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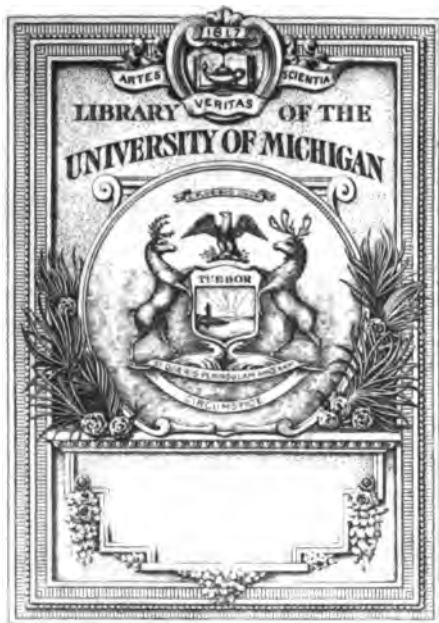
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THE NEW  
STATISTICAL ACCOUNT  
OF  
SCOTLAND.  
VOL. XV.



THE NEW.  
STATISTICAL ACCOUNT  
OF  
SCOTLAND.

BY

THE MINISTERS OF THE RESPECTIVE PARISHES, UNDER THE  
SUPERINTENDENCE OF A COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIETY  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SONS AND  
DAUGHTERS OF THE CLERGY.

VOL. XV.

SUTHERLAND—CAITHNESS—ORKNEY—SHETLAND—  
GENERAL INDEX.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

MDCCCXLV.





SUTHERLAND.



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59



**SUTHERLAND  
SHIRE.**

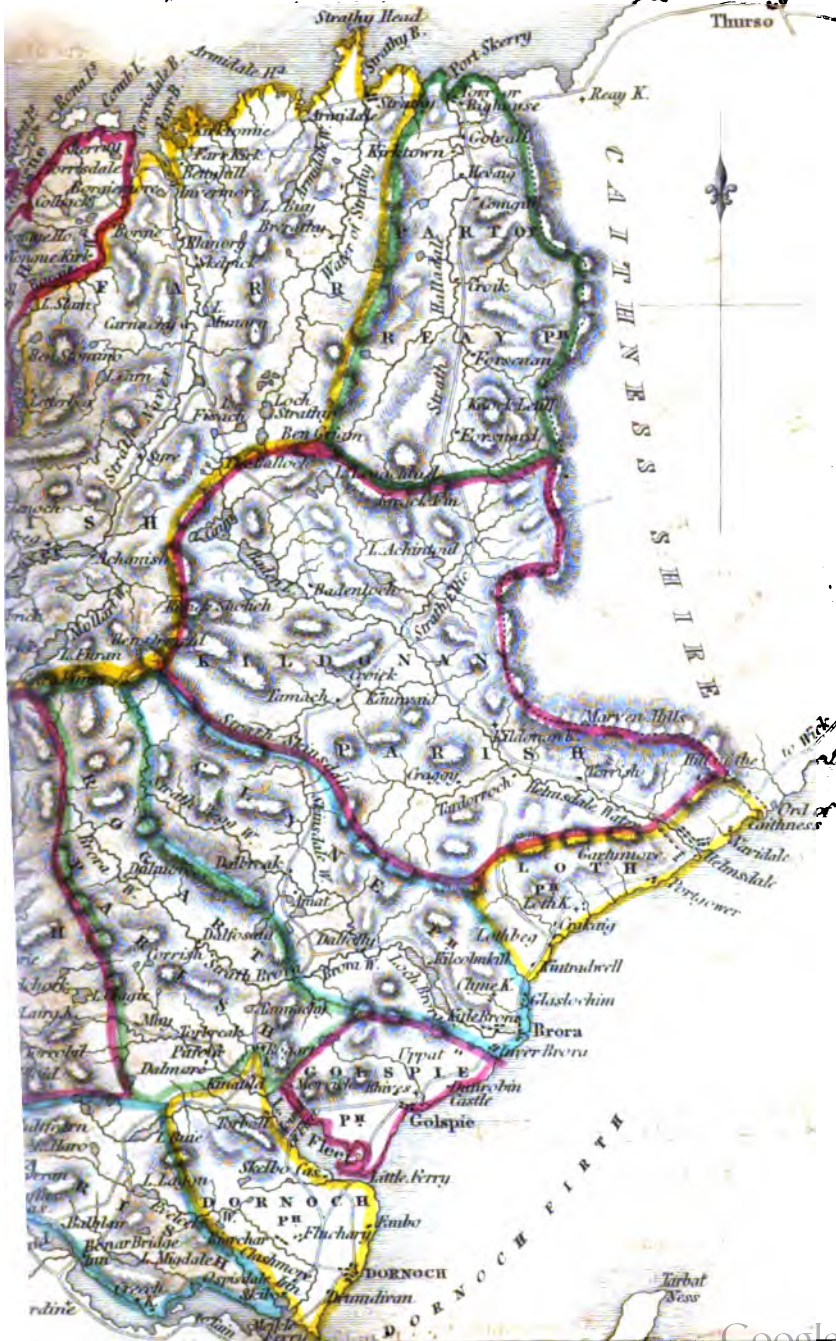
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5° Longitude West from Greenwich

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## PARISH OF DORNOCH.

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. ANGUS KENNEDY, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—"THE town and parish of Dornoch," says the writer of the last Statistical Account, "derive their name from the Gaelic words *Dorn-Eich*, which signify a horse's foot or hoof,—there being a current tradition to this effect:—About the year 1259, the Danes and Norwegians having made a descent on this coast, were attacked by William, Thane or Earl of Sutherland, a quarter of a mile to the eastward of this town. Here the Danish general was slain, and his army beaten, and forced to retire to their ships, which were not far distant. The Earl of Sutherland greatly signalized himself upon this occasion; and appears, by his personal valour and exertion, to have contributed very much to determine the fate of the day. While he singled out the Danish general, and gallantly fought his way onward, the Thane, being by some accident disarmed, seized the leg of a horse which lay on the ground, and with that despatched his adversary. In honour of this exploit, and of the weapon with which it was achieved, this place received the name of *Dorneich*, or *Dornoch*, as it is now called. This tradition is countenanced by the horse-shoe, which is still retained in the arms of the burgh."

*Extent and Boundaries.*—This parish extends in breadth 9 miles from E. to W. along the coast of the Frith of Dornoch; and in length from S. to N. or N. W. about 15 miles. It is bounded on the east by the Little Ferry, which separates it from the parish of Golspie; on the north and west by the parishes of Rogart and Criech; and on the south by the Dornoch Frith, which separates it from the county of Ross.

The parish may be considered as a sort of peninsula; the Dornoch Frith, which extends considerably beyond it, bounding it on the south, and the estuary of the Little Ferry on the east, which

runs up to the Earthen Mound, rising with a gradual inclination from the sea to a range of hills behind.

*Topographical Appearances.*—There are no high grounds in this parish which deserve the name of mountain, although the name has been given to some of them, as Beintarvie, &c. There is a ridge of hills behind Skibo, another behind Rearchar, and a third in the vicinity of Torboll. The ground on the side of the parish next the sea is generally flat; in some places almost a dead level, with the exception of some sandy hillocks, interspersed here and there, some of which are naked, and some half-clad with bent and whins, affording a place of refuge for rabbits.

There are two valleys, or, more properly speaking, straths, in this parish: the one, Strath Cairnaig, formed by the river Cairnaig. This valley stretches south from Torboll for the space of some miles. The other, Strath Achvaich, is near the source of the river Evlix, and is of no great extent.

There is a considerable stretch of sea-coast in the parish, from the extreme point of the Meickle Ferry on the west, down the Dornoch Frith, to the mouth of the Little Ferry on the east,—and thence up that estuary for some miles. The shore is flat and sandy, with the exception of a few small rocks to the east of the town, and on the shore of Embo. At the Little Ferry, there is an excellent harbour, where vessels may lie in great security, after having got over the bar which runs across the entrance. Coal ships also drop anchor below the town to discharge their cargoes.

*Meteorology, &c.*—The climate may be called mild and healthy,\* considering the northern latitude. Snow seldom remains long on the sea-coast; and for several years there have not been the same heavy and long-continued falls of snow and the same intense frosts as in former times.

Among the prognostics of unfavourable weather may be noticed the tremendous noise that proceeds from the sand banks called *Gizzing-Briggs*, so called from the peculiar sound they make. These banks lie almost in the middle of the channel betwixt the northern side of the Frith of Dornoch and the coast of the parish of Tarbet, and render the navigation up the Frith extremely dangerous, especially to strangers, without the assistance of a pilot. It is observed, also, that the appearances of the Aurora borealis,

\* As a proof of the mildness of our climate, pheasants have been recently introduced at Skibo: they are doing well, and are likely to increase. Walnuts also frequently ripen in the garden at Skibo; and a very fine Ilex tree growing there is a proof of the favourable climate.

which are sometimes very vivid, are commonly followed by cold and stormy weather.

The prevailing distempers are rheumatism, consumption, and inflammatory fevers.

*Hydrography.*—The Frith of Dornoch extends at least twenty miles beyond this parish. From the Meickle Ferry to the Little Ferry, the water is strongly impregnated with salt, and is found excellent for bathing during the summer months.—In the hilly part of the parish, there are a few lakes, in which a variety of trouts is found, but generally small, and little sought after.—In this parish there are the rivers Carnaig and Evlix. The Carnaig takes its rise some miles south of Torboll, and empties itself into the Fleet on the sands of Torboll, up to which the tide at one time flowed, till arrested by the Earthen Mound. The Evlix takes its rise about the head of Strath Achvaich; and, after running about eight or nine miles, with a considerable population on each side of it, and its banks beautifully wooded with natural birch and alders, it empties itself into the Dornoch Frith, not far from the Meickle Ferry. These rivers are not large; but during winter thaws, or heavy rains in summer, they rise rapidly, overflow their banks, and in their progress sometimes do considerable damage to corn lands.

*Mineralogy.*—Coal was found at Clashmore in this parish; it was submitted to Sir Humphry Davy's inspection, and by him pronounced to be similar to that of Brora. The seam is said to traverse Ross-shire, and become visible in Coigach. There is a considerable freestone quarry in the neighbourhood of this town, from which stones for building houses and erecting fences are taken. There is another on the estate of Embo; and several inferior ones, fit for fences, have recently been discovered in other parts of the parish.

*Zoology.*—In this parish are to be found badgers, foxes, otters, hares, rabbits, roe-deer, and occasionally red-deer; also grouse, black game, partridges, &c.

There is nothing in this parish that deserves the name of a salmon fishing. Abundance of excellent cockles may be found near the town when the tide recedes, and westward to the Meickle Ferry. They are much sought after in their season, and carried to a considerable distance in the interior of the country.

There are also two muscle-scalps near the Meickle Ferry, the property of Mr Dempster of Skibo. The Buckie fishermen re-

pair thither with their large boats for bait, and pay a certain sum to the proprietor for each boat-load.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Eminent Men.*—Among the eminent men connected with this parish may be mentioned Sutherland, Lord Duffus, who had a residence in Skelbo, the ruins of which are still visible: also the Gordons of Embo, now represented by Sir Orford Gordon, who resides in England. The heads of these families acted a conspicuous part in the feudal quarrels and wars of their times.

Connected with this parish also, by purchase of lands and by residence, were George Dempster, Esq. of Dunnichen, and John Hamilton Dempster, Esq. his brother. These gentlemen were of a younger branch of the ancient family of Dempster of Muresk, in the county of Aberdeen, as may be seen by reference to Douglas' Baronage of Scotland: \* and their grandfather had acquired, shortly after the year 1700, the estate of Dunnichen, in Forfarshire, which is now the property, and gives the designation, of the elder branch of his descendants.

Mr George Dempster purchased the estate of Skibo in the year 1786, and Mr J. H. Dempster shortly after purchased the estates of Pulrossie and Over-Skibo. The estates of Skibo and Over-Skibo had been purchased from gentlemen of the name of Gray. But the estate of Skibo had also been possessed for a few years previous to the last Mr Gray by the Honourable George Mackay of Reay, by whom the older portions of its woods were planted, and to whose taste and industry that part of the parish is much indebted.

Mr George Dempster was for twenty-eight years member of Parliament for the Dundee and St Andrews district of burghs. He was most active and assiduous in devising measures himself, and in encouraging measures planned by others, which had for their object the improvement of his native country. He took an active and leading part in promoting its manufactures, its fisheries, and its agriculture. He was a gentleman of great benevolence and suavity of manners. While he and his brother remained in Skibo, they were much respected by all ranks; and as landlords, they were kind and indulgent to their tenants. Mr Dempster died A. D. 1818, aged 86.

The noble family of Sutherland have a burying-place within the church, where the mortal remains of several of its members are laid. Over it a neat monument has been erected to the memory of the last Earl and the Countess of Sutherland, the parents of the now

Duchess Countess of Sutherland, who both died in the flower of youth, the one ten days after the other, at Bath, in the year 1766, and were buried in one grave in the church at Holyrood-House. His lordship had only attained the age of thirty-two, and her ladyship that of twenty-six. This amiable pair were not less ennobled by their shining virtues than by their high rank. Their humane dispositions and condescending manners had greatly endeared them to all orders of society : and their untimely death was deeply felt and universally deplored.

A melancholy event which occurred in July 1833 added to the number of those belonging to the noble family of Sutherland, whose mortal remains are deposited in the cathedral of Dornoch. George Granville Leveson Gower, first Duke of Sutherland, died at Dunrobin Castle on the 19th day of July 1833. His Grace's remains are laid in a place prepared for them in the south aisle of the cathedral ; over which, it is said, the Duchess Countess of Sutherland proposes to raise a statue of his Grace, to be executed by Chantry of London. The death of the Duke of Sutherland produced a deep and universal feeling of regret among all ranks in this country ; for his Grace was highly respected by all as a nobleman of most honourable principles, and having the comfort of his numerous tenantry at heart.\* His funeral was attended by the gentlemen and tenantry of thirteen parishes in this county, and by the tenantry of four parishes from his Grace's estates in Ross-shire ; and the procession strikingly testified to the high estimation in which his Grace was held. †

*Land-owners.*—These are, the Duchess Countess of Sutherland ; George Dempster, Esq. of Skibo ; Major George Gunn Munro of Poyntzfield ; and Mrs Gordon of Embo. None of the principal land-owners reside in the parish, except Mr Dempster.

*Parochial Registers.*—A register of baptisms has been kept, though sometimes not very regularly, since 13th August 1730 ; and a register of marriages, since 13th August 1734. These registers have been always under the charge of the parochial schoolmaster for the time being, who acts also as clerk to the kirk-session, and receives a small fee for every act of registration. When the school

\* Vide Golspie.

† While preparations were making in the cathedral for the Duke of Sutherland's funeral, a leaden coffin was discovered in the burying-place of the noble family, having a plate bearing an inscription that it contained the remains of John, the twentieth Earl of Sutherland, who "died June 27, 1733," a little more than a century before the Duke's death. His Lordship's coffin was covered with another, and laid up with all due respect and care in the same burying-place again.

became vacant, the registration was much neglected. Since the year 1817, however, both registers have been kept correctly.

Great inconvenience, and even loss to individuals, having been experienced from the want of a register of deaths, to which reference could be made,—a register of that description has been kept by the minister of the parish since January 1821, which, if continued by his successors, may prove useful to succeeding generations.

*Antiquities.*—The picturesque remains of the old castle of Skibo, formerly the residence of the family of Sutherland, Lord Duffus, still remain. This castle was built on an eminence, rising abruptly from the sea side, near the Little Ferry.

The castle of Skibo, once a residence of the Bishops of Caithness and Sutherland, was demolished in the last century. Within its walls the celebrated Marquis of Montrose was confined subsequently to his being taken in Assynt; and from Skibo he was conveyed to Edinburgh, where he was executed.

In memory of the event which gave its name to the burgh, a stone pillar was erected on the spot, supporting at the top a cross, encompassed by a circle, which went under the name of the Earl's cross. The lapse of ages had, however, somewhat defaced this monument. But it has been repaired, and is still standing.

### III.—POPULATION.

By the Government census of 1821, the population of the town and parish was found to be 3100. By the census of 1831, it was 3380; and would have been 300 more, had there not been a partial emigration to British America to that amount from the parish during that and the previous year. It is but justice to the landed proprietors to add, that this emigration was purely voluntary on the part of the emigrants; that most of them left the parish in comfortable circumstances; and that the situations which they left open were soon occupied by others. The population, it may be safely asserted, is still on the increase.

The increase of population may be accounted for by persons of various classes coming from the east and south country, and settling in the parish,—by a general inclination to marry young: when out farm-servants, of whom the number is considerably increased by the erection of large farms, get *barracks* for themselves, they marry: when a young man gets a croft of land, he marries: when a fisherman becomes possessed of a quarter share of a boat, he builds a house, and marries. Second marriages also, of which

there are not a few, contribute to the increase of the population. There is one instance of a marriage in which both parties were married for the fourth time.

1. Number of families in the parish,	-	-	-	-	644
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	-	596
in trade, manufactures, and handicraft,	-	-	-	-	41
2. The average number of marriages, for 7 years,	-	-	-	-	21½
births, for the same period,	-	-	-	-	82½
of the whole number of births during the 7 years, 300 were males, and 279 females.	-	-	-	-	
average number of deaths, for 7 years,	-	-	-	-	44½

There is 1 person insane in the parish; 3 fatuous; 3 blind,—2 of them by small-pox; and 1 dumb.

*Language, Habits, &c. of the People.*—The vernacular language is still the Gaelic; from which also almost all the names of places are manifestly derived. In that language, *bailè* signifies a town. Hence *Tor-baile*, *Kerr-baile*, *Eun-baile*, *Skia-baile*, compounded of that word and others, signifying respectively mount, rock, fowl, wing; and these names indicate the figure, situation, or other circumstances of the places to which they are applied. Some places in the vicinity of the cathedral have been denominated from the offices of those who formerly held them; as *Cro' n Espig*, *Auchintreasurich*, *Auchinchanter*, signifying the Bishop's, Treasurer's, and Chanter's fields. This language has, however, lost ground considerably during the last twenty-five years, owing to the influx into the parish, from various parts of the kingdom, of persons who speak the English language, but especially to the introduction of schools, first Gaelic and then English, into every district of the parish. The predilection for the Gaelic language is, however, still manifest, from the well-known facts, that the common people prefer to use it in their ordinary intercourse, and that larger congregations attend public worship during the Gaelic services than during the English. Nevertheless, the English is making rapid encroachments on our ancient language; and it is not improbable that, in the course of sixty or seventy years, the latter may be extinct.

The habits of the people in regard to cleanliness have improved considerably. Instead of their feal-houses, in which it was scarcely possible to maintain cleanliness, they have now generally neat cottages, built of stone and clay, and harled with lime, having chimnies, instead of the fire-place being in the middle of the house, as formerly,—there being then no outlet for smoke except by the door, or a hole in the roof.

A great improvement has also taken place in their dress, parti-



cularly in that of the young of both sexes. This also they have learned from those who came from other parts to reside in the parish.

Potatoes have become the principal article of food here, as, indeed, they are throughout all the Highlands. They serve as the chief subsistence of the people during one-half of the year, and with some even for two-thirds. Many of the people come from a considerable distance for cockles, of which abundance may be had in their season on the sands of Dornoch. They go also for haddocks to the fishing town of Embo; and since the herring-fishing was established at Helmsdale, many go there, purchase and cure herrings, and carry them home in casks in their own small carts: they thus provide themselves with wholesome food.

The people here are rather above the middle size. They are in general well-made and handsome, and the women, comely. On the whole, they are a moral and religious people; industrious, peaceable, and respectful to their superiors. With very few exceptions they regularly attend public worship; and their decent appearance on Sabbath days indicates their comfortable circumstances.

Poaching and illicit distillation are now scarcely known among them.

During the last three years there were 4 illegitimate births: but in three of the cases the parties were afterwards married.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—During the last fifteen or twenty years agricultural improvements have been carried on with wonderful activity, and to a great extent, in this parish, especially on the Sutherland estate. On that estate, there are 4000 acres of arable land under the plough, besides 2000 acres of waste ground improved, and carrying crops.

*Improvements.*—Among the improvements on waste-land it may be mentioned that the fresh-water lake, at a place called Balvraid, near the county road, has been thoroughly drained and prepared, and is now laid down in crop. The highly improved appearance of the spot holds out a prospect of remunerating the expense in a few years. It may be observed also, that, by the erection of the earthen mound across the estuary of the Little Ferry, from thirty to forty acres of valuable carse ground, over which the tide formerly used to flow, have been brought under the plough, and are

now carrying heavy crops of wheat, &c. A still greater extent has been reclaimed on the Golspie side of the estuary.

The contents of the principal farms on the Sutherland estate may be stated as follows :—Sidera, 196 acres ; Evlix, 154 ; Farms, (1820, 1821, 1822,) 344 ; Achley, 91 ; Pitgrudie, 133 ; Auchurach and Auchinchaunter, 84 ; Coull ; 203 ; Skelbo, 323 ; East Balvraid, 192 ; West Balvraid, 54 ; Cambusmore, 104 ; Torboll, 145 ; Pronsienain, 89 ; Pronsienaird, 132 ; Kinauld, 100 ; Trentham, 150,—all imperial acres. The parks are, at an average, from 10 to 15 acres each. The average rent of old arable land is L. 1, 5s. per acre ;—that of improved waste land, 5s.

Besides the principal farms which have been stated above, there are a great many lots, or small holdings, ranking from two to five or six acres, which are receiving yearly accessions from waste land by the industry of the occupiers ; and though the average rent of improved waste land be stated at 5s. per acre, it is a well-known fact, that many of these cottars pay only a rent of 1s. each, some 2s., and so on, in a gradual scale,—an increase of rent not being so much the object of the noble proprietors, as the improvement of the soil, and the comfort of their numerous tenantry ; in which liberal objects they have succeeded.

On the estate of Skibo there are 800 acres of arable land : and besides a great number of smaller holdings, there are four large farms, highly improved, and rented each at about L. 150. On this estate also, a good deal has been done in reclaiming waste land ; but much more in the parish of Criech, where the greater part of Mr Dempster's estate lies, and in which he has very extensive plantations of firs and hard-wood.

On the estate of the Duchess Countess of Sutherland in this parish, there are plantations to the extent of 2500 acres, consisting of Scotch firs and larches, birch, and hard-wood. To these it is in contemplation to make considerable additions. There are besides 300 acres of natural birch and alder.

On Mr Dempster's estate there are plantations to the extent of 350 acres, a considerable part of which is hard-wood. There are some ashes and planes of great size. The rest consists of Scotch firs and larches. On the estate of Embo there may be from 30 to 40 acres of Scotch fir, but, though old, very stunted in growth.

On the estate of Embo there is only one large farm, consisting of about 200 acres of arable land, of which from 30 to 40

have been reclaimed from waste land. It is enclosed and subdivided by stone fences, and in a high state of cultivation. The rest of the estate is let to small tenants, and they, of late, have adopted a rotation of crops.

Major Gunn Munro's estate in this parish lies in the vicinity of the burgh, and the greater part of it is well-farmed by a gentleman residing in the town. The rest of it is also well-farmed by two industrious individuals, who now grow wheat, where they formerly cut peats.

The steadings on the large farms throughout the parish are generally good and commodious. Attached to several of them is a thrashing-machine. These are of various powers, according to the size of the farm. Some of them are wrought by water, and some by horses.

The ordinary duration of leases here is nineteen years.

*Live-Stock.*—As to the live-stock in the parish, it is only necessary to observe, that the breeds of black cattle and horses, particularly the latter, have been greatly improved of late years. Cheviot sheep have also been introduced into store farms, and have succeeded well.

*Husbandry.*—The five-course shift is the rotation of crops adopted in the parish,—1. oats; 2. turnips and potatoes; 3. barley and grass seeds; 4. hay or pasture; and, 5. pasture. On account of the low price of barley, the wheat husbandry has been recently introduced. The produce is sent on consignment to Leith, where it is sold at the prices of the time; but the grower has to submit to a heavy deduction for freight, agency, &c.—not less than 4s. per quarter.

*Rate of Wages.*—The wages of farm-servants are various. The principal servant has generally L. 8 per annum, six bolls of oat-meal, a pint of skimmed milk per diem, or an agreed equivalent for it,—some eight, some ten barrels of coals, a certain extent of land for potatoes, and a free house. Young men hired by the half-year have from L. 2 to L. 2, 10s., with cost and lodgings. The wages of female-servants for the half-year are generally from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2, with victuals in the house. The wages of able-bodied men for day-labour are from 1s. to 1s. 6d.; those of the women, 6d., except when at harvest work, when they have 1s.; but no victuals in either case.

The daily operations of various kinds that are necessary on

large farms furnish employment to all in their vicinity who are able and willing to work.

*Quarries, &c.*—There is a considerable freestone quarry in the neighbourhood of this town, from which stones for building houses and erecting fences are taken: and there have been several other quarries recently opened in other parts of the parish; but none of these are equal to that in the vicinity of Dornoch, except one at Embo.

*Fisheries.*—There is no regular fishery in the parish. There is, indeed, a colony of fishermen at Embo; but they only fish for haddocks, small cods, flounders, &c. which they sell in the fresh state. The women carry the fish in creels on their backs to this town, and throughout the parish, and sell it as they best can. The fishermen also frequently go across with their boats to the shore of Tain, where they dispose of their fish to advantage. Of late years they have engaged in the herring-fishing, by hiring themselves to fish-curers for the season,—the fish deliverable in the fresh state at so much per crane, and the nets being provided by the fishermen. The curers allow a certain quantity of whisky to each boat's crew. To the credit of the fishermen at Embo, it should be observed, that, with a few exceptions, they are sober and industrious, and some of them pious.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Burgh.*—Dornoch is the only market-town in the parish, and the only Royal Burgh in the county. It was erected into a royal burgh by a charter from Charles I. A. D. 1628. The council consists of fifteen members, including the provost, four bailies, a dean of guild, and treasurer. By the constitution and practice of the burgh, four of the councillors are annually changed. This is one of five which compose what is called the northern district of burghs. It has no landed property, nor any other source of revenue except the customs levied at six annual fairs held here, and which are on the decline. But this may be accounted for by the recent establishment of two other fairs,—one in the village of Golspie, and another in the parish of Clyne,—and by the great number of retail-shops found here and there through the parish and the county.

The population of the town is little more than 500, but appears to be rather on the increase. The Sheriff-substitute and Sheriff-clerk, one writer, two messengers-at-arms, reside in the town. We have also a post-office. The northern royal mail-coach passes through the town twice every day. This is an advantage to the burgh, as

strangers travelling by the coach for business or for pleasure, may find good entertainment in a commodious and well-kept inn.

There are here also five retail-shopkeepers, two saddlers, one baker, one butcher, (though not in constant employment,) three blacksmiths, three shoemakers, several house-carpenters, masons, tailors, and weavers.

Within the last twenty years there was a considerable number of small uncomfortable feal-houses in the town; but these gradually gave way to neat and comfortable cottages, most of them two stories high. The streets are clean, and the approaches to the town from every quarter have been much improved. The communication with the town is open in every direction by excellent roads and bridges, which are kept in annual repair. The Macadamizing system is adopted on the county roads. Indeed, the whole parish is intersected with roads and bridges; and with these there is another great advantage,—there are no tolls. Not a toll is to be seen in the county of Sutherland. Hence, carriages, gigs, and carts may be seen on Sabbath days carrying some of the good people to church.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church stands in the middle of the town. It consists of three aisles of the old cathedral,—the fourth has been long in ruins; but these venerable ruins point out to the admiring beholder what was their ancient grandeur.

Dornoch was formerly the seat of the Bishop of Caithness. The precise time of the erection of the See is not ascertained. Andrew, Bishop of Caithness, had his seat here in 1150: and in 1222, Gilbert Murray was consecrated bishop. The latter is supposed to have built the cathedral. He died at Scrabster, in Caithness, where the bishops also had a residence in 1245; and was afterwards canonized. A statue of him is still shewn in the church of Dornoch, under the name of St Gilbert, but it is not entire. The last bishop, Andrew Wood, was translated hither from the Isles in the year 1680, and remained till the Revolution in 1688.

In the year 1570, the cathedral, (except the steeple,) was burnt by the master of Caithness; but it “hath been of late re-edified and repaired by Sir Robert Gordon, tutour of Southerland, which work was interprysed and begun by John Erle of Southerland, last deceased, a little before his death.” At what time the cathedral received its present roof, which is comparatively modern, I cannot ascertain. For a long time after it was occupied as a Presbyterian place of worship, the congregation met on the

ground-floor,—which was also occupied as a burying-ground for families of distinction. But this was found to be most inconvenient and unwholesome, both for the minister and congregation, the roof being stupendously high, and the house very cold in winter. To remedy these inconveniences, it was agreed by all concerned, about sixty years ago, that the church should be lofted at the height of seven feet from the ground. To this upper story, which is the present place of worship, the ascent is by stairs from without. The last repair which was given to the church was in 1816, when its lofty roof was ceiled, and additional accommodation was given by the erection of a gallery in the easter aisle; notwithstanding which, there is not yet sufficient accommodation for an increasing population. Another gallery is still necessary. The number of sittings in the church cannot be exactly ascertained; they are probably from 1000 to 1100; but it is a well known fact, that the pews are generally crowded to inconvenience, and that, in fine weather, some have to sit on the tops of the pews for want of room. Arrangements are, however, in contemplation, which may remedy this inconvenience.\*

The pews have been divided by the heritors according to their valued rents; and their tenants have free access to them. So far as I know, there are no seat-rents exacted. The poor sit on the forms connected with the communion tables, and in the passages.

The great body of the people are within six miles of the church; some at the distance of seven or eight miles, and in one district about twelve miles. The people in this last district are within a mile of the parish church of Rogart, where they attend public worship. They are, however, catechised annually by their own parish minister.

The manse was built about sixty years ago. The last repairs to it were given in the year 1825, when some additional accommodations were given by the heritors. It ought to be recorded here, to the honour of the heritors of the parish, that no meeting of presbytery was rendered necessary during the last eighteen years to obtain the accommodations which the clergyman required.

The glebe is about twelve imperial acres, all arable; but the greater part of it is of little value, the soil being so very sandy and

\* Since writing the above, the Duchess Countess of Sutherland has announced her intention of repairing the wester aisle, which has been so long in ruins, at her own expense, and to fit it up as a part of the place for public worship. Also to repair the other aisles of the cathedral. The work is to be commenced next spring. There are to be some free sittings for the poor.

light, that during the high winds which prevail from March to June, it is drifted in every direction like fresh laid snow.

The stipend was augmented on 6th February 1832, from fourteen chalders, and L. 8, 6s. 8d., to seventeen chalders, and L. 10 for providing the communion elements. The victual is half meal, half barley, imperial standard weights and measures.

There is one catechist in the parish, appointed by the Committee on the Royal Bounty, with a salary of L. 7.

There is no chapel of any description here : no Dissenters from the Established church ; and only one family of Seceders, who almost regularly attend public worship in the parish church.

The average annual amount of parochial collections for religious and charitable purposes may be stated at L. 28 or L. 30.

*Education.*—There are seven schools in the parish, of which three are in the town,—the parochial school, a female school on the second patent of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and another female school without salary, the teacher depending on the school-fees. In the landward parish are two schools on the General Assembly's scheme, and two on that of the Glasgow Auxiliary Gaelic School Society ; besides which, the people in remote small districts hire a young lad to teach their children during the winter quarter ; after which the school breaks up till next winter. The Holy Scriptures and the Assembly's Shorter Catechism are taught in all these schools. Many are taught also to read the Bible in Gaelic. Dr Thomson's English school-books are introduced into most of them. Arithmetic, book-keeping, English grammar, and Latin, are taught. The parochial schoolmaster has the maximum salary, with a large house and garden. The school-fees are of no great value,—not exceeding L. 6. The teachers belonging to the Glasgow Society have L. 14 each : those employed by the General Assembly's Committee, have each L. 20 of salary, besides fees. Suitable dwelling and school-houses are provided by the heritors in all these cases. The schoolmistress at Dornoch has a salary of L. 8, with a good house and garden.

It may be observed in general, that the fees in all these schools are of very little value ; that, so desirous are the people to give the advantages of education to their children that some are sent to school at the age of five ; that female education is better attended to than formerly ; and that during last winter nearly 500 attended schools.

About 700 persons in the parish are unable to read, above six

years of age; and about 250, betwixt the years of six and fifteen.

*Friendly Society.*—There is a friendly society in this town of some standing; but it does not appear to be in a prosperous state, as last year its dissolution was talked of.

*Savings Bank.*—A branch of a general savings bank for the county was lately set up here. Nothing can yet be said of it but that the people shew a desire to vest their savings in it. It is under the patronage of the noble family of Sutherland, who give every encouragement to the people to vest their money in it, and to promote provident habits among the working-classes.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of persons receiving parochial aid may be considered on an average at from 120 to 130. The funds for the poor, which are distributed only once a year, consist of collections made in church on Sabbath days, including what is given on marriage occasions, which may amount to L. 36; the dues for the use of the mortcloths, amounting to about L. 3, 10s.; an annual gratuity of L. 6 from the Duchess Countess of Sutherland; and L. 25, the interest of L. 500. The late Duke of Sutherland, who did not need to borrow money, very humanely took this sum from the kirk-session, and allowed the above liberal interest for it. The lowest sum which is given to any of the poor is 6s., the highest is L. 1, 5s. There is a strong tendency among the lower classes to apply for relief to the parish funds. It must be added, that the Duchess gives also annual gratuities to several poor and aged individuals,—one of which, I know, amounts to L. 4; and that, besides these stated gratuities, the Noble family always gives a liberal supply of victuals to the poor on their estates, in time of scarcity.

*Prisons.*—The only prison in the county is in this town. It was once the bishop's palace, which, from its remains, appears to have been a stately edifice. In 1567, George Earl of Caithness sent his son John with some of his people, to invest the town and Castle of Dornoch, of which the Murrays, a tribe attached to the noble family of Sutherland, had possessed themselves. The Murrays, no longer able to maintain the ground they had occupied, retired to the castle; upon which the master of Caithness burnt the town and cathedral; but still the besieged defended themselves in the castle for a month. At length, however, they were obliged to capitulate. Whether the castle was dismantled at that time, I have no means of ascertaining; but it is well known that it lay in ruins for



a great length of time, till, in 1814, it was roofed and repaired; it has since been occupied as a court-house, a record-room, and a jail. The number of prisoners in the jail during the year 1833 was 20. Of these three were for debt, six for smuggling, one for theft, and ten for assaults of various kinds. The prison is, upon the whole, comfortable and well-secured. One of the surgeons in the parish has a salary for attending any of the prisoners when sick.

*Inns, &c.*—In the town there is an excellent principal inn; and also two houses licensed to sell whisky. One of these with the inn would be quite sufficient. There are two other respectable inns in the parish, one at the Meickle Ferry, and another at Clashmore. There are three licensed houses in the parish, all of which could be well dispensed with, as they prove injurious to the morals and the means of the people, particularly of the young, among the working-classes. It should be stated to the credit of the magistrates here, as well as throughout the county, that they have suppressed several of these dram-shops.

*Fuel.*—Coals imported from Newcastle have been used here by the better classes in town and country, for the last twenty years at least. They are purchased at Dornoch, at from 1s. 10d. to 2s. per barrel, and carried home in carts. Peats are still used by the common people.

*September 1834.*

## PARISH OF CRIECH.

PRESBYTÈRY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. MURDO CAMERON, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—THIS large parish extends from the parish of Dornoch on the east to the parish of Assynt on the west,—a distance of not less than thirty-five miles. Its breadth is not, however, proportionate, varying from five to seven or eight miles in the eastern part, and narrowing towards the west. It is bounded on the north by the parishes of Dornoch and Lairg; and the Frith of Dornoch and its continuation, the river Oykell, forms its southern boundary.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The greater part of the parish is mountainous, or rather hilly, for, excepting at its junction with Assynt, there is no very great elevation.

It contains numerous lakes, including those of Migdale, Gour, Laggan, Buie, Laro, &c.,—which all abound with small trout; but none of these lakes are of any great extent. They have been examined and found to contain no marl.

*Hydrography.*—The rivers which find their way to the Frith of Dornoch in this parish are the Shinn, the Oykell and the Cassley,—the confluence of the two last of which forms the Frith, and is the point to which the tide flows. These rivers all contain salmon, and are regularly fished. Chalybeate springs are numerous.

*Mineralogy.*—A mineralogical survey of part of this parish, made in 1789 by R. E. Raspe, a German mineralogist, employed by Mr Dempster, reports that it does not contain any minerals worthy of notice. Coal, which is found in an adjoining parish, is not found here: and it is uncertain whether there be limestone.

There is at Rosehall a small vein of fine-grained, ponderous, solid, bluish-gray manganese, as perfect and free of iron as is

ever seen. It is not, however, above five inches wide, and would not repay labour.

*Soil.*—There is not in the parish very much variety of soil: the usual gravelly and peaty soil of the mountains preponderates over every other. There is some good clay soil at Pulrossie, at Flode, at Rosehall, and elsewhere on the shores of the Frith. At Rosehall is to be found fine natural meadow pasture; and the hills are pastured by sheep and cattle.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners of this parish, and their valued rents, are as follows:

	Scots.
George Dempster, Esq. of Skibo, - - -	L. 1195 0 0
Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, - - -	708 14 8
Sir Charles Ross, Bart., - - -	431 18 0
Right Honourable Lady Ashburton, - - -	400 0 0
Dugald Gilchrist, Esq. of Ospisdale, - - -	253 6 8
	L. 2968 19 7

The last is the only resident heritor; and the real rent, exclusive of salmon-fishings, may be about L. 3700 Sterling per annum.

*Antiquities.*—In the 11th or 12th century a contest of the inhabitants with the Danes is recorded to have occurred at Drinleah, near Bonar Bridge, whence the invaders were driven back with great loss to their ships at Portnacoulter,—now the Meikle Ferry.

The extraordinary number of tumuli or graves on the scene of action, while they attest the truth of the tradition, and the greatness of the slaughter, cannot fail to excite the wonder of reflecting persons at the great numbers who must have been engaged, and the consequent density of the population at that remote time. Many of these tumuli have been opened, but nothing was found except three or four large stones artificially arranged in each.

On the summit of the Doune or hill of Criech there is a specimen of those very puzzling relics of antiquity, the vitrified forts. It is considered by persons conversant with these appearances as a good specimen, and has been visited and described by Sir George S. Mackenzie, Bart., and by others.

### III.—POPULATION.

Population in 1801, - - - - -	1974
1811, - - - - -	1969
1821, - - - - -	2354
1831, - - - - -	2562

Number of families in the parish in 1831,	-	-	-	525
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	407
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, and handicraft.	-	-	-	37

The Gaelic language is spoken in the parish; but the English has now gained so much ground, that it may be said to be spoken by the greater number of the inhabitants.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy—Wood.*—There is a natural oak-wood of great beauty at Ledmore, the divided property of the Duchess of Sutherland and Mr Dempster of Skibo, of about 150 acres. The bark of the portion which belongs to the latter owner was sold last year for L. 500, and that of the former was sold some years ago for a much larger sum.

There is also some natural oak and birch at Rosehall, and in one or two other places; but, excepting some large oaks, it is not valuable, nor attended to.

The oldest planted wood in the parish is the hard-wood at Ospisdale, and the fir-wood at Rosehall; but this last, from being grown in a soil too rich, is considered of bad quality.

A considerable extent, chiefly of fir and larch, was planted thirty or forty years ago on the estates of Skibo and Pulrossie; and the present proprietor has already added upwards of 1500 acres, consisting of larch and fir, (chiefly the former,) with oak and other forest trees in smaller quantity. Mr Houston of Creech, (who has recently sold his property to the Duke of Sutherland) and Mr Gilchrist of Ospisdale, have also planted considerably; and, on the whole, the extent of growing wood in this parish cannot be less than 2500 acres, and on the estate of Skibo it is yearly increasing. All sorts of hard-wood sell readily, and at good prices, and the export of pit-wood from the fir plantations is considerable.

It has been found impracticable to ascertain the quantity of land cultivated and uncultivated, and the amount of gross produce.

*Rent.*—The largest corn farm in the parish yields about L. 300 per annum, and there are half a dozen others giving betwixt L. 50 and L. 200.

The rent of sheep grazing is from 2s. to 4s., and of cattle from 5s. to 10s. according to the size of the cattle and quality of the pasture.

*Husbandry.*—There are no sheep-farms in this parish, except one at Auchinduich, occupied by Mr Marshall, the property of the Duchess of Sutherland, and one in Inverchasly, occupied by Messrs

Rose and Murray, the property of Sir Charles Ross of Balnagown, Baronet. The breed of sheep in both these farms is chiefly Cheviot, and generally fetches the highest price. Improvements in these farms are carried to the highest pitch. The reclaiming of waste lands, draining, and irrigation, has been carried on in this parish by landlords and tenants, of late years, rapidly and successfully. The general duration of leases is from seven to nineteen years. The farm-buildings on large farms, as well as inclosures, are in general complete and comfortable, and the small farmers and cottars follow the example of their superiors.

*Quarries.*—There are in the parish two quarries of whinstone, both very hard to work.

*Fisheries.*—The only valuable river fishery is the salmon fishing of the river Shin, the property of the Duchess of Sutherland, who also has in lease all the salmon fishings along the Kyle, belonging to the estate of Skibo, which are worked and generally with success by fishers employed under her Grace.

*Navigation.*—No ships or vessels of any description belong to the parish. But several vessels trade to Bonar Bridge, of from 30 to 60 tons burden, importing meal, coals, and lime; and exporting fir props, wool, oak-bark, corn, and salmon.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town and Villages.*—There are no market-towns in the parish, and the nearest is Dornoch.

A village and cotton manufactory were established at Spinningdale, by Mr Dempster of Dunnichen, in the latter part of the last century; but the destruction of the factory by fire in 1809 has been followed by the decay of the village.

The central position of Bonar Bridge, situated at the great entrance of the county, and at the junction of the Assynt, Reay, Caithness, and Ross-shire roads, has pointed it out since the erection of the magnificent iron bridge in 1813, as the site of a future town. Mr Dempster is feuing ground here, and a village has already arisen, which is gradually increasing by that slow and natural growth which experience has shown to be the most secure foundation of a town. The great Kyle markets, as they are called, for the sale of the cattle of Sutherland and Caithness, are now held here, in the months of July, August, and September. A suitable piece of ground is inclosed for the purpose, and the convenience of the public will be greatly promoted by the desertion of the

very inconvenient place at Portenleik, where they have hitherto been held.

Bonar Bridge is already a place of considerable export and import, having the advantage of depth of water sufficient for shipping.

There is no village at Newton, but it is used as a shipping place for the wool, corn, wood, &c. of this parish.

*Means of Communication. Bonar Bridge.*—The first and most useful among the means of communication in the parish is the bridge of Bonar, consisting of one large metal arch and two smaller stone arches: it opens the communication between Sutherland and Ross-shires, as well as to the most distant parts of the country, south and north. It was erected by Government and the county; as were also the roads leading from it.

The first road, from Bonar to Assynt and the west coast, has three bridges; one of two arches over the river Shin; one of a single arch over the river Caslie; and one of a single arch over the river Oyke. This public road runs through the parish from Bonar to within a few miles of the manse of Assynt, a distance of about thirty miles. The second public road from Bonar is by Lairg to Tongue, at the north coast. The third public road from Bonar (recently opened) is made through the middle of the parish in mosses and hills, towards the Fleet Mound and the east coast of Sutherland. It extends within the parish a distance of seven miles, and has a bridge of one arch over a small river. The fourth public road from Bonar is towards Dornoch and the east coast. This road within the parish extends a distance of eight miles, and there are two small bridges upon it at Spinningdale and Ospisdale. These four roads were made by Government and the county. There are, besides, several private roads with bridges through the different inhabited straths and glens; which render the communication through the parish both easy and comfortable in all seasons of the year.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated near the shore, about nine miles from the east end of the parish, and upwards of thirty miles from the west end. It is convenient for the greater part of the population from the river Shin in the west, to Ospisdale in the east. The church was built in 1790, has been repaired at different periods, and is now in a good state. It accommodates 500 persons. There are no free seats, except the communion forms occupied by the poor.

The manse was built in 1780, and has undergone many repairs. The glebe is about five acres in extent, and would be valued at L. 7. The stipend is fourteen chalders of victual, half barley, and half oatmeal, paid in money betwixt Yule and Candlemas, by the fiar prices; there are also L. 10 of money allowed for communion elements.

There is a mission at Rosehall in the west end of the parish, connected with the Royal Bounty. There is also a catechist paid by the Royal Bounty the sum of L. 7, 10s. with a small gratuity from the people.

There are no Dissenters or Seceders of any description in this parish. 400 families attend the church, and from these about 700 persons. Divine service is generally well attended by all ranks. The number of communicants attending the parish and mission-churches may average about 90.

The average amount of collections yearly made in the parish and mission-churches for religious societies is from L. 9 to L. 12.

*Education.*—There are three schools, viz. the parochial school in Criech, taught by Mr Patrick Murray and his son, Mr David Murray, student of philosophy. There are also two Assembly schools, one at Inverchaslie, and another at Whiteface. Both the Assembly schools are well attended and very successful, as may be seen by the Reports. The branches taught there are English and Gaelic reading and spelling; writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping, and Latin, &c.

The salary of the parish schoolmaster is L. 30; and the school-fee is from 1s. to 3s. per quarter, according to the branches of education taught, but do not yield above L. 10 a year. The parochial teacher had hardly any accommodation for upwards of twenty years back, being obliged to live in a house that was falling over his head; and, for the safety of his own life and that of his family, was obliged to quit that ruin and live in a hired house. The heritors promise to build one, but it is not yet begun. The expense of education is various,—from 5s. to 14s. per annum. The people in general are very much alive to the benefits of education; so much so, that the families who are at a distance from school club together to support a teacher that goes from house to house once a week. Inveran and Linside in the mission are seven miles distant from any school, and at present employ a teacher, who has generally

from forty to sixty attending his school at Invershin. Two additional schools are required, one at Inveran and neighbourhood, and one in Aurdale of Airdines, at each of which there might be an attendance of from forty to sixty. A very great and visible change to the better has taken place in the conduct and morals of the people within the last twenty years, during which time not less than eighteen teachers were introduced among them in different parts of the parish; all these with stated salaries from different benevolent societies. There are still about 800 persons in the parish above six years of age unable to read, and about 400 in that state betwixt the years of six and fifteen.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of paupers at the parish church and mission may average about 140, who receive annually from the funds collected in church from 3s. to 6s. each. The annual collections in the churches may amount to L. 16: and there is also the interest of L. 150, a fund in the Commercial Bank, Tain. The total amount for annual distribution is about L. 20.

*Inns, Alehouses, &c.*—There is one inn at Bonar, and five or six alehouses in different parts of the parish; but the people seldom exceed a necessary refreshment.

*September 1834.*



## PARISH OF GOLSPIE.

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. ALEXANDER MACPHERSON, A.M., MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—The name of this parish is, in the Gaelic language, pronounced *Goishbee*. Situated in the maritime parts of the Highlands, the parish has, like many other places, in all probability, received its name from the ancient northern invaders, who for a time were possessors of these parts. The attempts which have been made to derive the name from the Gaelic language seem forced and unsatisfactory. The ancient name of the parish was *Culmallie*,—denoting that the church or chapel had been dedicated to some tutelary saint.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The form of the parish is an oblong, stretching along the coast; its length is about eight miles, and breadth about six. The parish is bounded on the north by the parishes of Rogart and Clyne; on the east by the latter and the Moray Frith; on the south by that frith; and on the west by the small inlet, which bears the name of *Little Ferry*, and the stream called *Fleet*.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The hills near the coast are, *Beinn a Bhragidh*, which is about 1300 feet in height above the level of the sea; the *Silver Rock* and the *Hill of Morvich*, both much lower; and, in the interior, *Beinn Horn* 1712, and *Beinn Lundie*, 1464 feet in height. In the middle of the parish there is a valley called the *Glen of Dunrobin*. Through this glen runs a stream called *Golspie Burn*, whose banks, for the space of about a mile, near the sea, present very beautiful and picturesque scenery. The range of hills, consisting of the *Silver Rock*, the *Hill of Morvich*, and others, in their vicinity, are rounded at the top, with a southern, seaward aspect. The flat arable part of the parish lies chiefly between the coast-side hills and the sea, having the rude figure of a triangle, one of whose sides is formed by the base of the hills, another by

the *Little Ferry* inlet, and the third by the sea-shore, with a considerable sinuosity.

*Caves.*—In the former Statistical Account, two caves are described,—the one, *Uaigh mhic Ghil Anndreis*, Gillander's Cave, in the eastern part of the parish; and the other, *Uaigh Thorcuil*, Torquil's Cave, in the hill above Dunrobin. It may be observed, that the former is on the face of a white sandstone rock, and seems to have been formed by the gradual action of the elements; that the latter is in a loosely stratified red sandstone rock; and that its formation appears to have been coëval with the present structure of the rock itself. The eastern half of the coast in this parish is mostly rocky, and the western low and sandy.

*Meteorology.*—The climate of this, and of the adjacent parishes on the coast, may be considered temperate and mild. Snow seldom lies long on the ground; nor can the climate be called rainy. The east winds, indeed, which are not unfrequent, sometimes occasion cloudy and damp weather; and, when they blow hard for a day or two, they bring with them much rain; but this rain is almost uniformly succeeded by a tract of fair mild weather. The south winds, which are the least frequent, are rarely accompanied with rain; and it is in occasional showers only that the west and north-west winds bring rain. The gales from the north-west are here by far the hardest. Those dense fogs, which so often occur, on the east coast of the island, to the southward of us, are here of rare occurrence.

Ailments of the rheumatic kind are perhaps the most prevalent; but not in any remarkable degree; nor can these be ascribed to any peculiarity in the climate.

*Hydrography.*—The fresh-water lakes in the parish are *Lochs Horn, Lundie, Farralarie*, and *Salachie*, none of which exceeds half a mile in length, or one-third in breadth. The *Fleet*, which, as already observed, forms part of the western boundary of the parish, is the only stream connected with it that can be denominated a river. It flows through the valley called *Strathfleet*. At its lower part, it is slow and meandering, and contains trout, and sometimes salmon. In the *glen of Golspie*, there is a cascade, which, when there is any quantity of water in the stream, has a very fine effect. The surrounding scenery has of late been greatly improved; and the traveller, who rests at the inn, and who takes pleasure in such things, will find himself rewarded, in visiting it.

*Geology.*—The following geological remarks, relative to this pa-

rish, are copied from an original manuscript, at Dunrobin Castle, written by the late eminent Sir Humphry Davy, President of the Royal Society :—" The primary hills, in the neighbourhood of Dunrobin, are composed of felspar, quartz, mica, and hornblende, forming different arrangements of porphyry, porphyritic granite, gneiss, sienite, and mica slate. There are very few veins in the rocks. The only veins I have seen are quartz, and in them there are no indications of metallic formations. The decomposed rocks have left no fragments of quartz, which are usually found in abundance in metalliferous districts.

" The highest secondary hills, in this district, extend in a line from Loch-Brora to Strathfleet," that is, through the northern part of this parish, " and are composed of hard silicious sandstone and puddingstone, containing large fragments—some rounded, some sharp—of the primary rocks, particularly of the porphyritic granite, gneiss, and sienite.

" The secondary rocks are more interesting. The mechanical deposits in them are evidently derived from the ruins of primary rocks ; and most of the fragments are such as may have been detached from rocks in the neighbourhood. The vegetable remains in the sandstone and the shells in the limestone are those common to such formations. The cement of the secondary rocks is generally silicious ; but in one stratum near Golspie, and extending along the coast, it is calcareous ; and the decomposition of the rocks forms an excellent marl. In this marl there is a blue substance, having some of the external characters of phosphate of iron."

In another manuscript, Sir Humphry writes thus :—" The soils of the coast side lands, between the *Little Ferry* and Helmsdale, seem to be formed principally from the decomposition of sandstone-rock, which in some parts approaches in its nature to shale. The soils in Strathfleet,"—the lower parts of which partly lie in this parish,—“ appear to have been produced by the decomposition of transition-sandstone and breccias :

" The transition rocks of Sutherland are not numerous, and belong, as far as I have been able to learn and examine, only to a small extent of country. Some of the high hills, in the immediate neighbourhood of Dunrobin and Strathfleet, must be regarded as belonging to this order of rocks. *Beinn a Bhragidh*, rising immediately above (near) the castle, is composed of red transition sandstone and breccia. *Beinn Horn*, the *Silver Hill*, and all the mountains immediately above Loch-Brora, are similar in their nature ;

but their colours are various,—the sandstone being in some cases gray, in some white, and in others iron-brown.

“ In general the breccias, in these transition mountains, contain fragments of granite, porphyry, and micaceous schist, connected by silicious cement; but, in a few cases, they contain fragments of marble, with a calcareous cement. A very remarkable breccia occurs at Golspie, near the inn, and at the east side of the burn, and a still purer one near Rhives, in which small blocks of marble are inserted. These calcareous breccias, in general, are in a state of decomposition, and a sort of marl is formed from the decay. These rocks might, with as much propriety, be called secondary as transition rocks; for though in some parts they abound in crystalline matter, yet in others they are almost entirely composed of fragments. I have given them the name of transition by courtesy. Rocks of the rare kind are often associated with greywacke and crystalline stone; and they are placed immediately upon the primary rocks. I have never seen any greywacke or transition limestone in Sutherland.

“ The secondary rocks occupy but a small space, and are probably incumbent on the red sandstone or breccia described. They occur in regular strata; but their arrangement is very much disturbed. They appear to have been originally deposited, or formed parallel to the horizon; but in most places this parallelism has been disturbed, either by the subsidence or the elevation of part of the strata; so that there are frequently faults or abruptions of the different rocks, which have given to the different parts of the strata different inclinations.

“ The true secondary strata of Sutherland,” *i. e.* of the east coast, “ occupy an extent of six or seven miles, filling up a sort of basin between the transition hills, in the neighbourhood of Dunrobin, and those in the parish of Loth. The upper stratum is a sandstone of different degrees of hardness, and composed of silicious sand, cemented by silicious matter. Below this occurs an aluminous shale, containing pyritous matter, carbonaceous matter, the remains of marine animals,\* and of land vegetables. Beneath this shale, or rather alternating with it, a stratum occurs, containing in some of its parts calcareous matter, and passing into lime-

\* The reefs at Dunrobin contain the remains of the following *bivalve* shell fishes:—*Gryphæa*, differing slightly from *G. obliquata*; *Modiola*, new species, longitudinally striated; *Pecten*, new species, striated; *Plagiostoma duplicata*; *Terebratula media*; a new species of gibbose shell resembling *Unio*; *Venus* undescribed.—*See Murchison on Strata of Oolitic Series, &c. Trans. Geol. Soc.*

stone; but in general consisting of a silicious sand agglutinated by calcareous cement. The coal measures occupy the lowest part of this secondary district which has been yet exposed."

"The hard sandstone is principally composed of pure silicious earth. It is not acted upon by acids, and is not liable to be decomposed by the action of air and water. The shale contains no calcareous matter near its junction with the coal. The limestones found in the secondary strata contain no magnesian earth, and are adulterated only with aluminous and silicious earths, and oxide of iron. They differ very much in purity, in different parts. The marble in the calcareous breccia at Rhives, and on the coast, leaves only from one-twelfth to one-twentieth of residuum during its solution in acids. The sand on the coast, near the quay at Dunrobin, contains from one-half to one-third of weight of calcareous matter."

*Zoology.*—The following birds, of the rarer kinds, have occasionally been seen in this parish, by the game-keeper. The goshawk, (*Falco palumbarius*, Linn.; *L'Autour*, Buffon.) The ash-coloured shrike, or greater butcher-bird, (*Lanius excubitor*, Linn.; *La Pie-Grièche grise*, Buffon.) The ring-ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*, Linn.; *Le Merle à Plastron blanc*, Buffon.) The cross-bill or Sheld Apple (*Loxia Curvirostra*, Linn.; *Le Beccroisé*, Buffon.) The snow-bunting or snow-flake (*Emberiza nivalis*, Linn.; *L'Ortolan de Neige*, Buffon.) The Siskin or Aberdevine (*Fringilla spinus*, Linn.; *Le Tarin*, Buffon.) The night-jar, goat-sucker, dor-hawk, or fern-owl, (*Caprimulgus Europæus*, Linn.; *L'Engoulevent*, Buffon.)

At a very remote period, deer seem to have been numerous either in the hills of this parish, or in its neighbourhood; for large, and evidently very old deposits of their horns have recently been dug up, near the site of the old chapel. They now seldom venture to approach so near the coast. Galloway black-poll'd cattle, Highland black cattle, and the Cheviot breed of sheep, and some good work-horses, are reared with great care and success, in this parish. The kinds of fish found here are merely those which are common to the other parts of the east coast of Scotland, and which are mentioned in the former Statistical Account. The most useful shell-fish, in the parish, is the mussel, generated on a bank in the *Little Ferry* inlet. This shell-fish is the bait chiefly used in the haddock and other white fisheries; sometimes, however, the *limpet*, and a worm named by the fishermen *lug*, and found in the sand, at ebb

tide, are used as bait. In the vicinity of the mussels, cockles abound. Heaps of oyster-shells have occasionally been dug up in certain parts of this, and of the neighbouring parish, to the west; and their shells are also found on the sea-shore, about the *Little Ferry* inlet, —affording an indication of the existence of this shell-fish in abundance, in former times.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Like other maritime parishes in the Highlands, Golspie appears to have, in ancient times, been invaded, and possessed, for a period, by foreign northern nations.\* By far the most prominent and interesting part of its history relates to the eminent characters that have been connected with it.

*Family of Sutherland.*—Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, who, with the other members of her family, often resides in this parish, at her seat—Dunrobin, is also Countess of Sutherland, in her own right. The thanes of Sutherland first received the title of earls from Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland, A. D. 1031. Her Grace Elizabeth, the present Countess, is the twenty-third representative of this ancient family, and a lineal descendant of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland; the third William Earl of Sutherland having been married to the Princess Margaret, daughter of that monarch.

The husband of her Grace is George Granville Leveson Gower, Duke of Sutherland, Knight of the Garter. The descent of his Grace is also very illustrious, as well as very ancient. Not to mention many other particulars, he is in the paternal line descended from Robert, the youngest son of Rollo, first Duke of Normandy, and, in the maternal line, from the Princess Mary, second daughter of the seventh Henry, King of England.

The family consists of two sons and two daughters,—George Granville, Marquis of Stafford, Baron Gower of Stittenham, Lord

\* In all probability, the continental warlike nation of the Catti, so largely treated of by the Roman historians, invaded and took possession of the district of country extending from the Pentland Frith to that of Dornoch; and that, perhaps, soon after the disasters brought upon them by the Roman arms. The Celtic name of the district, situated between the Ord of Caithness, and the Frith of Dornoch, is *Catt thaobh*, i. e. the side, or district of the *Catti*, and the inhabitants are in Celtic denominated *Cattich*. Caithness has in English retained its original name, for it means the promontory of the Catti; but in Celtic, it is called *Gall thaobh*, the district of strangers, from the people who at a later period settled there. *Sutherland*, the English name of this county, evidently owes its origin to its geographical position, in reference to Caithness. In Celtic, the title of the Earls of Sutherland is *Morfhear chath*, pronounced *Morer chath*, and that of the Countess, *Bana Mhorfear chath*, pronounced *Bana vorer chath*; *Bana* being the feminine prefix. Both the Celtic titles are expressive of nobility in *any degree*; and thus they still continue applicable.

Lieutenant of the county of Sutherland, and heir to the estates and titles of the family, married to Lady Harriet Howard, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle; Lord Francis, heir to the property of the late Duke of Bridgewater, married to Miss Greville, niece of the Duke of Portland; Lady Charlotte, married to the Earl of Surrey, son and heir of the Duke of Norfolk; and Lady Elizabeth, married to Earl Grosvenor, son and heir of the Marquis of Westminster; all of whom have families, consisting each of sons and daughters.

As a statesman the Duke of Sutherland is enlightened, liberal, firm, and independent; possessing the well-merited character of inflexible integrity and of high honour. His Grace, then Earl Gower, was ambassador, from this country, at the court of France, at the memorable period of the French Revolution, which began in 1789.\*

Her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland has, by universal consent, been always regarded as endowed with great talent, accomplishments, and beauty; and, in respect to character, is eminent and exemplary, in the highest degree, and a great ornament to her exalted rank and station; the natural fruit and reward of which qualities are richly exhibited, in the good conduct and great prosperity and happiness of her family. The noble Marquis follows the paternal example,—favouring and promoting, as a statesman, all those measures which appear calculated to benefit the empire, and to render its institutions pure and permanent. The younger son, Lord Francis, has already, in connection with former administrations, served his country successively as Secretary of State for Ireland, and minister at war, and, in a literary capacity, is author of some

\* His Grace died at Dunrobin, on 19th July 1833, greatly lamented by all descriptions of persons in the county; and his remains repose in the cathedral at Dornoch. No nobleman's funeral could be attended with a demonstration either more true, or more appropriate, of esteem and veneration, than that of his Grace; and never, in this county, was there a scene at once so decorous, so imposing, and so impressive. Not only did the relatives of the noble deceased, and the gentlemen and clergymen connected with his domains, give their attendance on the solemn occasion, but also the general population of all the parishes, who, while the procession passed along, lined the road leading from Dunrobin to Dornoch. In testimony of their great esteem and respect, the gentlemen and tenantry on his Grace's estates in this country, are, at their joint expense, to erect a monument to his memory, to be situated on the summit of the hill "*Beinn a Bhragaidh*," in this parish; and a similar manifestation of esteem and respect, takes place on the English estates. His Grace's eldest son succeeds to his titles and estates; but the Duchess Countess of Sutherland not only enjoys her own estates, but also liferents the whole of the extensive and valuable estates purchased by the late Duke in this country; a bequest as merited as it is munificent. For never, in any rank of life, was there one, who discharged the duties of the connubial relation in a more exemplary manner than did her Grace.

works, chiefly connected with German literature, which have attracted considerable notice.

The names and biography of the Earls of Sutherland are honourably interwoven in the general history of the empire. To specify the many honourable actions and exertions of these noblemen, in defence and for the liberties of their country, the necessary brevity of this account renders impossible. But there is one remarkable and interesting circumstance that may not be omitted,—which is, that the line of succession down to the present representative is direct, and uninterrupted, having the title of Sutherland united to it. Twice was there an attempt unavailingly made to divert the succession from an heiress; first from the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of John, the twelfth earl; and again, from the present representative, who, by the almost simultaneous and much lamented death of her noble parents, was in early infancy left an only child. From such critical circumstances did the Supreme Arbiter of the Destinies of all deliver the present representative of the house of Sutherland, and in her person the direct line of succession,—to become still farther exalted, and to be connected with the most noble, the most wealthy, and the most ancient families in the empire;

“ Mersus profundo pulchrior evenit.”

*Family of Kilcalmkill.*—In the churchyard of this parish there is a chapel, or inclosed place of sepulture, where repose many members of the very old family of Kilcalmkill, or, according to a more recent designation, of Carrol. This family derives its descent from Adam Gordon, Dean of Caithness, the first Earl of Huntly's second son, uncle of Adam Gordon, Lord of Aboyne, the second Earl of Huntly's son, who married the Countess Elizabeth, daughter of John, the fourteenth Earl of Sutherland. The representative of a main branch of the Kilcalmhill family is Joseph Gordon, Esq. W. S. Edinburgh, who, it is understood, has a right to a baronetage by the death of the Rev. Sir Adam Gordon, Baronet, in whom a collateral branch of the male line has terminated.

*Family of Novar.*—Among the eminent persons connected with this parish, by birth, must be noticed the late Sir Hector Munro of Novar. Sir Hector was born at Clayside, in this parish, in 1727, and, when about twenty years of age, entered the army. He went to the East Indies, a major in Morris's regiment. At the head of a small force, he defeated a large army commanded by a native prince, at Buxar. He was afterwards promoted to the rank of



major-general, and appointed commander-in-chief at Madras. He soon took the French settlement of Pondicherry, and, for this service, was invested with the order of the Bath. At Negapatam, also, he behaved with equal gallantry. Having soon afterwards returned to England, he was appointed Colonel of the 42d Regiment of Infantry, and was subsequently promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, on the North British Staff. Sir Hector's father, Hugh Munro, by the death of an elder brother, succeeded to the estate of Novar, in Ross-shire, and, on the father's death, Sir Hector himself. Sir Hector was twice in India, and in the interval spent at home he represented in Parliament the Inverness district of burghs, and on his finally quitting India was re-elected. Sir Hector died in 1802. He was a brave officer; in private life a good friend; and a remarkable instance of filial piety, towards a venerable and worthy mother, to whose prayers he was wont to ascribe his success in life.\*

Sir Hector Munro's brother, Alexander, who was for sometime Consul General at Madrid, and afterwards a Commissioner of Customs, was also knighted. H. A. J. Munro, Esq. the present proprietor of Novar, an intelligent and accomplished gentleman, is the son of Sir Alexander.

It must be added under this head, that Dr Hugh Macpherson, the present Professor of Greek in the University and King's College, Aberdeen, and who has taught that language there, for thirty-five years, with great success and approbation, is a native of this parish; and is the son of the late Rev. Martin Macpherson, who was minister of the parish.

*Land-owners.*—The Duke and Duchess Countess of Sutherland are the sole owners of the land in this parish; and, by the late purchase of the Reay country, they have become owners of nearly the whole county. Their property has also been further enlarged by the recent purchase of several estates in the county of Ross; so that the whole, in conjunction with the Staffordshire and other estates, the Bridge-water canal, and other possessions in England, constitutes a property which may with propriety be called immense, yielding a revenue more than princely.

*Manuscripts.*—It is proper to observe, that there is a manuscript at Dunrobin Castle, entitled "the Genealogy of the Earls and family of Sutherland." But though this be the title, the work is

\* Sir H. Munro's conduct in India did not wholly escape censure; but, whatever cause there may have been for it, it is evident that his general conduct and services must have made ample amends.

extensive, and contains a great many curious and interesting historical notices, relative to the counties of Sutherland and Caithness, the highlands and islands, and the country at large. The author was Sir Robert Gordon, a younger son of the family of Sutherland. The work embraces the space of time between the years 1681 and 1690, and there is appended to it a continuation, by Gilbert Gordon of Sallach, to the year 1651. It was printed in Edinburgh in 1813; and of the MS. there is another manuscript copy in the Advocates' Library, in Edinburgh.

*Antiquities.*—A portion of the wall of the old church, or chapel, of this parish still remains, and forms part of the fence which encloses the burying-ground formerly used. This cemetery contains the remains of many of the Earls of Sutherland, as signified by a plain stone placed in the old church wall, bearing this epitaph, "*In hoc diruto cœmeterio Sutherlandiæ plurimorum comitum cineres conquiescunt.*" The church was transferred from Culmalie to Golspie, A. D. 1619.

In the former Statistical Account of the parish, there is notice taken of the battle fought in 1746, on the north side of the *Little Ferry*, between a party of those who sided with the invading prince and the militia of this country; in which battle the Earl of Cromarty and other gentlemen were made prisoners. Of the sanguinary nature of this battle there remain clear proofs. Several skeletons of those who fell, and who were buried on the scene of action, have of late been occasionally discovered. Along with these, there have been found a number of small copper coins, and one of silver,—all of Mary and James,—together with some copper brooches and some glass beads. Of these articles, some are now at Dunrobin Castle, and others in the possession of Dr Ross of Camusmore. Among the latter, there is a copper ring encircled with this inscription, rudely executed; "*Jesus Nazareus Rex Judeorum.*" The remains of swords and pistols have also been found.

Near the ruins of the old chapel, there were lately dug up the handle of a balance, with some of the weights, both of brass, and of neat and curious workmanship, and in very good preservation. They are supposed to have belonged to the old chapel. These, together with some thick rings of brass, wood, and other materials, in diameter from half an inch to one and a-half, found in the same vicinity, are now at Dunrobin Castle; and here also are two brass rings, three inches in diameter, and a third of an inch thick, found

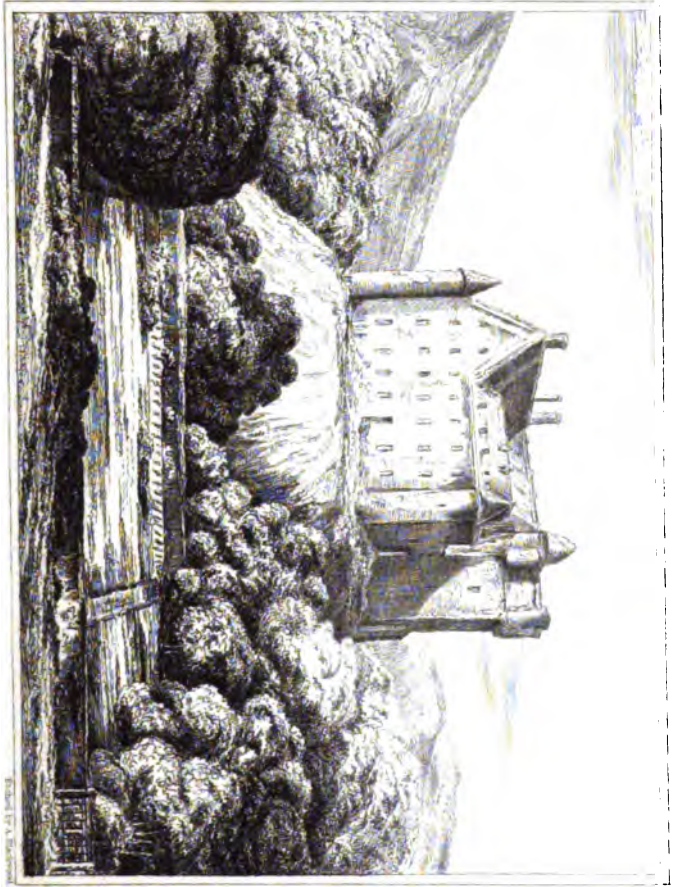
at the place of Uppat, five feet under ground. Near the site of the old chapel, too, there was lately dug up a large undressed stone, with a rude device, as of an ancient galley,—a thick crescent. The date and the object of it are alike unknown. It now stands a little to the east of the castle.

The ruins of two Pictish towers, as they are often called, are described in the former Statistical Account;—the one, situated at a short distance to the east of Dunrobin Castle, and the other to the west, now embosomed in a plantation of fir trees. There is another ruin of the same kind near the place of Backies, which has not been mentioned, and which, as well as that situated at the east, has been greatly demolished. The ruin in the wood is less dilapidated, and still distinctly bears the characteristics of similar ruins in the coast-side Highlands. The general dimensions,—the central circular compartment,—the gallery between this compartment and the exterior wall,—are quite visible. The absence of mortar in the construction is common to these three ruins, as well as to all others of the kind. The two nearest were in sight of each other; the one at Backies looked into the glen; and they all commanded an extensive prospect of the sea and the land. It is most probable, that these, and other similar structures, were built and used by the Danes. The remains of a Druidical temple, or circle, are to be seen a little above the road which leads from the Mound to Morvich, about half way between these places.

*Dunrobin Castle.*—About the middle of the parish, and situated on the margin of a bank, and considerably elevated above the sea, stands Dunrobin Castle, which was first built by Robert Earl of Sutherland, A. D. 1275. Its environs are a good deal wooded, and the surrounding scenery, which is varied and hilly, is very interesting and picturesque. The garden which, as viewed from the bank or the castle, spreads itself like a map at the foot of the bank, is in excellent keeping with the antique character of the mansion and the place.

*Parochial Register.*—The earliest entry in the parochial register here is 29th December 1739. The register is at present regularly and carefully kept.

*Modern Buildings.*—Besides the farm-houses and offices, there are in the village an inn, a flour and barley-mill, a meal-mill, a bank-office, and the manse, all of them good, and built not many years ago.



**DUNROBIN CASTLE.**

From a spot in the Loch Ferness of Sutherland



## III.—POPULATION.

Since the former Statistical Account in 1793, there has been a decrease of population. This has arisen from a powerful cause, which has been, for the last forty years, in full operation in all the Highlands of Scotland,—the occupation of the land, in large farms, by tenants of skill and capital;—a measure urged on by the changes and improvements in the general state of agriculture and commerce, at home and abroad. Since the census in 1821, there is an increase in the population of upwards of a hundred; which has been occasioned by the increased comforts of the working-classes, arising from employment on the large farms, and in the various works, such as buildings and roads, carried on in the county.

By the census of 1831, the whole population of the parish was	-	1149
The population of the village of Golspie is at present	-	450
The population residing in the country,	-	699
The yearly average number of births for the last seven years,	-	30
of deaths for do.	-	16
of marriages for do.	-	9
The average number of persons under 15 years of age,	-	395
betwixt 15 and 30,	-	302
30 and 50,	-	238
50 and 70,	-	165
upwards of 70,	-	54
The number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age,	-	11
The number of unmarried women upwards of 45 years of age,	-	52
Average number of children in each family,	-	4
Number of persons deaf and dumb,	-	2
fatuous persons,	-	1
blind,	-	1
The number of families in the parish is,	-	248
of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	113
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	49

*Language, Habits, and Character of the People.*—Forty years ago, the Gaelic was the language generally spoken in the parish. But, from better education, and the residence of persons from the south country, that language is now fast on the decline; and among the young there is now hardly an individual who does not understand and speak English. In cleanliness, both personal and domestic, there has of late been a great improvement; and the same may, in its full extent, be said of their dress. The ordinary food of the peasantry and tradesmen consists of oat and barley-meal, variously prepared,—of potatoes, fish, and milk, but rarely flesh. Tradesmen and others occasionally use a little wheaten bread, and a little butter, cheese, and tea. The people of this parish live in comfort and contentment.—However far short they may come of the full Christian standard, they may generally, and in the ordinary acceptation of the term, be, without hesitation,

said to be a moral and a religious people. It must, however, be admitted, that, in common with a large proportion of their countrymen, the religion of many of the native population of the lower class is not without serious and inveterate errors. Christian conversion, in their view, essentially consists, not in the forsaking of wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, and in returning from these to the Lord, but in another sort of change not distinctly connected with a moral life. A set of illiterate, fanatical, and disorderly, self-appointed teachers of religion have, by their wild and mystical rhapsodies, acquired a baneful ascendant over the ignorant minds of the lower orders of the people not only in this country, but in other parts of the Highlands. In the mouths of these teachers, prayer is irreverently perverted into mere discussion, virtually addressed, not to God, but to the hearers, and frequently degenerates into bitter personalities and invectives. By these deluding, and often deluded persons, the metaphorical parts of the Holy Scriptures are received and taught in the literal sense, and the plainest parts are very often allegorized. Not unfrequently the Scriptures are considered as a mere secondary thing, of little avail; and that pastor who studies them closely and critically, and expounds them in their true sense, is regarded as if he were dealing with occult and unhallowed sciences.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—The number of acres, imperial measure, in the parish which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage is about 2040. Of unimproved land there is very little. There are about 800 acres under wood. Every attention seems to be paid to the plantations.

The trees and plants in this parish are of those kinds which are common to other parts of the Highlands. Since the former Statistical Account was written, a considerable space of land has been planted with forest trees, by which the appearance of the parish is greatly improved.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per imperial acre in this parish is L. 1, 2s. The average rate of grazing is L. 1, 10s. per ox or cow grazed, and 2s. per ewe or full-grown sheep, pastured for the year.

*Rate of Wages.*—The rate of wages is as follows: A ploughman, for the year, receives L. 10 in money, one stone of meal per week, keep for a cow, (or a cow between two,) six bolls of potatoes, with horse and fuel. A male day labourer gets 1s. 6d. in the long day,

and 1s. 3d. in the short; a female 6d. a-day generally; in harvest, 1s. House-carpenters 2s., and masons 2s. 6d. a-day. The prices of articles of manufacture, and the rate of work, are; for an iron plough, L. 4; for a wooden one from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3. A cart, with hay frame, L. 14; a set of cart and plough harness, L. 7, 10s.; pair of harrows, L. 2, 10s.; rood of stone and lime-work, L. 2, 12s.; drystone-dike, 4 feet high, with coping, 6d. per yard; if 6 feet high, 9d.; blacksmiths work 4d. to 7d. per lb.

*Live-Stock.*—The price of a Dunrobin ox, from two to three years old, is generally L. 9; but, during the war, the price was L. 14, and sometimes higher. Other Highland cattle are considerably lower in price. A work-horse from L. 25 to L. 40. The price of beef and mutton is 4d. per lb.; butter, 10d. per lb.; a common house fowl, 8d.; eggs, 3d. per dozen; oatmeal generally L. 1, but this year 17s.\* per boll of eight stone; potatoes from 8s. to 12s. per boll of twelve bushels imperial; salmon 1s. to 1s. 6d. per lb.; grilse 6d. per lb.; a cod 6d.; haddocks from 10d. to 1s. per dozen.

The Dunrobin breed of cattle, originally from Argyleshire, are deservedly accounted excellent, and there is great attention paid to the rearing of them. For dairy use, there are some Ayrshire cows. On some farms, the breed of Highland black-cattle is chiefly reared; and on the farm of Kirkton, an excellent breed of black polled Galloway cattle. At the Highland Society's cattle show, held at Inverness in 1831, where stock of all kinds were shown, from all the northern counties, including the counties of Aberdeen and Perth,—a larger amount of prizes was awarded to this parish than to any other. To the Marquis of Stafford was awarded the prize for the best two oxen of the Highland breed; another for the best lot of stirks of the same breed; and the Society's medal for two Highland oxen shown as extra stock. Mr Craig of Kirkton obtained a prize for the best cow, another for the best heifer, and another for the best ox, all of the Galloway breed,—together with the commendation of the judges for a bay colt and a chesnut filly, shown as extra stock. This gentleman afterwards sold his prize ox for L. 30, to the advantage of the buyer. The Galloway breed of cattle are here found to be very hardy, and to arrive at a greater weight, upon the same feeding, than the Highland breed do. The milk, both of the Galloway and Highland cows, is not great in quantity, but is in quality very rich. On the large farms, some good work and saddle horses are bred; and by

\* In 1834, 14s. per boll.



the cottars, some small ponies. The kind of sheep reared is the Cheviot, to the purity and rearing of which much attention is paid; and they accordingly are very superior, and obtain high prices.

*Husbandry.*—Farming is carried on in this parish on the most approved system. The rotations of cropping are the four, five, and six years shifts. Trenching and draining have been done to a great extent on every farm in the parish, at an expense of from L. 8 to L. 50 per acre.\* The duration of leases is nineteen years; in one instance, thirty. The farm-buildings and many of the fences (which are dry-stone dikes) are substantial.

*Improvements.*—It may be with truth affirmed, that a simple account of the improvements in this parish must have the appearance of exaggeration, and that he only can appreciate them who had seen the state of the parish forty or even thirty years ago, and compares that state with the present. Every farm, every building, every piece of road, presents an instance of the greatest improvement. The farms of Culmalie and Morvich are possessed by Mr Sellar, who, by trenching, draining, and liming, with much labour and expense, has converted them into specimens of great agricultural excellence. The farm of Kirkton, occupied by Mr Craig, affords a most creditable example of industry and skill. That of Drummuie, held by Mr Macpherson, and that of Golspie Tower, held by Mr Duncan, have been greatly improved, and at a great expense. The farm of Rhives had been rendered a remarkably fine one by its former successive occupants, Mr Young and Mr Suther; and an addition has been made to its arable land, by the present possessor, Mr Gunn. The mains of Dunrobin, being old and good land, have always been productive; but they, too, have been improved under the new system; and the same may be said of the place of Uppat, which completes the number of large farms in the parish. These notices are not irrelevant here; for it must be added, that these farmers have not only the good fortune to be placed under most liberal landlords; but that they deserve the liberality they receive. They have acquired a title to the gratitude of the community at large “by making corn and grass to grow, where neither grass nor corn ever grew before.”

*Quarries.*—There are two very good red sandstone quarries wrought here; there is also one of white sandstone. Some indi-

\* Much use continues to be made of drift sea-weed as a manure; kelp is used at Dunrobin, and bone-dust has recently been introduced by Mr Craig, Kirkton, and has been since adopted to some extent and with success by others. From the very small quantity of this manure requisite, there is a great saving of carriage.

cations have appeared of coal veins; but it has not been thought expedient to open them.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as that can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Produce of grain of all kinds, cultivated for food for men and the domestic animals,	L. 5800	0	0
Potatoes, turnips, cabbages, beet, and other plants, cultivated in the field for food,	1250	0	0
Hay cultivated,	1000	0	0
Land in pasture, rating it at L. 1, 10s. per cow or full-grown ox, grazed, or that may be grazed, for the season; at 2s. per ewe or full-grown sheep pastured, or that may be pastured, for the year,	1490	0	0
Fisheries yearly, haddocks, &c. L. 250, herrings, L. 200,	450	0	0
Muscles yearly,	100	0	0
Total yearly value,	L. 10,090	0	0

*Fishings.*—The only salmon fishery, in the parish, is on the *Fleet* below the Mound. It commences in June, and is carried on by stake nets. The quantity of fish caught there is not large. There is no herring fishery station in the parish. It is at Helmsdale, Wick, and Portmahomach, that the fishermen of this parish take and sell their herrings. The above calculation of the fisheries is probably under their real value.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Markets, Villages, &c.*—In this parish there is, strictly speaking, no town, and the nearest market-town is Tain, distant about twenty miles; a ferry intervening. There is, however, a village, bearing the name of the parish. Originally, there were only a few fishermen's huts of the meanest description on the site of the village; but within the last twenty years it has, with the aid of the noble proprietors, become a neat village of considerable extent. It contains several retail-shops of various descriptions. There are also mechanics of various kinds, and upwards of twenty professional fishermen, together with many labourers of both sexes, who earn their livelihood by working on the neighbouring farms.

*Means of Communication.*—A trading smack plies regularly once a-month between the *Little Ferry*, in this parish, and the port of Leith, touching also at Helmsdale and Aberdeen. \* There is here, too, a regular post-office; and a daily mail-coach passes through the village on its way to and from Thurso. From this post-office, there runs twice a-week a Diligence gig, conveying a mail, and fitted up to carry two passengers, to Lairg in the interior, distant eight miles; from which place, and on the same day, two other

\* There is a steamer to commence plying, next spring, between the Moray Frith and London; and this steamer is to touch at the *Little Ferry*.

similar conveyances, and for similar purposes, branch off,—the one to Tongue, the other to Assynt. It is only about three years since these latter conveyances began to run; and fifteen, since the mail-coach commenced. Both the latter and the former owe their establishment, in a great measure, to the liberal and powerful support of the noble proprietors of this parish,—rendered effective by the ability and activity of their commissioner, James Loch, Esq. M. P. The length of mail-coach road, in this parish, is eight miles. Over Golspie burn there is a well-built substantial one-arched bridge. \*

*Earthen Mound.*—Connecting this parish with the adjacent one of Dornoch, at the head of the *Little Ferry* inlet, and across the *Fleet*, there is a mound 995 yards in length, 60 yards in breadth at the base, and 20 feet at the top, and about 18 feet perpendicular in height; it terminates at the north end in a bridge 34 yards in length, with four arches, each 12 feet span, fitted with valve gates. The expense of constructing this mound was L. 9600, of which sum the Duke of Sutherland defrayed L. 1600, and the public and the county the remainder, each a moiety. Along the mound the mail-coach now passes; and thus a passage, formerly uncertain and often dangerous, has been rendered safe, certain, and agreeable. Besides the public benefit effected by this work, some good land is preserved from the overflowing of the sea; and about 400 acres of beach, which may in time become arable, are gradually assuming a coating partly of herbage, and partly of alder trees. The construction of the mound having been by many skilful engineers deemed hazardous, and by some impracticable, there was much difficulty in getting persons to undertake it, when Earl Gower, now Marquis of Stafford, William Young, Esq. of Maryhill near Elgin, and Patrick Sellar, Esq. of Westfield, came forward, and became responsible for the completion of the work. To Mr Young, who was commissioner on the estate of the noble proprietors of this county, it is but doing justice to observe, that the mound, which was finished in 1816, and is accounted one of the most complete structures of the kind in Britain, in a great measure owes its exist-

\* On the middle of one of the parapets of this bridge stands a small obelisk, with this Celtic inscription: "Morfhear chath do cheann na droichte big gainn clann chathich nam buadh."

At "*Ceann na droichte big*," the end of the Little Bridge, the *cattich* were wont to muster. Their "*gathering*" also, or rallying "*Pisbarachd*," which is accounted one of the best, bears the name of "*Ceann na droichte big*." But this *Pisbarachd* has likewise long borne the name of "*Ribingorm Mhorfhear Chath*," i. e. The Earl of Sutherland's Blue or Green Ribband.

ence; and it will remain a lasting monument of his ability and exertions.

*Little Ferry.*—The Little Ferry inlet, or the estuary, as it may be regarded, of the Fleet, forms a harbour at the distance of about a mile from the bar formed at its mouth. The depth of the water over this bar, during spring tides, is, at full tide, about 18 feet, and at ebb tide  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet; and, during neap tides, is, at full tide, about 16, and, at ebb tide, 6 feet. When the Fleet is flooded, the depth is, in a small degree, increased. The harbour is about 259 yards broad, has about 18 feet water at ebb tide, and affords perfect safety, in any weather. Above this narrow part, the sea, at full tide, expands over a space of about 1500 imperial acres. The harbour of the *Little Ferry* is frequented by trading vessels, which import lime, coal, bone-dust, and merchant goods, for this parish and district, and export grain, wool, whisky, &c. At Dunrobin there is a pier for the use of small vessels.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated about the middle of the parish, and so near the sea, that the gleebe only intervenes. The situation is convenient for the parishioners; the village, which contains from a third to a half of the population, being in its immediate vicinity, and most of the remaining part, with the exception of a few families, who are not far from the neighbouring parish churches, being within less than three miles of it; and the extremities of the parish, which are more thinly inhabited, being in any direction scarcely more than six miles distant from the church. The church was built in 1738. The southern aisle was added in 1751, and at present the building is in good repair. It is fitted to accommodate 565 persons.—The manse was built in 1827.—A large proportion of the glebe is sand and gravel. Of good glebe land there is scarcely the legal measure of four and a-half acres; and it has become greatly deteriorated by being cut up by a neighbouring stream. Calculating according to the average rent of land in this parish, which is L. 1, 2s., its value annually is evidently small. There is no grass glebe.—The annual stipend consists of 181 bolls of victual, old county measure, and L. 75 in money. There is no separate allowance for sacramental expenses. The teinds are supposed to be exhausted. There is no public place of worship of any kind in the parish, but the parish church. There is no catechist.

The average number of communicants in this parish, which is 70, must, when compared with the population, appear strikingly small;

but this is only what is general in Highland parishes. The chief cause of it is, that the views generally entertained by the lower classes of the nature of the Lord's supper are inveterately superstitious. Very many of those, who are not only decent in their lives, but even religious, are laid gray-headed in their graves without having once engaged in the Christian duty of the Lord's supper. Where the population of many parishes, consisting of several thousands, are assembled in one parish, it is evident, indeed, that, with other evils, there cannot be the due proportion of communicants. On some occasions, too, the strange anomaly exists in these parts of many of the illiterate laity being permitted to address those large assemblages of people, who but too generally regard their doctrines as the dictates of inspiration.

*Education.*—The schools in the parish are the parochial one and a female school. During the winter months, however, in the more distant parts, parents occasionally unite in employing a youth to teach very young children. The branches taught in the parochial school are Latin, Greek, the elements of geometry, book-keeping, arithmetic, writing, English reading, and the catechisms of the Established church. The schoolmaster's annual salary is L. 34, 4s. 4d., and the annual average amount of school fees is about L. 26. The salary of the teacher of the female school is L. 8, and is granted by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands. The school is patronized by her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, who gives the teacher a house and garden, with other donations, equivalent to L. 6. It is found to be very useful. The branches taught in it are sewing and English reading. From its immediate vicinity to the parochial school, other branches are not here required. There are few children in the parish who cannot read; and those few are the children of the fishermen, some of whom, from the erroneous idea that to persons of their calling education would be no advantage, are indifferent about the instruction of their children. Those children, who are taught to read, are also taught to write; and most of the youth can, in some degree, both write and read. Of the elderly people, indeed, there are a number, probably 80, who can do neither. The desire on the part of parents to educate their children is greatly increasing. The situation of the parish school, which is in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, is well calculated to induce the general attendance of the children. The

facilities of education have considerably improved the moral and social condition of the people.

*Poor.*—In regard to the poor of the parish, it may be observed, that though they all receive some aid from church collections, and from other funds, there are none of them wholly supported by these. The average number on the poors-roll is somewhat more than sixty. The average sum which each of them annually receives is 8s., and occasionally some meal. The average annual collections in church are about L. 19. There is the interest of money lent in behalf of the poor, amounting to about L. 7. And her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, besides many charitable pensions, and many liberal donations in money, meal, clothing, and house accommodation, annually contributes L. 6 to the parochial fund for the poor. Out of this general fund there is a small annual allowance to the session-clerk, precentor, kirk-officer, and treasurer. The average amount of church collections for other charitable and religious purposes may be L. 15 a-year.

There is in the parish a house for the accommodation of several poor widows, which was sometime since built at the joint expense of the present Ladies Surrey and Grosvenor.

*Literature.*—It may be observed, that the gentlemen of this and the neighbouring parishes have formed themselves into a reading club. They purchase new books of merit, which, after being circulated among the members, are sold to supply the means of purchasing others.

*Fairs, Inns, Fuel.*—There is an annual fair held near the village of Golspie, in October, chiefly for the sale of country cattle; but merchants and pedlars also resort to it, with goods suited to the wants of the country people. There is another fair of a similar nature, but of little importance, in May. In the vicinity of the village, there is an inn, lately built, large, commodious, well-furnished, and well-kept. It is allowed to be the best country inn in the Highlands, and is beautifully and picturesquely situated. In the village itself, there are several smaller inns, or alehouses, for the use and accommodation of the lower orders; and hitherto these houses do not seem to have had any particularly bad effects on the morals of the people. The fuel used in the parish is coal and peat. The coal is imported from Newcastle, and generally costs 2s. per barrel. The peats are cut and seasoned in the mosses, at the distance of some miles from the coast; and were the expense of cutting, seasoning, and carriage, duly calculated, it

would probably be found that the price comes little, if at all, short of that of imported coal.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the time of the last Statistical Account, the greatest changes, as already noticed, have taken place in the state of the parish. At that period, the injurious system of sub-letting prevailed; and both the knowledge and the practice of farming were exceedingly defective. The place of Dunrobin excepted, there was neither draining, trenching, nor fallow, and very little green crop, besides potatoes and a little pease. There were few fences, and these few bad. The plough, which was rudely constructed, had no part of it iron but the coulter, the sock, and the hook, at the end of the beam. Four country *garrans*, or Highland ponies, were yoked to the plough abreast: and the driver walked in front of them *backwards*. There were few wheeled vehicles that deserved the name. Corn, fuel, &c. were carried in a kind of frame called *crubags*, fastened on horseback, to a wooden saddle, that rested on a straw mat. The public road was the only one, and that itself indifferent. The dwellings of the subtenants were wooden frames thatched with turf, and of these, one end accommodated cattle, horses, and sometimes pigs. One end also of the turf covering of these huts, saturated as it was with soot, was annually stript off and converted into manure. With such dwellings the dress of their tenants corresponded. With the exception of the *mutch*, or cap, and handkerchief of the women, and perhaps the men's neckcloths, their clothes consisted of coarse tartans, kelt, and blanket stuffs. The state of things is now very different. Farming is brought to the highest degree of excellence, that industry, skill, and expense can bring it to. Nor is it too much to say, that the system of farming, at present followed in this parish, does not fall short of the best modes of farming, in any part of the kingdom. The farmers have very good houses, with two public rooms; and they have their wheeled carriages for personal and family use. Sub-letting is abolished. The small tenants, or cottars, live in decent cottages built with stone and lime, or clay, with glass windows; and their fare is correspondingly better. Tradesmen and ploughmen, on Sundays, wear good long coats of English manufacture, white shirts, hats, and silk handkerchiefs; and the females of the same class wear good cotton gowns, shawls or scarfs, and many of them straw bonnets. There are, of all descriptions of road, in the parish, about forty miles,—of which about twelve were made by the Parliamentary

Commissioners and the county; about eighteen, partly at the expense of the proprietors, and partly by an assessment on the tenantry; and ten miles at the sole expense of the proprietors. In no county of Scotland was there ever, in so short a time, the same length of road made, as there has been, within the last twenty years, in the county of Sutherland. In former times, the internal communication was by mere paths or tracks, and many parts of it were all but inaccessible. Now, several hundred miles of good road intersect the county in every direction; and there is free and easy access to every part of it. These roads were made chiefly at the expense of the noble proprietors of this parish, and under the able management of James Loch, Esq. M. P. their commissioner.

In the months of July and August of last year, 1832, that awful scourge, the Asiatic cholera, by which so many millions of the human race have been destroyed since 1817, visited this parish also. Every possible precaution was adopted, and every known preventive was used, to ward it off. A Board of Health was established, large subscriptions and assessments of money were made, all manner of cleanliness was enforced, the poor were fed and clothed well, vagrants were kept away; and the result was, that, although the fishermen of the village of Golspie brought the infection from the fishing station of Helmsdale, and although the disease made its appearance in the village, in its most malignant form, quickly carrying off three individuals, the infection was, by the mercy of Divine providence, arrested and destroyed, while a very great proportion of the population of other villages, in the adjacent county, and separated only by a few miles of sea, perished miserably. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the proprietors and farmers of this county, for the heavy expense which they incurred, and the great exertions which they made, on the perilous occasion. It most fortunately happened, that the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, with Lord and Lady Stafford and their family, were at the time at Dunrobin, and it were great injustice not to record here the most humane, liberal, and unwearied attention, which they paid to the safety of the population, and especially to the health and comfort of the poor.

*March 1833. Revised September 1834.*



## PARISH OF ROGART.

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. JOHN MACKENZIE, MINISTER.

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### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—ROAIRD is the name of this parish in the Gaelic language. How it came to be written and pronounced *Rogart* can only be accounted for by the difficulty in pronouncing the name to those who did not speak that language. It is evident that *Rogart* is a modification of *Roaird*. Various etymologies have been assigned to this word. The most probable is, that it is an abbreviation of two Gaelic words, *rhidhe*, an inclined plain, and *ard*, high. In the district of the parish called *Roaird*, which gives the name to the whole parish, there is *Roaird-bheg* and *Roaird-mhor*; both inclined plains of no great extent, but one, *Roaird-bheg* of less extent than the other, as the name implies. *Rhidhe* and *Rhidheachan*, in the plural, are common in Sutherland, and all of them are used as names of inclined plains. To give an idea of the liberty used with Gaelic names, when attempted in another language, it may be mentioned, that *Rhidheachan* is found in this county, and in the neighbouring county, *Ross-shire*, to have passed into *Rhives*. In like manner, *Roaird* has been changed into *Rogart*.

*Extent, Boundaries.*—This parish is of nearly equal length and breadth, and forms a square of ten miles. It is bounded on the east by parts of the parishes of *Dornoch* and *Golspie*; on the south by parts of the parishes of *Dornoch* and *Criech*; on the west by the parish of *Lairg*; and on the north by parts of the parishes of *Clyne* and *Farr*. It comprehends, on the south side, the whole of *Strathfleet*; on the north side, the upper division of *Strathbrora*, and an interjacent space, consisting of low hills, flat moors, meadows, small lakes, and the courses of many burns issuing from them to form the river *Fleet*, and to swell the *Brora*, which has its source in a distant mountain.

*Topographical Appearances.*—*Strathfleet*, in the language of the

inhabitants, is called Strathfloid; and the small river passing through it is called in that language *Flodag* the diminutive of *Flod*, a word signifying inundation, to which this stream is subject. This strath is ten miles in length, and of irregular width. In some parts it is three-fourths of a mile wide; in other parts it is contracted to within a few yards of the stream passing through it. Both sides of it rise to an elevation of from 500 to 700 feet above the course of the Fleet,—in some parts abruptly, but generally in sloping banks, which are occasionally cultivated and produce crops.

The part of Strathbrora which is in this parish bears a resemblance to Strathfleet,—the difference being such as may be accounted for by the action of a larger body of water, which has in some places cut deeper into the rock, forming chasms. In other parts, the water meets with less resistance, the valley is widened, and lengthened haughs are formed. Being nearer the mountainous region, the aspect of this strath is of a more rugged character than that of Strathfleet.

The hills between these straths are nearly of equal height, and rise to an elevation of from 800 to 900 feet above the level of the sea. The meadows, which are found around some of the lakes and in those flat parts which are subject to irrigation from burns passing through, are not of great extent, and form but a small proportion to the extent of the moors.

*Climate.*—The climate of the county of Sutherland, from its latitude and exposure to the winds of the German and Northern Ocean, is sharp and cold. The greater part of Rogart, owing to its elevation, and to its having but little shelter from the east wind, and being swept by every blast coming from the high mountains of Assynt and Strathnaver, is much exposed to the severity of a cold atmosphere. Yet snow does not lie long here, and frost is not very intense. Winter, however, leaves us but reluctantly, continuing during the greater part of spring; and it often arrives in the last month of harvest. At the times alluded to, we have our most disagreeable weather,—cold easterly winds, bringing sleet or rain. The most frequent winds, however, are the north and east, but the south-west blows with greatest violence.

Summer here has a great proportion of dry weather; as the rains which fall among the high mountains in this season do not extend to this place. A dry scorching summer is more frequently a subject of complaint with us than one too rainy. Nor can it be

said that we have more rain in winter than there is in other parts of this island.

Notwithstanding the coldness of our climate, however, it is remarkably healthy. With the exception of catarrhs in the months of March and October, diseases but rarely visit the inhabitants.

*Hydrography.*—The lakes in this parish are very numerous, but not remarkable for extent. Of Loch Craggie, in its western extremity, anglers speak with rapture for the size and quality of its trout, and for the excellent sport it affords. In the north-eastern extremity of the parish, there are two lakes in which fine trout are found. Their name implies that they were once on this account held in estimation; both being called *Loch-beannachd, Lake of Blessing*.

The only rivers are those already mentioned, the Fleet and the Brora. Even the larger of these is insignificant in summer and harvest; but both when in flood, discharge a great body of water, and often cover almost the whole of the plains in their courses, so as to present the appearance of a succession of lakes. The Fleet has its origin in a rising ground, forming the boundary between the parishes of Rogart and Lairg. After traversing ten miles, from west to east, in many windings, fringed with birch and alder bushes, it enters an extensive plain, once covered by every tide from the Moray Frith, but now encroached upon only by this stream: the waters of the sea being completely shut out by the earthen mound, at the head of the *Little Ferry*. In this place, where it is not confined by the skill and enterprise of the agriculturist, it appears almost completely lost among rapidly growing alders, until it collects itself into a pool, or forms a considerable lake, before being discharged into the sea by the sluices of the mound. The Brora is about twice the size of the Fleet, has its origin in the high mountain Beinclibric, and passes from west to east, traversing ten miles of this parish in its course. It then enters the parish of Clyne, where it unites with another river called the Blackwater, and passing through that parish, it joins the Moray Frith at a village to which it has given its name, and affords a harbour for light shipping.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—Rogart lies chiefly on gneiss rock, in which the only veins seen are of quartz. It is of a large-grained kind, with a great proportion of mica. It is used in building the houses and cottages of the inhabitants, and is found an excellent material for the purpose, being easily wrought.

Over the whole of the parish, rolled blocks of granite are seen in great numbers on the surface; in some parts, if viewed from a distance, the surface appears covered with them. They are found no less numerous under ground in hollows, where there has been an accumulation of soil to cover them.

Of the whole surface of Rogart, moss forms the largest proportion. In some parts it is very deep, found often to a depth of twelve feet. In those parts where its depth is less, its fresh appearance indicates rapid growth. The soil in the valleys, and covering the sides of the hills, is sandy and gravelly. The land abounds in springs; consequently, to be brought into a state of culture, it requires to be intersected with frequent drains.

*Plants.*—The moors produce heather, deers'-hair and cotton-grass, intermixed in proportions said to be highly favourable for the feeding of sheep. The hills are covered with heather on the tops, but on their sides a mixture of fine grasses is to be found; and, around their bases, red and white clover, and mountain daisy, are common. The meadows and straths are covered with the meadow grasses prevalent in similar situations, and, where irrigated, are very productive.

*Zoology.*—Roe-deer may always be seen here, but not in great numbers. The red mountain-deer is occasionally seen crossing the moors to or from the mountains north of this, which abound in that species of animal. The gray mountain-hare is here common on the higher grounds. The brown hare, and of late the rabbit, are found on the lower grounds,—the former exceedingly numerous. Moor-fowl are still abundant, though less so, it is said, than they have been. Black game, which are said to increase as moor-fowl decrease, are become very numerous.

Goats were once a part of the stock of the inhabitants, but they have now nearly disappeared, giving way to more profitable animals. There is a species of sheep, of small size, formerly the only kind known here, still reared by the occupants of small lots of land, and much commended for fineness of fleece and excellence of mutton; but they are likely soon to disappear also,—those who have them appreciating the better size of the Cheviot sheep.

A great variety of trout is found in the lakes. Salmon, grilse, and sea trout, are taken in the Brora and Fleet. The trout make for the burns falling into, or issuing from, the lakes, in the month of October, to deposit their spawn; and their spawning season lasts

generally till the beginning of November, and seldom or never extends beyond the middle of that month. Salmon begin to spawn fourteen days later, and before the middle of December; that process being finished, they return to the sea. Salmon enter the Fleet in the end of May. They are found, and were taken, till a recent act of Parliament prohibited, at the mouth of the Brora, as early as the end of January; but they are not seen in the upper part of that river,—the part belonging to this parish,—till the commencement of summer.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland are proprietors of nearly the whole parish of Rogart. The other proprietors of land in it are, George Dempster, Esq. of Skibo, and Hugh Rose Ross, Esq. of Glastullich and Cromarty, who have each a small patch in it unconnected with their principal estates.

*Antiquities.*—At a place called Corrie, where there are indications of the existence in former times of oak trees, imperfect remains of a Druidical circle are to be seen. The inhabitants, quite unconscious of the sacrilege, finding the stones composing it suitable, carried them away for the purposes of building, so that but few of them are now to be seen.

Tradition accords with the rude but certain monuments of battles, in showing that Rogart was in past times the scene of violent contests, and of much bloodshed. A ridge of hills crossing the eastern extremity of the parish from north to south, and extending from Strathbrora to Strathfleet, is covered with tumuli, which appear to have been thrown over the slain where they fell. One of these was opened lately by dikers erecting a fence around the glebe, having no idea that they invaded the resting place of a warrior, probably of an ancestor. They found in the centre of it a stone coffin, containing mouldered bones, and the blade of a dirk, or short dagger, which seemed to have been wielded by the hand of some leader, being of a more costly description than the common dirk, coated with gold, and marked with lines, crossing one another at acute angles, and terminating in the point. It is likely that this bloody instrument was broken, and covered, in the wound it inflicted, and was thus retained in the body of its victim.

The Earl of Montrose on his return from Orkney passed unmolested through Strathfleet, where he and his followers halted for a night at a place called Rhin. The stillness and beauty of

that spot forms a striking contrast with the struggle and disaster to which the next day's march conducted him. From Rhin he marched to Strathocail, on the heights of which this bravest of unfortunate men fought his last battle.

III.—POPULATION.

A continued decrease is found in the population of the parish of Rogart since the year 1811,—as may be seen by comparing the census of that year with the census of 1831, and with these statistics. This decrease has been caused by emigration to the provinces subject to Britain in North America,—chiefly to Upper Canada.

Population in 1801,	-	2022	
1811,	-	2148	
1821,	-	1986	
1831,	-	1805	
For the last seven years the average number of births is	-	-	40
deaths,	-	-	29
marriages,	-	-	10
The number of persons under 15 years of age, is	-	-	695
betwixt 15 and 30,	-	-	413
30 and 50,	-	-	350
50 and 70,	-	-	236
upwards of 70,	-	-	64
The number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age, is	-	-	25
The number of unmarried women upwards of 45 years of age, is	-	-	46
families is	-	-	386
The average number of children in each family is	-	-	3
The number of families in the parish,	-	-	386
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	279
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	19
The number of inhabited houses,	-	-	386
houses now building,	-	-	4
insane persons,	-	-	3
fatuous,	-	-	3
dumb persons,	-	-	1

*Language.*—The Celtic, or Gaelic, language is spoken by almost all the inhabitants. There are a few shepherds who do not speak this language; but their families do. A considerable proportion of the inhabitants, however, can converse in the English language; and, in a few years it is likely that none may be found who cannot do so. Their English, being acquired from books, and occasional conversation with educated persons, is marked by no peculiarity, except a degree of mountain accent and Celtic idiom; so that it is more easily intelligible to an Englishman than the dialect spoken by the Lowland Scotch.

*Character of the People.*—A desire for information prevails among them, as, indeed, among all the inhabitants of the High-

land districts ; and the degree of information they possess is more than could be expected from the advantages enjoyed by them. The young, in general, read Gaelic and English ; and some of them write and understand arithmetic. Such of those advanced in years as have been taught to read, delight much in the Holy Scriptures, and in some of the popular works of the early divines of the church of Scotland,—which, having been read and talked of for generations, have acquired a sacredness of character. They are all Presbyterians, and firmly attached to the religion and modes of worship of their forefathers. They have hitherto been respectful to persons in stations superior to their own, peaceable and orderly in their intercourse with one another, and have seldom or never been charged with the commission of crime. Smuggling, happily for their character and circumstances, has been checked. Poaching in game, or in the salmon fisheries, is not attempted by them.

There have been three illegitimate births in the parish during the last three years.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

A great part of the population of this parish is employed as day-labourers for more than half the year. The men find employment in the making or repairing of roads ; or from the tacksmen in parishes along the coast as extra labourers in spring and harvest-time ; or, during the season of the herring fishing, in curing fish at the fishing stations. The women find employment with the farmers in weeding, hoeing, and cutting down crops, and with the fish-curers at the proper season. A certain portion of time is, of course, occupied in the cultivation of their own lots, and in securing the crops which these produce. Some elderly persons of both sexes, helped by children not attending schools, are always occupied at home in herding cattle.

*Agriculture and Sheep-Farming.*—The proportion of land in culture and yielding crops is small, and must always be so, while naked rock forms a considerable part of the surface of the parish. It has, however, for several years back, been increasing ; and it is likely, that, in the course of some years, what is now occupied by lotters, if left in their occupation, may become cultivated where practicable. The quantity of land cultivated, or occasionally in tillage, does not at present exceed 1200 acres.

Nearly the half of the parish in value, and more than the half in extent, is laid under sheep of the Cheviot breed. It is no less than

62,800 acres in extent. Probably 1000 acres might yet be added to the cultivated land.

*Husbandry.*—The pasture for sheep is good, and the sheep reared on it are said to be of the best quality of their kind. Surface draining, which has been carried on to a great extent, has added much to the quantity, and improved the quality, of feeding for sheep. In this species of improvement, little remains to be now done here by the sheep-farmer. Large farms are let on leases of nineteen, and small lots on leases of seven, years.

*Live-Stock.*—The number of sheep of all kinds is 6420 ; of black cattle, (heads of,) 1079 ; of horses, 276 ; of pigs, 210.

*Rent.*—

The rent of sheep-lands is	-	-	L. 648	0	0
of corn-farms,	-	-	281	0	0
of lands under lotters,	-	-	569	0	0
Total rent,	-	-	L. 1498	0	0

*Woods.*—Timber as yet cannot be mentioned as one of the products of the parish of Rogart. A small space in Strathfleet, about twenty acres, having some native plants of oak, was enclosed, and planted with larch and common fir. The appearance of this small plantation, which has been lately thinned for the first time, affords sufficient encouragement for planting in situations equally favourable ; of which situations the sides of that strath, and several other parts in the parish, present many. Small alders are to be seen along the streams ; and patches of dwarf birch are common. Both of these, when in foliage, enliven the aspect, and relieve the ruder features of the scenery ; but otherwise they are of no value.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount and value of raw produce yearly raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows :—

Grain of all kinds, whether cultivated for food of man or the domestic animals, 3000 bolls at 15s. per boll,	-	-	-	-	L. 2250	0	0
Potatoes, 1500 bolls at 8s. per boll,	-	-	-	-	600	0	0
Hay, 10,000 stones at 4d.	-	-	-	-	166	13	4
Land in pasture, rating it at 10s. per cow or full-grown ox, grazed, or that may be grazed for the season ; at 2s. per ewe or full-grown sheep, pastured, or that may be pastured for the year,	-	-	-	-	1300	0	0
Miscellaneous produce, including turnips, cabbages, &c. not enumerated under any of the foregoing heads,	-	-	-	-	400	0	0
Total yearly value of raw produce raised,	-	-	-	-	L. 4716	13	4

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—A road extends through the whole length of the parish along Strathfleet ; and another crosses its



breadth at the eastern end, from Strathfleet to Strathbrora. The road in Strathfleet is a continuation of a line of road from Golspie to Tongue; from which roads branch off in various directions. From the cross-road to Strathbrora there is a road branching off to Golspie, and forming a more direct and shorter way to that village for the inhabitants of the interior of the parish. Along these lines of road there are sufficient bridges.

There is no post-office in this parish. Letters to and from it, for which there is a receiving-office at Pitentrail, are carried twice a-week by a mail-gig running between Golspie and Tongue. It is probable, other improvements continuing to advance, that the communication may become more frequent.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church and manse are situated, not far from each other, in one of the most elevated parts of the parish, commanding an extensive and romantic view,—in which the peaks of almost all the high mountains in the county of Sutherland form a part. This is a source of enjoyment which is dearly purchased, by the exposure to the wind and storm. The manse was built in the year 1776, and the church in 1777. The church has undergone some repair, and the manse has frequently been repaired; but, owing to the very exposed situation of the latter, it cannot be said to be in a good condition. For the parish, the situation of the church is most inconvenient,—being in its extreme boundary on the east. Consequently, some of the parishioners travel ten miles in coming to hear sermon; which, being doubled before they return to their homes, is a severe exertion, though it be cheerfully made, even in the short days of winter. The distance of the parishioners from the manse is also productive of much trouble and inconvenience to them. Having few besides their minister whom they consult, various and often recurring are the occasions which oblige them to travel from their place of residence to his.

The minister's stipend is L. 138, 14s. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Sterling, and 15 bolls, 1 firloft, 1 peck, 3 lippies, half-meal and half-barley, including the allowance for communion elements; so that he draws L. 3, 1s. 5d. from Exchequer, to make his income equal to the minimum stipend in the Church of Scotland. The glebe consists of arable and pasture land. The arable part has lately been considerably increased, by trenching small spots capable of improvement: so that it may be about eighteen acres in extent. A

patch of green pasture, rocks, and spots covered with stunted heather, extend its surface to about twenty-five acres. Occupied alone, its value is not much,—servants, horses, and farming implements sufficient for the culture of a small farm being required for it. But if held along with an extent of land which would enable him to cultivate it conveniently, the occupant might find the arable part of it worth 15s. per acre, and the pasture of corresponding value.

The church is the only place of worship in the parish. There is a catechist supported by an allowance from the inhabitants, to which the minister contributes : he labours constantly among them. The average number of communicants is 90.

*Education.*—There are three schools at present in operation in the parish,—the parochial school, a school supported by the General Assembly, and a Gaelic school, supported by the Gaelic School Society. In the parochial school, English reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, mensuration, and land-surveying, are taught. In the General Assembly's school, English reading, Gaelic reading, writing, arithmetic, and sometimes the rudiments of Latin, are taught. In the Gaelic school, the reading of the Gaelic only is taught.

The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is L. 34, 4s. 4½d. The average amount of school fees received by him is L. 16. The salary of the General Assembly schoolmaster is L. 20. The average amount of school fees received by him is L. 2, 10s.

The teacher of the Gaelic school is not allowed to take fees, by the regulations of the society. He is not stationary in any place. His salary is L. 25. To these teachers the requisite accommodations are given. Fees are exigible from those who can pay them in the General Assembly's school, at the same rate as in the parochial ; but the greater part of the scholars are not in circumstances to afford them. In the parochial school, the fees per quarter are, for English reading, 2s. ; English reading and writing, 2s. ; English reading, writing, and arithmetic, 3s. ; book-keeping, 10s. ; mensuration and land-surveying, 10s. Many of the inhabitants cannot read or write : Of these, the number of all ages above six years, given in the Report to the General Assembly's Committee in 1832, was 842 ; and the number betwixt six and twenty years, 290.

There is a district of the parish, *Barrschol* and *Craigies*, containing a population of about 200, which is four miles distant from

the parochial school, and has no other school within reach. There is another district of the parish, in which some families reside, *Braes of Langwel and Achinluachrach*, at a still greater distance from any permanent school, in which the Gaelic Society's teacher at present officiates.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—On an average of years, the number of paupers regularly receiving parochial aid may be stated at 84; but, in addition to these, there are several who receive occasional aid. Persons admitted on the poors' roll are generally advanced in age; and charges for the interment of paupers form a considerable expense on the fund. This fund consists of a yearly donation from the Duchess of Sutherland, regularly made, but depending on her Grace's good will, interest of L. 200 bequeathed by a benevolent individual, a native of the parish, and the church collections, the yearly average amount of which is L. 16. The average annual allowance to each pauper for some years back has been 4s. 9d. It has been felt degrading to receive parochial relief; but there are many applicants for it who are rejected.

*Inns.*—There are three houses in the parish, and one on the confines of it, licensed to retail spirits. They are found injurious to the morals and circumstances of the working classes.

*Fuel.*—Moss, cut as peats in the months of May and June, and abounding of the best quality at no great distance from the inhabitants, is the fuel used by all. It is procured at considerable expense of time and labour; but the very poorest never fail to supply themselves with a stock sufficient for the year's consumption.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In the parochial school, writing and accounts have been so well taught for several years back, that many young men have set out from the parish, and found employment, some as clerks in mercantile towns, and some on plantation estates in the West Indies. In general, these are reported to be persevering and industrious; and small remittances frequently made to poor relatives, afford a pleasing proof that they are prosperous. Were the means of acquiring education given more fully, there is reason to conclude that, in every respect, an improvement in the condition of the inhabitants must follow.

Roads and bridges justly claim particular mention in the improvements which have taken place here, since the time of the last

Statistical Account. They have changed the mode, as well as improved the facility, of every species of carriage. Sledges, which may soon become one of the objects interesting to the antiquary, were formerly the best means of carriage which those in better circumstances could use in farming, and for other purposes. Now, almost every poor man who cultivates a croft of land, has his wheeled cart.

The greatest change has taken place in the habits of the people since the last Account. They are now very industrious in general, and surpassed by none around them as willing, skilful, and active labourers in all those kinds of work which the extensive and varied improvements carried on in the county have supplied to its population.

The traveller interested in the comfort of the working-classes must regard the cottages in this parish as pleasing objects; and their number, seen, as they often are, in picturesque situations, must strike every observer, as giving life and interest to the scene presented to his view. In no part of the North Highlands, are there so many well built neat-looking cottages as in the county of Sutherland. Whoever sees them, must form a favourable idea of the industry of the inhabitants, and of the encouragement afforded them by the proprietor of the soil.

*September 1834.*

## PARISH OF LAIRG.

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. DUNCAN M'GILLIVRAY, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Extent, &c.*—THIS parish seems to take its name from the Gaelic word "*Loeg*," signifying a "footpath." This definition agrees well with its situation, as the road from the northern to the southern parts of the county, which till recently was only a footpath, passes through Lairg. Its length may be stated at thirty miles from E. to W., and its greatest breadth is about fourteen miles. Its extent in square miles, inclusive of the lake, is about 240 miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—It is an inland parish, distant from the sea about twenty miles; it is bounded on the north by the parish of Farr; on the west by Assynt and Eddrachillis; on the south by Criech; and on the east by Rogart. There are hills of various elevations in most parts of the parish, and on its northern boundary stands Ben Clybric, the highest mountain in Sutherland.

From the elevation of the parish above the level of the sea, which, though not minutely ascertained, is very considerable, the air is always pure, and in winter exceedingly cold. But though a good deal of rain and snow fall during the year, the climate cannot be called rainy: it is at all events a healthy one, and there are no distempers peculiar to the district.

*Hydrography.*—There are about twenty lakes in the parish, of various extent and depth; but the principal one is Lochshin, which runs very nearly from one end of the parish to the other. It is about twenty-four miles long; its mean breadth is at least one mile, and its depth in some places thirty fathoms.—There are five rivers in the parish, some of them very rapid. Four of these fall into Lochshin, and the fifth discharges its waters into the sea.

*Geology.*—The geology of the parish has never been surveyed, but the principal rocks are coarse granite and trap. There is also at the side of the lake a large bed of limestone.

The most common alluvial deposit is peat, between which and the rock, gravel is generally found. In some places, however, the soil is loamy and fertile. Immense quantities of fir are found imbedded in the moss in all parts of the parish,—a proof that at one time the ground was covered with wood. At present, however, there is none except some birch which grows along the lake.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

This parish does not appear in remote times to have produced any men of great eminence. In the absence of such, a few individuals may therefore be mentioned, connected with, or natives of, the parish during the last century, and whose names are not unworthy of a place in this record.

The first we shall notice, is the Rev. John Mackay, a man of superior birth and education, who in 1714 was translated to Lairg from his native parish of Durness on the west coast. Mr Mackay found this parish in a rude uncivilized state, owing, among other causes, to the lingering remains of popish superstition and ignorance, and to the want of a resident ministry for several years before. The Earls of Sutherland, the hereditary sheriffs of the county, strenuously endeavoured to remedy this evil, but found it difficult to procure faithful ministers of the Gospel, able to administer spiritual instruction to the people in their native language. In Mr John Mackay the Earl of Sutherland found a man peculiarly fitted for such a charge,—as, with a profound knowledge of theology, acquired at the Universities of Utrecht and Edinburgh, and an enlightened zeal for the propagation of the gospel, he had a robust bodily frame, and corresponding vigour of mind. The parish afforded ample scope for the exercise of his talents,—disorderly habits and immorality prevailing to a great degree, and drunken quarrels, even to the effusion of blood, being of frequent occurrence in the churchyard on the Lord's day, after divine service, as appears from a fragment of the session records still extant. To repress such enormities, the Earl invested his new presentee with a salutary, though not strictly legal power, to use force and inflict corporal punishment when he judged it necessary. Armed with this authority, Mr John Mackay proceeded vigorously to the work of reformation among his people; in which he was further assisted by a certain air of moral elevation in his bearing, which overawed persons of the most profligate character. He sometimes had recourse to very strong measures: but at length, by the blessing of God on his spiritual labours, he had the satisfaction to see pure religion in a flourishing state among his people. He died in 1753.

and was succeeded by his son, the Rev. Thomas Mackay, who laboured fifty years in the parish with great success. The names of both father and son are still remembered with affectionate reverence. Mr T. Mackay left three sons, of whom the two youngest, Hugh and William, distinguished themselves in their respective professions.

Hugh Mackay entered the service of the East India Company in 1784, and served in the Madras Native Cavalry during all the wars in which the Madras army was engaged. He held an important and lucrative staff appointment, that of agent for draught and carriage cattle to the army under General Wellesley, now the Duke of Wellington, whose favour and confidence he enjoyed to a large degree. His staff situation exempted him from regimental duty; yet such was his high military spirit, that, rather than remain idle in the rear, when his brother officers were engaged, he solicited permission to join his regiment in the battle of Assaye, and obtained from the General a reluctant assent. He was killed at the muzzle of the enemy's guns, in that desperate charge of the cavalry which decided the fate of the day; and on the spot where he fell, the officers of his regiment have erected a monument to his memory. Besides many acts of beneficence at home and abroad, he bequeathed at his death L. 500 to the kirk-session of this parish, for the use of the poor.

William, third son of the Rev. Thomas Mackay, was educated at the school of this parish, and went to sea at the age of sixteen. He made several voyages to the East and West Indies, during the intervals between which, he studied the theory of navigation and practical astronomy under able teachers in London, and became such a proficient in both, as to be esteemed one of the most skillful navigators in the Indian seas. In 1795, being second officer of the ship *Juno* of Calcutta, he was sent to the coast of Pegu for a cargo of teak-wood, and in his return was wrecked on the coast of Arracan. The ship sprang a leak, and filled so fast with water, in spite of the exertions of her crew, that, but for the nature of her cargo, she must inevitably have gone to the bottom. She continued, however, to sink till her hull was under water, and then settled down, leaving her masts to stand erect. To lighten her burthen the main mast was cut away, and the unfortunate crew, seventy-two in number, scrambled up the rigging of the two remaining masts to escape immediate destruction. In this situation, without food or water, but what the rain from Heaven supplied, fourteen individuals, including the captain's wife and her maid, lived twenty-three days.

Of the rest, some died from hunger, others from thirst, and a few in strong convulsions or in raving madness! The wreck having at length taken the ground, fourteen were saved by the merciful interposition of Providence in their behalf. The principal survivor was William Mackay, and he published a narrative of the sufferings and escape of himself and his companions,—which, from the extraordinary nature of the facts, and the graphical felicity of his narration, bids fair to transmit his name to posterity. \*

Immediately after this wonderful preservation, William Mackay returned to sea, and after various adventures, was in 1801 dispatched by the Bengal government in command of a brig, to the Red Sea with stores and provisions for General Baird's army, destined to co-operate with that of Sir Ralph Abercromby in Egypt. On this voyage, he had another marvellous escape from shipwreck, and was instrumental, by superior seamanship, under God, in saving the lives of many others, as may be seen in the appendix to a late edition of the Narrative of the Juno. He died at Calcutta in 1804, from an affection of the liver, contracted during the twenty-three dreadful days he passed on the wreck. † In the churchyard of this parish there is a square monument with a separate tablet for each, commemorating, by an appropriate inscription, the characters of the Rev. John Mackay, his son, and two grandsons. Concerning the last, it is said, "their bodies lie in the opposite quarter of the globe, but their monument is erected where their memory is dearest, near the remains of their pious fathers, and amidst many living, whose gratitude will attest, that fraternal affection has not overcharged this record of their virtues." ‡

\* It is a circumstance worthy of remark, that from this narrative Lord Byron has borrowed some of the finest incidents and most touching images in the description of a shipwreck, in his poem of Don Juan. Concerning these passages the biographer of the noble poet observes: "It will be felt, I think, by every reader, that this is one of the instances in which poetry must be content to yield the palm to prose. There is a pathos in the last sentences of the seaman's recital (see Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno, page 26,) which the artifices of metre and rhyme were sure to disturb, and which, indeed, no verses, however beautiful, could half so naturally and powerfully express." It deserves to be recorded, to the honour of our Scottish parochial schools, that this narrative was written by a young man who had gone to sea ten years before, without any more education than he received at the school of his native parish.

† A tribute of remembrance, similar to that which his brother's memory received from his regiment, has been paid to the memory of William by his friends, who have, in the churchyard of Calcutta, recorded his worth, sufferings, and death.

‡ It may not be irrelevant to subjoin a list of sons or grandsons of the clergy, who, at the time above referred to, were on General Wellesley's staff, and all of whom had been recommended to him solely by their own merits, viz.

1st, Captain Hugh Mackay, agent for draught and carriage cattle to the army, killed at Assaye, 23d September 1803.

2d, Captain, afterwards Lieut.-Colonel Sir Robert Barclay, K. C. B., Adjutant-General, Son of the Rev. Mr Barclay, minister of Delting, Shetland, deceased.



*Land-owners.*—The land-owners in the parish are the Duchess of Sutherland; Munro of Poyntzfield; and Rose of Achany.

*Parochial Register.*—There is a parochial register regularly kept, but the earliest entry is dated only in 1768.

*Antiquities.*—There is at a place called “Cnoek a chath” (the Hill of the Fight) a number of tumuli, said to be the graves of those who fell in a skirmish between the Sutherlands and the Mackays. There are also found in various parts of the parish strong circular buildings called cairns. What the design of these was, cannot now be ascertained. When the people are questioned on this subject, the only answer is,—“They were built by the Fingalians.” It is a curious circumstance, that one of these buildings is always visible from the site of another.

### III.—POPULATION.

The present population of the parish is about 1100. What the ancient state of the population was, cannot now be discovered: but about thirty years ago, it was far greater than at present. A system commenced in this country about the year 1807, which has been followed out extensively. As the interior of the country consisted principally of moor grounds covered with heath, the proprietors were convinced that these grounds could be more profitably laid out in sheep-walks, than (as formerly) in the rearing of black-cattle. With this view, the interior was let to sheep-farmers, and the tenantry were removed either to the coast, or to those parts of the country more susceptible of cultivation. Lairg being an inland parish, this circumstance accounts for the great decrease in its population. From Mr Rose’s property, the tenants were all removed some years before he purchased it; and although the Duchess of Sutherland and Munro of Poyntzfield have still a considerable number of tenants, yet they are far less numerous than formerly.

As to the measure of comfort enjoyed by the people, the chief want is pasture for their cattle during the summer months. The Duchess of Sutherland’s tenantry have their land on very moderate terms; and though their pasture is at present confined, this defect (we believe) is to be immediately remedied. The other tenants in the parish are certainly less comfortable,—they

3d, Captain, now Lieut.-Col., William Cunningham, Quarter-master-General, grandson of the Rev. Mr Robertson of Gladsmuir, and nephew of Principal Robertson.

4th, Captain, afterwards Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., political agent to the Governor-General, afterwards governor of Bombay, deceased.

not only want pasture, but their rents far exceed the value of the land; and the appearance of their houses tells but too plainly the condition of their inhabitants. The population of the parish is now rapidly decreasing, as may be seen from the following statement:—

	Population in 1801,	-	1209	
	in 1811,	-	1354	
	in 1821,	-	1094	
	in 1831,	-	1045	
1.	Number of families in the parish,	-	-	206
	chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	124
	chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	6
2.	The average number of births yearly for the last 7 years,	-	-	27
	of deaths,	-	-	154
	of marriages,	-	-	8

*Language, Character, &c. of the People*—The language generally spoken is the Gaelic; and, although all the young people now speak English, the Gaelic can hardly be said to have lost ground, and the people, from being taught to read it, speak it more correctly than they did some years ago.

The inhabitants of the parish are an interesting people;—they are cleanly in their habits, and neat in their dress; they combine intelligence with modesty, and due respect for their superiors; they are sober, moral, and industrious; and they show a becoming regard for the ordinances of religion.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy*.—From the description already given of the parish, as consisting principally of moor ground, it will be seen that very little can be said under the head of agriculture. There is no great corn farm in the parish; and, with the exception of the lots occupied by the tenants, (which all lie within two and a-half miles of the church,) the whole of it has been turned into sheep-walks. The breed of sheep on these farms is the Cheviot, and that, too, we believe, of a superior kind,—as much attention has been paid to its improvement in all parts of the county. The average rent of grazing on the sheep farms does not exceed 2s. a-head; but what number of sheep there are on these farms, the writer has no means of discovering. The lotters on the Duchess of Sutherland's property raise, in favourable seasons, as much corn as supplies their families during the year; and of late, a very decided improvement has been manifested in the mode of cultivating their land.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication*.—There is no market-town in the parish, nor any nearer than Dornoch, which is distant from Lairg

about twenty miles. This want, however, is little felt, the people having every advantage as regards the means of communication with other parts of the country. The roads (of which there are about forty miles in the parish) are excellent. There is a post-office, at which a post-gig carrying passengers arrives twice a-week; and an idea of the means of communication enjoyed may be had from the fact, that the London papers are received at Lairg on the morning of the fifth day from the day of publication.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parochial church, though distant about twenty miles from the western extremity of the parish, is exceedingly well situated for the convenience of the people, as, with few exceptions they all reside in its neighbourhood. It was built in 1794, and is always kept in a good state of repair. It accommodates about 500 people, and no seat-rents are exacted.—The manse was built in 1795, and was last repaired about eight years ago.—The glebe contains ten acres of arable land, and may be valued at L. 8 a-year. At one period, there was a considerable extent of hill pasture connected with the glebe; this, however, has been lost by reason of a circumstance of common occurrence in the Highlands,—the clergy neglected, till it was too late, to have their glebes regularly designed.—The stipend amounts to L. 184, 14s., including L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The parish church is always well attended: and it is worthy of remark, that there is no dissenting place of worship in the whole county of Sutherland,—a fact which cannot be affirmed of any other county in Britain.

*Education.*—The parochial school is the only one in the parish. Till lately, there was an Assembly school on Major Munro's property, but, owing in a great measure to the thinness of the population, it has been discontinued. This is the only part of the parish where a school is required at present. In the parochial school, one of the best in the country, all the common branches of education are taught. The following table of fees, appointed by the presbytery, will give an idea of the expense of education. English and Gaelic reading, 1s. 6d. a quarter; English grammar, 5s.; writing, 2s.; arithmetic, 2s. 6d.; and Latin, 3s. a quarter. The school is always well attended; and the interest which the people *now* take in the education of their children may be learned from the fact, that, whilst the persons above fifteen years of age who cannot read or write are to the rest of the population of the same age as 1 to 4, or in all 260, the proportion in the case of those between 5 and 15 is only as 1 to 10, or 30 in all. The

schoolmaster has the legal accommodations. His salary is L. 34, 4s. 4½d., and this, with school-fees, (which average L. 8, 10s. per annum,) makes his yearly income only L. 42, 14s. 4½d.

*Poor.*—The poor of the parish are comparatively well provided for. The yearly collections are indeed small, not exceeding L. 12; but the Duchess of Sutherland makes a yearly allowance to the poor of all the parishes in which she has property: and the poor of Lairg have, besides, an annuity of L. 25, being the interest of L. 150 left to them by Captain H. Mackay, above-mentioned.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

On the difference between the present state of the parish, and its state at the time of the last Statistical Account, it is unnecessary to enlarge. The change produced on the condition of the people by the introduction of sheep-farming has been already noticed,—a change which, though for the time it subjected the people to very serious inconvenience, is now showing its salutary effects in the increased industry of the population. In proof of this, we need only refer to the improvements so rapidly going on in those parts of the parish possessed by the tenantry.

It may here be observed, that nothing would tend more to extend these improvements, than giving the people increased facilities for obtaining lime. To accomplish this object, the people should be assisted in working the lime quarries found in this parish; nor can we doubt, from the enlightened management of the country, that this assistance will soon be afforded. We may farther recommend, as a grand means for enlarging the minds and improving the morals of the people, the establishment of a parish library. The inhabitants, and especially the young, have a taste for reading, and would eagerly avail themselves of such an institution. For the awakening of this taste, they have been principally indebted to their present parochial teacher; an individual who has laboured for years not merely to communicate the dry husks of mechanical learning, but to enlighten the mind, and thus improve the character.

*November 1834.*

## PARISH OF FARR.

PRESBYTERY OF TONGUE, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. DAVID MACKENZIE, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE parish appears to have been called Farr, for more than 400 years. The name is probably derived from the Gaelic word *Faire*, a watch or centinel; for, about half a mile north of the parish church is the ruin of a circular tower, or *Dunn*, the nearest to the sea-coast of a chain of these ancient buildings, extending for more than twenty-four miles into the interior. Not far from this Dunn, is the promontory called Farr Head, from which, in clear weather, there is a distinct view of that part of the northern ocean, which lies betwixt Orkney and Cape Wrath. From this promontory, a centinel or watch could easily discover vessels approaching the coast, and, during the period of invasions from Denmark and Orkney, could speedily communicate the necessary intelligence to the inhabitants of the interior, by means of the chain of towers, and such signals as were then in use. This, however, is only a conjecture as to the name of the parish, founded on the geographical relation of the place now called Farr to Strathnaver, where the principal chain of towers was erected, and which strath, in ancient times, was the most populous and most interesting part of the parish.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish is about forty English miles long, from Baligil in the north-east to Muadale in the south-west; and varies from eight to twenty miles in breadth, the narrowest part being in the middle of Strathnaver. It is bounded on the north by the Northern Ocean; on the east, by the parish of Reay in Caithness; on the south, by the parishes of Kildonan and Lairg; and on the west, by the parish of Tongue. Its figure is irregular.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The principal mountain in the parish, and the highest in the county, is *Bein Chlibrig*. It is near

the south-west extremity, and not far from the Parliamentary road from Bonar Bridge to Tongue. Its height is 3200 feet above the level of the sea. Its form is conical, especially towards the summit, which is called "*Meall a'neuion*," that is, the summit of the Bird, probably from its being the chief residence of ptarmigan in the parish. Towards the sea-coast, to the north-east, on each side of Strathnaver, there are several hills, of various dimensions; but they are all far below the elevation of Chlibrig, and have nothing in their form or relative position deserving of notice. Near the coast, the low hills exhibit a greater quantity of bare rock, and are in general more precipitous.

The greatest quantity and extent of low flat land is in Strathnaver and Strathrathy in the interior; and in Armdale and Mains of Strathy on the sea-coast. There are several farms along the shore, in all of which there is a considerable extent of arable land; but the surface is uneven.

*Straths.*—The largest valleys are Strathnaver and Strathrathy. Strathnaver, a place from which the Noble family of Sutherland have one of their titles, is a beautiful valley, extending from the sea-coast, in a south-west direction,—a distance of about twenty-eight miles, including the ground along the river, the loch, and the Water of Mudale, beyond Lochnaver. Considering the extent of this strath, the beauty and variety of the scenery, which almost invariably attract the notice of the traveller of taste, and the richness of the pasture it everywhere produces, this valley is undoubtedly the finest and most interesting Highland strath in the whole county of Sutherland. Strathrathy stretches directly south from the sea-coast, a distance of twelve miles; it is about ten miles north-east of Strathnaver. Between these, along the sea-coast, are situated the valleys of Clachan, where the parish church and manse are built, Swordly, Kirtomy, and Armdale; but these are quite diminutive compared to those already described.

*Caves, &c.*—There are several caves, natural arches, and fissures, along the sea-coast, and a few caverns in the interior. The most interesting of the caves are in the Aird of Kirtomy, Strathy, and Strathy-point. The finest natural arch is near Farr. It is described in Pennant's Tour, and referred to in the former Statistical Account of this parish. The largest cavern in the interior is in *Carn a' Mhadi*, in Bein Chlibrig, noted in the traditional history of the parish as the retreat of a robber named Chisholm from In-

verness-shire, who, more than a hundred years ago, had taken shelter there, and for some time supported himself by the deer of Bein Chlibrig, and the flocks of the neighbouring tenants. Any farther description of the caves and caverns in this parish is considered unnecessary in this work.

*Bays, &c.*—There are about thirteen miles of sea-coast, from Naver Bay in the west to Baligil Burn in the east. With the exception of Kirtomy and Armidale, and a few more creeks where boats can land in moderate weather, the coast is either bold and dangerous to mariners, being composed of perpendicular or projecting rocks, from 20 to 200 feet high, against which the waves of the Northern Ocean break with awful fury; or there are shallow sands, on which heavy surges are almost invariably rolling. The bays are Naver, Farr, Kirtomy, Armidale, and Strathy. The principal headlands are, Airdniskich, Aird of Farr, Aird of Kirtomy, and Strathy Head. From this Head, the Lights of Cape Wrath and Dunnet Head are seen in clear weather.

*Climate.*—Considering the latitude of this parish, which is 58° 30' north, the temperature is on the whole mild; and there are no diseases prevalent that can be ascribed to any peculiarity of the climate.

*Hydrography.*—In every district, valley, mountain, and hill of this parish, there is an abundant supply of perennial springs of excellent water. So far as known to the writer, their chemical properties have not been ascertained; but it is evident many of them run on iron ore. The number of fresh-water lochs of various dimensions in the parish is very considerable; the largest of which are *Loch Naver*, *Loch Coir-na-fearn*, and *Loch Strathy*. But the most interesting of the whole is Loch Naver, in respect both of extent and scenery. It is 7 miles long, and about 1½ miles broad. Its depth is ascertained, by sounding, to be in some parts 30 fathoms. Its shore is in some places pebbly, in other parts rocky and sandy. It is richly supplied from the adjacent hills, mountains, marshes, and valley ground, with large tributary streams, especially the rivers Mudale and Strathvagasty, which enter the loch near the inn of Aultnaharve. The scenery around it is very interesting, having *Bein Chlibrig* at no great distance on the south; several low hills and abrupt rocks nearer its shore; its banks beautifully skirted with a variety of indigenous trees growing to a considerable height;—the distant hills of Kildonan to the south-east, and those of the Reay country to the west, appearing in their grandeur from certain

points in its vicinity. And there is an excellent road on the north side of the loch, from which the tourist can see the whole with ease and advantage.

The principal rivers in the parish are the Naver, the Borgie, and the Strathy. The Naver issues from the loch already described, near Achness, at which place it receives a large stream running from *Loch Coir-na-fearn*. From Achness it runs north-east, a distance of eighteen miles, until it enters the ocean at the farm of Airdniskech. Besides its supply from Loch Naver and Loch Coir-na-fearn, it receives a number of considerable streams in its course through the strath, so that, when flooded in winter, it is the largest river in the county. The Naver is not rapid in its course, the declivity of the strath being very gradual. The Strathy flows from the loch of that name, and from the adjacent hills and marshes; and is, when flooded, a large stream. The Borgie runs from Loch Loyal in the parish of Tongue; and is, in some parts of its course, the boundary line between this parish and Tongue. But its salmon-fishings have been for a long time the property of the Noble family of Sutherland. It enters the Northern Ocean within a mile of the Naver, at a place in the parish of Tongue called Torrisdale.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The rocks and stones in this parish, of which immense quantities are to be seen in every direction, especially along the coast, appear to be chiefly coarse granite, gneiss, and sandstone. In Kirtomy on the sea-coast, there is an extensive deposit of old red sandstone, mixed with conglomerate. At Strathy, there is a large quarry of white sandstone, which takes dressing by the chissel; and near it, a considerable extent of limestone, from which excellent lime is manufactured for the supply of the parishioners.

The most of the rocks and precipices along the shore exhibit a great variety of veins and fissures which cut across the strata, and greatly derange and alter them. But in many places on the coast and in the interior, the strata are distinctly and regularly arranged: and in such cases the inclination and dip are not many degrees from perpendicular. The most striking and marked exception is at Strathy, in the free and limestone quarries, where the strata are horizontal.

The soil along the coast, especially near the bays, is light and sandy; on the banks of the Naver and Strathy it is composed of sand, gravel, and moss; and in the interior, at the base of the



hills, and near the different lochs, except Loch Naver, the soil is a deep moss.

*Zoology.*—It is reported traditionally, that bears and wolves at one period existed in this parish. But this must have been when those extensive forests of fir grew in this country, the remains of which are still found deeply imbedded in moss, and are raised by the parishioners for roofing their houses, and other domestic purposes. The only species of animals which existed in comparatively modern times in the parish, but which have now disappeared, are goats. About forty years ago, they were numerous, and serviceable to the inhabitants; but, by the introduction of the sheep-farming system, they have been entirely exterminated.

The sheep-farmers rear the Cheviot or white-faced kind of sheep. The lotters have a breed of small Highland cattle; a few ponies of a similar description; and sheep of the black-faced kind.

On Bein Chlibrig, and the adjacent higher hills, there are considerable flocks of red deer. Hares and rabbits are found in the parish. Ptarmigan, black-cock, grouse, partridge, plover, and snipe, are numerous in the hills, moors, and inland glens. A great number of aquatic fowl frequent the sea-coast and fresh-water lakes; and the woods of Strathnaver are throngly tenanted by various classes of birds. The cuckoo, lapwing, and swallow pay their annual visits; and, so far as they escape the vigilance of game-keepers and vermin-destroyers—foxes, otters, wild cats, eagles, hawks, ravens, and carrion-crows, are to be found.

In the larger rivers and lakes, there is abundance of salmon; and in the lesser lochs and streams, trout are found in considerable quantities. There is a rich supply of cod, ling, haddock, and herring, in their season, on the sea-coast. Turbot and mackerel have been taken occasionally, and lobster is caught for the London market.

*Botany.*—The herbage of this parish is of a mixed character, varying according to the elevation of its mountains, hills, valleys, and shore ground: and, on the whole, the parish affords an interesting field for the botanist. If there be few rare plants, there is a rich profusion of those already well known in this country. The mountains, hills, and moors are generally covered with the common red heather, deer-hair, and a long tough grass, called Flying Bent. In the softer marshes, there are extensive plots of cotton-grass. With a trifling exception, all the trees in the parish are indigenous. Of these, there is a considerable variety,—such as the hazel or nut-tree, alder, roan-tree or mountain-ash, willows, and

birch. The alder tree grows to a considerable size on the banks of the Naver and *Loch Coir-na-fearn*; but the birch is the most abundant, and, on the banks of Loch Naver, the most flourishing wood in the parish.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The only printed accounts of the ancient state of the parish, so far as known to the writer of this article, are to be found in Sir Robert Gordon's History of the Earldom of Sutherland, and in Mr Robert Mackay's History of the House and Clan of Mackay, published in 1829. Any manuscript documents tending to throw light on the ancient state of the parish, which might have been in the possession of heritors, or wadsetters, formerly occupying lands within its bounds, are supposed to be now in the archives of the Duke of Sutherland, the proprietor of the whole parish. The most accurate geographical description of the boundaries and localities of the parish is to be found in a map of the county, lately published by Mr Burnet, from a particular survey taken by order of the late Duke of Sutherland.

*Parochial Registers.*—The only parochial registers extant are a book in which the minutes of the kirk-session are kept; and another, in which births and marriages are recorded. The earliest entry in the first is in the year 1754; and in the second, in the year 1800.

*Antiquities.*—The antiquities of the parish consist of the remains of several circular towers or dunns, built of large undrest stones without mortar; a number of barrows or tumuli; a few erect stones in the form of obelisks; and the ruins of a castle built with mortar. The remains of the circular towers are in Strathnaver. The principal field of tumuli is about half a mile east from the parish church, close by the public road to Thurso. The finest erect stone is in the churchyard of Farr; and the ruin of the castle is on a small *peninsula* about a mile and a half north of the parish church. The traditions connected with the more ancient relics are imperfect. It is reported, that the circular towers were built and occupied by an ancient race called, in Gaelic, *Cruinnich*, from either of two Gaelic words, *cruinn*, round or circular; or *cruinnachadh*, a gathering. The tumuli indicate fields of battle, on which foreigners, especially Danes, and the native inhabitants, had bloody conflicts; and the erect stones are said to point out the places where chieftains have been interred. This is very probable, from the circumstance of these stones being seen not far from the fields of tumuli; as is the

case at Dalharrold in Strathnaver, and in the church-yard of Farr. The stone in the latter place has been evidently brought there either from a foreign country, or from some other part of this kingdom. It is very hard, but differs entirely in its appearance and quality from any of the rocks in this neighbourhood. It is about twelve feet long, more than five feet being above ground, and as many under it. There is a regular figure carved on the west front of it, evidently hieroglyphic.—The ancient castle is supposed to have been the residence of the Mackays of Farr previous to their being created barons, and obtaining the title of Lord Reay. It is not known by whom it was built. \*

### III.—POPULATION.

From the remains of antiquity mentioned under the former head, it is evident there must have been a considerable population, either occasionally resorting to this parish, or permanently residing within it, at a very remote period of the history of Scotland. About 400 years ago, the Mackays began to make themselves conspicu-

\* Connected with the antiquities of the parish, the writer may mention a few particulars regarding a *loch* in Strathnaver, about six miles from the church,—to which superstition has ascribed wonderful healing virtues. The time at which this *loch* came to be in repute with the sick cannot now be ascertained. It must, however, have been at a period of the history of this country when superstition had a firm hold of the minds of all classes of the community. The tradition as to the origin of its healing virtues is briefly as follows: A woman, either from Ross-shire or Inverness-shire, came to the heights of Strathnaver, pretending to cure diseases by means of water into which she had previously thrown some pebbles, which she carried about with her. In her progress down the strath, towards the coast, a man in whose house she lodged wished to possess himself of the pebbles: but discovering his design, she escaped, and he pursued. Finding, at the *loch* referred to, that she could not escape her pursuer any longer, she threw the pebbles into the *loch*, exclaiming in Gaelic, *mo-nar*, that is shame, or my shame. From this exclamation the *loch* received the name which it still retains, "*Loch-mo-nar*," and the pebbles are supposed to have imparted to it its healing efficacy. There are only four days in the year, on which its supposed cures can be effected. These are the first Monday, old style, of February, May, August, and November. During February and November, no one visits it; but in May and August, numbers from Sutherland, Caithness, Ross-shire, and even from Inverness-shire and Orkney, come to this far-famed *loch*. The ceremonies through which the patients have to go are the following:—They must all be at the *loch* side about twelve o'clock at night. As early on Monday as one or two o'clock in the morning, the patient is to plunge, or to be plunged, three times into the *loch*; is to drink of its waters; to throw a piece of coin into it as a kind of tribute; and must be away from its banks, so as to be fairly out of sight of its water before the sun rises,—else no cure is supposed to be effected. Whatever credit might be given to such ridiculous ceremonies as tending in any respect to the restoration of health, while ignorance and superstition reigned universally in this country, it certainly must appear extraordinary to intelligent persons, that any class of the community should now have recourse to and faith in such practices; but so it is, that many come from the shires already mentioned, and say they are benefited by these practices. It is, however, to be observed, that those who generally frequent this *loch*, and who have found their health improved, on returning home, are persons afflicted with nervous complaints and disordered imaginations, to whose health a journey of forty or sixty miles, a plunge into the *loch*, and the healthful air of our hills and glens may contribute all the improvement with which they are generally so much pleased.

ous in this district as a clan. Farr and Strathnaver appear to have been the principal residence of the Mackays during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and part of the seventeenth centuries, and that clan is still the most numerous in the parish. After the Earls of Sutherland formed a marriage alliance with the Gordons, some of that clan came to reside in Strathnaver,—so that at one period, perhaps a hundred years ago, there were few in the parish but Mackays and Gordons. They are still the most numerous names.

In ancient times, the inhabitants were no doubt in a very barbarous state, living mostly by plunder, and robbed of their property in return. During the universal reign of Popery in Scotland, that system of belief found its way to this parish, and was most probably professed by all the inhabitants. The principles of the Reformation were, at an early period after their introduction into Scotland, embraced by the Earls of Sutherland, and the first Lord Reay, and disseminated among the people of this parish. In consequence of this happy change in religious principles and views, civilization and good order advanced, and the parishioners gradually became a religious and moral population.

The census of 1831, compared with the return in 1790, shows a decrease of 400 in the population. This was owing to the introduction of the sheep-farming system. By its adoption, the farmers and tenants who occupied the straths and glens in the interior were, in 1818 and 1819, all removed from these possessions. Allotments of land were marked out on the sea-coast for such as were thus removed. In these the greater number of the removing tenants settled; but several families quitted the parish altogether, and thus diminished the population.

The tenants, or lotters, on the sea-coast, live on their respective farms or townships. In these townships, there are from eight to forty-five houses, according to the quantity of land; and the houses stand at a considerable distance from each other, not in the manner of a regularly formed village.

The number of families in the parish is	-	-	-	-	419
of families chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	-	-	314
chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	-	-	11
The average number of births for the last seven years,	-	-	-	-	55
marriages,	-	-	-	-	17
No register of deaths is kept.					
Average number of persons under fifteen years, about	-	-	-	-	740
from fifteen to thirty,	-	-	-	-	500

As there was no register of births and baptisms kept previous to

the year 1800, it is impossible to classify the ages of persons above thirty years. It is certain, however, there are a number of healthy, active people in the parish from fifty to sixty, many from sixty to eighty; and a few vigorous and stout from eighty to ninety.

The average number of children in young families, 5; the number of insane in the parish, 1; fatuous, a female, 1; blind, a male and a female, 2; deaf, a male, 1; dumb, a male, 1.

*Language, Character, &c. of the People.*—The Gaelic language is spoken in common conversation, and it is in that language that the people receive religious instruction with most advantage. Their language has been rather improved of late by means of Gaelic schools. The English, however, is gaining ground considerably, especially among the younger part of the population. The people are more cleanly in their habits than they were forty years ago. They dress neatly on public occasions, and in the cloths and cottons of south country manufacture, make a more showy appearance than their ancestors in the more homely but more substantial garbs wrought at home. Their ordinary food consists of the produce of their lots, viz. oat and barley meal, milk, potatoes, and cabbages,—with fish, especially herring. Very little butcher meat is used by the natives; but a considerable quantity of tea and sugar is consumed in the parish.

The people are social among themselves; kind and hospitable to strangers, according to their circumstances; acute and intelligent, according to their advantages; moral in their general habits; regular in attending on religious ordinances; and many among them decidedly pious. Smuggling is entirely abandoned by them, and poaching is almost unknown.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—Except about 600 acres on the sea coast, which are kept in cultivation by the lotters, the whole of the land of this parish, formerly in tillage, is, with the adjacent mountains, hills, and glens, laid out in extensive sheep walks. From the great extent of the parish, and the nature of its surface, it is impossible to give its measurement in acres with any degree of accuracy. The different plots of trees in the parish cover about 800 acres; and of late years, considerable attention has been given to the woods in Strathnaver, by pruning and thinning.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of the land occupied by the lotters is 16s. per acre, including their privilege of hill-common

and peat-moss. The rent paid by the sheep-farmers is moderate.

*Rate of Wages.*—The allowance to day labourers is from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. per day of ten hours; to masons 15s.; to carpenters from 9s. to 12s. per week. The lotters use the Highland delving spade in labouring their land. To this they are forced, partly by being unable to rear horses for the plough, and partly by the very uneven surface of their lots. The greater part of the land in their possession is susceptible of considerable improvement by trenching, draining, removing heaps of stones, inclosing their lots, and turning them with the plough.

*Husbandry.*—The sheep farms are in the possession of gentlemen, who are sufficiently attentive to every kind of improvement of which pastoral districts are susceptible,—by draining, embanking, and burning heath. The leases of the sheep farmers are given for nineteen years: but the lotters on the coast are tenants at will, which is evidently a bar to the improvement of their lots.

*Fishings.*—The principal fishings are those of salmon and herring. Of late years, the rivers have been fished by the heritor, and the salmon sold at a certain rate per pound raw, to a Company who have a curing establishment in the parish. In consequence of this plan, the present rent of the salmon fishings of Naver, Borgie, and Strathy cannot be ascertained. The fishings are kept up by proper guards in close time on the rivers to prevent poaching; and by having a sufficient supply of fishing and curing materials during the fishing season.

*Produce.*—As very little of the raw produce is brought to market within the parish, it is not easy to state its amount. The following account is submitted, however,—giving an average of the last three years.

Annual produce of the land occupied by the lotters, including oats, bear, and potatoes, being the only crops they raise,	-	-	-	L. 2000	0	0
Annual produce of sheep-farms in wool,	-	-	-	8700	0	0
Annual produce of sheep-farms in widders and ewes, sold to south country dealers,	-	-	-	5800	0	0
salmon-fishings,	-	-	-	800	0	0
herring-fishing,	-	-	-	1300	0	0
meadow-hay,	-	-	-	310	0	0
Miscellaneous, including dairy produce, black-cattle sold by the lotters, &c. &c.	-	-	-	420	0	0
Total annual produce,				L. 14,330	0	0

The fishermen on the coast have from fifteen to twenty boats

\* About 22,000 Cheviot sheep are annually grazed in this parish, including old and young stock.

of fifteen and twenty tons burden. During the herring-fishing season, ships from the south ports of Scotland, from England and Ireland, come to the coast to land cargoes of salt and barrels, and to carry the cured fish to market. There are no ships belonging to the parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication, &c.*—The nearest market-town is Thurso, thirty-two miles from this place. There is a post-office here connected with that of Thurso; and a mail diligence, drawn by two horses, and carrying four passengers, which runs three days in the week from Thurso to Tongue, and alternately back; and there is a weekly carrier from Tongue to Thurso. There are no turnpike roads in the parish; but a considerable extent of the Parliamentary road from Bonar Bridge to Tongue passes through the heights, and about sixteen miles of the general line from Tongue to Thurso run near the sea-coast. On the roads in this parish there are two bridges of three arches each, twelve of one arch, and a chain-boat on the river Naver. There are no regular harbours. The safest landing-places for boats are Kirtomy and Armidale.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is conveniently situated for the population who are now attached to it, since the erection of the Government church. It stands close to the sea-coast, and is about thirty miles from some parts of the interior. But these remote parts are occupied only by a few shepherds in the employment of the sheep-farmers. The parish-church was built in 1774, is a commodious and substantial building, and is kept in good repair. It is seated for about 750. The communion table is, on ordinary Sabbaths, free to the poor, and accommodates about 64.

There is a Government church and manse at Strathy, ten miles east from the parish church. This church was built in 1826, and its present minister was appointed to it in 1828. It accommodates about 350 sitters. Thus, in a parish, the population of which is about 2100, we have church accommodation for 1160 persons.

The manse was built in 1818, is a commodious house, and kept in sufficient repair. There are about six acres of arable land, some meadow-pasture, and a considerable extent of hill ground, with a right to peats,—legally designed as a glebe. The value of these may be estimated at L. 25 per annum. The stipend is L. 166, 14s. Sterling, including L. 8, 6s. 8d. Sterling for communion ele-

ments. The teinds are exhausted. There is a catechist appointed by the kirk-session, and paid by the people.

There is no Dissenting chapel in the parish; and, with the exception of one shepherd from the borders, who is of the Anti-burgher persuasion, and a shepherd's wife from Lochaber, who is a Roman Catholic, there is not a Dissenter of any description in the parish. Divine service is generally well attended, on ordinary and communion Sabbaths, in the parish and Government church; and the people, old and young, are punctual in attending family and village examinations, are in general well acquainted with the Shorter Catechism of our church, and have regularly the worship of God in their families. The average number of communicants may be stated at 130.

There is no society for religious purposes established in the parish; but, for the last nineteen years, collections have been made, almost annually in our congregations, for missionary and educational objects in Scotland, and the average amount of these is about L 5, 10s. Sterling.

*Education.*—There are at present four schools in the parish, viz. the parochial school; one supported by the Committee of the General Assembly; one by the Glasgow Auxiliary Gaelic School Society; and one on the Second Patent of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highland and islands of Scotland. The parochial schoolmaster is qualified to teach Latin, Greek, mathematics, and the ordinary branches of English literature; and the teacher of the General Assembly's Committee is required to teach Latin, mathematics, English, and Gaelic. The branches generally taught, are English reading and grammar, writing and arithmetic, and Gaelic reading.

The parochial teacher has the maximum salary; L. 3 Sterling, in lieu of a garden; L. 1 13s. 4d. of session-clerk dues; 4s. for proclaiming banns, and registering each marriage; 6d. for recording each baptism; and a house of three apartments. His rate of school-fees is, for beginners, 6s. per annum; for reading and writing, 8s.; for arithmetic, 12s.; and for higher branches, 20s. per annum. The teacher employed by the Committee of the General Assembly has a salary of L. 25; three apartments; a croft of land, and a garden from the heritor; and fuel provided by the inhabitants of the district. He is allowed to exact fees, according to the rate demanded in the parochial school; only in cases of indigence certified by the minister and elders, a certain modification,



or an exemption altogether, is permitted. The teacher employed by the Glasgow Society has L. 12 of a salary, and two apartments. He is furnished with fuel by the inhabitants, and is allowed to exact fees on the same principle with the teacher under the General Assembly's Committee. The teacher on the scheme of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge has L. 4 of salary, a house and croft of land, with fees.

Last winter, about 240 individuals, from the age of five years to twenty, attended the different schools in the parish. But owing to the general poverty of the parishioners, and to the circumstance, that they are under the necessity of having their children, when they arrive at the age of ten or twelve years, employed, especially in the summer and harvest months, either in working about their own dwellings, or earning something for their support, in the service of others,—education is very imperfectly acquired by a majority of the young. Of those, however, from ten to thirty years of age, the greater number do read either English or Gaelic; many read both, and a considerable number write, and can keep accounts. Even at the oldest age at which the people arrive, a considerable number are found who read the Scriptures fluently, and with benefit. But it is among the aged that the greater number are met with who can neither read nor write. In 1832, it was computed that 870 persons of all ages above six were unable to read; and 300 betwixt six and twenty.

The people value the benefits of education, and would most willingly give their children greater advantages, did their circumstances allow it. A permanent school at Armidale, with those already established, would supply the inhabitants of the sea-coast with the means of education. It is impossible to place a school in the interior, so as to accommodate its scattered and widely separated inhabitants, consisting of a few families of shepherds.

*Savings Bank.*—A savings bank was established this year for the benefit of the whole county;—of which the Duke of Sutherland is patron and treasurer; James Loch, Esq. M. P. president; and the three resident factors of the Duke of Sutherland in this shire, vice-presidents. There are trustees appointed in this parish, who meet every fortnight to receive deposits and give out money as occasion requires. The head bank is at Golspie, near Dunrobin, the seat of the Duke of Sutherland. All deposits are sent from this parish to it; for which the contributors have the receipt of the patron and treasurer, and are allowed four per cent. interest on sums

not exceeding L. 20. Little can be said yet of the advantages of this bank, as the first deposit was made in this parish only on the 15th day of February last; but considerable benefit is anticipated from it to day-labourers, fishermen, and farm-servants, in the course of a few years. The Duke of Sutherland is deeply interested in its prosperity.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 76; and the average sum allowed them is from 13s. to 3s. per annum, according to their circumstances, as certified by the elders of their respective districts. The annual average amount of contributions for their support, during the last five years, has been about L. 27 Sterling, arising from church collections, amounting to L. 20 per annum, and from donations by heritors, amounting to L. 8 on an average of the last five years. No other method of procuring funds for the poor has been resorted to, and in general they seem content with the existing system. The Marchioness of Stafford, now Duchess Countess of Sutherland, for more than twenty years gave, and continues to give, an annual donation of L. 6 to the poor of this parish. Occasional donations have been given, besides, by members of the Noble family when visiting this parish, and when important changes by marriages and births took place among them; and by such means, a small fund is at interest for the benefit of the poor.

*Market.*—There is a market held at Bettyhill, near this place, on the first Wednesday of November, (N. S.) for general traffic.

*Inns.*—There are three licensed inns, so situated as to be convenient to the parishioners and the public at large. Tippling-houses are entirely suppressed, and their extinction has a good effect on the morals of the people in general.

#### · MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

When the former Account was written, a considerable number of tacksmen, natives of the parish, occupied extensive farms in different parts of it; and with them, a dense population of subtenants resided in the interior straths and glens. Now, however, all the lands, both hill and dale, which they possessed, are held in lease by a few sheep-farmers, all non-resident gentlemen,—some of them living in Caithness, some on the south coast of this county, and some in England; and the straths, in which hundreds of families lived comfortably, are now tenanted by about twenty-four families of herds. In place of the scores of Highland cattle, horses, sheep, and goats, which formerly were brought to market, or used for do-

mestic purposes, now thousands of fleeces of Cheviot wool, wedders, and ewes, are annually exported. The people who had been removed from the interior in 1818 and 1819, when these great changes took place, are thickly settled along the sea-coast of the parish, —in some instances about thirty lotters occupying the land formerly in the possession of twelve; and some of them placed on ground which had been formerly uncultivated.

This alteration in the locality of the parishioners has been followed by a corresponding change in the general system of their occupation. Instead of tending flocks, and following other avocations connected with the habits of an inland population, they are now partly employed in cultivating their small pendicles of land; but more vigorously engaged, especially the young, in preparing the necessary fishing implements, and prosecuting the fishing in its season. The females, in place of manufacturing tartans, and other woollen cloths, for their husbands, brothers, and other relatives, now use the spinning wheel in preparing hemp for herring-nets; and the labour of the country weaver is considerably set aside by the knitting of the nets. The *Garb* of *Auld Gaul* is entirely superseded by the fisherman's habiliments; and our population, who in early life traversed the hills, moors, and crags of the interior, now cautiously steer their boats on the waves of the Northern Ocean, and actively carry on the various labours connected with the fish-curing stations.

The changes referred to in the locality and in the employments of the inhabitants have had their influence on the state of society in the parish. Although there are greater facilities of communication than formerly with different parts of the kingdom, the manners of the resident population are not thereby improved. It is a well authenticated fact in this country, that the herring-fishing is not conducive to the improvement of the morals of those engaged in it. The leaseholders of our large sheep-farms are, as was already mentioned, all non-resident gentlemen. But the former tacksmen resided on their own farms, most of them having respectable and numerous families. By their education and status in society, as justices of peace, and officers in the army, their example, in their general intercourse with the people, had an influence in giving a respectable tone to society, which is now almost gone. There is not now a resident justice of the peace in the parish, whereas there was formerly a most respectable bench of such civil magistrates; and the permanent population being composed of lotters, day-labourers,

fishermen, and herds, the people, in general, are much more plebian, than when the former Account was written. On the other hand, the improvements by roads, bridges, more commodious inns, neater cottages, and more regular and sure means of communication, form a most interesting and pleasant variety since the date of that Account. An increase in the number of those who read the Scriptures in English and Gaelic, and a more extensive circulation of the sacred volume among the families of the parishioners, are also among the important changes which have since taken place. The openness of the winters, the absence of those heavy and long-continued storms of snow, which in former times were so destructive to every description of stock, and the general mildness and fruitfulness of the seasons, ought not to be omitted under this head. Since the harvest of 1816, there has not been an extensive failure in the ordinary crop of the parish.

There is much room for improvement on the sea-coast, by a better system of husbandry among the lotters, by rendering the landing-places for boats more commodious and secure, and by an increase of branch roads to some of the townships. It is much to be regretted that the inhabitants have not more permanent and regular employment during the winter and spring months; for by the want of such employment, a great portion of their time is wasted in idleness and dissipation; whereas, they would most willingly avail themselves of any additional opportunities of labour.

*August 1834.*

## PARISH OF DURNESS.

PRESBYTERY OF TONGUE, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND CAITHNESS.

THE REV. WILLIAM FINDLATER, MINISTER. \*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name Durness, or, as it is pronounced by the natives, Duirinish, is evidently of Gaelic origin. \* By some it has been derived from *Dorrain*, i. e. storms or tempest, and *nis* or *ness* a promontory. Others derive the word from *Dubh*, black; *raon*, field; and *ness* or *nis*, a promontory,—*Dubh-thir-nis*. But as the word *ness* or *nis* is seldom, if ever, used to signify a point or promontory in Gaelic, it may with greater probability be derived from *Durin*, the principal township in the parish, and *innis*, a green patch or grazing,—literally an *oasis* in a desert. Hence the word *Shineness*, a green knoll near the Deer Forest in this parish, is derived from *sithin*, venison, and *innis*, a grazing.

Formerly the parish of Durness comprehended the whole of the district known by *Lord Reay's Country*, or, as it is called in Gaelic, *Duthaich Mhic Aoi*, i. e. *The Land of the Mackays*, extending from the river of Borgie near Strathnaver, to the Kyle of Assynt, and comprehending a space of about 800 square miles! Since 1724, it has been divided into three parishes, viz. Edderachillis, Durness, and Tongue: with the parish of Farr, it was disjoined from the presbytery of Caithness, and by Act of Assembly attached to the presbytery of Tongue.

*Boundaries.*—It is bounded on the N. by the Northern Ocean; on the E. by the parish of Tongue; on the S. and S. W. by Edderachillis; and on the W. by the Atlantic Ocean. Its greatest length from east to west is twenty-five miles, and its average breadth about twelve miles,—there being thus, including friths and lakes, about 300 square miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The general aspect of this parish

\* Notwithstanding the frequent incursions of the Danes and other northern tribes, it is remarkable that they never succeeded in establishing themselves as separate colonies, or in giving names to the different places in the country, which, as every Gaelic scholar knows, are all, with hardly an exception, of Gaelic origin.

is mountainous; and its surface is naturally divided into three parts, viz. 1st, the Parf district, or that which lies betwixt the Atlantic and the Kyle of Durness. 2d, Durness, properly so called, including all between the Kyle of Durness and Loch Eriboll. 3d, Westmoin, which extends from Loch Eriboll to the middle of the morass below Loch Hope, commonly called the Moin.

*Mountain Ranges.*—In the Parf division, comprehending a surface of from 60 to 80 square miles, there are several mountain-ranges from 1500 to near 2500 feet in height, from Screbhisbheinn on the north, to Fairemheall on the south. Fairbheinn has a conical shape, and appears isolated from these and the other ranges of Creigriabhach and Bendearg, which have a S. W. direction, gradually diminishing to the Western Ocean.

In the second division, the mountains are, Ceannabinn, Meallmeadhonoch, Ben Spionnadh,\* and Crànstackie, which take a S. W. direction, and the mountains of Foinnebheinn and Meallhorn, which take a S. E. direction. This division contains an area of about 80 square miles.

The third, or Westmoin division, having a surface of about 100 square miles, contains several ranges of high and precipitous hills on the east side of Loch Eriboll, and clustered in various shapes and directions betwixt Strathmore and Strathbeg. In this division also is the lofty Ben Hope, 3150 feet above the level of the sea; it extends in a S. W. and S. direction along the narrow vale of Strathmore. The view of Ben Hope from the west has been always admired by travellers, as perhaps the finest of its kind in the kingdom. The best view is at the inn of Cassildubh, near the upper end of Loch Hope. As there is no table-land, it rises within a few feet from the level of the sea, in abrupt and towering magnificence. The mind is filled with awe at the grandeur and sublimity of the scene, and the eye is overcome with beholding the mountain as a whole,—except when occasionally relieved by viewing the trees of varied hue that diversify the scene, and adorn its base and its dark-blue terraces. Here is often seen the eagle soaring aloft; and amidst its deep ravines, the red-deer and roe, pasturing in security, as if defying the stratagems of the hunter. Nor is the view from its summit less interesting. On a clear day, may be seen Lewis to the west, and the Orkney Islands to the north-east, as well as the principal mountains of Sutherland and Caithness, while

\* 2566 feet above the level of the sea by Mr Burnet's measurement.

the numerous lakes through the country appear like specks, and its friths (when the view is not obstructed by adjacent hills) like rivers.

*Valleys.*—In the Parf district, though there are several deep ravines, there are no valleys of any note. It consists chiefly of marshy loans and deep morasses several miles in extent, and intersected by the mountain-streams. A few green and fertile spots may be seen on its eastern shores. With the exception of the light-keepers at Cape Wrath, there are only four families, shepherds, who reside in this extensive district. In the second district, Strath Dinard runs up the Kyle of Durness, and by the water of Dinard, to the south base of Fairemheall, and then takes a south-east direction along the side of Foinnebhinn, extending a distance of about fourteen miles. At the upper end of Loch Eriboll is Strathbeg,—a narrow but fertile vale of about two miles in length, and scarcely half a mile in breadth. The only other valley deserving notice is Strathmore, commencing at the north base of Ben Hope, and extending about six miles along the river. It is now inhabited by one family; whereas, formerly, it was inhabited by upwards of twenty, by no means affluent, but virtuous and contented. To the south, betwixt the mountains of Strathmore and Strathbeg, are Glengollie and Corinessie, both celebrated by the muse of Rob Donn, as the favourite haunts of the deer and the hunter. These contain almost the only remains of birch trees in the parish, which at one time diversified and beautified its straths and glens. It may be remarked, that, with the exception of those last mentioned, the straths are but a very few feet elevated above the level of the sea, and give an Alpine grandeur to the contiguous mountains.

*Caves.*—*Smo, &c.*—In a country so extensive and mountainous, and abounding in limestone, we may naturally expect to find caves, deep ravines, and fissures. Of these, Smo \* is the most remarkable. It is about two miles east of the church, and may be approached either by sea or by a pathway from the road. Directly above the cave, a beautiful waterfall arrests the eye. Descending from the road, about 100 yards to the shore, and crossing the water, after walking twenty yards, the traveller is suddenly arrested by the grandeur and magnificence of the cave,—whether he views the singular and massive construction of its Gothic-like and transverse arches, or its immense height and width;

\* In "Daniell's Coast Views," a front view of this cave may be seen.

for, in some places, it is about 100 feet wide, and as many in height. Here, also, the noise of the waterfall steals on the ear; and when the voice is raised, an echo is distinctly heard. Near the entrance, its stratified rocks have several tufts of ivy mantling over them, which add to the interest of the scene. The dark perforation on the right hand of the arch has of late years been explored; it was believed by several of the natives, upon traditional information, to be the abode of *fairies*, and the spirits of the dark! \*

There are also several extensive caves at Tresgill, at the east side of the entrance of Loch Eriboll. Sir Walter Scott visited these in 1814, and they excited his admiration equally with that of Smo. They are approached only by sea. The grandest of these has a waterfall over its mouth. The deep and unknown extent of the fissure of Polaghloup, half a mile west of the church, has been frequently admired. The immense *stocks* or detached Gothic-like pillars at Kervic bay near Cape Wrath, and at the Whiten Head, have been also much admired. Several other caves, fissures, and cascades, in the interior of the country, if found in parishes of less extent, would be deemed deserving of more detailed description.

*Coast.*—That part of the coast which is bounded by the Atlantic and the Northern Ocean is bold and lofty. On both sides of Cape Wrath, of the Farout Head, and Whiten Head, the rocks are magnificent, towering in most places from 200 to 700 feet of perpendicular height. At Kervic bay, the shore is low and sandy. At the bay of Balnakiel, there are several hills of sand, which frequently shift their places and forms, though generally covered with bent. Along the friths of Keoldale and Eriboll, the shores are generally precipitous and rugged, with intervening bays of sand or shingle.

*Islands.*—These are, 1. *Garvellan*, within 4 miles of Cape Wrath to the east, and 1 mile from the shore; it is about 60 feet high, 100 yards long, and about the same breadth; here thousands of

\* The following is a short account of this cavern, as given by a young gentleman, one of a party who entered it in August 1833. "After providing ourselves with a small boat and lights, and raising them over the arch, we found ourselves in a lake about thirty yards long, and nearly as broad; we now lighted our candles, and approached an arch in the rock, under which we could just pass by lying flat on the boat. This opened to another lake of equal length, but gradually diminishing in breadth. Having at the upper end left the boat, we walked over the rock about thirty paces in the same direction. The height of the roof is various, from twenty to sixty feet, and its sides and bases are almost covered with stalactites and stalagmites, formed from the dropping roof of the cave, which is entirely composed of limestone. The temperature of a well at the upper end we found to be 48° Fahr."



different species of sea-fowl are reared. 2. *Hoan*, 1 mile long, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile broad; it lies near the entrance of Loch Eriboll; is green and fertile, and supports four families. 3. *Choaric*, in Loch Eriboll, about the same dimensions, and equally fertile. In both of the two latter islands, there are places of sepulture, which have been discontinued as such for upwards of a century. Tradition reports, that they were used for sepulture to prevent the depredation of wolves, which at one period infested the country.

*Meteorology*.—Cape Wrath is the only place in the parish where observations have been recorded. \* After the autumnal equinox, and about two hours after sunset, the polar lights frequently appear most splendid, and occasionally extend from the north or north-west like a belt over the whole horizon. On the 3d September 1833, the horizon, from three to four P. M., presented a peculiar appearance, and that during sunshine,—as if tinged, though faintly, by the polar lights, rushing with great rapidity. For some days after, the weather was dry and squally. When the Orkney Islands or the neighbouring mountains are clearly seen, either a storm, or the continuation of bad weather, is the certain consequence. When the sound of the breakers on the shore is heard distinctly, it indicates frost. The appearance of the swan is a precursor of snow.

In a country so contiguous to the ocean, and so mountainous, it is to be expected that high winds and frequent showers should prevail; but, from these very causes, snow does not last so long as in more southern latitudes. Though the climate, in general, be moist and variable, yet the atmosphere is purified by high and frequent winds; and the inhabitants are in general healthy. Fevers, small-pox, &c. are seldom, if ever, spread by infection. In spring, however, colds, inflammatory sore throats, and rheumatism, are not infrequent. In summer and autumn, cases of dyspepsia and bowel-complaints among the lower orders are of common occurrence. These are supposed to arise from a sudden change of their diet, which in the summer consists of oatmeal, milk, &c. and afterwards, of potatoes.

*Hydrography*.—The *friths* that intersect the parish are, 1st, the *Kyle of Durness*, which is about six miles long, and averages nearly one mile in breadth. Near its entrance on the west side of the

\* A monthly report is transmitted to the Board of the Lighthouse Commissioners, of the ranges of the thermometer, barometer, and rain-gage.

bay of Balnakiel, are bars and shallows, which frequently shift their position with north winds. This frith is little visited by vessels, either for shelter or commerce. At ebb, it appears a large field of sand, which is gradually accumulating from the debris of the Dinard and tributary streams. On its banks, may be frequently seen considerable numbers of seals (*Phocæ vitulinæ*,) and different species of shell-fish. 2d, *Loch Eriboll*, which is about ten miles long, with a south-west direction, and varying from one to four miles in breadth. Its waters are of a depth varying from fifteen to sixty fathoms; and no perceptible current is felt, while its saltness does not materially differ from that of the ocean. Camisendunbay, near the ferry, is one of the best anchorages in the kingdom, and is pretty often resorted to by vessels unable to double Cape Wrath, or attempt the Pentland Frith. The tides off Cape Wrath, Farout, and Whiten Head are very strong—running about ten miles an hour.

*Springs*.—As might be anticipated in such a mountainous country, and where such quantities of rain fall, the springs are innumerable. There are several chalybeates; and those which give a reddish colouring to the gravelly banks are reckoned salubrious by the natives.

*Lakes* are also abundant, varying from a few hundred yards to six miles in extent. Of these, *Loch Hope* is the largest, being six miles long, by one half mile broad. Its mean depth does not exceed six fathoms. Its upper end is gradually filling up by the alluvial deposits of Strathmore water; and its banks occasionally diversified by a few tufts of birch. *Loch Borley* and *Loch Craspul*, near the manse, are beautiful lakes; both of which are supplied by subterraneous streams through the limestone rocks in the neighbourhood. The former is one mile long, and has a small green isle 200 yards long. It abounds in *char*, which spawn in October, and are seldom or ever caught by the fly. *Loch Craspul* is half a mile long, and abounds with excellent trout, which do not spawn till January. There are several other lakes around the above and in the interior,—all abounding in trout, which appear reddish, dark, or silvery, according to the clearness of the water. Among these, the largest are *Dinard*, the source of the river *Kescaig*, and *Ishour* in the Parf or western division. *Marl* has been found at *Loch Borley*, but has not been applied to any extent for the purpose of manure.

*Rivers*.—The only rivers deserving notice are the Hope and the *Dinard*. The former is merely a continuation of the Strathmore Water, which has its source from Glengollie and the contiguous

mountains, and empties itself about three miles from the mouth of Loch Eriboll,—running a distance of fifteen miles. The latter has its rise from Loch Dinard, and empties itself at the head of the Kyle of Durness,—running a distance of ten miles. Both these rivers are very rapid, especially when swelled by their tributary streams. In both, the cruives are shut in March; but very few salmon are found till summer, owing, it is supposed, to the coldness of the snow water descending from the higher mountain streams. Salmon are, also in small quantities, found to ascend the *Sandwood* water from the Atlantic, *Dal* water from Balnakiel Bay, and *Strathbeg* water, at the head of Loch Eriboll. All these are tolerably good angling rivers, especially for trout, during the months of May and June. During heavy rains, the mountain streams present to the eye some fine cascades, the most noted of which are at Altnacailish in Strathmore, and at Benspionnadh on the north-west side.

*Geology.*—There are few parishes in Scotland that furnish such a rich field to the speculations of the geologist—both from its extent and the variety of its formations. These have been examined by Professor Jameson, Professor Sedgwick, and Dr M'Culloch. Following the geographical divisions of the parish we find the high and precipitous rocks on either side of Cape Wrath, chiefly sandstone and gneiss, with numerous veins of granite and felspar. The central mountain of Fasbheinn is gneiss; but all the other mountains are chiefly of the red sandstone formation, and puddingstone,—the strata of which are horizontal. At Handa Island, and Store in Assynt, the same formation of sandstone appears.

In the second or Durness division, the mountains are all composed of quartz, gneiss, and mica-slate, with occasional veins of porphyry and granite. The dip of the strata is chiefly north-east. The higher mountains present their steeper and bolder fronts to the west and north-west,—with the exception only of the Farout Head, composed of dark gray slate. The greater part of the low lands of Durness from the Kyle to Smo, consists of an immense triangular bed of primitive limestone, of about fifteen square miles, and of unknown depth. It is of different colours—gray, blue, and pale white. These often alternate with each other, and are of various depths, often horizontal, but generally inclining to the north and east. The fissures almost always cut the strata at right angles, and frequently consist of thin veins of carbonate of lime, pure, white, and crystallized. This bed at its southern angle disappears under the Foinnebhinn and Meall Horn Mountains, and

is seen minutely in the adjoining parish of Edderachillis at Lochmore and Glencul, and to an extent of several miles in the parish of Assynt, where it appears under the same general character and of the same formation.

In the third or Westmoin district, a section of this bed also appears, to the extent of about five miles in length by half a mile in average breadth. It is separated from Durness by Loch Eriboll, the quartz mountain range of Ceannabinn, and Benspionadh. The mountains of Hope and Strathmore are quartz and gray slate, either horizontally stratified, or with a small inclination to the east and north. The limestone caves present fine specimens of stalactites and stalagmites, and some of the lakes in the limestone formation abound in marl. Immense circular blocks of granite are frequently resting upon the limestone rocks: \* and pieces of porphyry have been discovered near Rispond, which are easily cut into seals.

*Soil.*—Over the limestone, the soil is chiefly clay, of various depth, and yielding rich pasturage. The alluvial deposits carried down by the mountain streams make the straths equally fertile. But with these exceptions, the whole soil of the parish is a continuous surface of peat moss, varying from a few inches to twelve feet in depth,—below which there are deep strata of clay or gravel.

*Zoology.*—The high mountains in the interior, commonly called the “Forest”—(a leafless one!) abound in red-deer (*Cervus elephas*.) The roe (*Cervus capreolus*) is occasionally seen at Ben Hope. Foxes (*Canis vulpes*,) notwithstanding the high premiums given, are numerous and difficult to extirpate. Badgers (*Ursus meles*) are almost extinct. Wild cats (*Felis catus ferus*) are pretty numerous. Otters (*Mustela lutra*) are found in the rivers. Hares common (*Lepus timidus*), and alpine (*L. variabilis*), are seen, the latter more numerous; also rabbits (*L. cuniculus*;) polecats, ferrets, and weasels (*Mustelæ*.) Moles (*Talpa Europea*) are rare, and only found in one district of the parish, on the eastern bank of Loch Hope. Rats (*M. rattus*) are of late immigration.

*Birds.*—Among the land fowls, the following are the principal: Hawks (*Falco*) of different kinds. Owls, both gray and brown, with ears resembling horns. The Royal (*fulvus*), and fishing (*haliæetus*), eagle. A colony of rooks (*C. frugilegus*) may be seen in September for a few weeks, and almost all the small birds common

\* From one of these on the glebe, the monument erected in the church-yard to the memory of Rob. Donn, was formed.

to the latitude; such as the starling (*Sturnus*), thrush (*Turdus*), wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), lark (*Alauda arvensis*), green linnet (*Loxia chloris*), swallow (*Hirundo*), blackbird thrush, (*T. merula*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), kingsfisher (*Alcedo ispida*), wild pigeon (*Columba *Ænas**), black-cock (*Tetrao tetrix*), ptarmigan (*T. lagopus*), moorfowl (*T. Scoticus*), partridge (*T. perdix*), plover (*Charadrius*), &c.

Among the water-fowls are gulls (*Larus ridibundus*, and *L. marinus*;) wildgoose (*Anser*), swan (*A. cygnus*), duck (*A. boschas*), teal (*A. crecca*), solan-goose (*Pelecanus Bassanus*), puffin (*Alca arctica*), auk (*A. torda*), and great auk (*A. impennis*), crane (*Grus*.)

*Fishes*.—Skate (*Raiæ*), piked dog-fish (*S. acanthius*), eel (*Murena anguilla*), conger, or sea eel, (*M. conger*), cod (*G. morrhua*), haddock (*G. *Æglefinus**), coal-fish (*G. carbonarius*), whiting (*G. merlangus*), ling (*G. molva*), mackarel (*Scomber*), turbot (*Pleuronectes hippoglossus*), sole (*P. solea*), flounder (*P. flesus et punctatus*), salmon (*Salmo*), trout (*S. trutta et fario*), char (*S. alpinus*.)

The shell-fish are:—Oysters (*O. edulis*), cockles (*C. edule*), mussels (*M. edulis*), &c.; univalves of different kinds, as well as lobsters and crabs, are very numerous. The sands of Balnakiel present beautiful specimens of conchology.

*Reptiles, &c.*—Among the reptiles are: the viper (*Coluber berus*), adder (*Anguis eryx*), lizards (*Lacerta*), frogs (*Rana*), toads (*Bufo*). Among the various species of insects and flies, the most peculiar and numerous are gnats, provincially called *midges*; these are so annoying during the months of August and September in calm warm and moist weather, that they interrupt all labour without doors.

*Botany*.\*—The vegetation of this parish is materially affected by its latitude, the vicinity of the sea, its position towards the western shore, its diversity of surface, and its soil. On the northern confines of Britain, the ordinary law by which the geographical distribution of plants in regard of latitude is regulated, brings to very moderate elevations plants which, in the southern parts of the Grampians, are found only on the ridges, and which are not produced at all in the south of Scotland, for want of a sufficient elevation to give the Alpine climate. In the parish of Durness, however, the descent of Alpine vegetation is greatly increased by its

\* This article was kindly communicated by Dr Graham, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh.

western position. Several plants which, to the eastward in the same latitude, grow upon the sides of the mountains, grow here on the beach.

On the top of the cliff overhanging the sea at Cape Wrath, we have *Salix herbacea* and *Silene acaulis*; and near Keoldale we have *Thalictrum alpinum*, close to the high water mark. Even a very few miles off, these plants have disappeared from the shore, and are met with only on the mountains, at a height increasing as we proceed eastward. On the other hand, the neighbourhood of the sea secures that mild temperature during winter, which enables less hardy plants to thrive; or otherwise fits the fields of Durness for the growth of species which require a maritime climate. This is true with respect to many plants which appear in the pastures. The *Primula Scotica* abounds here, and in many places near the north shore of Scotland, but it has not been observed anywhere upon the mountains either to the eastward or southward.

The soil in the parish is various; but perhaps the only kind which, apart from the degree of moisture, seems to exert a sensible influence in modifying the natural productions, is that formed over limestone, which abounds in the immediate vicinity of the manse, and crops out in many places. It is no doubt on account of this that *Dryas octopetala* is so profuse in Durness. To the eastward and in the south, it is met with on the mountains, and on various rocks, but here it seems confined to the limestone, and is most abundant at the level of the sea. Equally circumscribed, and on the same rock, is *Epipactis latifolia*, and perhaps *Draba incana* extends no farther. *Centaurea scabiosa* is abundant in the fields around, and very seldom with white flowers. All these, except the last, are likewise found on limestone in Assynt, but rarely, if at all, in the intervening district, where limestone does not exist. A great part of the flat land towards Cape Wrath is bog, wholly different from the close fine turf which forms the surface near the manse. It produces in abundance the ordinary coarse herbage which is found to cover wet ground throughout the country, as the various common species of *Juncus*, *Carex* and *Eriophorum*, while on the neighbouring drier banks we have *Nardus stricta*, and the other grasses which generally grow along with it. These form very productive sheep pasture, and support a very excellent stock. In the bogs, there is abundance of *Pinguicula Lusitanica*, and of *Drosera Anglica*. Upon the shores of Sandwood and of

Durness, we have a profusion of *Gentiana amarella* and *Thalictrum minus*. *Elymus arenarius* and *Juncus Balticus* are met with in both places, the latter particularly abundant to the north of the house of Keoldale.

The mountain tops are generally dry and stony, and nothing has hitherto been observed upon them but such Alpine plants as are found on many other mountain ranges in Scotland, except *Luzula arcuata*. *Azalea procumbens* and *Arbutus alpina* abound chiefly on the low shoulders. *Luzula arcuata* has been found only in three stations in Britain, the summit of the mountains at the source of the Dee, Ben More in Assynt, and Foinnbheinn in this parish; and along with it, on the two last mountains, *Apargia alpina*. On Foinnbheinn there is great abundance of *Arabis petrea*. It is among the mountains in this and the adjoining parishes, forming the north-west of Scotland, that botanists expect to discover several of the plants common to the north of Europe and America, but which have not yet been added to the British Flora.

With the exception of a few acres of *Birch copse* on the banks of Loch Hope, and a few birch, poplar, and holly trees in the clefts of rocks and glens, the parish may be said to be quite destitute of wood. In low and sheltered situations, however, the mosses retain the roots of fir, birch, willow, &c. and decayed trunks of from thirty to fifty feet in length are occasionally dug from the mosses. In sheltered situations, and where the soil is open and dry, there is little doubt but forest and fruit trees might grow, from the few specimens tried at Eriboll. Culinary vegetables thrive well. Notwithstanding the great quantities of rain in harvest, the crops are ripe, and secured at least three weeks earlier than in the neighbouring county of Caithness,—which may be occasioned by the difference of soil, as well as the shelter, and the radiation of heat from the adjacent rocks and vallies. With the exception of six acres of winter sown wheat, tried for the first time at Balnakiel, the whole of the crops were cut and secured before the 23d September 1833.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

It cannot be expected, that the annals of a parish so remote and so thinly inhabited, should at any time have excited much public interest. Some accounts of the local conflicts of the clans Mackay, Gordon, and Sutherland, may be seen in Sir Robert Gordon's History of the Sutherland family, and Mackay's History of the Mackays.—A correct survey was taken of the coast in 1827 by or-

der of the Commissioners for the Northern Lights: and a map of the parish on a large scale, by Mr Burnet, land-surveyor, is preparing for publication, under the patronage of the Duke of Sutherland, who is now sole proprietor.

*Eminent Men.*—Among the most eminent characters who were natives of this parish are the following:—1st, General Mackay, who distinguished himself in the civil wars in the reign of King Charles II. His father, who was a branch of the Reay family, resided for some time in Borley, but afterwards had his principal residence at Scowrie, in Edderachillis. 2d, Robert Donn or Calder, or, as he is sometimes called, Mackay, the celebrated Reay country bard, was also a native of the parish. His lyrics, satires, and songs, are much admired and sung by the natives, and have rendered our mountains and glens classic ground. A volume of these was published in 1829 by Dr Mackay of Dunoon; to which is prefixed a memoir of his life.

*Parochial Register.*—The earliest date of the parochial register is 4th November 1764. It does not contain any register of deaths.

*Antiquities.*—Among these, the first that claim attention are the circular Duns, which appear to have been very numerous in the Highlands. The ruins of ten of these Duns are to be seen in this parish. They appear to have been the residences of some native chieftain; they are often built in low and fertile spots, and, in some places, they are surrounded by several circles of from 12 to 20 feet diameter, which in all probability have been the foundations of the circular booths of the chieftain's dependents. The form of these Duns is the simplest mode of structure that would occur to a rude people. There is a tradition among the natives, that they were built to defend the inmates from the incursions of the wolves. The only remains from which we can judge of the form and structure of these Duns are—a segment of one in Strathmore, about sixteen feet high, near the south base of Ben Hope. It is called "*Dun Dornigill*," *i. e.* Dornadilla's Tower. The tradition is, that it was built by the Scottish king of that name, and used as a hunting residence. The outer circumference is about fifty paces in extent, and consists of two concentric walls, connected by large flags, which served the purpose of strengthening each other, and forming a pathway to the top. The triangular stone which forms the lintel is still seen in the building. The slaty stones of which it is built, bear no marks of



having been shaped by tools, the acute angle being always uppermost.\*

There are also some subterraneous buildings, called "*Leabidh fholaich*," i. e. hiding-places: one of these, lately discovered at the west side of Loch Eriboll Ferry, is about 40 feet long, 6 feet high, and about 6 feet wide, built of dry stone, and covered over by flags; the descent is by regular steps, and the entrance is covered by a flag. It is still in good preservation.—There are several large stones placed on end, either in a circular or elliptical form, which appear to have been places of sepulture; but no traces of writing have been seen on any of these.—Tumuli, and heaps of stones, called "cairns," are of frequent occurrence. In one of these, called "*Cnoc na cnamham*," i. e. the hill of bones, near Keoldale, a small brass elliptical cockade was found two years ago, and a small polished bone, supposed to be used for fastening the military plaid. The tradition is, that it contains the remains of those who fell in battle.—Heads of arrows are occasionally found in the mosses; they are from two to three inches long, formed of a brown, red, or whitish flint-like stone. †

*Buildings.*—There is a pretty large mansion-house at Balnakiel, where some of the Lords of Reay occasionally resided. It was built about ninety years ago. Another building of importance is the Light-house at Cape Wrath, the tower of which is fifty feet high. The building is altogether 350 feet above the level of the sea. It was built in 1827 of granite found at the Cape. Previous to its erection, seldom a winter passed without one or more wrecks; but these are now of rare occurrence. At Rispond there is a good dwelling-house, and a pretty extensive range of houses and sheds for the salmon-boiling and herring-fishing. There is also a pier for sloops of ordinary size to load their cargoes.—The houses of the tacksmen merit no particular notice. Those of the small tenants and cottars are all built of turf or dry stone, plastered on the inside with clay, with the exception of two or three in some hamlets whose western gable has a vent and chimney-stalk.

\* See *Antiquities and Scenery in Scotland* by Rev. Charles Cordiner of Banff, and *Agricultural Survey of the County of Sutherland*, 1806, Appendix.

† The noted Donald M'Leod, *alias* Mac Mhorchie-ic-eoin-mhòir, who was the *Rob Roy* of the North, always carried his bow and arrows, either to the field or the forest. He died in 1623. His figure, represented in relief on the gravestone over his vault in the church of Durness, exhibits him with his bow and arrow. A drawing of this vault, and the gravestone and inscription, was lately executed by order of the Duke of Sutherland.—For further particulars of the history and character of this freebooter, see former *Statistical Account of the Parish of Edderachillis*, and Mackay's *History of the Mackays*.

Several neat cottages, however, built with lime or clay, are commenced in those hamlets where the lots are divided.

### III.—POPULATION.

By a census taken in 1724, the population did not exceed 1000 souls. In 1790 the population was 1182. In the Durness, or second district of the parish, there has been an increase of nearly 50 per cent. since 1815; but in the third or eastern district, Eriboll, the population has diminished since 1815 from 517 to 220. The decrease has been owing to the whole district having been converted into two extensive sheep-farms. The increase in the Durness, or second division, has been owing to the establishment of the herring fishery, and the subdivision of lots in the different hamlets. In 1815 from thirty to forty families emigrated to America.

Population in 1801,	-	1208	
1811,	-	1155	
1821,	-	1004	
1831,	-	1153	
The average of marriages, for the last 7 years, is	-	-	8
of baptisms,	-	-	33½
Total number of persons 1st January 1834,	-	-	1180
Of these, there are under 15 years of age,	-	448	
from 15 to 30,	-	343	
from 30 to 50,	-	185	
from 50 to 70,	-	164	
above 70,	-	40	
			1180
Number of bachelors and widowers above 50,	-	-	13
Unmarried women above 50, (excluding widows,)	-	-	44
Average number of children in each family,	-	-	3½
Number of families in the parish,	-	-	206
chiefly employed in agriculture,	-	-	123
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	-	13
Insane persons,	-	-	2
Fatuous,	-	-	10
Blind,	-	-	4
Deaf and dumb,	-	-	3

*Clans.*—The principal clans in the parish are, those of M'Kay, Sutherland, Campbell, Morrison, and Gunn; the two former generally distinguished by fair hair and blue eyes,—the Campbells and Gunns, by dark eyes and dark complexion.

*Character, &c. of the People.*—The natives are generally lively in their dispositions, social in their habits, and when engaged in labour, either at sea or on land, endure a good deal of fatigue. There are few artisans among them: and, having little or nothing to do in the winter months, many of them are in the habit of visiting and spending the evenings in each other's houses in the different hamlets, hearing the news of the country, repeating the songs of their native bard, or listening to the legendary tales of some venerable *Senachie*.

With the exception of eight families from the south of Scotland, all the natives speak Gaelic. Though a considerable proportion of the young can speak English, yet very few are able to follow out or understand an English sermon. Indeed, even those who speak and understand the English well, always prefer the Gaelic services. Whether this predilection arises from early associations, the influence of habit, or the greater ease, familiarity, and simplicity in the style of the speakers, they think themselves more edified by discourses in that tongue. It cannot be said, however, that the Gaelic language is spoken with such emphasis and purity in this country as in some parts of the western Highlands; and, though it has been a good deal corrupted by the younger people who now speak English, it has not lost much ground.

The principle *amusements* are—playing at the ball and shinty on the fine sands of Balnakiel. The whole population turns out on old Christmas and new-year's day, and even old men of seventy are to be seen mingling in the crowd, remaining till night puts an end to the contest. Indeed, the inhabitants of this parish have always been noted for the enthusiasm with which they engaged in these sports. To keep up the tone of action, they retire in the evening, and mingle in the dance to the music of the bagpipe, regardless of the bruises and scars of the contest. Of this sport, Dr M'Leod of Campsie has given a very humorous and graphical description in his "*Teachdaire Gaidhleach*." Hallow-e'en eve is also a festive day in the calendar, but is not kept with such enthusiasm as formerly. Superstitious observances, belief in witches, and other enchantments, are gradually wearing away,—though even a grave elder may occasionally be met with, who will quote scripture, and relate many traditionary stories, as evidences of his faith.

As to the *habits* of the people,—it cannot be said that they are remarkable for cleanliness: the huts they occupy,—the smoke arising from the fire in the centre of the house, and forming a canopy over them,—and the cattle entering by the same door with the inmates,—are not favourable to personal cleanliness. The change of *dress* within the last twenty or thirty years has been very marked, both with males and females. Instead of the tartan or kelt coat and trowsers, spun and dyed at home, when each family had their own wool, hardly any thing is to be seen on the young but the fustian jacket and trowsers, or the lighter tartan of the shops, and here and there the blue and fancy cloths of Leeds. The blue

mantle and the well-spun blue gown of the fair sex is superseded by the prints and Merinos of modern times. The head is in many cases adorned or covered by a gauze or muslin cap, and now and then by a straw-bonnet. Umbrellas are more numerous than great-coats or mantles. It is questionable whether, with these changes, the morals or comforts of the people have been improved.

It could not be expected that a people who had led chiefly a pastoral life were to be soon reconciled to the change which placed them in crowded hamlets upon the shore. The manufacture of kelp, herring-fishing, road-making, and other occasional sources of industry during the summer and harvest, have, however, called out the latent industry of the young; but, as there has been, of late years, no encouragement to enter the army, and as they have no opportunities of learning trades at home, they are tempted to marry too young; they then reside for some years with their parents, and divide the lot of two or three acres, chiefly reclaimed from moor, at the very time it promised to support the family with bread and potatoes. Thus, the wants of a new and rising family are to be provided for, and poverty and a high rate of population are kept up.

The habits of dram-drinking, acquired by both sexes in their annual migrations to Caithness, and in the course of their mixing together in crowded lodgings there, have tended to deteriorate the morals of the people considerably. Their attendance on religious ordinances, however, is pretty regular; and in most cases, the evening and morning devotions of the family are offered up. On the Sabbath evenings, the Shorter Catechism is taught; or they congregate together in some commodious house in the township, to repeat the Shorter Catechism and read the Scriptures. These meetings are always commenced and concluded by prayer and praise, and often tend to spread a moral and religious influence over the hamlet. Smuggling, foreign and domestic, is now totally suppressed.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—The whole of this parish, (with the exception of about one-twentieth part,) has been converted into four extensive sheep-walks, yielding on an average L. 500 each of rent. From the irregular surface, and small patches in cultivation, it is impossible, without measurement, to ascertain the exact number of acres. The following is an approximation:—

				Imperial acres.
1.	Balnakiel farm and herds,	-	-	100
2.	Keoldale, do.	-	-	60
3.	Eriboll do.	and subtenants,	-	80
4.	Ben Hope do.	for herds,	-	6
	Glebe,	-	-	12
	120 small tenants and cottars, with 2 acres each, on an average,	-	-	240
Total,				498

Along the shores, straths, and glens under sheep, a considerable proportion of the land is arable,—perhaps about 300 acres. Of good pasture capable of being brought into cultivation by spade husbandry, there are 1000 acres at least. The amount might be made equal to what is already in cultivation by the tenants and cottars, and capable of supporting three times the present population,—even though the whole of the mountain pasture and some of the straths and shores should be left under sheep.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per acre is from 20s. to 30s.; but to all arable land there is attached a right of pasture on a common hill. The estimated value of grazing for sheep or widders is about 2s. 6d. each on the great sheep-farms. Cows are pastured on rich meadows at L. 3 per annum. Including stock farms, kelp, and salmon fishery, the rental of the parish is about L. 2550.

*Wages.*—Day labourers receive 1s. 6d. per day; artisans, from 2s. to 3s.; farm-servants L. 6 per annum, 7 bolls meal, and 20 barrels potatoes, and one cow's grass; farm or domestic female servants, L. 3 per annum and board.

*Breeds of Live-Stock.*—The only breed of sheep is the Cheviot or white-faced, with the exception of about 300 cross or black-faced, kept by small tenants and cottars on the common grazing. To the improvement of the former very great attention is paid—both wool and carcase fetching average prices at market. The principal breed of black-cattle is the Highland, reared by small tenants. The few milch cows on the sheep-walks are chiefly Ayrshire. With the exception of six pair of Clydesdale horses kept for husbandry by the sheep-farmers, all the rest of the horses are small Highland ponies.

*Husbandry.*—Several acres of waste or marshy land have been drained at Balnakiel, but are laid out in pasture. The old mode of reclaiming waste land was by making *lazy beds*, i. e. by peeling one part of the ground and laying it over another of equal space. Trenching was never used, but a better and more econo-

mical system is now employed. The runrig system is wearing out, and every township is in the course of being lotted out in regular divisions, and cottages are building on each lot. Though the expense and labour of building these be great to the small tenants, especially in a country where masons and carpenters must be brought from other places, yet they submit to the charge, though no leases are given, and have every confidence, that, under the liberal and enlightened management of the family of Sutherland, they will be furnished with new sources of industry.

The sheep-farmers have leases of nineteen years; and all of them have lately made considerable improvements in diking and surface draining.

*Fisheries.—Herring.*—The principal fisheries are the herring, salmon, and lobster. The early herring fishing commences in June. At this season, the fish are so rich that it is difficult to cure them, and they are sent off weekly to market. The late fishing commences about the middle of July and continues till September. It was only of late that the out sea fishing commenced on this coast. And even yet, it hardly remunerates those engaged in it. A smaller but superior species of herring is found occasionally in Loch Eriboll; but it is chiefly used for home consumption. Ten boats are employed at Rispond: they are each manned by four men and a boy, and cost each L. 36.

*Lobster Fishing.*—The lobster fishing commences in May and is carried on with little intermission till August. Six boats of fourteen feet keel were employed last season, each boat having two men, and being furnished with twenty or more nets inclosed in circular iron cylindrical hoops or rings of two and a-half feet diameter; a piece of herring or gray fish being tied in the centre of the mesh for bait. The nets are cast into the sea within a few yards of the shore by one of the men, while the other rows forward; and they are raised in about an hour after. This is continued from sunset to sunrise. When a lobster is caught, the large claws are fastened together by a strong packing thread,—otherwise, by the muscular strength of their claws, they would soon destroy each other. When thus secured, they are conveyed in the morning to the perforated floating chest, until they are called for weekly by the *welled* smacks.

*Cod and Ling Fishing.*—Cod and ling, though abundant on the coast, have not been much fished by the natives.

*Salmon Fishing.*—The only rivers in which salmon are caught

are the Hope and Dinard; on both of these there are cruives and coble fishing. The fishing commences in the end of March and ceases in August. The spawning months are October and November. The following table shows the weight of salmon and grilse caught during the last two years.

	lbs. Salmon.	lbs. Grilse.	Rivers.
1832,	624	1946	- Dinard.
1833,	181	687	-
1832,	1488	4650	- Hope.
1833,	2166	7895	-

Several of the larger burns or streams have salmon but, from their distance and the difficulty of access, fishing in these would not remunerate the expense.\*

*Produce.*—The following is the average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, viz.

900 bolls of grain of all kinds, at 18s.	-	-	-	L. 800	0	0
20 acres turnip at L. 5,	-	-	-	-	100	0
1000 bolls potatoes at 8s.,	-	-	-	-	400	0
11000 stones hay, cultivated and meadow,	-	-	-	-	270	0
Cattle sold by small tenants,	-	-	-	-	100	0
Sheep sold by stock farmers, being the average for the last six years, viz.						
1880 ewes at 11s.,	-	-	-	L. 1006	0	0
2000 widders at L. 1,	-	-	-	2000	0	0
3210 stones wool, at 15s.,	-	-	-	2407	0	0
					5418	0
500 barrels herring at L. 1,	-	-	-	-	500	0
5842 lobsters at 3d.,	-	-	-	-	73	0
2346 lbs. salmon at 5d.,	-	-	-	L. 47	0	0
6782 lbs grilse at 4d.,	-	-	-	146	0	0
					193	0
40 tons kelp at L. 3,	-	-	-	-	120	0
Miscellaneous produce,	-	-	-	-	27	0
					L. 8000	0

*N. B.*—It must be observed, that meal is imported to the parish to the average amount of 300 bolls annually.

*Kelp manufacture.*—The only manufacture worthy of notice is the kelp. It commences in June, and in favourable seasons is finished early in July. It is cut every alternate year, spread out on the shores, and when nearly dried is put up in heaps and burnt in

\* It is the universal belief of the oldest and most experienced fishermen acquainted with different waters, that salmon never deposit their spawn except in rivers; that they universally and instinctively frequent the rivers on which they were spawned; that, however numerous the fish in traversing the shores, and when entering the estuary or frith, each turns to that direction where the river in which it was spawned empties itself. Where a stranger can hardly discern any difference, a practised eye will single out the fish of different rivers from each other, and view them almost as varieties of the same species. It is true, that large shoals of salmon belonging to different rivers, on their return from the ocean, often congregate at estuaries, and are caught in the net; but the stranger fish, on tasting the water, and entering fairly into the channel of the river, soon returns, not finding the velocity, temperature, colour, or taste of the water congenial to its habits.

long narrow kilns of loose stones of 2 feet wide, and 12 or 16 feet long; when thoroughly melted and well-wrought, it is, after cooling, broken up to heaps, and covered with turf till it is shipped.

*Navigation.*—There are three small sloops at Rispond, of the respective tonnage of 25, 37, and 51. These are managed by ten men, and are principally employed in the coasting trade. One of them goes occasionally to Hamburg with early herrings.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—Thurso is the nearest market-town, 65 miles distant. There are no villages, the population all residing in hamlets along the shores, containing from 4 or 5 to 20 families. The means of communication have been much improved during the last three years, by the liberality of the late Duke of Sutherland. Formerly, the post-office was at Bonar Bridge, a distance of 62 miles, to which there was a runner sent once a-week at the sole expense of a few subscribers. There is now a post-office twice a-week to Tongue. The days of dispatch are Monday and Thursday; of arrival, Tuesday and Friday,—to suit the Golspie mail, which crosses the interior to Tongue every Monday and Thursday. There is a weekly runner to Scowrie. There is also a monthly carrier to Tain; but almost all imports and exports are by sea.

The *roads* are, *1st*, a road from the Kyle of Durness to Cape Wrath, executed by the Light-house Commissioners in 1828, 11 miles in length; *2d*, from Eriboll by Strathmore, till its junction with the Tongue road to the south, 19 miles; *3d*, the main line leading from west to east,—34 miles round by Loch Eriboll, or, by crossing the ferry, 24 miles. With the exception of 12 miles, commenced ten years ago by statute-labour, these roads were completed by the late Duke of Sutherland, and have completely opened up the country to new sources of industry, and the gratification of the traveller, and the speculations of the capitalist. There is an excellent bridge over the Dinard, and a chain-boat over the Hope.

The *harbours* are, Loch Eriboll, Rispond, and Port Our, at the termination of the Cape Wrath road, and Smo; the last only for boats. At Rispond, there is a basin and pier, and rings fastened to the rocks in the bay; but this is not reckoned very safe in north-east gales and spring tides. Loch Eriboll, in the bay, where there is a church, is reckoned a very safe anchorage. A slip for boats has been also made at Clashcarnach, three miles east of



the cape, where the light-house yacht lands the oil and necessaries for the light-house; but is seldom attempted in stormy weather with northerly winds.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church is situated within half a mile of the manse, at Balnakiel Bay. About three-fourths of the population, or all within six miles, attend. Its distance from the extremity to the south-east is 26 miles, and from the western extremity 12 miles. It was built in 1619, and the aisle added in 1692; it has no galleries, and contains 300 sittings, which are all free. It stands much in need of repair and enlargement. The practice of burying within the walls has been discontinued for nearly a century. The manse was rebuilt in 1830, and is commodious. The glebe, including its hill grazings and pertinents, may be worth L. 30 per annum. The stipend is L. 150, and is on the list of small livings augmented by act of Parliament in 1812.

In the Eriboll district, there is sermon preached every alternate Sabbath; it is connected with the Milness district of the parish of Tongue, twelve miles distant. The missionary here is supported solely by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, on a salary of L. 50. There are no Dissenters or Roman Catholics. The sacrament is dispensed once a-year, in summer. The number of communicants is 70; but, on such occasions, tokens to the amount of 150 are distributed to communicants who attend from neighbouring parishes. Collections in aid of religious and charitable institutions are occasionally made,—the average annual amount of which may be L. 3.

The schools in the parish are, parochial, 1; Assembly, 1; subscription, 2; in which the ordinary elementary branches are taught. The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is the minimum, or L. 24: of the General Assembly's L. 20. The school-fees in either of these do not exceed L. 4 per annum. The former has not the legal accommodations; those of the latter are new and sufficient. The subscription schools are chiefly taught during the winter. In some remote hamlets and families, boys are hired during the winter months to teach, at the rate of 20s. per month, and board. A considerable number of cottars and poor tenants, who have access to the parochial school, have not of late years been much alive to the benefits of education,—which may arise from their poverty, or want of confidence in the ability and diligence of a teacher so indifferently remunerated.

The number of persons betwixt 6 and 15 who cannot read or

write is 90 ; of those upwards of 15, is 216. It must be borne in mind, however, that the majority of those not included in this calculation cannot write. It is to be hoped that the district where the Assembly school is situated will, ere long, derive considerable benefit from the school, both in a moral and intellectual point of view.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of poor receiving parochial aid is 45,—in sums of from 3s. to 8s. or 10s. each. The annual amount of contributions for their relief does not exceed L. 20, viz. church weekly contributions, L. 12, with the interest of a legacy, L. 2, and alms, L. 6. It must be noticed, however, that in this, as well as in other Highland parishes, where the circulating medium is very scarce, the poor are regularly furnished with meal, fleeces, clothes, &c. in value at least equal to the sums of money annually divided by the kirk-session. It is to be regretted that, of late, the poor do not consider it degrading to be on the roll of the session funds. There are no assessments for the poor, or charitable institutions; yet, when extraordinary calls are made, the inhabitants have always manifested a commendable liberality.

*Inns.*—There are three inns, or rather houses licensed to retail whisky. But hitherto, travellers have been in most cases obliged to draw on the hospitality of the inhabitants. Comfortable inns and stabling are, however, now in progress.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most important change since the last Statistical Account has been the introduction of sheep-farming, which commenced about thirty years ago, and has been extended since. Though in some respects this may have augmented the revenue of the proprietor, and added to the commercial wealth of the nation, yet it is very questionable, if it has added, in the meantime, to the intellectual, moral, or religious superiority of the inhabitants.

The division of the parish into such extensive farms has also suppressed almost entirely the *middle classes* of society, who paid rents of from L. 10 to L. 50, and has thereby tended to extinguish, in a great degree, the intelligence and laudable emulation of the lower classes. The former generally felt a desire of giving every advantage of education to their children at school, and their example diffused an emulation among the latter. The great sheep-farmers who are resident employ teachers in their families; the schools are attended by the poorer classes, who are all on the same

level,—and that, for the most part, during the winter only. Lads when they can handle an oar remove to Caithness, and after two or three years training there, getting the share of a boat on credit, they have arrived at the summit of their ambition, and marry. From the extinction of the middling classes of society, the writer hereof, in common with several of his brethren, has to regret the difficulty of finding men suitable for being ordained elders. It cannot be expected, however worthy the individuals may be who may be nominated to this office, that while poor and in some cases illiterate, they can be so influential in checking immorality, stimulating to intellectual and religious attainments, and suppressing superstitious and enthusiastic feeling.

While such improvements have been made on the physical aspect of the parish, by the liberality of the late Duke, and which there is every confidence will be continued, in making the harbours and creeks more accessible and available, it is hoped that the tenants will gradually acquire the knowledge of artisanship, as well as of fishing, and thus add to the productive capabilities of the country, and their own individual comfort.

*September 1834.*

## PARISH OF ASSYNT.

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. CHARLES GORDON, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—The word *Assynt*, or *Assint*, is supposed to be a Gaelic compound, “*as agus innnt*,” signifying out and in, evidently referring to, and descriptive of, the general outline of the parish. Indeed, a glance at the map of Assynt makes it extremely probable that this derivation is correct. Other derivations have been given, connected with legendary traditions; but the above seems the preferable one.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish contains 97,000 acres of surface. Its extreme length, viz. from Cromalt to the point of Store, is about 36 miles. Its greatest breadth from Inverkirrig to Ardvar, about 18 miles. In breadth, however, it varies much. The parish is situated in the north-west part of the county of Sutherland, and is thus bounded: on the north, it is divided from the parish of Edderachillis, in the Reay country, by an arm of the sea of considerable breadth, called the Kyle, which runs betwixt both parishes from west to east; on the east and south, by Kin-cardine, Creich, Lairg, and Lochbroom; and on the west, by the Atlantic.

*Topographical Appearances.*—Few districts in Scotland are more mountainous. The general aspect of the parish is rugged. Many of the mountains are of considerable altitude. The most remarkable of these are, Benmore, Cuniack, Suilvhen, or Sugar-loaf, Cannisb, &c.

The first mentioned, Benmore, or Conval, is supposed to be the loftiest mountain in the county—about 8230 feet above the level of the sea. It is seen in various directions from a considerable distance. Ptarmigan are easily got here, especially during snow storms.

Cuniack has a most romantic and peculiar shape and appearance.

ance. It is a lofty ridge, extending southwards from Unapool to Loch Assynt, where it terminates in a minute peak. On the west it is lofty, precipitous, and inaccessible. On the east it is more gradual.

Suilven, or Sugar-loaf, as it is called by sea-faring people, on account of its resemblance to that article, is southward of Lochinver, and near the boundary of Coigach, in the county of Cromarty.

These mountains are often covered with snow. Game is found in these and in other districts of the parish, but by no means in such abundance as before the introduction of sheep-farming.

The other hills, which are extremely numerous, are of less note, being diminutive in comparison of those we have mentioned. Most of these abound in springs, and the quality of water is excellent. The lower part of the parish, particularly the Store district, is not so well supplied with this essential of life.

*Caves.*—There are several caves, and some natural arches, to be found, chiefly along the coast, and some in the interior. There are two which are often visited by the tourist, within two miles of the parish church, and on the Stronchrubie farm. Into one of these, if you enter, you must proceed in a creeping posture for several yards, through a rugged and dark passage, when you find yourself suddenly introduced into a well-lighted and somewhat spacious apartment. There is another cave of large dimensions near the point of Store.

The extent of the coast from the water of Inverkirkig, round the point of Store, to Ardvar, is about twenty miles.

The shore, in general, is bold, rocky, and dangerous; though in some places there is a fine sandy bottom, and safe landing.

There are many islands, most of them, however, so small as to be utterly insignificant; some of these are merely bare rocks, affording neither pasture nor shelter. The largest and most valuable is the island of Oldney; its length probably a mile, its greatest breadth a quarter of a mile. It is attached to the sheep farm of that name, and is valuable as a grazing. Its insular situation renders herding and fences unnecessary.

Crona, a little flat island adjoining Oldney.

Soya and Klett, two small islands on the south side of Rhustore, attached to the adjoining farm of Filin.

*Meteorology.*—There has been no record of observations kept. The climate is extremely wet, and high winds prevail. From what has already been said regarding the mountainous nature of

the district, and its proximity to the sea, it will readily be concluded, that we have much rainy weather—so much is this the case, that the harvesting of our crop, is an operation extremely precarious. We frequently experience severe storms of thunder and lightning, and two years ago, a young man was instantaneously deprived of life by the electric fluid. At the same time some cattle also were struck dead. Instances of this kind are fortunately rare. The climate, though severe, is upon the whole salubrious, and the inhabitants healthy. Consumption, however, is not unfrequent, and is generally induced by exposure, during the long harvest nights, at the herring-fishing. The prevailing wind is westerly, and invariably accompanied by torrents of rain. With easterly winds we generally have dry weather, but these are piercing and intensely cold.

*Hydrography.*—Every hill and valley, particularly in the heights of the parish, is abundantly supplied with springs of water, some of which are very large. There is one at Achumore, ten or twelve feet in circumference. There are several beautiful lakes, some of which deserve to be particularly noticed.

*Loch Assynt.*—Its extreme length is  $6\frac{3}{4}$  miles; its greatest breadth about a mile. It is a fresh water lake, and its banks in most places covered with brushwood. The scenery altogether is most delightful, and cannot fail to attract the notice of the intelligent tourist. It abounds in trout of various kinds, and as there is no restriction as to angling, or setting nets, the few inhabitants in the neighbourhood are able, in the proper season, to supply themselves, with an agreeable and wholesome addition to their daily fare.

Loch Assynt possesses considerable attraction for the angler. About two years ago, it was visited by Sir William Jardine, the naturalist, and others, who minutely inspected the different kinds of trout found here and in other lochs in the neighbourhood, the result of whose researches must no doubt prove interesting and useful. Before there was a road from the height of the parish to the shores, there were several boats kept on the loch for the purposes of carriage. At the east end of the loch stands the church. Next in size to Loch Assynt is Cam-Loch, *i. e.* the crooked loch, in the Elphine, or highest district of the parish. It is a beautiful lake, very irregular in shape, as its name implies. Trout are found here in abundance, as well as in Loch Assynt. Cam-Loch is in a most sequestered spot.

*Friths.*—1. The Kyle, already mentioned, is an arm of the sea, dividing Assynt from Edderachillis. 2. On the south side of Rhustore, there is an arm of the sea running into the bay of Loch-inver, which affords safe anchorage for vessels.

*Waterfalls.*—There is a fall at Inverkirkig, and another near the boundaries of the glebe. The former possesses considerable attraction for the admirers of nature. With regard to the latter, except when there is a great body of water, after heavy rain, it appears insignificant.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—From Ledbeg to Achumore, a distance of eight miles, there is abundance of limestone; it then disappears, and little more is seen of it, till the traveller reaches Duirness. On the Stronchrubie farm is a stupendous ridge of limestone rock, interspersed with strata of sandstone. The scenery here is truly majestic. In the vicinity of populous cities, this rock could not fail to prove the source of much wealth. It extends about a mile and a half, overhanging the public road. It is almost perpendicular, except about the centre. In many parts it is mantled with ivy. Birds of prey have their nests here. Its height is probably 200 feet. Beyond Achumore there is no limestone found. The pasture on limestone bottom is uncommonly rich.

*Botany.*—The alpine vegetation of the parish of Assynt is very similar to that which is met with in equal elevations in the greater part of the north of Scotland. As types may be mentioned,

*Saussurea alpina*  
*Hieracium alpinum*  
*Asplenium viride*

*Cherleria sedoides*  
*Vaccinium uliginosum,*

as plants which are not very rare in alpine districts: but less generally diffused than such as these last named, may be mentioned, *Carex pulla*, *Carex pauciflora*, and *Arbutus alpina*.

The limestone districts in the parish are characterized by *Epipactis latifolia*, *Dryas octopetala*—the latter in great profusion, and perhaps, in Sutherlandshire, only growing on limestone or micaceous rocks.

Among the rare plants found in alpine or subalpine districts of the parish, may be mentioned *Pyrus Aria*, *Apargia alpina*, *Luzula arcuata*,—this last found in Scotland only in three stations, of which Benmore, Assynt, is one.

*Silene maritima* also grows on Benmore.

The following may be named as yielded by the bogs in the parish:—

Carex filiformis	Drosera rotundifolia
—— limosa	Sparganium fluitans
Utricularia minor	Cladium Mariscus, in a swamp half-way
—— intermedia	between Kylestromo and Badcall.
Drosera Anglica, in profusion	Ligusticum Scoticum is abundant on the
—— longifolia	shores in some places.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There are no printed or manuscript accounts of Assynt extant, so far as the narrator knows. Various traditions, however, speak of individuals, noted in their day, living in or connected with the parish. Among these we may mention Neil Macleod, who resided at Ardvrack Castle (now a ruin), built on the banks of Loch Assynt, on a peninsula, situated within two miles of the eastern extremity of the loch.

It is said that the unfortunate Marquis of Montrose, who figured so conspicuously as a Royalist in the civil war in the reign of Charles I., after being defeated by General Strachan at Invercarroon, fled towards Assynt, and was betrayed by Macleod, in whom he had reposed confidence.

There are correct plans and maps of Assynt in the possession of the noble proprietrix, and a recent map of the county, both minute and accurate, has been published.

The Duchess-Countess of Sutherland is sole proprietrix of the parish. It has been in the possession of her Grace's family since the early part of the eighteenth century, when it was purchased by the then Earl of Sutherland, grandfather of the present Countess. In the former Statistical Account, published in 1794, is the following narrative:—" *State of property, &c.*—The property of this parish has, perhaps, undergone as few changes as any. Tradition, and even documents declare, that it was a forest of the ancient Thanes of Sutherland. One of these prime Thanes gave it in vassalage to one Mac-Kry-Cul, who in ancient times held the coast of Coigach, that part of it presently (1793) called the village of Ullapool. The noble Thane thus made Assynt over, as Mac-Kry-Cul had recovered a great quantity of cattle carried off from the county of Sutherland by foreign invaders, Scandinavians, who burnt the great fir forests in this and the neighbouring coast.

" Mac-Kry-Cul's family, by the fate of war in those days of old, being reduced to one heir-female, she was given in marriage to a younger son of Macleod, Laird of Lewis, the Thane of Sutherland consenting thereto, and also making this parish over to the new married couple with its superiority. The result of this marriage was fourteen successive lairds of the name of Macleod.



“ In 1660, or about that time, this parish and its superiority became the property of the Earl of Seaforth, who made it over to a younger son of his family, whose successors possessed it for three or four generations. Thereafter, it was purchased by Lady Strathnaver, who gave it as a present to her Noble and no less deserving grandson, the late William, Earl of Sutherland, father of the present Right Honourable Countess of Sutherland, married to Earl Gower, heir-apparent to the Marquis of Stafford. Thus the barony and parish of Assynt reverted to the Noble family who gave it to Mac-Kry-Cul.”

The term of the Thane of Sutherland's charter to Macleod was, “ as long as a cow gives milk, and waves beat on a rock.”

*Family of Assynt.*—The whole of the estate and parish of Assynt once belonged to the Macleods of Assynt, a branch of the ancient family of the Macleods of Lewis. The first of the Assynt branch was Norman, second son of Torquil, fourth Baron of Lewis, from whom he got Assynt as his patrimony about the year 1360. From Norman, the estate passed through nine generations, to Neil, ninth baron, who, from a combination of his enemies to effect his ruin, and other unfortunate events, was denuded of his estate about the year 1679. There were encumbrances on the property of long standing, and the laird having become security for friends, in several small sums, some of his more powerful neighbours, taking advantage of his indolence, and the difficulty of access to public justice, bought up his debts, by which means they carried off his whole estate for less than half its value; and though both he and his heirs raised several actions for the recovery of their just rights, they never obtained any redress. To such a length was the spite of his enemies carried against this unfortunate gentleman, that, not satisfied with having deprived him of his estate, a criminal process was instituted against him before the Court of Justiciary on various charges, of which he was finally acquitted by the verdict of a jury of his countrymen, as appears from the records of that Court. His estate, having fallen into the hands of the Seaforth family, was forfeited to the Crown, together with the possessions of that family in 1715, and was sold in 1758 to the late Earl of Sutherland, so that it now forms part of the vast territorial property of her Grace the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. On the death of Neil, the last Baron of Assynt, without issue, the representation of the family devolved on his brother John, who left a son Donald, a captain in the Dutch ser-

vice, and he having married an heiress, was enabled thereby to purchase the estate of Geanies in Ross-shire. He was succeeded by his eldest son Hugh, and Hugh by his son Donald Macleod of Geanies, the late venerable Sheriff-depute of Ross and Cromarty, who filled that office with credit to himself and advantage to his country nearly sixty years; having departed this life in January 1834, in the 89th year of his age. His eldest son predeceased his father, leaving a son, still a minor, the present representative of the family.\*

*Parochial Register.*—There is no register of date previous to 1798. Since that period, births and marriages have been recorded with tolerable regularity, but there is no register of deaths.

*Antiquities.*—1. Ardrack Castle, supposed to be built about the year 1581 or 1591 by the Macleods, who originally came from Lewis. It has for a considerable period been in ruins, but appears to have been strongly built and fortified.

2. Calda House, a more modern building, erected by the Mackenzies, who succeeded the Macleods as Lairds of Assynt. This building was destroyed by fire, (some say designedly,) about 100 years ago. Nothing remained but the bare walls.

3. There is a very large dun or heap at Clachtoll, the remains of a Druidical temple, with a double line of stone wall on the landward side; towards the sea it is sufficiently protected by that element, and a rocky shore. It used to be called “Tighe tal-mhidh na Druinich,” *i. e.* the earthly house of the Druids.

4. Close to the parish church there is an enclosed burying-ground, in which are interred several of the Macleods of Assynt.

This building is evidently part of what was once a place of worship. The following tradition connected with it explains the cause of its being built :

One Angus Macleod, supposed to be the great-grandson of the first Laird of Assynt of that name, had a quarrel with some neighbouring family. Out of revenge, he set fire to their chapel or place of worship. The consequence of this sacrilegious act was, his being excommunicated by the Pope. The displeasure of the Roman Pontiff was a serious matter in those days. Angus submitted, and asked forgiveness at Rome. This was granted, but by way of penance, he was enjoined to erect three places of worship,

\* When the estate was sold, as mentioned above, some small compensation for the losses of the family was granted by the Crown to the then proprietor, Hugh Macleod Esq. of Geanies.

the remains of one of which we are now describing. A second was built at Inver, and the third at Store.

5. On the Stronchrubie farm, and near the high road, there may be seen an extraordinary mass of stone and lime, having the appearance of having been in former times a part of some very large and thick building, such as an old castle. The lime seems as if infused into the mass. As there is not the least vestige of any such building in the neighbourhood, it is difficult to account for it, unless we suppose it to have assumed its present form in consequence of some volcanic eruption.

There are no modern buildings of any note in the parish, though there are several tolerably good dwelling-houses.

### III.—POPULATION.

By census 1881, the population was 3161—1503 males, and 1658 females.

In 1760 the population was	1800
1801	2419
1821	2803

So that, upon the whole, the population has been on the increase. Of the present population about 1400 are attached to the church and parish of Store.

Yearly average of births for the last seven years,	88
marriages,	14
Number of families,	375
Average number of individuals in each family,	5
Families chiefly employed in agriculture,	461
trade,	between 20 and 30
All other families,	90

There are no nobility or people of independent fortune resident in the parish.

*Language.*—The Gaelic language is still universal in Assynt, and the only medium of religious instruction. The English language, however, is making slow but sure progress. The youth of the parish are ambitious of acquiring it, being sensible that the want of it proves a great bar to their advancement in life. It is likely, nevertheless, that Assynt is one of the very last districts in which the Gaelic language shall cease to be the language of the people. It is remarkable that the Gaelic School Society will probably prove the means, at a remote period, of the expulsion of the Gaelic language from the Highlands. The teachers employed by that useful society, to whom we owe much, taught the young to read the Scriptures in their native tongue. This implanted a desire to acquire knowledge on other subjects, which induced them to have recourse to the English language as the medium of communication.

*Character of the People.*—The character of the people may be said to be good. They are kind, civil, and extremely hospitable; patient of labour, and capable of enduring much bodily fatigue. In general they prefer making immense exertions at times, to more moderate but constant labour. They live sparingly. Their chief articles of food are herrings and potatoes. Some attention has, of late, been paid to cleanliness and neatness about their dwellings, but very much remains to be done. Upon the whole, they may be said to be contented with their situations. They are naturally shrewd and intelligent, and regular in their attendance on public worship. Poaching and smuggling, particularly the latter, were carried on to an alarming extent, and proved extremely prejudicial to the morals of the people. Now, the narrator is happy to be able to say, that, through the judicious and determined exertions of the Noble proprietor, aided by the gentlemen who have the management, such irregularities are almost unknown amongst us.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

From situation and climate, the greater part of Assynt, particularly the interior, is peculiarly adapted for pasturage. Accordingly a large portion of it is laid out in sheep-walks, viz. Ledbeg, Filin, &c. at a rent of L. 540; Achumore, L. 338; Ardvar, L. 220; Stronchrubie, L. 205; and Ledmore, L. 80.

It will thus be seen that sheep-farming is carried on to a considerable extent. It is also prosecuted systematically.

The great bulk, however, of the population dwell along the shores, where they have the benefit of fishing. They occupy lots of land at rents ranging from L. 2 to L. 5. The land is not high rented, but the occupants, in general, are in straitened circumstances. This arises from the over-crowded state of the population. On the lot of land which, according to the rental book, is assigned to only one family, two are frequently found residing. This is the true cause of our poverty, and, unless emigration on a large scale takes place, matters must soon come to a painful crisis. At the same time, from want of climate, a great part of Assynt is unfit for cultivation.

*Rents.*—Of old, the valued rent of the parish was L. 1000 Scots. In the year 1794, it was L. 1000 Sterling. In the year 1812, when there was a general setting of the farms through the parish, it was about L. 5000; now it is reduced to something less than L. 3000.

*Quarries.*—From Ledbeg to Achumore the soil is limestone

About thirty years ago, an attempt was made to quarry marble both at Ledbeg, and in the immediate vicinity of the church. The marble was found susceptible of a very fine polish, and an enterprising individual, a native of Newcastle, commenced quarrying. Roads were formed, or rather tracts for the heavy waggons, from Ledbeg to Unapool, a distance of sixteen miles. This was an undertaking of considerable difficulty, and after a large quantity was shipped, it was found attended with such expense, that it was impossible to compete with quarries, in more eligible situations, and the project was dropped.

*Salmon Fisheries.*—There are no fisheries in the parish deserving the name, except that on the water of Kirkag, and that which leads from Loch Assynt to Lochinver. These are let at a moderate rent.

*Navigation.*—There are very few vessels belonging to Assynt. Mr Macdonald, Lochinver, has one or two. Several vessels, however, are yearly employed on our coasts in the herring trade, and a few in exporting the produce of the parish, which consists chiefly of wool.

There are no associations in the parish for the encouragement or improvement of industry; but the Noble proprietors supply this deficiency in a great measure, by rewarding the industrious, and thus inciting to additional exertions.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Markets.*—There is no market-town within the parish; neither have any markets been established. It is intended to establish a cattle market at Inshnadamph. This would prove very advantageous to the people, and save them the expense and trouble of driving their cattle to a greater distance. The Kyle tryst, held in the vicinity of Bonar Bridge, forty miles beyond Inshnadamph, is the nearest cattle-market at present.\*

Lochinver is the only place deserving the name of a village. In it are some good houses, shops, and several tradesmen. In the immediate vicinity is a manufactory, for the preserving of butcher-meat, fish, and vegetables, which affords our sailors, and others, the luxury of fresh meat, whilst they are hundreds of leagues out at sea. It is carried on under the auspices of Mr Macdonald, an extensive and enterprising sheep-farmer. Regular employment is thus given to a number of tradesmen and labourers.

*Means of Communication, &c.*—In this village, also, is a post-

\* Since writing the above a cattle-market has been established, and is likely to prove a permanent benefit.

office. There is another in the immediate neighbourhood of the church. The mails arrive regularly twice a-week. This is one of the greatest improvements imaginable. A letter or newspaper from London we have the fifth day. In connection with the post-office, I am naturally led to notice our excellent roads. Nothing has so much contributed to the external improvement of the country as these, by which this interesting district, till lately inaccessible, and comparatively unknown, has been opened up to the public; and thus, advantages secured to the inhabitants, which our ancestors would have deemed impossible. This improvement is attributable, in a great measure, to the Noble proprietors, and, were there no other benefit conferred on it, Assynt, on this account, owes a lasting debt of gratitude to the late excellent Duke of Sutherland. The length of road constructed from Aultnacaelgach to Store, including branches to Unapool and Inverkirrig, exceeds forty miles. To this may be added several miles of bye roads for the exclusive benefit of the tenantry. There is a small convenient harbour at Lochinver, where a pier has been erected. There are some other harbours, or rather creeks, at Nedd, Oldney, and Ardvar, all lying on the north side of the point of Store, which afford shelter and anchorage.

*Savings' Bank.*—There was a savings' bank established about four years ago, and it is now in full operation. It has already proved very beneficial. It is under the patronage of the Sutherland family, who encourage industry by giving a higher rate of interest than the banks do, for all sums not exceeding L. 20 Sterling.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated within nine miles of the southern boundary of the parish—a situation extremely inconvenient for the people. The great bulk of the population dwell at distances from the church, varying from twelve to eighteen miles. The intervening population is very small. The church was built upwards of sixty years ago, but was re-slatted and seated about twenty-five years ago. It is seated for 260 or 280 sitters. It is small, but comfortable. There are two other regular preaching stations, where the minister has to officiate, viz. Lochinver, distant fourteen miles, to which there is a good road leading; and Kyle-side, nearly the same distance, but without any road at all. In the former district there is preaching once in the three weeks generally, or once a month at farthest; in the other, once in the six or seven weeks. At Lochinver there is a pretty good house built by subscription, to which the late Duke, and the Duchess-Coun-

tess of Sutherland largely contributed. It is only partially seated as yet. It is also used as a General Assembly school-house during the week. In the Kyle side public worship has to be performed in the open air, however inclement the weather. Strong applications for additional accommodation in both districts have been made to the Religious Instruction Commissioners, but hitherto without success. There is a Government or Parliamentary church at Store, built in 1829. To this is attached a population of 1403, leaving upwards of 1700 scattered over a vast extent of inaccessible surface, as has already been described.

In order to carry on pastoral superintendence properly, a minister is required at Lochinver, and another at Kyleside. There are no missionaries in the parish. Public worship is well attended by the people. The average number of communicants is 80,—a number certainly small when compared with the population. The communion is regularly administered once a-year.

The stipend amounts to L. 158, 6s. 8d., including the allowance for communion elements. The glebe is pretty extensive. It is chiefly adapted for grazing, and, at the rate at which lands in the neighbourhood are let, might fetch a rént of L. 20 or L. 25 Sterling per annum. The manse was built about fifteen years ago, but, from frequent storms, and its exposed situation, it very often requires repairs. The minister of the Parliamentary church at Store has an annual stipend of L. 120, paid by the Exchequer, and a glebe worth L. 7 a-year.

There are no dissenting places of worship, and not above half a dozen Dissenters in the whole parish.

There is a catechist who receives L. 8 annually from the society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and, with the exception of this pittance, he is remunerated solely by the people. There is no such thing as letting of church seats known amongst us. The average annual amount of church collections is L. 7, 18s.

*Education.*—The schools in the parish are 7 in number, viz. the parochial school, three from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, one from the Edinburgh Gaelic School Society, one from the Glasgow Gaelic School Society, and one from the General Assembly's Education Committee. Besides these, in various remote districts the people club together to provide a teacher for their children, during the winter and spring months. None of these schools are endowed except the parochial one. In it the teacher's

salary is L.25; the General Assembly's teacher, L.25; the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge give L. 15 to their teachers; and the Glasgow Society, L. 12. All these teachers are entitled to demand fees, which privilege is not of much advantage to them, as far as money is concerned. Many of the people, however, make some remuneration, by supplying the teacher with provisions and fuel. The Edinburgh Gaelic School Society allow their teachers a salary of L.25, without the liberty of exacting fees. These schools are pretty well attended from the beginning of November till the end of March. The branches taught are, reading in Gaelic and English, writing, arithmetic, &c. ; a very few are learning Latin. There is much need that the system of education amongst us should be improved, and the qualification of teachers raised. At the same time, we would acknowledge the obligations under which we lie to the charitable and religious associations above named. The Bible is read daily in all our schools, and attention paid to the religious instruction of the pupils.

A reading club has been instituted, and promises well.

There is no jail.

*Poor.*—The number of poor annually relieved, (exclusive of the Stoer district,) 73. Amount annually expended in their relief, L. 13, 15s. Amount for that purpose arising from church collections, L. 7, 12s. Amount from other sources, L. 6, 3s. The poor are divided into three classes, and get respectively 4s., 2s. 6d., and 2s. each.

*Alcohol.*—There is a competent number of public houses licensed, and all others are strictly prohibited the selling of ardent spirits. In this respect a decided change for the better has taken place.

*Fuel.*—Peats are universally used, and much difficulty is experienced in seasoning them, arising from the excessive rains with which we are often deluged.

Since writing the foregoing Account, Her Grace the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland has been removed from this world; and her titles and estates have devolved upon Her Grace's eldest son, the present Duke, who has become twenty-second Earl of Sutherland.

To the late Duchess, the parish of Assynt owed much. She uniformly manifested a warm interest in the welfare of its inhabitants; and it is evident they evinced a hereditary and respectful



attachment to her Grace, who, during the singularly long period of seventy-three years, retained possession of the most ancient title in Europe. We look forward with confidence to the present Noble proprietor for a continuation of that kindness, which, for ages, characterized the Sutherland family.

*Drawn up November 1837.*

*Revised March 1840.*

## PARISH OF EDDERACHILLIS.

PRESBYTERY OF TONGUE, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. GEORGE TULLOCH, MINISTER.\*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent.*—THE parish of Edderachillis is situated on the north-west coast of the county of Sutherland, along the shores of the Atlantic, being a portion of the Reay country, commonly called "*Duthaich-mhic-Aoidh.*" Its extreme length, from north to south, is 25 miles, by an average breadth from west to east towards the interior of 7 miles, making 175 square miles, equal to 112,000 acres or thereby. In this is included the district of Keanlochbervie, some time ago disunited from the parish of Edderachillis, and erected into a separate parish *quoad sacra*, under act of Parliament 5 Geo. IV. cap. 90.

Edderachillis was part of the barony of Skelbo. It was disposed by Hugo Freskyn de Moravia, ancestor of the Duke of Sutherland, 1186–1203, to his brother, Bishop Gilbert Moray, who in 1235 disposed it to his brother Richard Moray of Culbyn. About 1440, an heiress, Egidia Moray, carried it into the family of Kinnaird of Kinnaird. In 1515, Andrew Kinnaird disposed it to John Mackay of Edderachillis, son of Mackay of Strathnaver, the superiority remaining with the Earls of Sutherland. The purchase of 1829 restored it to the Sutherland family.

*Name.*—The name is Celtic, the orthography and pronunciation being *Eadar-da-chaolas*, literally signifying between two friths or inlets of the sea, which can be readily reconciled to its geographical

\* Drawn up by A. Stewart, Esq.

position, Kylesku separating it from Assynt on the south-west, and the Kyle of Laxford,\* in the ancient division, on the north-east, although in modern times it extends to Gualin Hill.

*Boundaries.*—It is bounded on the south, by Kylesku, Loch Glencoul, parish of Assynt, and some of Creich; on the west, by the Atlantic ocean; on the south, by the parish of Durness; and on the east, partly by Durness also, and partly by the parish of Lairg.

*Figure, General Appearance, and Natural Divisions.*—Its figure is irregular, intersected with arms of the sea, and from the top of one of the mountains, presenting a checquered appearance of lakes, glens, rivers, and ravines. To view it from sea, at the distance of some miles from the coast, it is allowed to be particularly like Norway, affording an unbounded field for contemplation to the admirers of nature, in consequence of its sublime scenery and striking Alpine character.

“ Stranger! if e'er thine ardent steps have traced  
The northern realms of ancient Caledon,  
Where the proud queen of wilderness hath placed,  
By lake and cataract, her lonely throne;  
Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known,  
Gazing on pathless glen and mountain high,  
Listing where from the cliffs the torrent thrown,  
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,  
And with the sounding lake, and with the roaming sky,  
'Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay.”

The parish is naturally divided by arms of the sea into the three following divisions, 1. Scourie division, situated between Loch Glendhu and Loch Laxford. 2. “*Ceathramh-garbh*,” between Loch Laxford and Loch Inchard; and 3. Ashare. The name of the first of those divisions cannot be traced to any particular origin, whilst that of the other two may be ascribed to the natural appearance of the localities,—“*Ceathramh-garbh*,” in Gaelic signifying a rough section of a country; a term applicable in reality to this division; and Ashare, or “*Fas-thire*,” with the “*F*” silent, signifying arable land, or land capable of producing corn.

*Mountains.*—The mountains demanding particular notice are those of Beinne-Leothaid, Beinne-Stac, Beinne-Stroim, Arkle, and the south-west range of the Reay forest to the summit of Toinne-Bheinne, Meal Horn, Sabhal-mhoir and Mille-Rinidh, with part of Beinne-Shith. The shape of Beinne-Stac is conical, Arkle rather level in the top, with a glassy or stalactical appear-

\* Meaning the salmon frith,—from *Lax*, a salmon, and *ford*, a frith.—See Jameson's Dictionary

ance, especially after rain; each of which, as well as the forest range, are close to 3000 feet above the level of the sea.

*Lakes.*—The most remarkable lakes are Loch-moir and Loch-Stac; but many others of considerable size might be mentioned.

*Rivers.*—Laxford and Inchard are the largest, with innumerable rivulets, all discharging themselves into the Atlantic.

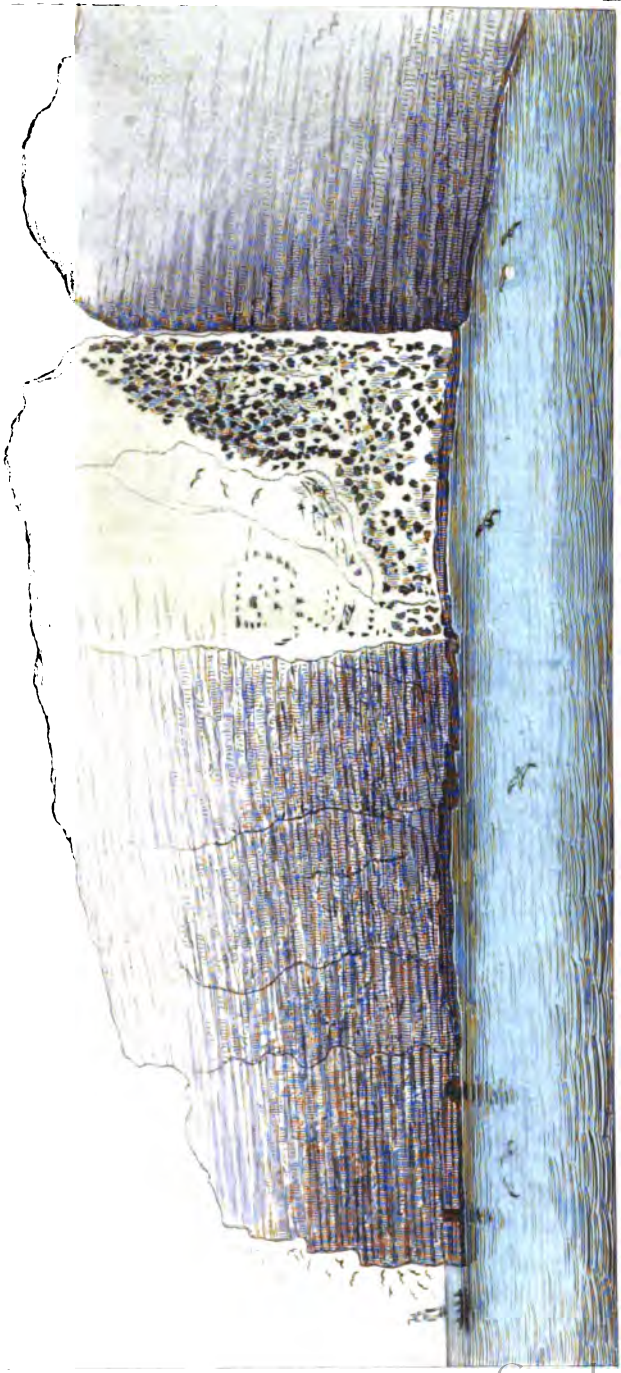
*Islands.*—A cluster of islands, of about twenty, lies between Edderachillis and Assynt, and to the north of Scourie Bay, the island of Handa; no less celebrated from its rising perpendicularly on the north-west side to a height of 600 feet or thereby; than for the myriads of sea-fowl which migrate to its precipitous cliffs in the summer season to bring forth their young. The tourist would be as much gratified by a visit to this island as to Staffa, the character of its rocks being more singular and striking. The basaltic columns of Staffa are to be met with in more than in one part, but those of Handa are peculiar to it only, lying as they do horizontally, and presenting an appearance as if all were built by the hand of man.

*Natural Harbours.*—The whole line of coast is much favoured in respect to harbours. They are sufficient to afford safe anchorage to the whole naval and mercantile shipping of Great Britain. Those of most note are lochs Laxford, Inchard, Badcall, Calva, Glendhu, and Sound of Handa.

*General Description.*—Owing to the mountainous character of the country, the natural capabilities are chiefly confined to the rearing of sheep: the greater part is so appropriated. The sea coast is to be viewed of similar importance as regards the fisheries. The quantity of corn is limited; and, in consequence of the ruggedness and unevenness of the surface, it is raised by the force of manual labour, with scarcely any aid from the plough.

But what nature has denied in one way for the support of man is bestowed in another, by the unlimited quantities of fish which surround the coast, particularly the herrings: they formerly frequented it in great shoals in autumn, and still not unfrequently in summer. The pasture is of a healthy and sound quality. Such portions of the land as are under tillage are not of a bad quality, and yield fair returns. The rivers produce salmon, and the lakes are all well stocked with trout,—both of excellent quality.

*Meteorology.*—The weather is changeable, and the prevailing winds are south and west. The temperature cannot be reckoned cold, but the atmosphere, owing to the vapours from the Atlantic,



W. H. COOPER SC.

SKETCH OF PART OF HAWAII ISLES FROM THE ATLANTIC-AT SUN SET.





and the high hills attracting the clouds, is humid, and productive of rheumatic and scrofulous affections, the latter often proving fatal. Heavy falls of snow occur, but are of short duration along the coast, although the higher grounds partially retain their coats till June. There are instances of great longevity and retention of physical faculties. Small-pox made its appearance last season, but its progress, under Divine will, was soon arrested by the immediate and general application of cow-pox, attended to by a surgeon appointed for the purpose, at the expense of the Duke of Sutherland. Solar and lunar rainbows are not unfrequent; and a most striking view is that of the sun setting in summer, casting its rays in crimson hue across the bosom of the ocean. The aurora borealis or *Northern Lights* occasionally shew themselves, are extremely vivid, and, according to vulgar acceptation, "arrayed against each other in the order of a line of battle." Although we are not strangers to the terror of the thunder storm, seldom or ever any accidents are heard of; flashes of lightning are periodically common about the commencement of each quarter. A rare, if not an unprecedented, phenomenon in this latitude, occurred in winter 1838, by an *avalanche* destroying no less than a herd of twelve deer; and such was the force of that terrific body, that it not only killed the animals on the spot, but when the forester found them, their bones were crushed to pieces. The fury of sea storms is often the cause of great alarm and damage, particularly in winter, and to the observer on shore is magnificently grand when they are from the north-west; the noise of the billows of the Atlantic heaving against the rocks is tremendous, and only equalled by the height to which they are raised, known in some instances to be no less than about 600 feet against the precipitous rocks of Handa. Shipwrecks, however, are not so common as they were, owing to a lighthouse having been erected on Cape Wrath.

*Hydrography.*—The most direct approach from the south to this parish is through a part of Assynt to Kylesku, at which there is a ferry between Edderachillis and Assynt, of 380 yards broad. The tide of this narrow inlet is extremely rapid, readily accounted for by the great expanse of sea on both sides; from it two extensive lochs branch into the interior, Loch Glendhu on the left, and Loch Glencul on the right hand,—the former upwards of three miles long, by one and a-half broad, and the latter nearly five long, by one broad,—both of great depth, and no less celebrated for the quantity and quality of their herrings than for their singular wild-

ness and romantic scenery, the hills rising on every side to a great height, and interspersed with formidable cliffs. The great arm of the sea forming this inlet on the west, juts in from the ocean a distance of ten miles, and is commonly but erroneously called in the charts "Loch Assynt." To instance the importance of Loch Glendhu for herrings, so recently as the autumn of 1829, it was estimated that the value of herrings caught in it was L.30,000; and it has been known that 100 herring busses have resorted to it at a time. The other harbours and sea lochs, already noticed, are productive of herrings and other varieties of fish, including shell-fish.

To advert to the fresh water lakes, Loch-Moir and Loch-Stac are the two most conspicuous; not only from their inland position, and as giving rise to the river Laxford, but as they form the confines of the great Reay Forest on the south-west. The former is five miles long by one broad; the latter three long and two broad. Their water, rising from the bowels of the mountains, which are principally gneiss, quartz, and felspar, is particularly limpid and free of impurities.

Good wholesome water is to be had in all parts, principally from perennial springs.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The characters and varieties that arise under those heads are neither numerous nor very important, as far as they have been yet discovered; and did we enter on particulars, too much space would necessarily be occupied. As a whole, Edderachillis is of the primitive and transition classes, and the ranges of mountains already mentioned, with little exception, consist of gneiss, various hornblende rocks, granite in veins, and quartz rock. Limestone is met with on the sides of Lochs Glendhu, Glencul, and Loch-Moir. Hornblende slates are to be found round Scourie and at Kylestrome. Handa island is composed chiefly of red sandstone, the quality of which cannot be excelled for every description of architectural work.

*Soil.*—The soil along the coast and in the valleys, principally recumbent on gneiss, is of various descriptions. The greater part of the arable is a mixture of gravel and moss, fertilized by the application of sea-weed for manure, which imparts to the land a considerable portion of organic matter, and its alkaline properties neutralize the acid which the moss contains. The district of Ashare is better soil than the rest, being dark loam intermixed with sand, and the features of that section of the parish convey a belief that it has been earlier inhabited and

cultivated than the rest. The arable land of the island of Handa is of a similar quality.

*Zoology.*—The domestic animals need not be enumerated under this head, as reference will be made to them in another part of this account. The wild animals common to the rest of the Highlands are to be met with. The first to be noticed is the red-deer (*Cervus elaphus*), and not inapplicable named the monarch of the forest. In this country, where so much is done for preserving and propagating his species, we are called upon to pay more than ordinary attention in delineating what has been done. The Reay forest, or *Diru-moir*, has had always a place amongst the principal forests in Scotland; a character in this respect it maintained for many generations, till within the last quarter of a century, when it gradually declined, owing to the introduction of sheep. Upon the expiry of the leases of such part of the forest as had been thus allotted for sheep,—the Duke of Sutherland has restored the whole to what it originally was, excluding sheep, and placing the range in charge of foresters solely for the preservation of deer. This not only amply provides for the animal most characteristic of the country, and most conducive to the sportsman's adventures, but also relieves the whole neighbouring sheep-walks of the greater part of the deer that roamed over them, the maintenance of which was a considerable burden. The extent of territory so exclusively laid off for deer cannot be less than 60,000 acres, whereof the half is in this parish, and the rest in Durness, inhabited by some thousands of deer, and inferior as a forest to none in Scotland. Sir Robert Gordon, in his History of the Earldom of Sutherland, written in the year 1630, gives the following account of the forest, viz.—“The halfe of the Diru-more, which lyes toward the north and north-west, doth appertein of late to Macky, by the Erle of Southerland, his gift and disposition. In the Diru-more, ther is a hill called Arkill; all the deir that ar bred therein, or hant within the bounds of that hill, have forked tails, thrie incles long, whereby they are easailie known and decerned from all other deir.” The description thus given of the deer having forked tails is still applicable.

It may be added, that the Laxford affords angling for salmon and trout, not to be surpassed by any river in the north.

The quadrupeds and birds are thus described in Sir Robert Gordon's work of 1630, and have since undergone very little change, viz. “All these forrests and schases are verie profitable for



feiding of bestiall, and delectable for hunting. They are full of reid-deir and roes, woulffs, foxes, wyld catts, brocks skuyrells, whittrets, weasels, otters, martrixes, hares, and fumarts. In these forrests, and in all this province, ther is great store of partridges, pluivers, capercalegs, blackwaks, murefowls, heth-hens, swanes, bewters, turtle-doves, herons, dowes, steares or stirlings, lair-igigh or knag, (which is a foull lyke unto a paroket or parret, which maks place for her nest with her beck in the oak trie), duke, draig, widgeon, teale, wild-gouse, ringouse, routs, whaips, shot-whaips, woodcock, larkes, sparrows, snyps, blackburds or osills, meiveis, thrushes, and all other kinds of wild-foule and birds, which are to be had in any pairt of this kingdome." From the above list, only the wolf and capercaillies need to be excluded, in order to make it nearly applicable to the present time.

*Birds.*—These are, three species of the eagle, the royal, black mountain, and osprey or fish-eagle,—hawks, (various kinds,)—owls, cuckoos, black-cocks, ptarmigans, moorfowls, partridges, golden and gray plovers, woodcocks, snipes, starlings, sparrows, thrushes, wagtails, swallows, kingfishers, rock, and wood, and sea-pigeons, mavis, and landrails. Swans, wild-geese, ducks, (different kinds,) the great northern divers, scarts, solan-geese, cranes, gulls, and many other sea-fowls and birds of passage, frequent Handa in the summer months.

*Fishes.*—These are, salmon, trout, char, herring, ling, cod, scate, turbot, flounder, haddock, halibut, mackerel, tusk, lythe, coalfish, dogfish, whiting, eel, silver-eyed fish, sunfish, and gurnards. In a country where the coast swarms with fish, some may have escaped notice, and others, perhaps, have not been discovered; for, so lately as December 1838, the writer transmitted to the Edinburgh College Museum, two very rare specimens recently found at Scourie. Professor Jameson gave them a place in the Museum, being presented by the lamented Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, and describes them thus: "Two specimens of fishes; the smaller of the two is very rare, and is new to the Fauna of Scotland; it is the *Poor Cod* of authors; the other, or larger specimen, is the *Trimaculated Wrasse*."

*Cetacea.*—The cetaca frequenting the coast are, the whale and the porpoise: and the seal may be included. A very remarkable specimen as to size, measuring in length 8 feet 2 inches, was shot by Captain Granville Gower Loch, R.N. in 1837, in the sea between Assynt and Edderachillis.

Neither the whale nor the sunfish are captured on this coast; the former seldom in any part of Scotland. The latter used to be taken in considerable numbers on the coasts of the islands of Harris and Barra, through the dexterity of the natives harpooning them at sea. The liver alone yields oil to the amount of 360 gallons at an average.

*Crustacea and Shell-fish* are to be had in great varieties and of superior quality, consisting of lobsters, crabs, oysters, mussels, cockles, welks, and limpets, also pearls in the rivers. The lobsters are brought in large quantities to London, and allowed to be the best exposed in Billingsgate.

*Beasts and Birds of Prey and Vermin.*—On this subject it may be remarked, that wolves were at one time numerous, and, to avoid their ravages in raising bodies from the graves, the population had recourse to the Island of Handa as their place of interment. This is the tradition of the country, and it is believed to be well founded. The destructiveness of the fox amongst the sheep is now most to be complained of. The otter amongst the salmon, and the common rat and mouse, could all be well dispensed with. No country produces finer specimens of the black mountain eagle, so hostile to lambs; ravens and crows also commit depredations.

*Reptiles.*—These are, the adder (*Anguis Eryx*), lizard, toad, and frog. The first is injurious. The following instance is worthy of notice: Some years ago, Donald Morrison, tenant, Ashare, was stung; and the effects gave rise to apprehensions of immediate death. When in the greatest agony, the captain of a strange vessel landed on the coast, who prescribed the following singular cure: a young chicken to be split or cut up alive, and instantly applied to the stung part. After the same treatment had been repeated by cutting up alive and applying nine chickens without intermission, the patient was relieved; each chicken which was applied indicating by its swelling that it had absorbed poison. The individual who underwent this treatment recovered, is still alive, and enjoys perfect health.

*Botany.*—The field for the botanist is rather limited. Professor Graham remarks, that the *Luzula arcuata* has been found only in three stations in Britain, the summit of the mountains at the source of the Dee, Benmore in Assynt, and Fionnbhein, ranging into this parish.

There are appearances of the whole country having been at

some period covered with wood, in the remains of trees, principally fir, which are found in the mosses. The natural wood now standing is limited to about 600 acres, almost birch, along the banks of Loch-Moir, Loch-Stac, and at Badna bay. Wood has not been planted, with the exception of a very small portion round the factor's house at Scourie, and has given way owing to its proximity to the ocean. There can be no doubt, that all kinds indigenous to the British Isles would grow in the interior, if they were on a large scale, and properly attended to. Apple, also pear trees, and small fruit bushes, as also culinary vegetables, thrive well in the garden at Scourie.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Nothing is known of Edderachillis as a parish, earlier than 1726, the date of its erection,—except that, before that time, it formed part of the parish of Durness, and was disjoined on an application to the General Assembly by the heritor, Lord Reay, and Mr John Mackay, minister of Durness, and endowed by a fund arising from the teinds, and a general subscription over Scotland. The district, however, occupies rather a conspicuous place in the annals of the Mackay's country. A branch of the Mackays, at so early a period as 1550, took possession of the territory of Edderachillis by displacing the Macleods, and planted themselves at Scourie, under the title of "Mackays of Scourie." The unjustifiable means to which they had recourse to procure this settlement, is defined in the last Statistical Account by the Rev. Mr Falconer. A repetition of it here is unnecessary.

Amongst the descendants of the Mackays of Scourie, were men eminent for piety and chivalry. The history of one of them in particular claims attention, whose character merits admiration for its many virtues. This was Lieutenant-General Hugh Mackay of Scourie, the famous Commander-in-Chief of the time of King William and Mary. He was born in 1640; the account of his life, published by his descendant, Mr John Mackay of Rockfield, is well worthy of a perusal. He fought against Dundee at the battle of Killcrankie; and although the fortunes of that day proved adverse, he showed great military skill in his retreat, and fully regained any character it might have been supposed he had lost, by his great success in Ireland, particularly at the battle of the Shannon, where he displayed much military skill and bravery. Many other great exploits could be mentioned. He was to have been rewarded by a peerage, under the title of "Earl of Scourie;"

but this was prevented by the alleged intrigue of his rival, Mackenzie of Coigach or Cromarty. This great man's career terminated in 1692; he fell shortly after the siege of Namur, where he commanded the British division of the grand army.

*Parochial Register.*—There are no traces of a parochial record having been kept prior to 1819. From that period, births and marriages have been carefully recorded.

*Antiquities.*—Little can be stated on this head. At Kylestrome there are the remains of a Danish fort tolerably entire: and at Scourie there are still visible the remains of a similar building, as well as of tumuli. At Badnabay, also, there is the appearance of a Druidical circle of stones.

*Land-owners.*—The Duke of Sutherland is sole proprietor of the parish,—into whose possession, with the rest of the Reay country, it came in 1829: it was then almost in a state of nature, without a foot of road or other improvements,—the most commendable thing about it being the excellent deportment of its natives as to religion, and in respect of moral and social order.

*Roads, &c.*—The aspect of the country has been since changed by the construction of roads, erection of inns, and farm-houses. These improvements extended over the whole county of Sutherland. In the aggregate, no less than 480 miles of roads have been made, greatly by the means, and wholly through the instrumentality, of his Grace. The portion of these roads confined to this parish is 32 miles in extent; and three inns have been erected in it solely at the Duke's expense.

*Means of Communication.*—It appears from the former Statistical Account, that there was no regular post communication with the south,—a circumstance which caused great complaint in these days; and the only way of receiving letters was by a few of the parishioners contributing to send a runner once a fortnight to Tongue, to which place there was a communication from the south round by Caithness,—the difference between the direct line and this route being at least 150 miles. Instead of this, there is now a post-office at Scourie, having intercourse, by means of a mail-gig twice a-week, with Golspie, where there is a daily post to all parts of the kingdom. The internal communication was equally defective,—the intercourse being carried on by boating, and on unshod ponies, which scrambled over the precipices with wonderful safety and agility. Few accidents arose from either. The last was the case of Captain William Scobie of Ardvar, who was drowned in

the sound of Handa, exceedingly lamented on account of his many excellent qualities.

*Buildings.*—In a country like this, almost entirely pastoral, many extensive buildings are not required. It is a marked feature in its character, since the succession of the Duke of Sutherland, that new farm-houses and inns have displaced the old,—introducing a new era in this district, and illustrating the liberality and ability of the new landlord.

### III.—POPULATION.

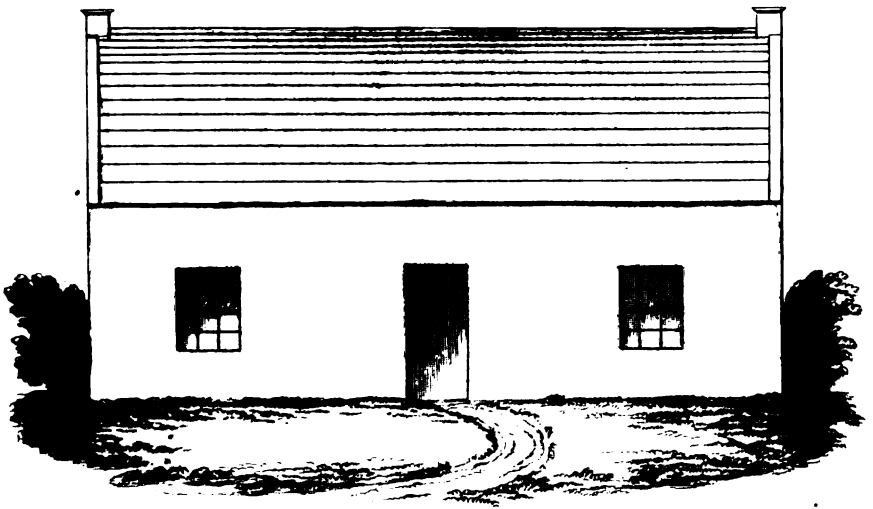
The population in 1792, according to the last Statistical Account, was 1024; and the last census makes it 1965, giving the striking increase of 941, notwithstanding that many families emigrated.

*Character of the People, &c.*—The population is domiciled along the coast in townships or hamlets, each family possessing a certain portion of land. Their houses are of a better description than the ordinary run of Highland houses, and amongst them are a few slated cottages. The people are moral, hospitable, and very mindful of their poor. They are particularly honest; and hardly ever a case of theft occurs, even when the wants of the population are great. For example; a ship laden with corn was stranded at Loch Laxford in 1838; and though the vessel and cargo, in the confusion of the shipwreck, was laid open to pillage,—to the credit of the people be it told, nothing was stolen; a self-denial scarcely to be met with anywhere, under similar circumstances. Gaelic is the vernacular tongue, and generally spoken: the greater number of the young speak English also; and the few south country shepherds amongst them speak English only.

Illegitimate births seldom occur,—there having been only four within the last three years.

The names most prevalent, are Morrison, Mackay, Macleod, and Mackenzie. The men are athletic; and such of them as were in the army made first-rate soldiers. Their features are marked, and, although not particularly well favoured, indicate a bold and resolute character. The women are comely. The colour of the hair is generally light, and the complexion rather fair.

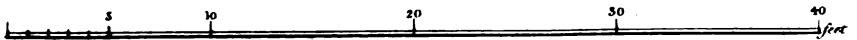
In the article of dress, they are not extravagant. On Sundays and holidays, they are neatly and cleanly attired. The elderly people dress in cloth of their own manufacture. Such as repair to the south and Caithness herring-fishing, adopt, to a considerable extent, the lowland dress and habits.



**THE MODERN HOUSE OF THE SMALL TENANTS OF THE REAY COUNTRY.**



**THE OLD HABITATION.**





## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Fishing.*—The productive employments of the people consist in tilling the ground and fishing, with the various operations attendant on both. In a country where there is not an immediate market for the sale of fish, and for affording the necessaries of life, the combination of these employments is found to answer well. The operation of laying down the crop commences about the middle of March, and finishes in May. Harvest begins in August, and ends in October. The crops raised are, potatoes, bear or bigg, and oats. In the absence of the plough, the implement used in laying down the crop is the common garden spade and *Cas-chrom*. A description of the latter having been so repeatedly given in other accounts of Highland parishes, it need not be presented here. Since the construction of the roads, many of the tenants have carts, which are in all about forty: these were unknown before the Duke acquired the estate.

Soon after the sowing is completed, the most enterprising commence the early herring fishing; and such as have large boats, in the latter end of July, on the Caithness coast, whence they return in the beginning of September. Their occupation in winter is promiscuous, —thrashing corn, attending to their cattle, making, repairing, and trimming herring nets for the ensuing season—the females spinning and knitting. The rate charged for spinning hemp is 6d. per pound, but in the neighbouring district of Assynt, 3d.; and it not unusually happens that a reckoning is kept amongst the members of the family, between sisters and brothers, of the quantity spun for herring nets, and closed by payment. This exactness cannot be too highly extolled, as it inculcates economy and value for money, so very desirable to be observed by all classes in the Highlands. Lobster-fishing is also carried on by a London company, who employ a number of the natives in procuring the lobsters, which they carry off alive in well-smacks to the Thames. This fishing commences in April, and ends in October.

The last to be noticed is the salmon-fishery, commencing in March and closing in August.

*Kelp.*—The manufacturing of kelp in former years gave employment to a number of the people. Advancement in the science of chemistry disclosed substitutes for kelp, which have entirely thrown it out of the market,—a result not to be regretted, as the sea weed from which it was made is the manure that Nature has set apart for the land. Although kelp yielded a certain revenue to



a landlord, its manufacture retarded agricultural improvements, and thereby curtailed the quantity of produce which the land would otherwise yield for the maintenance and comfort of the population.

*Produce.*—In order to bring all under one view, a table is here presented, showing the number of men employed, the amount of stock and capital invested, and annual returns; with a comparison betwixt the particulars of this and the last Statistical report of the parish.

*Live-Stock.*—The breed of sheep on the large farms is a pure Cheviot, to which great attention is paid. The sheep in the hands of small tenants is a cross between the native breed of small black-faced sheep and the Cheviot, and of late years has been much improved. The breed of black-cattle, comparatively speaking, is not very good, and much might be done towards its improvement.

Before the hills were taken up for sheep stocks, the country was deservedly famed for the breed of Highland ponies or *garrons*, extremely hardy, and some of them living to the age of thirty. The present Orkney breed is in a great degree descended from them, having at one time been sold hence in considerable droves.

*Manufactories.*—No establishment of this kind exists, and there is rather a scarcity of artisans and mechanics.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per acre cannot be exactly specified, as each lot or portion has a share of pasture land attached to it, held in common by the tenants of the respective townships. The following may convey an idea of the extent and nature of these holdings. The rents payable by each small tenant are from L. 2 to L. 5. To illustrate, we will advert to a L. 3 rent, which is a very common one. In a favourable season, the crop produced, together with milk and fish, supports a family of four for eight months. Three small Highland cows, eight sheep, and one horse, form the stocking.

These holdings, with their supply of fuel, however limited they may appear,—in a country where fish is abundant, enable the frugal occupants to live moderately well.

*Wages.*—The wages of carpenters, smiths, masons, and tailors are about 2s. 6d. per day. Farm-servants, besides board, receive L. 7 yearly; maids, L. 3, 10s. Mr Falconer states the wages in 1792 to have been, for a farm-servant, L. 2, and for a maid-servant, 17s. 8d. yearly—besides perquisites.

TABLE.

	1792.			1839.			Increase.			Decrease.		
	No.	Rate.	Amount.	No.	Rate.	Amount.	No.	Rate.	Amount.	No.	Rate.	Amount.
Population,*	1024	...	...	1965	...	...	941	...	...	...	...	...
Real rent,	...	...	L. 280 0 0	...	...	L. 2492 18 4	...	...	L. 2262 18 4	...	...	...
Black cattle,	2578	@ 60s.	7717 0 0	1155	60s.	3465 0 0	...	...	...	1418	...	L. 4252 0 0
Sheep,	2629	8s.	1051 12 0	12000†	21s.	13545 0 0	10271	...	12468 8 0	...	...	...
Gouta,	1807	7s.	457 9 0	417	7s.	145 19 0	...	...	...	860	...	311 10 0
Horses,	351	L. 8	2820 0 0	112	L. 9	1008 0 0	...	...	...	2689	...	1800 0 0
Potatoes,	Not stated.	...	...	About 2900 bar.	3s.	435 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barley,	...	...	...	285 bolls.	28s.	399 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Oats,	...	...	...	200	22s.	104 10 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hands engag. in fish.	...	...	...	24	L. 80	720 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Large boats,	...	...	...	89	L. 7	628 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Small boats,	...	...	...	438 tons.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Tonnage of boats,	...	...	...	600	50s.	1500 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Herring-nets,	...	...	...	Early 350 barrels	10s.	175 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Herrings caught,	...	...	...	Late 2400 do. ‡	10s.	1200 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lobsters,	...	...	...	9600	3d.	140 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Salmon and grilse,	...	...	...	4400§	4½d.	408 0 4½	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wool,	375 st.	7s.	181 5 0	1554 stoncs.	17s.	1920 18 0	1179st.	...	1189 18 0	...	...	...
						L. 27692 5 8½			L. 15945 19 4			L. 6863 10 0
									L. 6863 10 0			
									L. 9562 9 4			

\* The census of 1831 included labourers at roads from other parishes who have since left; but it is estimated that the present population is much the same, as to number, with that stated for 1831.  
 † With store farmers, 8650; with small tenants, 1900; exported annually, 2850 = 12900. ‡ On the Caithness coast.  
 § Weighing 21,761 lbs. ¶ Being amount of increase in amount of real rent and live-stock since 1792.

It is to be regretted that the cod and ling fisheries are not more prosecuted ; the natives are excellent herring fishers, but too lax as to the other : indeed, as yet, little or nothing has been done, in applying skill or capital towards the advancement of this important branch of industry.

The island of Handa is tenanted by twelve families. Besides fishing, they have recourse to other employment of a very hazardous character, by resorting to the daring enterprise of going a-fowling among the precipitous rocks round the island, from whence they bring, at the imminent risk of their lives, a vast quantity of sea fowls and eggs, to be used by them for food, and the feathers to be disposed of to their mainland neighbours. In this perilous avocation, some have fallen over the rocks, and been instantly killed. It is curious enough, that they have established nothing less than Royalty amongst them, in the person of the eldest widow on the island, who is designed Queen ; and her prerogative is recognized not only by the islanders, but by visitors from the mainland.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The whole population is of the Church of Scotland, and there are no Dissenting or Seceding families in the parish. There are two churches ; one at Badcall, and another at Keanlochbervie, both commodious, and in excellent repair.

The stipend is the minimum, L. 150, whereof L. 103, 6s. 8d is paid by the Exchequer, and the balance, L. 46, 13s. 4d., by the heritor. The extent of the glebe is about 320 acres, and its yearly value L. 30, or thereby. The manses and offices at Badcall and Keanlochbervie respectively are recent erections, the former built by the heritor in 1835, and the latter by Government in 1828.

*Education.*—The schools are the parochial school at Scourie, and a school at Ashare, from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. There is no regular Sabbath school kept. The attendance at both schools is considerable. It is believed that a parochial school in connection with Keanlochbervie church will be soon established. In some of the remote hamlets, there is private tuition in winter. The yearly amount of the parochial schoolmaster's salary is L. 35, 17s. 9d. : the school fees and other emoluments are trifling. A reading club has been recently established at Scourie.

*Savings Bank.*—There is one Savings bank at Scourie. The whole amount invested is L. 443, 9s. 6d., and the operations are very limited.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is about 40, and the allotment to each yearly is from 3s. to 1bs. The average amount of annual contributions for the poor is about L.20, whereof there is from church collections L. 14, and from the heritor L.6. No legal assessment has been imposed.

*Fuel.*—This article, so very necessary for the existence and comfort of man, nature has provided in great abundance. Tracts of moss are open to all, and at no other expense than that of cutting the turf, and drying it by exposure to the action of the atmosphere.

August 1840.

## PARISH OF KILDONAN.\*

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. JAMES CAMPBELL, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, &c.*—THE name Kildonan was spelt *Keldurunach*, in a charter by Gilbert Murray, who was Bishop of Caithness between the years 1222 and 1245; and in the seventeenth century, it was written *Kildonnand*. This name was originally confined to, as it still is the distinctive name of, the township where the church and manse were, at a very remote period, erected, and where they still stand; and upon the division of the country into parishes, the name of the ancient church was used as that of the extensive tract of the county of Sutherland, now forming the parish of Kildonan. Many of the early monks and other ecclesiastics, who were scattered throughout Scotland after Dioclesian's persecution, appear to have penetrated into Sutherland, and hence, those places in which their cells and residences were fixed, have been distinguished by the prefix of *Kil* from *Cella*,† a cell or chapel, which is found in

\* Drawn up by George Sutherland Taylor, Esq. Golspie.

† Almost all the words now used in the Gaelic language connected with religious establishments, have been borrowed from the old monkish Latin used by the first Christian missionaries in the Highlands, to denote new offices and terms not previously known. Thus the Gaelic of church is *Eaglais*, from the Latin *Ecclesia*; the Gaelic of Bishop is *Easbuig*, from *Episcopus*; the Gaelic of abbot is *Abb*, from

many of the names of places in Sutherland, as well as in other parts of Scotland. Thus *Kildonan* is derived from *Kil*, a cell, and *Durun* or *Donan*, the proper name of its original inhabitant, whose memory has been handed down by tradition, with great veneration, and who is distinguished as *Saint Donan*. The leading valley, and most important part of the parish, is, however, as frequently called *Strath Helmsdale*, (disregarding the tautology of Strath and Dale,) as it is called the Strath of Kildonan; but in Gaelic it is alone known by the name of *Stra' Ilich*, while the river is called *Aven-Ilich*,—and the village of Helmsdale, at the mouth of the river, *Bun-Ilich*,—the root or lower end of the *Ilich*. All this strengthens the belief that the river Helmsdale is the "*Ilius flumen*," or river *Ilie* of Ptolemy, who places that river on the present east coast of Sutherland, and close to "*Verubium promontorium*," which is unquestionably the Ord of Caithness. The name *Ilie* is therefore older than that of Helmsdale, which must have been introduced, long subsequent to the time of Agricola, by the northmen, whose inroads and adventures on the coasts of Sutherland and Caithness, during the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, are so often narrated in the northern Sagas, and historically arranged by Torfæus. *Kildonan*, again, is believed to have originated after the settlement of Christian missionaries in the north of Scotland, and is, therefore, in all probability, of more recent origin than the name Helmsdale.

*Extent, Boundaries, and Topographical Appearances.*—This parish is altogether inland. It may be said to be divided by a great leading strath, into which other less important straths or mountain passes open; and, accordingly, the former account of the parish states, that "it resembles the form of a tree, stretching out at the top or height of the parish into branches." This is so far applicable, that the great and leading strath of Kildonan or Helmsdale, below the church, being in the centre of the narrowest and lowest corner of the parish, may be compared to the trunk of the tree, and the smaller straths or glens, called Tilny, Free, and Achnahow, opening into it at obtuse angles on the west side, and those of Suisgill and Kinbrace on the east side, may not inaptly be considered as the side-branches. Kildonan is bounded on the east by part of the county of Caithness, having the picturesque and towering

*Abbas*; the Gaelic of priest is *Sagart*, from *Sacerdos*; and the Gaelic of a chapel, or the primitive resting place of a Christian missionary, was *Cill*, pronounced *Kil*, from *Cella*, a chapel or cellar.

peaks of the Morven Hills, not far distant from the boundary in that direction. The north boundary of the parish of Loth, running from the top of the ridge terminating in the Ord of Caithness, to the westward, and along the elevated summits of Ben-vallich, and the high range of hills to Craigaboddich, intervenes between Kildonan as its southern line of march, and the German Ocean, to which the nearest point of the parish is distant about two miles. On the west, the line of mountain tops from Craigaboddich, along the centre of the high table-land at the head of Skinsdale, to the great mountain Ben-Ormin, and thence to Cromolt, near the head of Strathnaver, separate Kildonan from the parishes of Clyne and Farr; and on the north, an irregular march crossing the great Ballach between the valleys of Strathnaver and Kildonan, and thence going over the top of Ben Griam-beg, and the highest part of Knockfin, to the county of Caithness, divides the parish from part of Farr, and the southern part of the parish of Reay. The extreme length of the parish, either from Cromolt or the Balloch near Ben Griam, to the top of the Ord of Caithness, is fully 24 miles, in a direct line. The breadth varies considerably, being towards the south end of the parish from 5 to 10 miles, and towards the north end from 12 to 17 miles, in straight lines. The northern division of the parish is all elevated ground, and exposed to the unbroken sweep of every blast and storm that rage amidst the highest mountains of Sutherland and Caithness. The general aspect of this part of the parish is characterized by several high and massy mountains; some elevated table-land, of considerable extent, thickly covered with heather and alpine plants; and several lakes, of which four are of a large size; but their shores and the country immediately surrounding them being in general tame, the expanse of their waters cannot be said to afford those enchanting and remarkable views for which other lakes in the Highlands, encircled by a wild variety of precipitous crags, towering pinnacles, and verdant glades, are so justly celebrated. The southern part of the parish may be said to consist of two parallel ranges of mountains, between which lies the very beautiful valley of Helmsdale or Kildonan. This valley, which extends throughout the whole length of the parish, varies in breadth from one and-a-half to three miles, between the bases of the steep sides of the strath. The river Helmsdale, a large and very handsome stream, which may be classed among the second rate rivers of Scotland, occupies the centre of the valley, and rolls down, with many graceful

curves in its course, amidst holms and haughs of the brightest verdure, and occasionally through birch-covered plats that partially conceal some of the bends and reaches of the stream, until it enters the German Ocean, at the thriving fishing village of Helmsdale, which is situate in the adjoining parish of Loth. The highest mountains are at the boundaries of the adjoining parishes, and Ben Griam-more, one of these mountains, is nearly 2000 feet high. All the other lofty hills are deeply indented by headlong torrents, which often transversely cut the highest ranges of the hills almost down to their bases, and thus form many wild chasms, and great and abrupt inequalities of the surface. A great proportion, however, of the uplands is superior and safe pasture ground, with occasional large tracts of moss; and the soil of the haughs, along the lower parts of the river Helmsdale, is formed of deposits of mossy earth, mixed with particles of decomposed conglomerate rock and sand.

*Meteorology.*—Notwithstanding the inland situation and mountainous character of this parish, the climate in the valley of Kildonan does not vary much from that of the coast-lying parishes of Sutherland; but the extremes of cold and heat are perhaps greater than along the sea coast. In winter, the high parts of Kildonan are often visited with snow, when rain alone falls in the less inland districts; and when there is a general and great fall of snow, it is heavier, and lies longer in the interior than on the coast. The winter storms are also of greater violence on the exposed high grounds, and are there generally most tempestuous and severe. Frost appears early in autumn, even in the sheltered strath, and frequently, at that period of the year, the dawn of day, which is accompanied by, and discloses a slight hoar frost, formed during the night-time, is followed by a brilliant meridian sun, which is oppressive by its heat. The east wind is the coldest, and with it the heaviest falls of rain occur. Of late years, the aurora borealis, or “the merry dancers,” as the meteor is called here, has been unusually frequent, chiefly from the month of July to January. It is often seen moving in upright luminous lines from west to east, which, when they attain their greatest brilliancy, suddenly become dim, and, as if formed of revolving columns, with alternate bright and dark sides, these shining lines again suddenly appear with an irregular glimmer, which increases in silvery brightness until it becomes a light of great splendour. This alternate  
d reappearing of these coruscations continues until what

appear to be the revolving columns, disappear in the eastern horizon, under the earth's shade.

This parish is particularly healthy, and there are no distempers which can be said to be prevalent among the inhabitants. Rheumatic pains sometimes affect aged people; but these probably arise from sudden changes from heat to cold, and from inattention to the due regulation of their clothing in the winter season. Fevers have been of late years unknown; and in 1832, when malignant cholera raged at Helmsdale, at the foot of the strath, and within nine miles of the church of Kildonan, no case of that mysterious and fatal disease occurred in the parish. Consumption, ague, and cutaneous eruptions are all unknown. Apothecaries' drugs are almost never called for; and the inhabitants generally, having a sufficiency of substantial food, comfortable dwelling-houses, and being of temperate and active habits, enjoy uninterrupted health, and a buoyancy of spirits which gives promise of long life.

*Hydrography.*—The river Helmsdale or *Ilie* is the leading stream in the parish, through which it runs a course of upwards of twenty miles. It receives its waters from some lakes in the upper parts of the parish, and from many mountain-streams and torrents which swell its stream in all parts of its course. After leaving this parish, the river has a run of more than two miles in the parish of Loth, until it enters the sea at Helmsdale, where its mouth forms the harbour of that village. The upper district of Kildonan is remarkable for the number and size of its lakes. *Loch-na-cuen* is one of the largest of them, and is ornamented with two or three small islands, and several winding bays. It has char and other varieties of trout, but is considered rather an indifferent angling lake. *Loch-leam-na-clavan* lies between the two mountains, Ben Griam-more and Ben Griam-beg, and has trout of different varieties, of the largest size of any lake in the district. There are also a great many char in its waters, but they are of a small size. This is an excellent angling lake, particularly with a south wind. *Loch Badanloch* and *Lochinruar* are also large lakes, and abound in trout and char. *Loch-ari-cliny*, *Loch-ascaig*, *Lochan-gunuh*, *Loch-altan-fearn*, *Loch-cor-na-maugh*, *Loch-na-moin*, *Loch-na-clar*, *Loch Truderscaig*, *Loch Cuillie*, and *Loch Leiven*, are all likewise in the upper parts of the parish, and all abound with trout, and many of them with char; but it is somewhat remarkable that pike have never been found in any of these lakes, nor, indeed, in any of the numerous waters in the county of Sutherland.



Mineral springs rise in many parts of the parish ; but it is believed that they are all chalybeate. There is one of superior quality at Achnamoin ; another near the manse ; one at Caen ; and one at the foot of Ben Uary.

*Geology.*—The geology of this extensive parish has not been minutely examined or described. The mountain ranges are, it is believed, all primitive rocks, among which gneiss and mica-slate predominate, while rocks of syenite, porphyry, and large-granular granite, occur in many parts. Several years ago, a rounded piece of native gold, weighing rather more than half an ounce, was found in the bed of the *Burn* of Kildonan, a rapid mountain stream ; but although this discovery induced many other searches to be made among the loose gravel and pebbles in the bed of that and other adjoining streams, no additional particle of the precious metal has been found.

*Zoology.*—The most elegant of all our native wild animals, the red-deer (*Cervus Elaphus*), “destined to embellish the forest, and enliven the solitudes of nature,” still ranges in many parts of this parish, which anciently formed part of the great deer forest of *Dirrie Chatt*. This admired animal is now scarce in most parts of the Highlands ; but amidst the solitary recesses of the great mountains, along the boundary lines of this parish, the red-deer, in considerable herds, still find protection, and during the storms of winter, they traverse the lower parts of the parish, in search of food and shelter. Deer stalking has, of late years, been revived with great ardour in this district, and in the few other remote parts of the Highlands where the stag is now to be met with ; and the red-deer of Sutherland are the stateliest and fattest of their kind.\* Since the extirpation of the wolf from this neighbourhood, which only occurred about 150 years ago, the fox has been the most obnoxious wild animal in the parish. His wiles, however, have been of little avail to him since the introduction of sheep-farming ; for the united hostility of fox-hunters and shepherds has almost cleared the whole parish of foxes. The wild cat is occasionally met with, and is a particularly fierce and desperate animal ; so much so that it has been known to spring at an unarmed assailant, who could not instantly kill it, when excluded from other means of escape. The otter also frequents the numerous waters in the

\* “From the accounts that have been sent me from the various forests in Scotland, I am inclined to think that the average weight of the best deer in Sutherland is superior to that of the other forests. It reaches about fifteen stone Dutch, sinking the offal ; and stags are occasionally killed of seventeen stone ; and in the forest of Ben Hope, of a somewhat larger size.” Scrope's *Art of Deer Stalking*, page 10.

parish, but he is by no means a stationary animal, and wanders over wide tracts of country, from one stream to another. The polecat, the weasel, the mountain hare, and the mole are likewise met with. Sheep of the Cheviot kind, which equal in the quality and weight of the fleece, and the value of the carcass, the Cheviot stocks from which they were originally obtained, occupy the whole pasture grounds of the parish; and the shepherd's dog must not be omitted, for without this faithful and tractable animal, it would be impossible to conduct sheep-farming in the successful manner now done. The first of these dogs were obtained from the borders; but there is now a cross between them and the country colley dog, which is more valuable than the pure breed, and excels the southern dog in sagacity and hardiness. Birds of prey are numerous. The common eagle (*Falco albicilla*), the raven (*Corvus corax*), the hooded-crow (*Corvus cornix*), and some species of the hawk abound. The hills of Kildonan have ever been celebrated as among the best grouse ranges in the north. The strath is well stocked with black-cock, and the tops of the highest mountains with ptarmigan. The river Helmsdale has a valuable salmon-fishery, which is fished under the direct control of the landlord, in a manner the best calculated, in all respects, to protect the spawning fish and the smolts, and which it is expected will elicit, beyond doubt, the success of the liberal system had recourse to, over the former close and severe mode of fishing. The lakes, already referred to, abound in trout and char; and lamprey eels are said to ascend the river Helmsdale about the month of June. The fresh water muscle (*Mytilus anatinus*) is also found in the bed of the river Helmsdale.

*Botany.*—The diversity of soil, and the different degrees of altitude and shelter which this parish affords, cover its surface with a great variety of plants; but these are all, with few exceptions, common to similar localities throughout the Highlands. The haughs and low parts of the strath are verdant with succulent herbs and the finer varieties of grasses; and here the birch, the mountain-ash, the hazel, aspen, and white willow, ornament the banks of the river, and some of the sloping sides of the hills. The mosses have their peculiar plants, of which the cotton grass (*Eriophorum*) is the most conspicuous and most valuable. The extensive mountain sides are chiefly covered with heather and ling; and the few rare plants which have been observed are among the Alpine tribe on the highest hills, of which *Arbutus alpina*, and the cloudberry, (*Rubus chamaemorus*), are the most abundant. A

great part of the parish was at a remote period covered with forests of stately pines, which have all perished without any contemporary account existing of the cause or manner of their destruction. Consequently, conflicting causes have been assigned for the total absence of the native fir in this part of the Highlands; but the generally received belief is, that the old trees died from natural decay when at maturity, their trunks being still dug out of the bogs in great numbers; and that from the decomposition of their leaves and branches originated the growth of moss, which has now completely altered the surface soil, and rendered it unfit for the growth of the pine tribe.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Some of the events and localities mentioned in the northern Sagas and in the Orcades of Torfæus are supposed, from an attentive examination of the narratives, to apply to this parish. There exists ample evidence, that after the final departure of the northern invaders, the whole of this parish was part of the ancient earldom of Sutherland; and consequently, the annals of that potent family embrace the subsequent historical events in the parish, several of which are described in Sir Robert Gordon's History of the Earls of Sutherland. The charter-room of Dunrobin Castle, —which is believed to have the most complete series of title-deeds and other invaluable muniments, from the thirteenth century to the present time, of any private charter-chest in Scotland,—contains written evidences, the most authentic, of the general correctness of that remarkable local history, in regard to the state of possession of the lands in the parish at different periods, and similar facts. In the sixteenth century, the chiefs and a great body of the clan Gun settled in this parish, which, since then, until a late period, has been their chief place of residence; and, as no connected account of them has ever been written, the following original notice of the clan Gun, prepared with great care from the only authentic sources relating to them that now exist, is here given in as condensed a form as the matter would admit of,—in order to suit the prescribed limits of this parish report.

*The Clan Gun.*—The clan Gun have at all times been considered throughout the North Highlands as descended from the Norwegian Kings of Man; and *Lochlin*, the Gaelic name for ancient Scandinavia, or, perhaps, in a more limited acceptation, for Denmark, is still named by the few natives of the Highlands who now recollect the traditions of their fathers,—as the parent country of the Guns, the Macleods and the Gillanders. According

to the Chronicle of Man, published with Camden's Britannia in 1586, Godred or Godfred, surnamed *Crovan*, and son of Harold the Black, of the royal family of Norway, was the first King of Man, and his sovereignty appears to have extended over a large portion, if not the whole, of the Western Isles. His reign is supposed to have commenced about the year 1077. The fifth King of Man, from Godfred the first King, and descended from him, was Olave, who, succeeding his father when very young, was deprived of his kingdom by a natural brother named Reginald, and had the Island of Lewis assigned to him. After severe and protracted struggles, Olave succeeded in recovering his kingdom, and died King of Man in Peel Castle, 18th June 1237. He had been thrice married, and by his third wife, Christina, daughter of Farquhar Earl of Ross, King Olave had three sons: 1. Guin or Gun, the ancestor of the clan Gun; 2. Leoid, Loyd, or Leod, from whom are descended the Macleods; and 3. Leandris, from whom were the clan Landers, or Gillanders of Ross-shire,—but many of this last clan afterwards assumed the name of Ross. At this period, the Earls of Ross were very powerful in the north of Scotland; and, besides being masters of the present district of Ross, they held extensive tracts of country in several parts of the west coast, and along the Caithness shores. The three grandchildren above-named, of Farquhar Earl of Ross, appear to have been provided for by that potent earl about the middle of the thirteenth century;—Guin or Gun having been settled in Caithness, where the Earl's authority at that period was considerable. Leod obtained Glenelg from him, and by marriage with the daughter of a Danish knight, Macraild Armine, also obtained Miginish, Bracadale, Durinish, Dunvegan, Lindell, Vaterness, and part of Troterness, in the Isle of Sky; while Leander settled in the midst of his grandfather's territories in Ross.

The particular lands in Caithness which were originally acquired by the clan Gun cannot, at this distant period of time, be satisfactorily traced; but the earliest castle or stronghold of their chief in that quarter, was the Castle of Halbury, at Easter Clythe, or as it is often called *Crowner Gun's Castle*, which, like almost all the other old castles in Caithness, was situate on a precipitous and nearly detached rock, overhanging the sea, and, except at one side, surrounded by it.

The clan Gun continued to extend and occupy their possessions in Caithness, until about the middle of the fifteenth century, when, in consequence of their deadly feuds with the Keiths of Caithness,

(who had obtained a settlement in that county, by the marriage of one of the Keiths with Marion Cheyne, a Caithness heiress, in the fourteenth century) and other neighbouring clans, the Guns found it necessary to establish their chief, and a strong detachment of the clan, in the adjoining county of Sutherland, where they obtained the protection of the Earls of Sutherland, and from them got possession of several lands in the parish of Kildonan and elsewhere. The history of the clan during these early centuries, as collected from tradition, and partly borne out by detached narratives in Sir Robert Gordon's history, is replete with incidents, which, in the present age, have more of the character of wild romance than of reality, and exhibits, in many startling details, the ferocity and implacable fury which distinguished the feuds of the clans in the remote Highlands,\* even down to near the close of the seventeenth century. This report does not admit of lengthened narratives of these ancient feuds; but one instance may be given of the desperate manner in which they were conducted, by very briefly narrating the best traditional account that has been obtained of the following bloody and treacherous rencounter between the Keiths and the Guns. The meeting of the parties, and the slaughter of the Guns, are, by Sir Robert Gordon, stated to have taken place in St Tyr's Chapel,—an old religious edifice on the sea coast of Caithness, and on the walls of which he says the blood of the slain might be seen in his time;—but the tradition of the Highlands says that this perfidious affair occurred in the interior of the country, and in the open air, in Strathmore of Caithness.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the chief of the Clan-Gun was George Gun, who lived in feudal dignity in his then impregnable castle of Halbury; but he was better known as the *Crowner Gun*, or, as he was called by the Highlanders,—“*N<sup>m</sup> Braistach-more*,” from a great broach which he wore as the badge or cognizance of his office of crowner. He had a deadly feud with the chief of the Keiths, and having met in St Tyre's chapel for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation, but without success, they there solemnly agreed to decide their quarrel, if they could not do so amicably on a future day, by equal combat between twelve sons

\* Sir Robert Gordon, whose history was written in 1630, thus alludes to “the inveterat deidlie feud betuain the clan Gun and the Slight-ean-Aberigh,” (a branch of the Mackays). He remarks: “The long, the many, the horrible encounters which happened between these two trybes, with the bloodshed and infinit spoils committed in every part of the diocye of Catteynes by them and their associats, aie of so disordered and troublesome memorie,” that he passes them over.—P. 174.

or relatives of each chieftain. This compact was concluded by mutual vows, accompanied with religious rites within the chapel, that the meeting would take place in a solitary part of the country, where no interruption could occur, and the escort of each leader was fixed at twelve armed horsemen. The crowner had been twice married, and had a numerous family of sons; but some of them resided in Sutherland, and it was also agreed that he should form his party there, and proceed into Caithness with them by the Strathmore route, while the Keiths would move, on the appointed day, towards the confines of Sutherland, and in the same direction; so that the two parties would meet in a retired district, remote from any chance of being disturbed. The chiefs, each followed by twelve horses and their riders, came within sight of each other on the appointed route, and soon thereafter met at a burn called Alt-na-gawn, below the glut of Strathmore. The crowner and the leader of the Keiths approached each other in full armour; but it was soon discovered by the Guns, that there were two riders on every horse in the party of the Keiths, and consequently the latter party had twenty-four men opposed to the twelve followers of the crowner. This vile stratagem instantly revealed to the Guns that their destruction, by unfair means, was determined upon. They scorned, notwithstanding the great odds against them, to retreat before their enemies the Keiths; and both parties dismounting, the huge double-handed sword, and other formidable weapons of the period used in close combat, were furiously and destructively wielded, amidst horrid imprecations, and remorseless vows of each clan's never-dying vengeance, which raised to madness the rage of the combatants.

The Guns fought most desperately, but could not withstand the great odds that opposed them; and after a long continued struggle, the survivors on both sides were so much exhausted, that the combat was mutually dropt,—the Keiths being so far the victors as to leave the field with their banner displayed, and to be able to carry with them their slain companions; while in the ranks of the Guns, the crowner and seven of his party were killed, and the remaining five were all severely wounded. The Keiths proceeded to Dilred Castle, in Strathmore, then occupied by Sutherland of Dilred, where they were hospitably entertained. The five surviving Guns, who were all sons of the crowner, also retired, but tarried at another stream, since then called Alt-Torquil, after Torquil Gun, one of the survivors, who there dressed the wounds of his brothers. Towards evening, Henry-

beg, the youngest of the surviving brothers of the Guns, proposed that they should follow the Keiths, and endeavour to obtain revenge, even by stratagem such as the Keiths had recourse to; but his brothers considered such a step as leading to their certain destruction. Henry, however, could not be restrained from his purpose, and swore that he never would rest until he should kill a Keith, and recover possession of his father's sword, helmet, shirt of mail, and broach of office, which the Keiths had taken off the dead body of the crowner. Two of the brothers were so severely wounded that they could not move to any great distance, but the other two accompanied Henry, who arrived at Dilred Castle soon after nightfall. On approaching the castle, its wooden windows or shutters were found open, and around a large fire in the lowest apartment, the survivors of the Keiths were quaffing bumpers of ale, and Henry, who went close to one of the windows, heard them narrate, with boisterous delight, the losses sustained by the Guns. The chief of the Keiths, not apprehensive of any danger, accidentally approached the window where Henry stood, and the latter then bent his bow, and in another instant his arrow pierced the chieftain's heart; Henry at the same time boldly accompanying the deadly flight of his arrow with the exclamation (afterwards used in the North Highlands as a proverb) of "The Gun's compliments to Keith."\* The old chief dropped down dead; a panic seized the other Keiths; and the three Guns, having darted forward to the door of the castle, slew some of the first persons who ventured out by it; but finding that they could not retain their position long, Henry and his two brothers retired silently under cover of the darkness of the night, and hurried back to the assistance of the other brothers, who had been unable to accompany them.

The crowner, † thus killed by the Keith, was, according to Sir Robert Gordon, "a great commander in Catteynes in his tyme, and wes one of the greatest men in that countrey; because when he flourished there was no Earle off Catteynes; that earldom being yit in the King's hands, and wes thereafter given to William Sinck-

\* This tradition was obtained in Gaelic, and Henry's exclamation of "Iomachgar n'Guinach gu Kaigh," is more emphatic in that language than in any translation of the words.

† *Crowner, Crownare, Crounal*, according to Dr Jamieson, was first an officer to whom it belonged to attach all persons, against whom there was an accusation in matters pertaining to the *Crown*; and the distinction between the office of crowner and that of sheriff was anciently thus explained: "All attachments perteines to the *Crowner*, quher the accuser makes mention, in his accusation, of the breaking of the King's peace. Otherwaies, gif he makes na mention thereof, the attachment pertenes to the shiref." 2dly, the crowner was he who had the charge of the troops raised in one county. The first certain proof of the existence of the office of crowner occurs in the reign of David II.

ler, the second son of William, Earl of Orkney, by his second wife : which William, Earl of Catteynes, was slain at Flowden." \* The Earldom of Caithness, at the period here referred to, may be said to have been, in one respect, in the King's hands ; for although, after the termination of the Norwegian line of Earls of Orkney and Caithness in 1331, the Earl of Strathern was also Earl of Caithness for a short time ; the succeeding Earls of the Sinclair family claimed the Caithness title, while they also held the Earldom of Orkney under the kings of Denmark, and their allegiance to a foreign power divested them of their privileges as Earls of Caithness under the Crown of Scotland. This state of matters, no doubt, occasioned the establishment of a crownship in Caithness, which office was vested in the person of the chief of the Guns, who was afterwards killed by the Keiths.

Five of the crowner's sons survived him. The eldest, James, from whom the patronymic of *MacKeamish*, the son of James, is derived, which distinguished his son and all the subsequent chiefs of the clan, succeeded his father, and resided in Sutherland, as all his successors have done, their principal dwelling-house having been at Killernan, in the parish of Kildonan, until it was destroyed accidentally by fire, about the year 1690. From one of the sons of the crowner, named William, are descended the Wilsons of Caithness, and from Henry, the Hendersons. Another son, Robert, who was killed with his father, left issue, and from them were the Gun Robsons, who afterwards appear in the annals of Caithness, and from the issue of another son, John, also killed by the Keiths, were the Guns M'Eans of Caithness.

It was in the time of this crowner Gun that Hugh Macdonald of Sleat, third son of Alexander Earl of Ross, married a lady of the clan Gun, who is supposed to have been the crowner's daughter. By this lady, Macdonald of Sleat† " had a son, Donald, called Gallach, from being fostered ‡ by his mother's relations in

\* Sir Robert Gordon's History, page 92.

† Gregory's Western Highlands and Isles, page 60.

‡ The *fostering* of the children of great families in remote but comparatively secure parts of the interior of the Highlands, was a very common practice in the north of Scotland, down to the beginning of the last century ; and the alliance or affectionate tie thus formed often proved to be stronger than that flowing from blood-relationship. Sir R. Gordon refers to this result in another case of fostering among the clan Gunn. He says, " In the month of December, 1622 years, Sir John Sinclair of Greinland and Ratter, (the Earle of Catteynes, his brother,) died in Catteynes. He was a great favourer of the Clan-Gun, with whom he had been fostered and bred in his infancy, which is accompted the strictest poynt of amitie and friendship among all the Hielanders of the kingdome of Scotland, preferring oftentimes their fosters and foster-brethren unto their parents, and neirest kiured ; they will follow and de-



Caithness, who afterwards became the heir of the family, and from whom the present Lord Macdonald is descended."

James Gun was succeeded as chieftain by his son William, with whom originated the patronymic of *Mackeamish*, i. e. the son of James. William, the first Mackeamish, signalized himself in several conflicts in the north, and his fame as a successful and brave leader of his clan, has been celebrated in some Gaelic verses and songs still existing. Alexander Gun of Killernan was the second, and his son William Gun, the third Mackeamish. John Gun of Killernan and Navidale was the fourth, and Alexander Gun, also of the same designation, was the fifth Mackeamish. This last chief had two sons, Donald and George, and was succeeded by his eldest son Donald, who was the sixth Mackeamish. Alexander Gun, the son of Donald, was the seventh, and Alexander's son, William Gun, the eighth Mackeamish; but this last chief, who was an officer in the army, being killed in action in India, without leaving issue, and the other male descendants of Donald, the sixth Mackeamish, being extinct, the chieftainship devolved on the now deceased Hector Gunn,\* the great-grandson of George, the second son of Alexander, the fifth Mackeamish, to whom he was served as nearest male heir on 31st May 1803; and George Gunn, Esq., Rhives, in Sutherland, the only son of the said Hector Gunn, is now the chief of the clan Gunn, and the tenth Mackeamish.

*Land-Owner.*—His Grace the Duke of Sutherland is proprietor of the whole parish, which has been part of the ancient Earldom of Sutherland from the earliest time to which the national records go back.

*Antiquities.*—There are the remains of several circular or Pictish towers in this parish, which have outlasted in their great antiquity, all traditionary accounts that may have once existed in regard to their erection, their uses, or history.† There are also

pend upon them befor their natural lords and masters." Several formal agreements for the fostering of children are still preserved in the north; and the foster-father, as well as the father of the child, makes a gift of cattle, which, with their whole increase, were to be kept as the property of the foster-child, until he arrived at man's estate.

\* The name Gun had been, until the middle of last century, spelt with one *n*, but since then, a second *n* has been added, in order to distinguish the name from the word *gun*, a musket,—a comparatively modern word, which has slid into the English language, in a manner which puzzles all etymologists. The name Gun appears to have been the same as the Welsh *Gwynic*, and the name *Gawne*, still common in the Isle of Man.

† These Pictish towers seem to have been more numerous in the principal straths in Sutherland, than in any other district of Scotland; and the writer of this report has visited the ruins of 65 of them in that county. There are some others which he

many barrows or tumuli scattered over the parish ; and in one not far from the manse, which was opened by workmen in search of gravel, a coffin formed of plain flags was discovered, in which were mouldering human bones. One of these tumuli, in the shape of a well-proportioned cone, and called *Knock'nreachy*, is situate close to the manse, and also an upright stone called *Clach-na-heudh*.

### III.—POPULATION.

In the year 1801,	.	1440
1811,	.	1574
1821,	.	565
1831,	.	257

The decrease is accounted for by the change that occurred in the rural economy of the parish, by the substitution of Cheviot sheep for Highland cattle, between the years 1811 and 1821. The system of small holdings and subletting, previously common in the parish, was thereby altered ; and no part of the parish being adapted for new settlements, the bulk of the population was settled in the coast-side parishes ; and, in particular, they resorted to the village of Helmsdale and its neighbourhood, which is within two miles of the southern boundary of the parish, forming part of the same district of country, and where the increase of the population far exceeds the decrease in the interior.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Almost the whole of the parish is occupied as sheep farms. The number of sheep grazed, all of the Cheviot breed, is estimated at 18,000 head, and they are divided among six tenants of separate farms.

### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Helmsdale is the nearest town, distant two miles from the south boundary of the parish, and nine miles from the manse and church. There is a good road leading from Helmsdale, along the whole extent of the strath, to Bighouse and Melvich, on the north coast ; and another road from within one mile of the manse, running southward across the Crask ; a stormy and elevated hill dividing the strath from the head of Glen Loth, until it joins the parliamentary road on the east coast of the county at Loth-beg.

has not yet seen ; and he is inclined to think, that a complete inspection of the whole of them, and accurate details of each tower, so far as their ruinous condition will admit of, including not only their size, and interior arrangements, and their situation in regard to marked localities, and their vicinity in some cases to each other ; but also every deviation from any part of their peculiar, and generally uniform construction, would, in some degree, remove the obscurity that at present attends the contemplation of these interesting relics of the oldest stone buildings in our native land, and which, when complete, must have exhibited, in singular combination, the ingenuity of design, and laborious industry of a people somewhat advanced in the arts of civilisation, with the rudeness of workmanship peculiar to savage life.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—By Bishop Gilbert Murray's charter, *inter* 1222 and 1245, reconstituting the chapter of the bishopric of Caithness, which included the whole county of Sutherland, the chapter consisted of nine canons, of whom five were dignitaries. The Abbot of Scone was appointed one of the abbots, and had the church of "Keldurunach" assigned to him, under the provision, that when absent, he would have another to minister for him. The Abbots of Scone continued in charge of this church until the Reformation; and the foundation of "Tea'n Abb," or the Abbott's House is still seen to the west of the manse, while the figure of a human head, rudely carved in stone, and called *the Abbott's Head*, is preserved in the garden wall of the manse. The patronage of the parish has, since the Reformation, been vested in the Sutherland family. The extent of the glebe is between 13 and 14 acres, and the minister has besides the grazing of 60 sheep. The former stipend of 40 bolls of victual is now converted, and paid by the heritor with the former money stipend of L. 30, 10s. 1d.; and there is also an addition of L. 70 from Exchequer. The manse is in good repair, and the church is suitable for the congregation; the whole inhabitants of the parish being of the church of Scotland.

*Education.*—The parish school is situate near the manse, but, owing to the great extent of the parish, many families are prevented from sending their children to it. Several private teachers, however, are employed, and exclusively paid by the inhabitants; and the parental duty of providing for the education of youth appears, in this parish, to acquire strength in proportion to the difficulties to be overcome in exercising it. The amount of the parochial schoolmaster's salary is the minimum.

*Poor.*—The few indigent persons in this parish are treated with kindness by their more independent and fortunate neighbours; and the easy access they all have to fuel, and the non-exactment of rent for their small houses, make the moderate allowances from the poor funds which they receive of far more value to them, than the same sums would be in more densely inhabited parishes. These funds are derived from Sunday collections, and an annual donation from the Sutherland family. The average number of poor of all classes for the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, is 42; average amount of church collections during these years, L.9; average amount of mortifications, &c. during these years, L.4.

*February* 1840.

## PARISH OF CLYNE.\*

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. GEORGE MACKAY, MINISTER.

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### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE etymology of the name of this parish is not correctly known; and though there are various conjectures on this point, not one of them seems in any degree satisfactory.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The figure of the parish is irregular; in length it extends from the east coast of the county into the interior to the summit of Ben Ormin, a distance of about 24 miles from south-east to north-west; its breadth on the coast side is 4 miles, and varies from 6 to 8 miles inland. It is bounded on the south-west by the parish of Golspie; on the west by Rogart; on the north by Kildonan; on the north-east by Loth, and on the south-east by the German ocean.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The interior is in many parts very picturesque, being distinguished from the more tame scenery along the coast, by a variety of mountains, glens, and lakes, and adorned by natural and planted woods. The prospect is much admired, when entering the glen at Killean. The Cárrol Rock, an abrupt precipice overhanging Loch Brora,—Ben Clibrig, Ben Ormin, and Ben Horn, at once break on the view, which, with the reflection in the lake of the rock of Carrol, and the sloping sides of the hills covered with plantations and natural woods, present a singular and magnificent panorama.

About nine miles from the coast, Strath Brora divides into two valleys of a still more upland character, at a place called Ascoile. The one to the left is skirted with many clumps and a few extensive ranges of natural wood; and the other valley, or rather glen, to the north is wild and deep. At this point also, the parish assumes a more sterile and Highland aspect, being of a bleak and heathy character, with extensive ranges of moors and moss, intersected by

\* Drawn up by George Gunn, Esq. of Rhives.

numerous small rivulets ; and still more inland, several lofty hills, forming part of the high and stormy centre range of Sutherland mountains, mark the boundaries of the parish to the west and north. Greatly different from this elevated district, the low grounds of the parish along the sea-coast contain well-cultivated farms, surrounded by several townships occupied by small tenants, and composed of neat stone cottages,—these farms connected together by excellent and well kept roads, which intersect the cultivated parts of the parish in all directions. The elevation of two of the highest mountains above the level of the sea, as ascertained by measurement, is as follows,—Ben Ormin 2306 feet ; Ben Horn 1712 feet.

The only cave deserving notice is a small one of peculiar construction above the Bridge of Brora ; it seems to have been formed by the action of the water on a soft portion of the rock, before the river became imbedded in its present low level.

The coast is low and sandy, and has a breadth of sand hills extending about a quarter of a mile from the shore, and covered with bent, and where not broken, with rich pasture. This sandy belt is succeeded by the arable land occupied by the lotters or small tenants, and the fine farms of Inver Brora and Clynelish ; and behind them are the hills of the interior division.

*Temperature.*—Along the sea coast, the weather is the same as in the neighbouring parishes, with the exception, perhaps, of the parish of Golspie, which is better sheltered by plantations, and not so exposed to storms from the mountains in the centre of the county as the low grounds of this parish are, when the wind blows down the opening of Strath Brora. The north-west gales blow with great force down this strath, the high hills on each side forming a natural funnel, and the blasts spread along the low grounds, often causing much injury to the crops. The soil being of a light, sharp, gravelly quality, occasional long droughts materially affect vegetation ; but it revives rapidly on being refreshed by the copious showers, which seldom fail to come in time to save it.

The climate may be considered on the whole excellent, of which the healthy appearance and the longevity of the people furnish the best demonstration. The prevailing winds are east or north-east, west or south-west. The east wind is sometimes damp, cold, and penetrating, and the west wind excessively violent.

*Hydrography.*—Loch Brora is the principal sheet of water in the parish. It is about four miles long, and varies from a quarter to half-a-mile in breadth, being contracted at two points, and has

the appearance of three lakes when seen from a short distance. Extensive fir plantations on each side, with the bold precipitous Carrol rock, and the mansion-house and offices of Kilcalmkill, form a beautiful and interesting scene in fine weather.

There is a small island near the lower end of Loch Brora, of which Sir Robert Gordon says, in his History of the Earldom of Sutherland, that "the Erle of Southerland hes a delectable habitation, and pleasant for hunting of red-deer and roes in the woods on both sides of the loch. This island is distant thrie or four myles from the burgh of Broray."

Among the smaller lakes, Loch Tubernach, north of Clyne church, and the source of the Clyne Milton Burn, was, at one time, famous for large trout of superior flavour; but they have fallen off in quality, of late years.

The river Brora has its source in the forest of Ben Clibrig, and, passing through a part of Rogart, it enters this parish about two miles above Sciberscross, and joins the Black Water a mile below that place. This latter river rises in Ben Ormin, and runs through a long extent of deep moors, which give a dark tinge to the water, and from which it no doubt derives its name. It receives several tributaries in its course, and runs down a deep rocky channel for about five miles before its junction with the Brora, when the united streams flow through rich meadows for half-a-mile, and fall into Loch Brora.

There is a cascade on the Black Water, near Balnakyle, very magnificent when the river is in flood; and another still more striking and romantic at Kilcalmkill, which is visited by most tourists; also a cascade well worthy of notice on a small burn near the manse of Clyne, where the water falls into a deep ravine over a rock sixty feet high.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—Sir Humphry Davy, when he visited this county in 1812, left a manuscript at Dunrobin Castle, describing the mineral productions of part of Sutherland, wherein he stated, with reference to this parish, "that the secondary rocks occupy but a small space, and are probably incumbent on the red sandstone or breccia; that they occur in regular strata, but their arrangement is very much disturbed. They appear to have been originally deposited or formed parallel to the horizon; but in most places, this parallelism has been disturbed either by the subsidence or elevation of parts of the strata, so that there are frequent faults or abruptions of the different rocks, which have given to the different parts of the strata different inclinations.

“ The true secondary strata of Sutherland occupy an extent of six or seven miles, filling up a sort of basin between the transition hills in the neighbourhood of Dunrobin, and those in the parish of Loth. The upper stratum is a sandstone of different degrees of hardness, and composed of silicious sand, cemented by silicious matter. Below this, occurs an aluminous shale, containing pyritous matter, carbonaceous matter, the remains of marine animals, and of land vegetables. Beneath this shale, or rather alternating with it, a stratum occurs, containing, in some of its parts, calcareous matter, and passing into limestone; but in general consisting of a silicious sand, agglutinated by calcareous cement. The coal measures occupy the lowest part of this secondary district which has been explored.”

Coal had been worked near the mouth of the River Brora so far back as 1573, in the time of Lady Jane Gordon, Countess of Sutherland, and at various subsequent periods; but that work was abandoned many years ago. The late Duke of Sutherland, with the munificence which characterized all his improvements, expended L. 16,000 in sinking a new pit, and for the necessary buildings, on the north side of the river, half a mile above the bridge, where a seam was found from 3 feet 2 inches to 3 feet 8 inches thick, at a depth of 250 feet from the surface. The coal was conveyed to the harbour on a railway 800 yards in length. Four large salt-pans were also erected, which cost L. 3327, and the salt produced proved of very superior quality.

Limestone is found in small detached portions in various places on the banks of the River Brora, from the harbour upwards. It contains no magnesian earth, and is adulterated only with aluminous and silicious earths, and oxide of iron. A specimen of it was examined by Sir Humphry Davy, from a rock about 100 yards above the Weir: 20 grains contained 17.3 grains of carbonate of lime.\*

*Zoology.*—The animals of this parish are common to most other parts of the county. They are, the red-deer, roe, fox, wild-cat, polecat, martin, and the stoat or weasel, which becomes white in winter, the lesser brown stoat, the brown otter, mole, common mouse, field-mouse, lesser field-mouse, Alpine hare, common hare, common gray rabbit, Muscovy rat. At no distant period, it was the general belief that rats could not exist in the county, and Suther-

\* We understand more detailed accounts of the geology of this parish than that given above, have been laid before the Wernerian Society by Professor Jameson, and by Messrs Murchison and Sedgwick before the Geological Society.

land earth was frequently taken to other countries, under the impression of its efficacy in driving them from any place where the earth might be deposited. But a vessel being wrecked near Kintradwell about thirty years ago, dispelled the delusion, and introduced the Muscovy rat, which has since multiplied, and spread in every direction. The red-deer have become very numerous since the plantations on the banks of Loch Brora have grown up to afford them cover and shelter. Some of these noble animals attain a great size, and are often seen congregated in herds. Lord Francis Egerton killed one of the stags at this place in 1838, which weighed upwards of eighteen stones Dutch weight; and it is believed that some of them are now much larger. The foxes and other animals of prey were at one time very destructive to stock; but the farmers entered into an association and hired fox-hunters, by whose exertions they were nearly extirpated; at least they were so much thinned, as not again to become very formidable.

One hundred and fifty different kinds of birds frequent the parish, the most remarkable of which are, the white-tailed eagle, ring-tailed eagle, peregrine falcon, buzzard, hawk, wild swan, wild goose, blackcock, grouse, ptarmigan.

The fishes in Loch Brora are, salmon, grilse, salmon trout, char, common trout. The salmon begin to ascend the river in condition to spawn about the middle of August; the grilse a fortnight later. They begin to spawn about the 1st of October, and descend as kelts or spent fish in February. The smelts go down in March, continuing to do so till the end of May. The grilses commence their ascent in May, varying it from the beginning till the end of the month, according as the season may be early or late.

The fishes caught on the shores are, cod, ling, haddock, skate, turbot, halibut, flounder, whiting, mackerel, mullets, millers, gurnards. The shell-fish are, lobsters, partons or crabs.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Sir Robert Gordon's Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland, of which there is an old manuscript copy in the library at Dunrobin Castle, contains many notices of this parish, but chiefly descriptive of the ancient feuds and combats which used to distract the country at that period, and is too voluminous to be inserted here.

The chief historical event of importance which has taken place since the publication of the former report, is the change in the occupation of the parish, by the removal of the small tenants from the



interior to the coast side, and which, with its consequences on the comforts and habits of the inhabitants, will be noticed hereafter.

A correct map of the county of Sutherland, on a scale of one inch to a mile, was completed a few years since at the expense of the late Duke of Sutherland; from which it appears that the surface of this parish contains 103 square miles, or 65,000 acres imperial measure.

The Duke of Sutherland is sole land-owner of the parish. The property of Kilcalmhill, which belonged for about 300 years to the Gordons of Carrol, a highly respectable family connected with the Gordon branch of the Earls of Sutherland, was purchased by the late Duke about thirty years ago; also detached portions of the estate of Uppat, lying in Clyne; the place of Uppat, afterwards purchased by his Grace, being in the parish of Golspie.

*Parochial Registers.*—There is no trace of any parochial register being kept farther back than the year 1706, and even for some time thereafter the strictest accuracy has not been observed.

*Antiquities.*—This parish is not remarkable for much that deserves the notice of the antiquarian, and the few scattered remnants that can be traced are greatly dilapidated. *Castle Cole*, one of those towers once so common in the north, is, however, worthy of particular notice. It is perhaps the most entire of what are called Pictish towers, in this part of Scotland, excepting that of Dornadilla, in Strathmore, in the parish of Durness. It is situated on the east side of the Black Water, about two miles above its junction with the Brora, and must have been held an impregnable place of defence in its day. The opposite bank is a precipice of 70 feet. The river running rapidly over a rocky channel, renders it inaccessible on three sides, and the narrow neck which connects it with the east bank seems to have been protected by a ditch. The building is oblong; the walls 11 feet thick, without lime or mortar; the diameter inside 22 feet; the only part of the walls now standing is on the south and east sides, about 12 feet high; the door, 5 feet high, 3 feet wide, is in this part of the building facing the south. There is a space in the wall, on the east side of this entrance, which can be traced round the building, and its height would only admit of people to lie or creep in it. This tower must have been the stronghold of the chieftain or of the tribe; and the remains of a line of watch-towers, to give warning of any hostile approach, may still be traced to the coast.

Craig Bar, on the south side of Loch Brora, is thus noticed in the former Statistical Report. "It is a steep and rocky precipice,

fortified with a ditch of circumvallation, every way inaccessible, but by a narrow neck of land between it and a neighbouring hill; it contains about eight acres of land, and could be easily defended against any number of assailants." An ancient cemetery at Kilmalkill, marks where the heroes of those days rest. The grave of the chief, in which large human bones were found, is yet distinguished by four stones and a cover. Various tumuli lie scattered over the interior, marking their battle-grounds, and where the slain were buried; but their names and their deeds have passed into oblivion.

The next object of antiquity is an artificial island in Loch Bro-ra, already alluded to, and which has been correctly described as below, in a note to the former Report.\*

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish has varied little since the year 1792, owing to the change which has taken place in the system of farming, the glens and interior being converted into sheep-walks; the inhabitants being removed to the sea coast, and some of them having emigrated to North America. The coal-works commenced in 1812, and caused a considerable increase of the population, which appeared by the census taken in 1821; and as they ceased to be worked in 1828, the number decreased previous to the next census in 1831.

By the census taken in	1792,	the population was	1660
	1801,		1643
	1811,		1639
	1821,		1874
	1831,		1711
	1840,		1756

\* "The figure of the island is an oblong square, consisting of two inferior squares of 70 feet diameter. It was divided into two parts; one-half appropriated for lodgings in time of war; the other half laid out for the advantage of a garden. The walls are still pretty high, and ascend perpendicularly from the surface of the water, without a vestige of the island behind them, and are only accessible by two stairs which front the south and east; so that with plenty of stores and the fishing of the loch, abounding with salmon, trout, and eel, the place was rendered impregnable when properly defended. Among many reports of the good purposes of this island, there is one traditional story repeated with pleasure by the inhabitants to this day. They tell that, on a certain occasion, the neighbourhood was suddenly invaded by a numerous army of Caithness men, which they were not prepared to resist. Upon this occasion they fled to the island for an asylum, where they were secure from the assaults of the enemy. Upon this, the invaders were so enraged, that they attempted damming up the narrow mouth of the loch, at which the river breaks out, and had made such progress in the work, that the islanders were obliged to take to their boats in the night time, to accomplish their escape; but, being pursued, they would have all perished, had it not been for the seasonable assistance of the clan Gun, who had marched from Strathulie upon hearing of the danger of their countrymen. The Caithness-men, in consequence of this assistance, met with a total defeat; and the part of the river or loch, at which they had been employed, retains to this day the name of Daman or Davan, which signifies a dam."

The number of families in the parish is 385, and they may be distinguished as follows :

Male heads of families, . . . . .	255
Female heads of families, . . . . .	130
	— 385
Bachelors above 50 years of age, . . . . .	7
Unmarried women above 50 years of age, . . . . .	39
Insane males, . . . . .	0
Insane females, . . . . .	5
Males under 15 years, . . . . .	293
Females under 15 years, . . . . .	282
Males betwixt 15 and 30 years, . . . . .	175
Females betwixt 15 and 30 years, . . . . .	213
Males betwixt 30 and 50 years, . . . . .	149
Females betwixt 30 and 50 years, . . . . .	180
Males betwixt 50 and 70 years, . . . . .	115
Females betwixt 50 and 70 years, . . . . .	196
Males upwards of 70 years, . . . . .	47
Females upwards of 70 years, . . . . .	55

The language usually spoken among the labouring classes is Gaelic ; but, owing to the more general intercourse with the south country, and the increase of education, it has certainly lost ground since the date of the former report, and, as most of the young people now attend school and receive at least the rudiments of education, it bids fair to be altogether unknown at no very distant period.—

The inhabitants of this parish do not devote much of their time to popular games and amusements ; and the few remnants of the merry olden times are fast passing from among them. The bagpipe is never heard except at weddings, and on Christmas and New-Year's Days. Their only game is the *shinny*, which they play with spirit during the holidays, and they then lay their clubs aside till the return of the same period next year. There is nothing distinctive in their habits, appearance, or personal qualities. They intermarry with the inhabitants of the other parishes on the coast-side ; and, consequently, form one community of the same general quality and customs. Their habits are cleanly, and their style of dress, when prepared for church on Sunday, is not surpassed by that of any assembled congregation of the same class of people in the south country. Straw bonnets are becoming general ; and no young damsel is seen without a neatly made cap, her hair tastefully braided, and her dress formed after the latest imported fashion. A great change this, from the time when they were clad in coarse, homespun, woollen stuff, and little regard was paid to appearance or cleanliness.

Though the peasantry cannot procure the same quantity of animal food, and of the produce of the dairy, as when they lived in

the interior and occupied a greater extent of land, they enjoy in general an abundant and varied supply at all seasons of the year. There is no family without some land, and few but keep one or more cows and a pig. Their lots of land supply potatoes, some meal, and other necessaries. The more industrious secure a store of herrings and other fish ; purchase some sheep or a cow, and kill a pig for winter food. Therefore, it may confidently be said, that, on the whole, they enjoy, in a reasonable degree, the comforts and advantages of society ; and their cheerful industrious habits are the best criterion of their being contented with their situation and circumstances.

They have acquired, in common with the people of the country, a taste for evangelical preaching, and cherish a warm attachment towards the Established Church. No Dissenting preacher has attempted to gain a footing in the parish ; and it would be in vain, so long as the present able and zealous minister continues to possess the confidence and affections of his people. There is neither a professed Dissenter nor Roman Catholic in the parish ; and, what may seem extraordinary, there is not one of the latter persuasion among the natives of the county, in a population of 26,000 souls. Though the country people are but little educated, they will soon discover an error in doctrine, and can quote scripture in support of their arguments with surprising readiness and accuracy. They are not fanatical nor given to prejudice, if directed by a clergyman whom they respect ; and a mutual esteem and attachment is soon established betwixt the pastor and his flock, such as is described in the early and purer days of our church.

The poor here are more numerous in proportion to the population than in the adjoining parishes of Loth and Golspie, and the inhabitants generally are not in such good circumstances as in these parishes, which is thus accounted for:—when the tenants were removed from the interior of the country to the coast-side, the poor belonging to this and other parts of the estate, and those who were unable or unwilling to occupy and improve lots of land, settled in the vicinity of the coal-pits, where they were insured abundance of fuel, without pay or trouble ; and living among men in the regular receipt of high wages, they were sure to obtain a share of these earnings ; but when the works ceased, they enjoyed no such advantages, and, being thrown on their own resources, they soon became a burden on the community. On the other hand, the people of Loth are enriched by the herring-fishing, and the high price paid

for their labour in the rapidly rising village of Helmsdale. Golspie is a community of tradesmen, labourers, and fishers, kept in constant employment by the establishments of Dunrobin, and of the neighbouring extensive arable farms.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—This parish contains 65,000 square acres, of which a very small portion indeed is under cultivation; the rest being generally high and irreclaimable hill-pasture. It is not easy to state with accuracy the extent of land in tillage, but it cannot be under 1400 acres imperial measure, three-fourths of which has been trenched from the barren waste by the settlers from the hills, and what was formerly under the plough greatly improved. There being 385 families, and as these occupy from one to four acres, we may safely fix the extent possessed by the cottars on an average at nearly two acres each, making in round numbers 730, exclusive of the following principal farms:—Clynelish, 235; Inver-Brora, 210; East Brora, 75; Kilcalmkill, 60; Clynekirkton and Glebe, 40; Clynemilton, 33; Achrimsdale Park, 17—total 1400. The six farms here enumerated have comfortable dwelling-houses and complete offices, sufficient for every purpose. They are enclosed and subdivided with neat and substantial stone fences, thoroughly drained, and cultivated, strictly according to the most approved system of modern husbandry, producing luxuriant crops of barley, oats, and turnips. No wheat is raised, the soil not being considered suited for it. The average rent of the old arable land is about L. 1, 5s. per acre, and the tenant becomes bound to improve all corners of fields, and such portions of the adjoining moor-ground as is conditioned for on the commencement or renewal of his lease. The duration of the leases is for nineteen years. The wages to male-servants from L. 8 to L. 10; females from L. 3 to L. 5 annually; labourers 1s. 6d. per day; and there is seldom any difference made in the winter season, from their being then more exposed to inclement weather.

The parish is entirely laid out in sheep-walks, excepting the above arable farms, and the ground occupied by the small tenants. The stock is pure Cheviot, and the utmost attention being paid to the improvement of the sheep by the present judicious and experienced tenants, they deservedly command the highest prices at market, and carry the first prizes in competition with the stock of other counties. The total number of sheep is from 10,000 to 11,000; the rent averaging 2s. 6d. each. There is of other stock,

about 300 horses, 250 cows, 300 other cattle, and 300 pigs. Goats were at one time numerous, but they have now quite disappeared.

When the small tenants were removed from the interior, lots were marked off for each of them, containing in every instance from a quarter to an acre of old land, and to this was added about two acres of moor-ground, which they were to improve. Not only has this condition been implemented in most cases, but the adjoining lands have been trenched, and now produce rich crops of corn and potatoes. There was scarcely a cart or a plough among the small tenants in the parish forty years ago. It can now boast of 258 carts and 240 ploughs, all made by native tradesmen, on the most approved principles. At that date, there was scarcely a regularly bred tradesman in the parish. They now abound; and there may be reckoned five stone masons, nine house-carpenters, twelve dike-builders, three blacksmiths, nine tailors, twelve shoemakers, three cartwrights, besides journeymen and apprentices.

There are several clumps of natural wood on the banks of Loch Brora, consisting of common and weeping birch, bird-cherry, alders, a variety of poplars, some old detached oak trees, and about 150 acres of thriving fir plantations at Kilcalmhill; and on the opposite side of the loch, which contributes greatly to the beauty of that magnificent lake,—also 50 acres of fir-plantation at Clynelish; but owing to the bad quality of the soil, and its exposure to the sea-blast, it has not kept pace with the other woods in the parish. The plantations are thinned regularly, sufficiently enclosed, and care is taken to prevent trespass by cattle, or other injury to them.

*Quarries.*—There are two freestone quarries, which have been extensively worked of late years for domestic purposes, and for exportation; one below Spouty, near the sea, of a soft, friable, sandy quality, not much used, except for the small country cottages, the other at Branbury hill, near Clynelish, a remarkably compact, hard, silicious freestone, beautifully white, and highly valued for its durability. It contains many very perfect petrifications of trees, fishes, and various forms of shells, which are much prized by the scientific travellers who visit the country.

*Fisheries.*—The river Brora is famous for the number and quality of its salmon, and when in proper condition, is one of the best angling streams in the north. It is fished for behoof of the proprietors, and the produce sold to a company at a stipulated rate

per pound. The rent may be stated at L. 300 a year. Some boats have been engaged at Brora in the herring-fishing, and with tolerable success. There are three boats' crews of regular fishers, who keep the neighbourhood abundantly supplied,—often selling a large cod for 2d., a skate from 4d. to 6d., and sometimes from 20 to 40 haddocks for 6d. But the other inhabitants have not taken to the sea, as was expected, and they are more inclined to occupy their time in cultivating their lands,—excepting during the herring-fishing season, when they are all engaged in it, at Brora or Helmsdale.

Kelp was formerly manufactured on the shores; but this has been discontinued since the fall in the value of that article at market, and the tenants are allowed the free use of the sea-ware as manure for their land.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town, &c.*—Dornoch is the nearest market-town, being distant about thirteen miles from the confines of the parish; but half-yearly markets are held in Golspie, only four miles distant, in June and October. Brora is the only village, and contains 280 inhabitants.

*Means of Communication.*—When the former report was published, there was not a mile of road fit for a carriage, and Brora could boast of the only bridge in the county. It has probably long enjoyed this advantage, and its name may have been derived from the Danish word Brora, a *bridge*, or from brugh, a *borough*. Now, the country is intersected in every direction with the finest roads in the kingdom, there being in this parish alone about thirty miles of road, and fifteen bridges of the most perfect construction, and always kept in the best order. No toll-dues are exacted in this county,—which is justly prized as a great advantage over our neighbours. Brora being a sub-post-office, a neat receiving-house was built by subscription from the inhabitants, and the Mail-Coach, drawn by two horses, passes and repasses daily. A pier was constructed at the harbour, at the sole expense of the late Duke of Sutherland, when the coal and salt works were in operation, and which affords secure shelter to coasting vessels.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church, which is the only place of public worship, is conveniently situated in the centre of the population, the whole inhabitants, with the exception of the dwellings of shepherds, being within less than three miles of it. It was built about the year 1770; and enlarged and thoroughly repaired thirteen years ago. It may contain from 800 to 1000 individu-

als. The sittings are free, as is the case all over the Duke of Sutherland's property, in this county and in Ross-shire. The manse, which was built about the same time with the church, has also received an addition, and it is now a handsome and commodious residence. The glebe contains 12 acres of rich soil. The hill rights belonging to it were lately exchanged for an equivalent of arable land, which is admitted to be far more convenient and advantageous for the minister. The stipend is 93 quarters barley, and L. 23 in money, including the allowance for communion elements. The average number of communicants is 65.

A catechist is paid by voluntary contributions from the people. He perambulates the parish frequently, visiting every family, and is a most useful and important assistant to the minister.

Collections are made periodically for the Inverness Infirmary, the four Assembly schemes, and other public charities, amounting in all to from L. 12 to L. 20.

*Education.*—There are two regular schools, exclusive of private teachers,—the parish school, and one in the Doll, which is supported by the Glasgow Auxiliary Gaelic School Society. The ordinary branches of education are taught. From the number and position of the population, the minister considers two additional schools necessary,—one at Brora, and the other at Badinellan. The parochial teacher has the maximum salary, and L. 2 Sterling in compensation for a garden. The fees are very moderate and not well paid, seldom exceeding L. 12. His accommodation is comfortable, and on a sufficiently liberal scale. Most of the rising generation attend school for some period of the year, and are so far in the way of receiving the benefits arising from a moral and religious education. There is also a female school at Brora, endowed by the Duke of Sutherland, where girls are taught to sew, make their own dresses, and other needle-work.

*Library.*—A circulating library was established, some years ago, among the families on the coast side, which is still in active operation, and by means of which they have access to the newest publications for payment of a few shillings annually.

*Charitable Institutions.*—There are no public charitable institutions in this parish, nor have the poor the benefit of any charitable bequests; consequently, they are dependent for their subsistence on the generosity of the landlord—the liberality of their neighbours who are in better circumstances, and the pittance afforded them from the proceeds of the parochial contributions.



The annual collections at the church amount to L.20 and upwards; and, besides a regular donation of L.6 from the Noble proprietor, there are extra collections, when the parishioners of all ranks contribute liberally.

The paupers on the roll are about 120, and the average allowance to each may be stated at 5s. In seasons of scarcity, the poor go about in the parish, and seldom leave it; but it is absolute necessity that compels them to go beyond their own threshold, for relief from others.

A Savings Bank was established for the whole county about six years ago, and a branch of it is in each parish. Considerable sums were deposited, and the institution has already been of incalculable advantage to the community, affording, during the late pressing seasons, a relief from the savings of more prosperous times.

*Markets.*—A market is held at Brora in the month of October, which is attended by the people of this and the neighbouring parishes. Shopkeepers come from a distance, and erect tents to display their commodities, and they usually meet with a ready sale. A great many cattle and horses change owners, it being the last market of the season. The five inns in the village used to be crowded on this occasion, besides a great many tents in the market for the retail of whisky; but the Total Abstinence Societies, which have been formed of late, have had a miraculous effect in improving the tastes and habits of the people in this respect. There is not a third part of the spirits used now which were used formerly, and the innkeepers complain loudly that their calling is gone.

*Fuel.*—The ordinary fuel is peat procured from mosses in the close neighbourhood, and the fishers collect coke from the shore under flood-mark. Coal is imported, costing from 16s. to 18s. per ton, and its use among the wealthier class is much on the increase.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

There is no district of country in Scotland where such an entire change has taken place in the habits, character, and pursuits of the inhabitants, as in this and the other parts of the county forming the estate of Sutherland. They were quite a rural, a moral, and a happy population, inhabiting beautifully romantic and sequestered glens in the interior—far removed from the bustle of the world. Strangers to its allurements and luxuries, they passed their lives, generation following generation, in the same localities, but without ambition to better their circumstances, or a desire to improve

their possessions. All passed happily and without care, so long as the seasons proved propitious, and that the produce of their stock was sufficient to pay the landlord and to afford the means of subsistence on their simple fare; but when the winter storms lengthened into spring, and the mill-dew and the early frosts destroyed the hopes of the harvest, then indeed came the period of distress; and it is not too much to say that they suffered the very extreme of want, which often produced contagious fevers and other mortal diseases. This was submitted to, however, in silence and with pious resignation: no tumults nor risings against the constituted authorities, who they well knew could not ward off the general calamity. Thus situated, helpless and without resources, their only course was an appeal to the compassion of their natural protector, the landlord, and this was never done in vain. He required often to import meal equal in value to the rent of two or more years, and generally leaving a large balance never to be recovered. This state of things could not continue, while the rest of the world were moving ahead, and making rapid advances in improvement; consequently, the great and deeply important measure was resolved on to remove the population to the coast-side, where they would be placed near the sea—become fishermen or artificers, and thus be able to benefit by the many and inexhaustible resources which Providence has placed within their reach. At this time, there were but few bred tradesmen in the country. When a man found it necessary to renew his rude dwelling, he called the neighbours to his assistance, and it was only the work of a few days to complete it. Every man was his own carpenter, for few implements were required, and he had little to do with them. One blacksmith served a district. The shoemaker and the tailor migrated from house to house, receiving their victuals and a small pittance of wages in return for their labour. There was scarcely a cart or a plough in the country, excepting on the larger farms. No man thought of increasing or improving his tillage or pasture lands by trenching or draining. But let any one with an impartial and unprejudiced eye examine the present condition of the inhabitants. Their well-built and neatly kept cottages and enclosed gardens far exceed what many tacksmen in former days paying from L. 50 to L. 100 possessed. Every individual in the family has some resource in a trade or other manual labour—all is a stirring scene of industry and positive comfort. The father and the sons cultivate the lot, if not tradesmen; while the females are engaged with household work, or preparing nets for the next herring season.

Persons who are ignorant of the character of the Highlanders, and many who have never seen the country, have ventured to describe them as indolent, idle, and unprofitable members of the community. A more gross fallacy has never been uttered. They are a quiet, sober, brave, and a moral race; attached and confiding while kindly and honestly dealt by; but reserved, stern, and unbending as their mountain rocks, wherever they suspect injustice, or lose faith in the acts and professions of their superiors. The extensive and perfect improvements on the estate of Sutherland bear evidence of their activity, industry, and confidence in their landlord, when their energies are properly directed. Those who reside in the country can testify, that it is a rare occurrence to meet with an individual the worse of liquor, except occasionally at markets. The naval and military annals of the nation record their bravery, where they have distinguished themselves in many a desperate onset. The faithful labours of our clergy have been blessed by Providence in rendering them pious and moral; and their character may be summed up in these few words,—that they fear God and honour the Queen.

October 1840.

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## PARISH OF TONGUE.

PRESBYTERY OF TONGUE, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. HUGH MACKAY MACKENZIE, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THIS district, previous to its erection into a separate parish in 1724, and while it constituted but a portion of the original parish of Durness, was called Kintail,—a term signifying *the head of the sea*, (*Ceann an t'sàil*). The name was derived from the arm of the sea, which, for many miles, stretches inland into the parish from the Northern Ocean. The modern name (*Tongue*,) which at first was written (*Tung*,) is in all probability derived from a narrow neck of land jutting out transversely for a considerable distance into the Kyle near the House of Tongue, which bears a resemblance to a protruded tongue. The Gaelic

as well as the English name of that organ justifies this derivation.

*Boundaries, Extent.*—It would seem by the record of erection, that the boundaries of this parish extended from Torrisdale, in the east, to the water of Polla, in the west; from the Whiten-head, in the north, to the great deer forest, in the south. By use and wont, however, these boundaries are greatly contracted on the west, in which direction the parish is considered now only to extend to the top of the Moin or the Ben Hope mountain range. The parish of Farr is contiguous on the east and south-east, and the parish of Durness on the west and south-west. On the north, it is bounded by the Northern Ocean. Its figure is irregular, somewhat resembling, as is mentioned in the former account, a spherical triangle. The extreme length from north to south is 20 miles; average 15. The extreme breadth from east to west is 12 miles; average 8. As nearly as can be computed, its superficial extent is 140 square miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The general aspect of the parish is mountainous. In topographical character, however, it is divided into two districts, distinct from each other. The first embraces all that is peculiarly alpine, and is the principal part of the parish as to extent, population, culture, and beauty. It lies towards the west, and consists of the great valley of Tongue, formed by the arm of the sea already mentioned, with the streams which flow from the interior into the head of it. On either side of the bay, two mountain-ranges, rising abruptly and boldly from the ocean, stretch along its whole length, and continue taking nearly a parallel direction, till interrupted by a third range, stretching from east to west, which consists of the mountain of Ben Laoghal and its arms. The whole constitutes a semicircular chain of hills, apparently continuous, and gives to the valley the form of a spacious amphitheatre. The western range, commencing with Ben Hutig, which is 1345 feet high, is for some miles of nearly an uniform height, and somewhat monotonous, till it reaches its southern extremity, when it suddenly terminates in the huge mountain of Ben Hope, 3061 feet high. The eastern range is a series of rounded hills, not very lofty, rising above the bay sometimes abruptly, but in general receding so gently, as to afford scope for considerable cultivation on their sides. The Ben Laoghal range is the most picturesque. This noble hill, the queen of Highland mountains, occupies the central point of the whole semicircular chain; there-

fore, from its position as well as from its romantic outlines, it is the most prominent and striking object in the whole scenery. At the southern extremity of a low extensive valley, it starts up majestically to the height of 2508 feet, presenting towards its base an expanded breast of two miles in breadth, and cleft at its top into four massy towering and splintered peaks, standing boldly aloof from each other. These gradually diminish in height, one after the other. The highest stands proudly forward to occupy the foreground; the rest recede a little, as if each were unwilling to protrude itself, from a conscious inferiority to its predecessor. As a graceful finish to its outlines, it stretches forth an arm on either side, as if to embrace condescendingly the other mountain ranges, which may well acknowledge it as chief, and which may readily be fancied as doing it homage. On a summer morning, or after a sweet summer shower, when the transparent mist is reposing on its bosom, or coiling among its peaks, the appearance of this hill is very beautiful, and often singularly fantastic. Within this great chain, there are various objects which constitute marked features in the scenery of the district. Amongst these, the Kyle occupies a prominent place, so studded with islands at its mouth, that, from some points of view, its connection with the ocean seems wholly intercepted. Towards its centre, the point of Tongue and a small island adjacent thereto, tend farther to charm and relieve the eye, by breaking in upon the continuous sheet of water. Another interesting and conspicuous object is the promontory of Castle Varrich. It consists of a small hill range, running south and north; rising gradually from the low ground at the foot of Ben Laoghal, and terminating at its northern extremity in a bold rock of considerable altitude, which is washed at its base by the water of the Kyle, and has its conical summit surmounted by a fine old ruin, which imparts a pleasing effect. Altogether, the scenery of this part of the parish is much and universally admired. The hand of man has undoubtedly done somewhat to embellish it; but little, very little, to what might be effected. Even Macculloch, with all his antipathy to the north, has admitted, that, were the Moin, on west side of the Bay, to some extent planted, this place would not be exceeded in beauty by many parts of the Highlands.

The second or eastern division of the parish is rather tame and monotonous. In the interior, this is partially relieved by lochs of various sizes, which are scattered with profusion in every direction, and the ground, moreover, is of a softly undulating character; the

rocks being clothed with an almost unbroken surface of verdure and of heath. Towards the sea-coast, the country becomes craggy and fretted-like, uninteresting in its general aspect, and apparently barren. Yet in the midst of this district, when more closely examined, there will be found numerous little glens, bearing a rich soil and a large population.

The coast is in general high and rocky, and round the promontory of the Whiten-head exceedingly bold and picturesque. The rocks are frequently intersected by creeks, and formed into caves and arches. The caves of Freasgail, which are described in the former Account of this parish, have been noticed in the Account of the parish of Durness, in consequence of the modern ideas regarding the boundaries of the two parishes. The islands are *Eilean na naoimh*, (saint's island)—*Eilean na roan*, (seal island,) and the rabbit islands. *Eilean na naoimh*, situated close by the eastern coast of the parish, "had formerly a chapel and burial-place on it, the traces of which are still to be seen. On the south side of the island, the sea, after passing for several yards through a narrow channel, spouts up into the air, sometimes to the height of thirty feet, through a hole in the rock, which, in shape and size, is like the moon at full, and a few seconds afterwards, there is a discharge of water from the east side of the island, with a noise resembling the explosion of cannon." *Eilean na roan* is of considerable size, and has the appearance of two islands, particularly at high water. Part of it is scooped out into the form of a basin, in which the soil is very fertile, and cultivated by a few small tenants. Its rocks are high and precipitous, and to the north side abound with deep narrow fissures, through which the wind rushes with great violence. As this wind, besides being sharp and piercing, is impregnated with saline matter, from its blowing across the ocean, or perhaps from carrying along with it the spray which dashes from off the rocks beneath, the natives take advantage thereof for economical purposes. In these fissures, they season their fish without using salt. On this north side also there is a spacious and elegant-looking arch, about 150 feet span, and 70 feet broad. About the middle of the island, there is a large circular hole, which has fallen in many years ago, and is supposed to communicate with the sea by a subterranean cavern.\* The Rabbit Islands, three in number, are farther within the mouth of the Bay

\* This island is well worthy of being visited by travellers who are desirous to see the natural curiosities of the country.

than the former, and so in some measure removed from the raging of the ocean. The rocks are not very high. The soil is sandy, though covered with verdure. The present name of these islands sufficiently indicates who are their principal inhabitants. The ancient name was *Eilean na Gaeil*, the island of strangers, from the Danes having been said to have landed upon it. The principal bays are those of Torrisdale and Tongue; the former is open and tempestuous, affording little or no shelter for vessels; the latter is the Kyle, or arm of the sea, already noticed. Its length is about ten miles, the average breadth about a-mile and a-half. Its depth is nowhere great, and, from the shifting nature of its sand banks, navigation is difficult and often perilous. There is, however, good anchorage for ships of any burden at the Rabbit Islands, where they may ride with safety in storms from most directions. A fine roadstead is also to be found in its neighbourhood at Talmine, a pretty bay that branches off the west side of the Kyle. It has a smooth beach, and a fine bottom,—is much sheltered from the most tempestuous winds,—and commands a ready exit to the ocean. At present, it is one of the principal fishing stations on the coast. By the erection of quays, and by connecting the mainland with a small island lying close by on the north side, it might be made one of the most commodious harbours in the north. Almost opposite to Talmine, on the east side of the Kyle, there is the creek of Sculomy, which at present shelters a few fishing-boats, but which an inconsiderable expense might render a safe station for many more.

*Meteorology.*—Considering the latitude of this parish, its temperature is mild, and the climate is very salubrious, though the state of the atmosphere is in general extremely changeable. The heat is not so great in summer, nor the cold so intense in winter, as these seem to be in some of the southern parts of Scotland. Placed in a central position between the west and east coasts of the island, it is not visited by those frequent deluges of rain which are peculiar to the former, nor so exposed to those piercing blighting winds which prevail in the latter. The prevailing winds are the south-west and north-west. The severest storms are from the south-west,—the most frequent from the north-west. The prevalent distempers, as connected with the climate, are rheumatism and inflammatory complaints; but more common than either are disorders of the stomach among the poorer people, arising from a diet often too scanty, and sometimes unwholesome. Luminous

meteors are frequent. The circle round the moon and the aurora borealis are sometimes brilliant in winter. When the latter is fiery and lurid, it is an invariable sign of stormy weather. The former generally prognosticates the same, so also does the fragment of a rainbow when seen in the north, called "Boar's head."

*Hydrography.*—The parish abounds with springs, which are generally perennial, but sometimes intermittent. Chalybeate springs are quite common. Sulphureous ones are found in several places, chiefly around Ben Laoghal, and there are some which seem to be a compound of both. None of these have been properly analyzed, but some of the sulphureous seem of such strength, that, were they more accessible, they might be found medicinally of considerable service. Lochs are so numerous, that from a single eminence, which does not command a view of the whole parish, I have counted more than 100. The most deserving of notice are the following:—Loch Maedie, in the southern extremity of the parish, which may be about six miles in circumference. Its appearance is striking, from its margin being singularly indented by numerous little bays and projecting points of land, and from its bosom being studded with islands, on which grow trees of considerable size. Loch Diru lies at the foot of the Diru rock, which is a part of the west arm of Ben Laoghal. The loch is two miles long, and the rock, which is nearly the same length, towers majestically above it to the height of 200 feet,—its brow adorned at pleasing intervals with solitary trees of birch and mountain-ash. This loch is one of the unobserved beauties of the parish, lying in a secluded spot, and inaccessible to any but the pedestrian. On the east and south-east sides of Ben Laoghal, there is a chain of lochs of considerable extent, called Lochs Cullisaid, Laoghal, Craggy, and Slam, which communicate with each other by narrow fords or small rivulets. Loch Laoghal is the largest of the four, and, indeed, the largest in the parish,—being five miles long and upwards of a mile broad. There are two islands upon it, where wild-fowl nestle in great numbers. The verdure in its neighbourhood is rich. A few trees fringe its margin on the west side, and on the opposite there rises a hill of considerable height, green to the top, with a thriving birch-wood at its base. Loch Craggy is interesting, by commanding a fine profile view of Ben Laoghal. Were this chain connected by a road with Lochs Maedie and Diru, sweeping round the whole of Ben Laoghal, it would form a ride which, as regards loch and mountain scenery,



could, for the same extent, be rarely surpassed in beauty. The rivers are, the Borgie, Rhians, and Kinloch; none of them of much consequence. The Borgie (called in the former Account the Torrisdale) rises from Loch Slam, and, after separating this parish from that of Farr during the greater part of its course, falls into the sea on the west side of the Bay of Torrisdale. The Rhians and the Kinloch, neither of them more than two miles in length, fall into the head of the Kyle of Tongue,—the former on the east side of Castle Varrich, the latter on its west. Cascades are numerous, and some of them pretty, though on a small scale.

*Geology.*—The principal rock in the parish is gneiss. It constitutes the mountain-range of Ben Hutig and the Moin, likewise the smaller range of Castle Varrich, and prevails throughout the whole extent of the eastern division of the parish. Its mineral character seems to be the common ternary compound of quartz, felspar, and mica; though not unfrequently hornblende is substituted for the latter. The aspect of this rock varies much from the component minerals, and, from the size of these minerals, as distinct concretions. It is regularly stratified, though in some places, as towards the east, this is not so evident, from the strata being intersected by quartz and granite veins, and disturbed and contorted by what appears, in some cases, the action of fire, and, in others, the action of water. The direction of the strata on the west of Tongue Bay is south-east, at an angle of  $20^{\circ}$ . On the east of the Bay their direction is west-south-west, at an angle of  $40^{\circ}$ , with the exception of a small district at Sculomy, where the direction is south-south-east, and the angle  $60^{\circ}$ . In various places garnet is found imbedded in this rock. Ben Hope is composed of mica-slate, being part of a very extensive district where this rock is developed. A stripe of the same formation is also found at the shore side, on the west side of the bay, stretching from a point opposite the village of Tongue to a place called Portvasgo, near the Rabbit Islands. It connects with, and conforms to, the gneiss of the mountain range above it,—the strata being in the same direction and at the same angle. The rocks of Eilean na roan are a fine specimen of the conglomerate, which rests upon red sandstone. The sandstone is only to be seen in the north side of the island, stratified in the direction west-south-west, at an angle of  $10^{\circ}$ ; at which point the junction of the two formations is very distinct and beautiful. The mountain-range, stretching along the east side of

the Kyle from Coldbacky to Cnoc-Craggy, consists of conglomerate capping the gneiss, and resting horizontally on its fractured beds. The junction in this case is quite visible in some exposed rocks at Coldbacky. Red sandstone has also been discovered at one point in this mountain-range, near Dalcharn. The whole mountain of Ben Laoghal is sienite, "which consists of a light flesh-red felspar, grey quartz, and black or dark-green hornblende, with minute and sparingly disseminated crystals of brown sphene. In several places the quartz almost disappears,—the rock then becoming a binary compound of felspar and hornblende. The structure of this sienite on the small scale is small granular, while on the large it is disposed in a most distinctly tabular manner. Indeed, few localities can be pointed out in Scotland where this beautiful rock arrangement is more characteristically developed. From various parts of its summit the entire structure may be traced with the utmost precision, and the several tabular concretions followed, with little variation, throughout its whole extent. The lateral planes of the tabular concretions are in general nearly parallel, and exhibit an almost polished surface. This mountain might, if other circumstances rendered it expedient, be wrought extensively for building materials. Such would be attended with but little difficulty as far as the raising of the stone is concerned, while the tabular form is so regular, that, for many purposes, very little dressing would be requisite."\* Black manganese ore has been found on the top of Ben Laoghal. Bog-iron ore is very common. Granite boulders are frequent about Tongue village. Whence they have come, is a problem not easy to solve. The principal alluvium is peat, which covers a great proportion of the parish: a quantity of fir-wood is found imbedded in it. The soil, which is, or has been, under cultivation, is in some places a black rich loam; in others a sandy loam; but, perhaps, the most common is a soil compounded of gravel and peat, with an admixture either of clay or sand.

*Zoology.*—The zoology of the parish is such as is common to the whole of this north coast, on which the various species of quadrupeds, birds, and fishes are numerous. Game of almost every description is to be found in the parish, but not in such abundance as formerly, owing, it is supposed, to the extensive moor-burnings upon the sheep farms. Fishing upon lakes and

\* Cunningham's Geognosy of Sutherland,—a work to which the writer is much indebted in drawing up this article.

rivers has also fallen off; to account for which, many opinions have been entertained, which at best are mere conjectures. The fresh-water fishes generally used at table are, salmon, grilse, trout, and char. Those got on the coast are chiefly herring, cod, ling, had-dock, whiting, skate, and flounder. In September, quantities of coal-fish are caught close to the rocks. Turbot and tusk are occasionally found. The upper part of the Kyle abounds with shell-fish, which are easily gathered, as the sea ebbs a considerable distance. Mussels and spout-fish of excellent quality are to be had; but cockles are the most abundant of all. These are of various sizes and colours. All of them, however, are rich and delicious when in season, which is from April to September. They are highly relished by strangers, who are loud in their praises; and they are an invaluable blessing to those within reach of them, who, during the summer months, use them daily as an article of food.

*Botany.*—The flora of this parish is not known to contain any plants peculiar to itself, or such as are very rare in other places. Perhaps the following are among those most deserving of notice. Some of them, though rare in this parish, are common in other parts of this country.

<i>Betula nana</i>	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	<i>Nymphaea alba</i>
<i>Carex hirta</i>	<i>Habenaria viridis</i>	<i>Oxytropis uralensis</i>
---- <i>incurva</i>	<i>Hyacinthus non-scriptus</i>	<i>Primula Scotica</i>
---- <i>limosa</i>	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>
<i>Cherleria sedoides</i>	<i>Lamium album</i>	<i>Silene inflata</i>
<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>	<i>Listera ovata</i>	<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	<i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>	<i>Vicia Cracca.</i>
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	----- <i>alpinum</i>	
<i>Festuca bromoides</i>	<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	

None of the native plants are now employed for culinary purposes, though formerly mugwort and nettle were made use of in this way. Ragwort is sometimes used as an emollient; and the leaves of ribwort plantain are successfully applied to fresh wounds. Heather is employed to dye green; ragwort to dye yellow; the lichen obtained on stones, to dye red-brown; and alder bark, to dye black, which, by the addition of copperas, is effectually fixed, and made to assume a still deeper hue. The native arborescent species now to be met with, are not numerous, and for the most part rather stunted in their growth. *Betula alba* (birch) predominates. *Salix alba*, *S. cinerea*, (white and grey willow,) *Corylus Avellana* (hazel,) and *Pyrus aucuparia* (the mountain-ash,) come next, in nearly equal quantities. *Alnus glutinosa* (alder,) and *Prunus spinosa* (sloe,) fringe the water courses. *Ilex aquifolium* (holly) is

frequent in rocky burns and cascades. *Quercus robur* (oak) is to be seen in a few places; but, from its being exposed to be trodden down by cattle, it only attains the size of a trifling shrub. It may be mentioned, that *Ulex Europæus* (whin) and *Cytisus Scoparius* (broom) grow freely in several places; but both were probably introduced about sixty years ago. The natural wood, which, for a long time, was neglected and destroyed, and in consequence fast dwindling away, has of late years been well kept and thinned. The only plantations of any extent in the parish are those around the House of Tongue. There are specimens to be seen here of beech, elm, ash, and lime, which, for size and beauty, may vie with any in the north. The greater part of these plantations are of recent date, composed of a mixture of hard-wood, fir, and plane-tree, for all of which the soil seems well adapted. Larch and spruce fir thrive much better than the Scotch. Altogether the plantations are in a most flourishing condition, and prove beyond a doubt the advantages that would accrue to such a country as this from their greater extension. Besides beautifying the scenery, they would ameliorate the climate, and become a fruitful source of revenue. The ordinary fruit-trees thrive well when they obtain the support and shelter of a good wall.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Distinguished Families.*—This parish is the birth-place, and was the residence of the most of the noble family of Reay. Some of these signalized themselves for prowess and skill in the military operations of their own times: among whom may be mentioned Donald first Lord Reay, who so distinguished himself in the wars of Gustavus Adolphus. Tradition ascribes to him most singular superhuman powers of body. There were other members of this family who, though not distinguished as public characters, devoted their influence to the welfare of their people, by whom their memories were cherished for several generations, for intelligence, patriotism, and exemplary piety. A full account of them will be found in Mackay's History of the House and Clan of Mackay.

*Ministers.*—Though erected in 1724, this parish was not supplied with a minister till 1726, when Mr George Mackay was appointed, who only lived two years. His successor was Mr Walter Ross, a man of fine preaching talents, but whose reserved manners and secluded habits were not calculated to gain upon the rough, frank Highlander. He occupied the parish till 1763, when he resigned. After his resignation Mr John Mackay was ap-

pointed, who, being of a weak and sickly constitution, was unable to labour efficiently in the parish, and only lived in the charge for six years. In 1769, he was succeeded by Mr William Mackenzie. As his incumbency forms an era in the history of this parish, his name deserves special notice in such an account as this. A native of Ross-shire, soon after his license, he came to officiate as missionary in the neighbouring parish of Farr; and though possessing highly popular talents, a liberal education, and prospects of advancement elsewhere through influential friends, yet, having formed a strong attachment to his adopted country, he accepted a call to this parish when vacant by the death of Mr Mackay. He found it in a deplorable state of religious ignorance. Scarce could one be found to repeat the Shorter Catechism. There was only one elder within the bounds, and it was impossible to fix on others, bearing the necessary religious character, who could be ordained to this office so as to constitute a session. The sanctity of the Lord's day was grossly violated by persons forming bargains, going and coming to the house of God. A general apathy to the means of grace was manifest; and several gross practices, the relics of a barbarous age, were common at funerals and festivals.

With these evils to contend against, he entered on his charge with zeal and energy, and an untiring devotedness to the interests of his flock. But, for three years, he seemed to labour in vain, and the feeling of his heart was, "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech." At last, the time to visit this portion of Zion was come. One day he took occasion from the pulpit to remonstrate plainly and faithfully with the people, for their several sins; declared his own ardent hopes of being instrumental in reforming them, when he entered the parish; the bitterness of his feelings in his disappointment hitherto, and his prayer to God, that were this to continue He would remove him from amongst them. Overpowered by his feelings, he could proceed no longer. For the first time, the congregation were seen bathed in tears, and overwhelmed with a feeling of shame, and from that day there was the most marked change; a truly fruitful revival was the consequence. The people showed all docility in receiving the instructions of their pastor; the house of God was thronged by persons from the most distant corners of the parish; respect and attention were shown to the ordinances and duties of religion; barbarous usages were gradually laid aside; and under his affectionate, glowing, and faithful ministry, there sprang up a race of intelligent Christians, so that he was soon en-

abled to form a throng session of elders, who, considering their station in society, were ornaments in the church. Likewise under his fostering care, several young men were reared for the ministry, all of whom, with scarce an exception, he had the pleasure of seeing the instruments of extensive usefulness.

This honoured servant of the Lord laboured for sixty-five years among a devotedly attached people, being able to preach and administer the sacraments to the very last. He died in 1834, at the advanced age of ninety-six. His people commonly spoke of him as "the great minister," and testified their esteem and affection by erecting a handsome monument to his memory.

*Parochial Register.*—There was no register kept, previous to the year 1775. From that period till 1797 there was a record of births and marriages regularly made up; but the person who was session-clerk at that time became deranged, which was never suspected till it was incontestibly proved, by his being found one morning busily employed in the churchyard distributing papers on the grave-stones, with the sanguine hope of raising an army from the dead. On examination, these papers were discovered to be the parish register, so torn as to be completely useless. From 1797 marriages and births were registered, but not in a permanent form, and many of the loose sheets have been lost through the carelessness of clerks. However, since 1816, a correct register has been regularly kept.

*Antiquities.*—The most striking ruin is Castle Varrich, standing on the promontory already mentioned, bearing the same name. It is a square building, which originally consisted of two stories, the first arched with stone, the second covered with wood. Its dimensions inside are not great; the walls are thick, and still of a considerable height. Tradition is silent as to its history, on which subject its name has given rise to various conjectures; but most probably the name is merely derived from a Gaelic word signifying *the castle on the eminence*. The remains of several circular towers are to be seen, extending from the coast to the interior, which, from the circumstance of one being always in sight of another, are supposed to have been erected for the purpose of conveying telegraphic information when an enemy threatened to invade the country.—Several subterranean caves have been found in the parish, long and narrow in their construction, with a small entrance. From various circumstances they appear to be artificial, and were probably occu-

pied by the natives, in warlike times, as places of retreat. The only tumuli to be seen, are at a place called Druim na Coup, where, as has been noticed in the former account, a battle was fought between the Mackays and the Sutherlands. Upon the same ground, or nearly so, a party of French were seized in 1746, going south with gold to aid the rebels. The French vessel in which they were conveyed, being pursued off this coast, ran for safety into the Bay of Tongue, and the party, carrying their valuable treasure, landed at Melness, where for a night they were protected by a gentleman of kindred sentiments. Next day, his son went to conduct them by the safest route through the country, but, as soon as their character and object were known, they were pursued by a band of natives from several neighbouring places. When the French came to Druim na Coup, finding that these were in chase of them, and hearing the beating of a drum resounding from the cliffs of Ben Laoghal, indicating the approach of soldiers from the south, they at once surrendered. Much of the gold was lost, being probably thrown into a deep loch in the neighbourhood, but a considerable quantity was appropriated by those who led on the pursuit. A few gold coins have since been found at a considerable distance from Druim na Coup.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the population by return to Dr Webster was	1093
1791,	1439
1831, by Government census,	2030
1838,	2080

Of these 956 were males; 1124 were females. In 1791 it is stated that the births were 47, and marriages 17. Since 1831, births have averaged 44, and marriages 11. It thus appears that, in a population of 1439, there were more births and marriages, especially the latter, than there are now in a population of 2080. The probable solution of this strange fact is, that the population, having increased till it has become a burden on the land at present cultivated, the subdividing of crofts having been prohibited, and the ordinary sources of industry by sea and land having, for some time, either proved unproductive or being shut up, the young of both sexes felt that they could not marry without running the hazard of being soon exposed to hardships and want. When marriages decrease, births of course share the same fate.

The Duke of Sutherland, the only nobleman connected with the parish as proprietor, has a residence in it—the House of Tongue, which he occasionally occupies for a few days in autumn,

when visiting his extensive domains in the north. Part of it is inhabited by his Grace's factor. There are three substantial resident sheep-farmers; a medical practitioner, whom the proprietor encourages by giving a free house and L. 60 annually; and a fishery officer. The peasantry reside in hamlets, and when a road passes through, the houses are arranged in a straight line on the one side, each standing on the croft of land attached to it. 244 pay rent. There are about 116 families, besides, who are mere cottars, having no land, in the majority of cases without any trade, and depending for their sustenance on a little day labour and on the kindness of their neighbours, who often give them patches of their own small crofts for raising a few potatoes. There are 4 carpenters, 10 masons, 8 tailors, 9 shoemakers, 3 smiths, and 1 watchmaker. There are 6 fatuous, none insane, 2 dumb, and none who were blind from birth.

*Language.*—The language of the peasantry is Gaelic; in it they invariably converse with one another, but, owing to the influx of persons from the south, the influence of schools, and the frequency with which they go south in quest of labour, English is generally understood by the young, and spoken by many of them with considerable accuracy.

*Character of the People.*—The young of both sexes are ambitious to dress well, so as to make a respectable appearance on Sabbaths and holidays. This is a laudable feeling, though it sometimes leads to extravagance, by inducing them to expend their hard-won earnings in sacrificing comfort to occasional show. When dressed in their best attire they are allowed to be a fine-looking peasantry. At the late Duke of Sutherland's funeral, when numbers from the whole county were invited to attend, and directed to line the road, arranged according to their respective parishes, as the procession passed by, the men from Tongue attracted general notice for their superior dress and appearance. It might hence be expected that their comforts were also superior; but no. They are, indeed, not worse off than their neighbours in this respect. The general standard is, however, wretchedly low. No doubt a few of them are comfortable, but the generality seldom can rise above the commonest necessities of life; and it is painful to think of how some eke out a subsistence. The consequence is, that poverty is gradually manifesting its baneful effects upon the intellects and morals of naturally a fine and generous people. The taste for music, dancing, and public games, is much on the



decline, and few or no traces are to be seen of the poetic talent and sprightly wit for which their ancestors, in common with most Highlanders, were distinguished. The imaginative powers are crushed under the continued pressure of a poverty that impels the mental energies in the low direction of what shall we eat and what shall we drink; and the habits of reflection and deep-thinking are exchanged for a sharp-sightedness in looking after their little secular interests. It is impossible that circumstances which have thus operated on their intellectual character, should not also affect their morals and religious feelings. They have done so, though not so greatly as might be expected; and it is saying much to their credit, that there is so little amount of crime, and so much security for person and property. There were never but two from this parish tried at a judiciary court, one not a native, and the other only for a breach of trust. The people are kind and peaceable, patient under adversity, submissive to laws, and respectful to authorities. They possess a good deal of religious knowledge, and much veneration for religious ordinances and usages. It is rare now to find one who cannot repeat the Shorter Catechism, and the writer knows not that such a thing exists among the native peasantry as a family without the daily worship of God. Many among them are decided Christians. The generality, it is to be feared, rest satisfied, however, with acquiring vague ideas, and engaging in empty forms; while it is matter of painful experience that the downward earthly tendency of their thoughts, induced so much by poverty, has a fearful effect in deadening their minds to religious impressions. It is manifest, also, that intercourse with the ungodly when south, and at the herring-fishing in Caithness, together with the desecration of the Lord's day by travellers from other places, (a sin till lately happily unknown), are very injurious to their morals and religious sentiments. Laziness is no longer characteristic of the people. They are alive to the advantages of industry. In proof of which many of them annually go south, because so little encouragement is given them at home. Poaching is unknown, and smuggling has been effectually put down through the exertions of the proprietor.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The number of imperial acres in cultivation is about 1000. It may safely be said, that three times this number might be added with a profitable application of capital. There are 200 acres of plantation, and fully 500 acres under na-

tural wood. The extent of the latter is not easily ascertained, from the irregular manner in which it is disposed.

*Rent.*—The real rental of the parish is L. 2282, 18s. 11d., of which lotters pay L. 757, 11s. 3d.; and large farmers L. 1525, 2s. 8d. The average rent of arable land per acre is L. 1.

*Wages.*—Tradesmen are allowed 2s. a-day, and day-labourers 1s. 6d. in summer, and 1s. in winter.

The raw produce which is offered for sale is trifling. Those who do sell, are regulated by market-prices. Very superior Cheviot sheep are reared upon the large farms, which are highly esteemed, and fetch high prices in the southern markets. The small tenants rear the black-faced breed, or more generally a cross between it and the Cheviot. From want of full feeding, their pasture being limited and generally overstocked, both their sheep and their cattle are stunted in their growth. A real Highland pony can now seldom be seen. The system of farming upon the crofts is decidedly bad. The tenants, besides endeavouring to keep more cattle than they can properly feed, employ a rotation of potatoes, bear, and oats, by which the land, thus constantly cropped, is so exhausted, that in many places the force of manure cannot now make it yield an adequate return. Besides, it is seldom properly drained or fenced, so that in winter it is commonly very wet, and injured by the poaching of cattle. As a proof of the deteriorating effects of this system of husbandry, it may be mentioned, that while the land cultivated by the large farmers will yield on an average seven returns in grain crops, the small tenants seldom obtain above four returns of bear, and as to oats, they do not calculate upon more than double the seed. The potato crop is that alone which gives a really remunerating return. The large farmers have leases of nineteen years' duration. Small tenants have only one year's tenure of their land, which is certainly a discouragement to them in improving their lots.

*Quarries.*—The only quarries that have been wrought are on the Melness, or west side of the Bay of Tongue, a flag quarry at Portvasgo, and a slate quarry at Talmine. Both are of the mica-slate formation. They have been wrought to a considerable extent, and have been found very useful for several country purposes. The expense of quarrying, however, is too great to make this a profitable trade, or to admit of much export, and accordingly it has of late been almost discontinued.

*Fisheries.*—There is a salmon-fishing upon the water of Borgie,

where on an average 2000 fish are caught yearly. The herring-fishery is that which has been carried on most extensively in the parish. At one time it promised to be profitable; of late, however, it has turned out a ruinous speculation, as the annexed accounts will show.

In 1839, boats fishing, 30—barrels cured, 3538—average per boat, 118					
1835, do. 64	do.	6304	do.	98½	
1839, do. 68	do.	1425	do.	21	
1840, do. 68	do.	1233	do.	18	

#### Raw Produce.—

Produce of grain of all kinds, - - - - -	L. 3450
potatoes and turnips, - - - - -	1939
meadow and cultivated hay, - - - - -	500
land in pasture, rating at 15s. per cow, and at 2s. 6d. per ewe or full-grown sheep, - - - - -	3080
gardens, - - - - -	140
thinnings of woods and plantations, - - - - -	60
fisheries, sea and river, - - - - -	1300
quarries, - - - - -	20
miscellaneous produce, viz. fuel, sea-weed, and cockles, - - - - -	541
	<hr/>
	L. 11,030

*Manufactures.*—From twenty to thirty tons of kelp were annually manufactured in this parish until 1832; but since then, as its place has been supplied by cheaper substitutes, the price has suffered such a depression as to render it no object for employing labourers.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—There is no market-town in the parish; the nearest is Thurso, in the county of Caithness, distant forty-five miles. There is a post-office in the village of Tongue, and mails run three times a-week to Thurso, and twice a-week to Golspie. There is also a post to Durness, whose days of arriving and starting correspond to those of the Golspie mail. The vehicle from Golspie carries three passengers; that from Thurso carries four inside and four outside. A lighter vehicle, however, runs on this latter line during winter, which only accommodates five passengers. The length of roads in the parish is 39½ miles. Of these, 11 are Parliamentary, 14½ county trust roads, and 14 private tenantry roads. They are kept in excellent repair. The bay of Tongue is crossed by a ferry 1262 yards broad. In 1830–31, slip quays were built, and proper boats procured. This ferry, which is a great annoyance to travellers, might be shortened to a fourth of its present breadth, by constructing a mound between the point of Tongue, and the island adjacent thereto. As the water here is not very deep, nor the current strong, and as profusion of mate-

rials lie ready at hand, it is believed by many that such an undertaking would not be very expensive.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church is so situated as to be nearly equidistant from the several extremities of the parish. There are, however, two populous districts on either side of it, so remote, that few of the people can attend public worship. The Skerray district to the east, which contains a population of 630, is from seven to eleven miles distant from the church. The Melness district to the west, with a population of 690, is from four to eight miles distant, separated, moreover, by the arm of the sea, the crossing of which is always expensive and often impracticable. Each of these stand much in need of the labours of a resident minister. Melness forms the chief part of a mission connected with part of the parish of Durness. The missionary is supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; and a church and manse were built by the late Duchess-Countess of Sutherland.

The parish church was built in 1680,—was nearly rebuilt in 1731, and repaired 1778. A few years ago, new doors were put in, and some of the pews a little improved. It is seated for 520, being just sufficient accommodation for the proportion of the people who can conveniently attend. There are no seat rents. The pews were originally purchased by the parishioners, and continue the property of their descendants while they remain in the parish. In winter, when the people are all at home, the church is well filled, and the people are diligent in attending the catechetical ministrations of their pastor. There is one catechist chosen by the people, and supported chiefly by a small salary from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The number of elders are eleven, and of male heads of families in communion with the church 45. Collections are annually made for the General Assembly's five schemes, and occasionally for other objects. There are no Dissenters, Seceders, Episcopalians, or Roman Catholics in the parish.

The manse was built in 1787, and has never got a thorough repair; a new substantial house is, however, to be commenced early this season, having been already contracted for. The stipend is L.150, with an allowance for communion elements. When the present incumbent entered on the charge, the glebe was of little value; the hill-grazing was a share of an undivided common, and the little arable land was rig about with adjoining tenants. An excambion being obtained, and quantity given for quality, improve-

ments have since been carried on at great expense, and now the glebe might probably fetch a rent of L.50 per annum.

*Education.*—At present there are three schools in the parish; the parochial, and two supported by the Educational Committee of the General Assembly. One of the Assembly's schools is at Skerry, the other at Melness. Last year there were three schools besides,—two supported by private subscription, which, for several causes, have since been suppressed,—the third was a Gaelic school, granted by the Gaelic School Society, which has been discontinued by the managers, though only two years in operation, and particularly useful. When the schools were examined last spring, there were nearly 400 children in attendance. The schools at present in existence are efficiently conducted. The common branches of education are taught in them all. The parochial teacher is qualified to teach mathematics, Latin, Greek, and French, but there are very few now who prosecute these studies. His accommodation as to school-room, dwelling-house, and garden, is excellent. His salary is the maximum, but fees are ill paid. The people in general are more alive now to the benefits of education than they have been, though still there is vast room for improvement. Irregularity in attendance, and want of proper school-books, from inability to buy them, are serious drawbacks to the proficiency of the scholars. There is one part of the Melness side where an additional school is decidedly required. It is removed at a considerable distance from the place where the Assembly school is situated, and is separated by a large rivulet, which, from want of a bridge, is, for the most part, impassable in winter. Were a school got for this locality, upwards of forty children might attend it.

*Literature.*—Two years ago, a subscription library and a reading club were set on foot, through the strenuous and praiseworthy exertions of Mr Horsburgh, the local factor. The members of the library exceed 100. These, however, do not all belong to this parish. Every member on admission pays 5s., and 2s. 6d. of yearly contribution. The number of volumes already amount to 455, consisting of a choice selection of books in theology, history, poetry, travels, memoirs, &c. Many of them are donations received by Mr Horsburgh from his acquaintances in the south, and sent by others who have taken an interest in this promising institution. The gentlemen of the club purchase new standards, and, instead of exposing them to sale at the year's end,

tuitously transfer them to the library, and thus, while the country people generally are benefited by them, the members of the club, who are all likewise members of the library, have still access to them. This plan since its adoption has been warmly commended. The noble family of Sutherland are so satisfied of its value that they resolve to patronize it. The Duke and Duchess, their Commissioner, and the Member of Parliament for the county, have severally requested to be admitted members of both library and club, and each propose making a handsome donation to the former. The donation of the Duchess, consisting of 32 volumes, has been already received.

*Savings Banks.*—There is a branch in this parish of the Sutherland Savings Bank, established in 1834, by the advice and under the direction of Mr Loch, M. P., Commissioner to the Duke of Sutherland. It extends over the whole county, and is divided into three general branches, which again are subdivided according to the parishes. The deposits and drawings in this parish since its commencement, are as follows :

		Deposits.		Drawings.	
From February 1834, to 31st July 1834,		L.151	11 5		
do. 1835,	do. 1835,	112	11 4	-	L. 23 17 5
do. 1836,	do. 1836,	182	18 5	-	65 16 8
do. 1837,	do. 1837,	89	0 3	-	77 5 11
do. 1838,	do. 1838,	80	15 4	-	132 14 2
do 1839,	do. 1839,	103	14 1	-	105 3 1
do. 1840,	do. 1840,	187	0 11	-	56 15 6
		<hr/>		<hr/>	
		L.907	11 9		L.461 15 9

The number of depositors at present is 35, composed chiefly of tradesmen, servants, and junior members of families. Four per cent. interest is given for sums under L.20. When the amount exceeds this sum, only 2 per cent. is allowed.

*Poor.*—The average number of paupers for the last six years is 70. The funds for their relief are distributed yearly, and, as these are variable, the sum allotted to each cannot be permanent. The distributions to the different paupers range generally from 2s. to 10s., according to their peculiar circumstances. Church collections and an annual donation of L.6 from the Duke of Sutherland, which, united, amount on an average to L. 24, constitute the sole fund for their relief, at the disposal of the session. From this sum there are to be deducted small salaries for the kirk-officer and session-clerk, and disbursements for assisting in the burial of those who die quite destitute. It is thus evident that the poor are mainly indebted for their support, not to the session funds, but

to the every-day charities and kind offices of relatives and neighbours. Yet, trifling as the sum given by the session is, the demands on them are increasing, and it is not considered now nearly so degrading to receive their aid as it was a few years ago.

Besides those upon the poor's roll, there are a few who receive permanent charity in meal or otherwise, to the annual value of L.14, 1s. 3d., granted originally by the late Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, and continued by his Grace the present Duke of Sutherland. Her Grace's kindness to aged widows and to respectable persons in reduced circumstances, was very considerate, and a most commendable trait in her character. It deserves to be noticed that, in 1837, a season of great scarcity in the Highlands, she gave meal to the poor of the parish to the value of about L.60, and supplied the small tenants with a great quantity at the purchase price,—the arrears of which have lately been remitted, amounting to about L.200. The object of putting this meal to the accounts of the tenants was, not so much the expectation of ever realizing the money, as the desire that they should not feel themselves therein treated as paupers.

*Inns.*—There are only two houses licensed to sell spirits. One of these is a neat comfortable inn in the village of Tongue, which was considered a large house when built twenty years ago, though now it is frequently found deficient in the necessary accommodations.

*Fuel.*—Peat is the fuel commonly used by all classes. From its long continued and rapidly increasing consumption, the labour and expense of procuring it is now very great; and the more comfortable inhabitants seem resolved to purchase coal in future, assured that it will be found less expensive. Free access to peat, however, is a mighty privilege to the common people, as it costs them nothing but their personal labour.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Many changes have taken place in the parish, since the former Account was drawn up. The first and most important is the introduction of sheep-farming. The character of this change will be variously estimated, as persons are disposed to look at one or other of its effects. That it has rendered this country more valuable to proprietors cannot be questioned,—for certain it is, that in no other way could a great part of it be laid out to such advantage; though it may fairly be questioned whether, by extending it too far, they have not injured themselves. If, however, we are to

estimate this system by its bearing on the former occupiers of the soil, and by the circumstances into which it has brought their children, no friend of humanity can regard it but with the most painful feelings. When introduced here, several hundreds, many of them of a grade quite superior to mere peasants, were driven from their beloved homes, where they and their fathers enjoyed peace and plenty. Some wandered to Caithness, others sought an asylum in the woods of America, but most, clinging with a passion to their native soil, located themselves by permission in hamlets near the shore. In these places the land, already occupied by a few, but now divided among many, was totally inadequate to the maintenance of all, and fishing became their necessary resource. And thus, on a tempestuous coast, with no harbours but such as nature provided, and in a country inaccessible, from want of roads, to enterprising curers, were these people often necessitated to plunge into debt for providing fishing materials, and to encounter dangers, immensely increased by their unavoidable ignorance of navigation, in order to obtain subsistence and defray their rents. The consequences were such as might be expected. Poverty soon overtook them, tending to keep alive their lacerated feelings, and rents, which became gradually extravagant, accumulated into a mass of arrears.

While such was the condition of the people, the proprietor, under whose management these changes were effected, found himself under the necessity of selling the inheritance of his fathers, and the late Duke of Sutherland became sole proprietor of the parish. This truly patriotic nobleman, fully alive to the evils which beset his new people, and the wants of this country, reduced the rents of the small tenants 30 per cent., and commenced a series of improvements, by opening up the country with excellent roads, at an enormous expense, and inducing public vehicles to run in several directions; by which, at once work was afforded for the people, and a stimulus given for a time to the herring-fishing.\* Likewise, with the laudable object of rendering the tenantry more comfortable, they were enjoined about the same time to build new houses, all being upon the same plan; and, encouraged by the prospect of work, they soon set about this undertaking, though the houses were upon a scale far too expensive for their slender means.

\* These improvements were conducted by Mr John Horsburgh, late local factor, whose business talents, sterling integrity, faithfulness to his employers, and attachment to the people and the country, rendered him one of the most judicious and popular of factors.



In the meantime, the lamented death of the proprietor put a stop to improvements, and many of the people were, by the building of these very houses, more deeply than before plunged into debt. From this cause, from the failure of the fishing, and from a series of adverse seasons, arrears again accumulated to a great amount.

Upon the accession of the present Duke of Sutherland, his attention was arrested by this evil; and, persuaded that, to reclaim these arrears, was impossible, without ruining his people, he determined to cancel the whole. In this parish, the arrears for rent alone amounted to L.1582. This deed of princely generosity has not failed to make a suitable impression upon a people strongly susceptible of gratitude, and deserves to have a prominent place assigned it in any public account of the parish. After such conduct, every one must feel that his Grace has the interest of his people deeply at heart. That their interest, however, may be really secured, it is absolutely necessary to open up for them sources of industry, to encourage such as are desirous to improve, and to introduce a different system of agriculture from the present among the small tenants.

Some of the large farms are susceptible of being extensively and profitably cultivated; but the farmers, from the amount of capital they have already at stake, and from the shortness of their leases, in which there are no extensive improving conditions, are prevented from cultivating as they might, and as some feel inclined; and the people are deprived of much work which they might otherwise have. And certainly it would be more satisfactory to see our labourers thus employed at home, than going to the south, where their morals are endangered; where their expensès eat up a great proportion of their earnings; and where, very frequently, they are disabled for a length of time by diseases caught in the wretched lodging-houses, to which they must have recourse, and whence they often carry infection to their native country.

As to the agriculture of the small tenants, wretched as it is at present, it is capable of great improvement. The foundation of the evils now attending both it and them, is not the amount of rent, but the smallness of the crofts. This it is which debars a proper rotation, and which causes rents to be ill paid. And though, by the concurrence of favourable circumstances, and a powerful stimulus to the feelings, calling forth uncommon exertion on the part of the tenants, the rents may be defrayed once

or twice, this cannot be expected to continue. For it must be evident, that when a people, depending mainly on the land for their sustenance, cannot be supported thereby more than seven or eight months, (which is the case in most seasons with the tenantry of this parish), they must expend whatever little money may be collected in different ways, in providing the staff of life during the remainder of the year. Were, however, the crofts of the tenants enlarged to twice their present size, and fenced in, so as to admit of a proper rotation, then they would be adequate to their maintenance; and the sale of cattle, decently fed, would enable them with ease to pay a full rent; whilst the produce of any day labour would, as it certainly should, be at their own disposal. Now, there is scarcely a hamlet in the parish in which the arable land might not be doubled. That the people themselves, who have only one year's tenure of their land, and who can only liquidate their debts by work, for which they are paid in cash, should improve so extensively, is not to be expected. If done at all, the proprietor must pay them for their labour until a crop is efficiently laid down; then a rent may be exacted, which would bring in a handsome interest on the outlay.

There are many families, however, in great destitution, who have at present no land; who could not, therefore, be benefited by the foregoing plan. Were sources of industry opened up, some of these might thereby be supported. But the most satisfactory method of disposing of these would be, to locate them in villages at the several fishing-stations; to build commodious harbours; to encourage enterprising curers to settle among them; and to secure a market for every species of fish: and thus, while the former depended wholly on the land, these should be made to depend wholly on the sea. Though the herring might occasionally fail, vast quantities of other fish could be caught on the coast, which are at present never brought to market; and, as there is a probability that a steamer will soon ply on this coast from Caithness to Liverpool, a great inducement is held out to prosecute this trade with vigour. By this communication, all the exports of the country could obtain a ready market in the south.

In conclusion, the writer expresses his full conviction, the result of long observation, and many anxious thoughts on the subject, that unless such, or some such plans are adopted regarding the interesting peasantry of his parish, the time will soon arrive when there will be no alternative but emigration, at the expense

either of landlord or Government ; a poor law assessment, or, worse than either, a summary and universal ejection. Yet, relying on the wealth and patriotic feelings of the Noble proprietor, and on the skill and intelligence of his agents, he confidently expects that these sore evils will be prevented, and that the next Statistical Account will have to record an improvement in the aspect of the parish, and an amelioration in the condition of the people, which will be alike profitable and honourable to all parties.

January 1841.

## PARISH OF LOTH.\*

PRESBYTERY OF DORNOCH, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. DONALD ROSS, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THIS parish appears to have taken its name from the farm on which the church stands, now known as Loth-more, to distinguish it from the neighbouring farm of Loth-beg. Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, these two farms bordered upon two lakes, which were formed by the river of the Glen of Loth being retarded in its progress to the sea, and hemmed in, in hollow spaces of the low flat grounds, by a rocky eminence that runs parallel to the sea shore. A new course for the river was cut in a direct line to the sea, and through the solid rock, at the above period ; and since that alteration, the spaces occupied by the lakes have been converted into rich arable land, although the extent and banks of the lakes can still be traced. The present name of *Loth*, which in Gaelic is still pronounced *Logh*, is, therefore, believed to be a corruption of the word *Loch*, which, in the Scotch dialect, is descriptive of a sheet of water, in the same sense as the word in old German signified,—namely, *apertura*, *hiatus*, or *cavitas rotunda* ; or, as Cambden has it, “ *a place where rivers are stopped.*” This etymology also agrees with the spelling of the name in ancient writings ; and thus, in a Crown charter of the year 1451, the present Loth-more,—the site of the church and

\* Drawn up by George Sutherland Taylor, Esq. Golspie.

manse,—is called “*Ville de Estirloch*,” the same being situated to the eastward of Loth-beg. The glen, also, through which the river of Loth flows is, in old writings, called “the *Glen of Loth*,” and not *Glen-Loth*, as it is now most frequently named; thereby denoting that the glen was an appendage to the farm of Loth, instead of having a descriptive or distinct name of its own.

It may be added, however, as a remarkable fact connected with this name, that Ptolemy places the *Logi* along the sea coast, of which the south boundary of the present parish of Loth forms a part; the *Ila flumen* (the river Ullie or Helmsdale) being in their country, which seemed to extend between *Verubium promontorium* (the Ord of Caithness) and *Ripa alta*, (the Ardrross range of mountains towards Tarbetness). And Richard of Cirencester, in his description of Caledonia, assigns the same locality to the *Logi*, and says, after naming the *Cantæ*, and Promontorium *Penozullum*, (the high ground of the present Oykill,) “*Huic ordine proximus est fluvius Abona* (the Dornoch Frith) *ejusdemque ac-colæ Logi. Hinc Ila fluvius*,” &c.

*Boundaries, Extent, Topographical Appearances.*—The parish extends in a straight line from west to east, about eleven miles in length; and its breadth, where broadest, from Ben-Uarie to the sea, is about five miles. The boundary line, if taken at the sea shore at the Bay of Kintradwell, proceeds northward to the top of Kollieben, and thence along a ridge of high hills, and in a half-circular sweep, by west and north, to the top of Ben-Uarie, (1923 feet high,) and then eastward by the summit of the high ground between the Strath of Kildonan and the glen of Loth, and, intersecting the top of the Crask, on to Ben Veallich, (1888 feet high,) and to the top of Knock Elderaboll; thence, down to the plane of the Strath of Kildonan and the river Helmsdale, at a point about three miles above the mouth of that river. Thereafter, following the river downwards for about one mile, the march ascends the east side of the valley, and, running nearly parallel with the line of sea coast, and at a distance of about two miles from it, terminates to the north of the Hill of the Ord, at the march with the county of Caithness. From this last point to the sea, the boundary between Sutherland and Caithness forms also the eastern boundary of the parish, and runs southward to the steep front of the Ord at the sea, and is marked out by a low turf wall, erected about thirty-five years ago, when this part of the march between the two counties, as to which there existed some

differences, was finally adjusted and fixed by arbitration. From the Ord to the Bay of Kintradwell, the sea shore is the southern boundary. The parish of Loth is therefore bounded on the west by the parish of Clyne; on the north by the parish of Kildouan; on the east by the parish of Latheron; and on the south by the German Ocean, or rather by that part of it distinguished as the Moray Frith, which is here about forty miles broad.

The whole length of the parish along its northern boundary is distinguished by a ridge of high hills, which slope down towards the south with a steep descent, except at the contracted opening formed by the Strath of Kildonan, where the march crosses the low grounds of the valley from the summits of the hills that enclose it. This lofty range is placed nearly parallel with the line of sea coast which limits the parish to the south, and at a distance of from one to three miles from it; the intervening space between the hills and the sea being either gently sloping ground, partially cultivated, and otherwise yielding sound natural pasture; or a level flat of rich alluvial soil, all arable, and in a high state of cultivation; but at the eastern extremity of the parish, the huge headland of the Ord leaves no intermediate space between the mountain and the sea, but forms a sheer and abrupt wall, rising with great majesty from, and towering above, the ever-heaving and deep sea, whose only strand, at the lowest tides, is the perpendicular face of the rock.

This headland of the Ord\* has been at all times an object of great interest to strangers; and before the present Parliamentary road from Sutherland into Caithness was formed, in the year 1811, the path—for it did not deserve the name of a road—along the

\* The oldest name of the Ord, with the exception of *Verubium promontorium* of Ptolemy, to be found in ancient writings, is *Mons Mound*, which appears in the curious geographical fragment headed "De Situ Albanie," and which has been attributed to Andrew Bishop of Caithness, who died in 1185. He divides Scotland into seven parts, and, no doubt, alluding to the *Diocesis* of Caithness, which included the counties of Sutherland and Caithness, says: "Septima enim pars est Cathanesia citra montem et ultra montem; quid *Mons Mound* dividit Cathanesiam per medium." In the geographical collections in the Advocates' Library, called Macfarlane's MSS., several references are also made to the Ord. Thus: "All that tract of land which lies betwixt Port-na-couter (the Dornoch Frith) and Dungsby, (Duncansby head,) was of old called Cattery. That part of it which lies eastward from the hill Ord was named Catteyness, and afterwards Cathness, the Promontory of Cattery. That on this side the Ord, was called simply Cattery, and afterwards, for distinction's sake, South Cattery and Sutherland, which to this day, in the language of the natives and Highlanders, retains the name of Cattery, as the Sutherland men were called Catteigh, and the Earl of Sutherland Morvar Cattery." And again,—“Sutherland is separated and divided from Catteyness by the brook or stripe called Aldituver, (should be Ault-in-uder,) and by the hill called Ord or *Mound*, with a range of other hills which do stretch from the south sea to the north ocean.”

outer edge of the rock, and without any protection from the precipice that overhangs the sea, could not, with any degree of safety, be passed in stormy weather, and never failed to inspire individuals not accustomed to such passes, with great dread; and among other travellers of the last century who describe the terrors of the passage across the Ord, the Rev. John Brand, in his Description of Orkney, Shetland, and Caithness in the year 1701, says, "The Ord which divideth Caithness from Sutherland is a high mountain, as the name Ord, which in Irish signifieth an height, doth imply, down which our way from Caithness to Sutherland doth lie. The road is but narrow, and the descent steep, and if any stumble thereupon, they are in hazard of falling down a precipice into the sea at the bottom of the rock, which is very terrible to behold; but who pass it for the more security, use to lead their horses to the foot of the hill, which is about a short mile in length, and no other way there is from Sutherland to Caithness, or from Caithness to Sutherland, but this, except we go 12 miles about."

The Glen of Loth is a narrow opening of about three miles in extent, surrounded by the highest hills in the parish, and is one of those wild glens, characteristic of a Highland district, which the superstition of former ages invested with traditional tales of wonder and terror. The glen, at the foot of an abrupt and prominent hill called Drumderg, was the scene of a bloody conflict between the men of Strathnaver and those of Loth in the sixteenth century; and it possesses several objects to which the traditions of the country have given celebrity. Thus, a large cairn, called *Cairn-Bran*, marks the place where Ossian's dog Bran is said to have died, and been buried. At *Cairn-in-uag*, an ancient hunting-house stood. *Tober Massan* is the name of a well of excellent water, which, in former ages, was resorted to as a specific for almost all diseases, provided silver or gold was left in the water for the officiating priest. *Clach Mac-meas* is a huge upright stone, which a precocious youth, at the tender age of one month, in that interesting period of the world's history, when "giants of mighty bone and bold emprise," dwelt in the land, hurled to the bottom of the glen from the top of Ben-Uarie. *Carriken-cligh* are four stone pillars on an elevated barrow, that point out the resting-place of some leading men of a remote period; and connected with this glen, and forming the very close and singular sides of a small burn that runs into it, are the lofty cliffs called *Craig-Boddich* and *Craig-Bhokie*, remarkable not only for their

towering and perpendicular height, but for the very narrow space that separates them.\*

The arable portion of the parish, between the hills along its northern boundary and the sea, is generally flat, and its naturally rich and fertile soil is well cultivated. The ravines formed by mountain streams, which intersect the south side of the hills at distances of two or three miles, are striking features in the landscape; particularly one of them, *Aulthollie*, which is a remarkably deep, tortuous, and romantic *gully*. The sea coast is, with the exception of a few low rocky headlands, sandy and shallow, from the western extremity of the parish to Port-Gower; and thence to the Ord, the shore is one continued line of rock or rough gravel; but no part of the coast affords any natural protection for shipping.

*Meteorology*.—The changes of the atmosphere have not been registered or ascertained by continued observations in this parish. The complete range of high hills that forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the parish, affords great shelter from the cold and piercing winter, and spring winds from these quarters; and consequently, during the prevalence of such winds, the greater mildness of the atmosphere in this parish, compared with that along the more exposed sea coast on the Caithness side of the Ord, is often remarked by persons travelling between the two counties. The opening of the Strath of Kildonan at Helmsdale may be an exception to this remark, for there the wind, when high and coming down from the strath, is felt with peculiar violence. The parish is decidedly healthy, and instances of longevity are common; and at present, a small tenant and his wife, whose ages are not correctly known, have been united in marriage for the long period of eighty years. There are no distempers peculiar to the parish; but in 1832, Asiatic cholera appeared very suddenly, and for the first time north of Aberdeen, at Helmsdale, during the busiest period of the herring fishery, and in that town and neighbourhood between thirty and forty persons died of it. This mysterious disease was believed to have been introduced into the parish by some fishermen who then arrived at Helmsdale from the Frith of Forth, where the disease was raging at the time; and it is certain that the first person who was seized with it in the parish, was a female while in the act of washing clothes, belonging to

\* The writer of this report furnished notices of the forest traditions connected with the Glen of Loth for Mr Scrope's *Art of Deer Stalking*, which are inserted in that work.

one of the fishermen who came from an infected quarter near Edinburgh.

*Hydrography.*—The Moray Frith, the *Æstuarium Vararis* of Ptolemy, and the *Breidaford* of the Northern sagas, is here a wide and stormy sea, without any islands. The projecting and bluff headland of the Ord affects the currents along the shore; and these currents, in the opinion of many practical fishermen, influence and direct the progress and course of those shoals of herrings which annually visit this coast; and hence, a continuance of the success which has attended the herring fishery at Helmsdale, since it has been regularly prosecuted there, may be found to rest on more certain and durable causes than are generally supposed to exist. The saltness of the sea water off the Ord has been analyzed, and it has been ascertained to be much greater than that of water taken at Tarbartness, at the opening of the Dornoch Frith; while the water at the latter point contains about double the quantity of salt found in water taken within the Frith, between the towns of Dornoch and Tain. There are now no lakes within the parish, and the only rivers are those of the Glen of Loth and the Helmsdale, which last flows for about three miles along or within the parish, before it enters the sea at Helmsdale. The Helmsdale is a large and handsome stream; but, having had no bridge across it until 1811, it retarded travellers; and Pennant, in his tour in the northern counties in 1769, records, that he had to “ford the very dangerous water of Helmsdale, rapid and full of great stones.”

*Geology.*—The high hills of the parish present a steep front to the south, and are of primary formation, being composed of porphyritic granite, chiefly of a brown colour, but often reddish and sometimes gray. This stone is fragile, and, as it cannot be quarried in large blocks, or formed into well-proportioned shapes, it is of little use for building. This stone is also distinguished by different degrees of coarseness in its grains, and by the presence of veins of a large size. Thus, in the bed of the river Helmsdale, close to the march with Kildonan, a fine-grained porphyry occurs; and at Lothbeg, and thence to the west end of the parish, the same rock is a very rude compound, with large veins, in which felspar predominates, and which yield readily to the action of running water.

In Mr Cunningham's Geognostical Account of the County of Sutherland, published in the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture, No. 46, that gentleman includes the coast side, or low-lying section of this parish, as part of the district in which the oolite se-



ries which he describes is developed ; and as his description is minute and interesting, it is added in a note below.\*

About one-half of the whole stretch of sea coast in this parish, or from the west end of it to Port Gower, is a sandy beach, with the exception of low rocks covered during full tides, but forming narrow promontories during low water, which, at irregular intervals, break the uniformity of the sandy beach ; and, with the exception also of occasional deposits of boulder stones of various rocks, pri-

\* " After leaving Brora, the oolite strata are completely covered, until we arrive at Kintradwell, where a series is to be found dipping, in general north, at an angle of about 20°. At a short distance from the House of Kintradwell, there is a beautiful example of what may be termed a false or pseudo-vein, which consists of a mass of quartzose sandstone, 76 yards in length by two feet in breadth, and traverses vertically slaty sandstone strata, inclined to the north north-east at 20°. Laying aside the species of rock which forms this veinous mass, every variety of form exhibited in the usual trap dikes, is to be found. It runs the same uninterrupted course, has the same definite lines of boundary, and in several places sends out lateral branches. Indeed, if we keep theory apart from facts, this is, as far as visible, as perfect a vein as any composed of a rock whose origin is considered consonant with an eruptive and veinous form. As a proof that the present position of this sandstone vein is not its original one, we may state that the remains of plants which occur in it are all arranged parallelly to the sides of the vein ; whereas, if it had been quietly deposited in a previously existing rent, they would all have had a more or less horizontal arrangement.

" Between Kintradwell and Helmsdale, the oolite series, when visible over a considerable extent, affords marks of much derangement, and frequently dips within short spaces to various points at various angles. Associated with the white lias sandstone near Port Gower, one of the brownish-red colour is to be met with, having the usual character of the red sandstone of the coal formation ; shale also of green, purple, and brown shades, is found to alternate with it. On the shore at Helmsdale, at Loth, and several other points, the oolite sandstone occurs, containing beds of conglomerate, composed of variously sized masses of the sandstones, shales, and limestones of the series ; but this may easily be explained, by supposing, that, after the deposition of some of the strata, they were acted upon by destructive agents, and again reconsolidated. After leaving the junction at Clyne, no other is discoverable until we arrive at the ravine of Alt Colle. Here the same conformability again appears, both series dipping in a disturbed manner. The quartz rock is the same as that already noticed, and in this and an adjoining glen, is found to afford numerous well-marked contortions. At the bridge of Loth-Beg, the quartz rock is replaced by granite, and an almost immediate junction of the oolite and the granite may be observed, the strata of the former dipping north north-east at an angle of 40°. At Port Gower, this position is completely reversed, the lines of stratification, if prolonged, sinking under the granite.

" At the Green Table near the Ord of Caithness, and at several points along the shore, a conglomerate of the oolite series is found to rest immediately on the granite at angles of 40°. Its apparently disturbed arrangement and mode of formation, have, by Professor Sedgwick and Mr Murchison, been explained by referring them to the action of the granite ; the fact of its not being indurated or traversed by veins, being considered as explicable by supposing that the granite had been elevated in a solid state after its original fluid protrusion through the primitive strata. One reason for not adopting this theoretical view, exists in the fact, that the same conglomerate may be found, connected with the sandstones of the series, at points where there is no granite in the neighbourhood. To say that highly inclined and mineralogically unaltered strata, when in connection with granite, have assumed their angular position, by the granite being upheaved in a solid state, is a doctrine which is completely unsupported by all that is known in regard to volcanic dynamics, and exists only as a very unwarrantable hypothesis. To imagine that all rocks inclined at high angles have been upraised subsequently to their formation, must lead to very false conclusions ; and can never be adopted to its full extent, by any who have examined the disposition of mountain debris, and the high angle at which a talus may be accumulated."

mitive, transition, and secondary, which the storms of centuries have collected in the bay of Kintradwell, and in one or two similar localities. From Port Gower to the extremity of the parish at the Ord, the sea shore is formed of one continued and rugged margin of limestone, part of the oolitic formation referred to by Mr Cunningham. This stone has often been burnt into lime, which was found to be of excellent quality; but the extra expense of fuel at a place remote from coal markets, increased the expense of the manufacture beyond the price at which English lime can be delivered in the parish; and besides, the encroachments of the sea on this coast require that the natural rocky barrier, which presently exists, should not be weakened or reduced by the removal of any part of it.

*Zoology.*—The only rare species of animal now found in the parish is the red-deer (*Cervus elaphus*), which occasionally wander from the interior recesses of the county, into the corries and passes of Ben Uarie and Ben Veallich. The fox, once so destructive to the farmer, has been extirpated; and one of the last wolves killed in the county of Sutherland was destroyed in the Glen of Loth, some time between the years 1690 and 1700.\*

The cattle, sheep, horses, and hogs, reared in the parish, are all superior animals, and often obtain the highest prizes, when exhibited at public competitions. The fishes that may be said to belong to Loth are extremely important and valuable. The salmon of the Helmsdale are of a large size, and the river being fished by the proprietor, the Duke of Sutherland, the utmost attention is directed to the proper mode of fishing, which annually closes two weeks before the legal period, in order to allow a greater number of spawning fish to ascend the river; and the spawning-beds and fry are afterwards carefully protected; but no peculiarity in the habits of the fish have been observed in this river. Of sea fish, the herring is the most valuable, and when they approach this part of the coast in the months of July and August, are in prime condition, and of very superior quality. Cod are also got in great numbers, and excel in quality and size those obtained in the upper waters of the Frith; and abundance of haddock, skate, and whiting are constantly obtained. Turbot are plentiful at a distance of some miles from the coast; but the fishermen have no inducement to follow the deep-sea fishing. Lobsters and crabs are, at present, very numerous, but the former were so

\* Scrope's Art of Deer Stalking contains an account of this occurrence.

severely fished some years ago, by fishing-smacks, for the London market, that it was, for some time thereafter, thought that the lobster had been exterminated along the coast.

*Botany.*—Rare native plants are seldom met with in the parish; but the cultivated vegetable productions are important and of the best quality. With the exception of a clump of Scotch firs at Kintradwell, and some stately sycamore and ash-trees at Kilmote, and a few straggling young trees at Midgarty and Port Gower, there is no growing wood in the parish. The grains raised in the arable lands, are of superior quality, and ripen early and with little risk, even in unfavourable seasons. The deep carse soil in the centre of the parish, yields all descriptions of grain,—wheat, barley, oats, beans, and pease; but the quality of the barley of this district is so superior, that its cultivation is the chief object of the farmer; and large parcels of this grain have been raised of late years in the parish, which weighed  $57\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per bushel; while one small parcel raised at Crakaig weighed 59 lb. The herbage of the hills and moorlands, however, do not excel similarly situated pasturages in their neighbourhood; and no rare plants appear in the uncultivated lands, unless we enumerate as such, *Eriophorum*, in boggy places; *Primula farinosa*, in two or three plats of meadow; *Viola lutea* in sheltered slopes of rivulets; and the fragrant *Myrica gale*, in marshes and soft grounds. *Vaccinium myrtillus*, the blaeberry, and *V. oxycoccos*, afford their wild native fruits, along some of the sides of the highest mountains; and *V. vitis-idaea*, the red bilberry, is common in less elevated moorlands. The steep and comparatively dry sides of the hills to the north of Navidale are adorned with some of the richest and most luxuriant furze-bushes, *Ulex Europæus*, to be met with in the north of Scotland, and which, when brilliant with their splendid golden blossoms, far exceed in wild beauty and richness, any other of our native plants, and invest with credit the anecdote of Linnæus, who, for the first time, saw the furze on his visit to England in 1736, and was so enraptured with it, that it is said he fell on his knees in order to admire its bright blossoms. Another common plant, the spear-thistle, *Carduus lanceolatus*, rears its stately and barbed-head, along the line of the old road across the Ord, in such great numbers as to justify the assertion, that the national emblem of Scotland is the decorative crest of the bold sea-front of the Ord,—one of the most characteristic headlands of ancient Caledonia. In the barren shingle along the sea shore,

between Helmsdale and the Ord, *Pulmonaria maritima*, a rare plant on the northern shores, attracts attention by its beautiful azure leaves. The rocky parts of the coast of the parish also furnish several species of *Fuci*, and, in such abundance that, before the reduction in the price of the kelp, about thirty tons of kelp were annually manufactured in the parish; but the present price of the article would not pay the expense of manufacturing it; and no seaweeds have been burnt for several years past. The best known species of *Fuci* on this coast, are *Fucus digitatus*, *F. palmatus*, *F. vesiculosus*, *F. nodosus*, *F. serratus*, and *F. filum*.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There is no separate history of this parish known to exist; but many events and occurrences connected with its annals are recorded in Sir Robert Gordon's History of the Earldom of Sutherland, which was written in the year 1630.

The only direct land route to Caithness, and by the Pentland Firth to Orkney, being through this parish, it has, at different times, witnessed the march of hostile forces, and has often been the scene of disturbance and violence. During the inroads of the Northmen in, and preceding, the twelfth century, the coast of Loth appears to have been often visited by these daring invaders; and Helmsdale, a name evidently derived from them, is believed to be identical with the name "*Hialmaidal*," which occurs in one of the northern sagas. In the year 1198, the parish received a royal visit, on the occasion of King William the Lion's march into Caithness, to revenge the cruel death of John Bishop of Caithness;\* for an ancient MS. descriptive of his expedition states, that the King had a great army, "and marched till he came to Eysteinsdale,—there are the boundaries of Katanes and Sudrland,—the camp of the King of Scots stretched along the Dals, and that is a very long way." These Dales are believed to have been the valleys of Kildonan, terminating at Helmsdale, and Strathmore in Caithness, which communicate with each other, "and that is a very long way;" and in the last of which valleys, there is a place still called Easterdale.

During the turbulent ages that succeeded King William's ex-

\* "During King William's absence, Harold Earl of Orkney and Caithness apprehended John Bishop of Caithness, cut out his tongue, and put out his eyes, for having opposed some designs of his at Court. For which King William upon his return, caused the Earl to be apprehended, cut out his tongue, pulled out his eyes, and then hanged him upon a gibbet. These things happened in the year 1198."—*Bishop Elphinston*.

pedition, Loth, being a *border* parish, was exposed to all the sudden inroads and *craichs* arising from the hostility which the inhabitants of two adjoining districts, separated by a marked natural barrier, such as Sutherland and Caithness are, fostered against each other, before the blessings of regular government and the impartial administration of equal laws, were experienced; and the parish also suffered very much from the lawless depredations committed by fugitives, and persons of desperate character, who sought for temporary shelter amidst the solitary recesses of the Ord; and the tales still, or very lately, lingering in the neighbourhood, with reference to these freebooters between the two counties, agree in spirit and tendency, with the sympathy expressed in some of the popular ballads of the period, in such terms, as,

Alas! that e'er such laws were made,  
 To hang a man for gear;  
 Either for stealing cow or sheep,  
 Or yet for horse or mare:  
 Had not the laws then been so strict,  
 I had never lost my joy;  
 But now he lodges with Auld Nick  
 That hanged my Gilderoy."

But, notwithstanding the existence of this popular feeling, it is stated in Sir Robert Gordon's History, that, in the year 1617, a gibbet was erected on the top of the Ord, where "some notable robbers that exercised all kynd of thift, and other misdemeanors in Southerland, Catteynes, and Rosse, were hanged."

The disastrous battle of Floudden was fought on 9th September 1513, and, shortly before then, a gallant body of Caithnessmen, headed by their Earl, marched through this parish on their way to join the Scottish army. These brave men and their leader met with an honourable death on the field of battle; but as they happened, when leaving Caithness, to cross the Ord on a Monday, and were dressed in a green uniform, there still exists a popular aversion among the natives of the district, to take a journey over the Ord on that day of the week, or in a green-coloured coat.

Passing over those other historical events connected with this parish, which are already before the public, in Sir Robert Gordon's History, the next prominent occurrence was the appearance of about 700 Argyle Highlanders on their march into Caithness, in the summer of 1679, in order to support the King's patent to the Earldom of Caithness, which had been granted on 28th June 1677, in favour of John Campbell of Glenorchy, afterwards creat-

ed Earl of Breadalbane. This expedition, which terminated in the battle of Altimarlach, to the westward of Wick, is remarkable as indicating the peculiar condition of Scotland at that comparatively recent period, which admitted a subject to arm his vassals, and wage war, in support of his private legal claims. It was during the march northwards of the men of Glenorchy, on this occasion, that the well known quickstep airs, "The Campbells are coming," and "The Braes of Glenorchy," obtained their names.

The Rebellions in 1715 and 1745, occasioned the arming of the male population of this parish, in support of the reigning dynasty. During the retreat of the insurgents before the battle of Culloden, in 1746, Lord Loudon was stationed in Dornoch, with some companies of the King's troops; but, hearing of the advance into Ross-shire of a large force under the Duke of Perth, with the intention of attacking him, Lord Loudon and his men abruptly retired to the westward, leaving the whole county of Sutherland unprotected. The Earl of Cromarty, with a considerable force, instantly marched through Sutherland into Caithness, with the intention of collecting together such men in that latter county, as might be inclined to join the rebel army; and the Earl's men, among other outrages committed by them against individuals and private property, burnt, in this parish, the mansion-houses of Kintradwell and Crakaig, and disinterred the corpse of a person recently interred in the burying-ground at Navidale, who had been the relative of a zealous royalist at that place, and left the partly decayed body in his bed,—he having previously fled from his home on the approach of the enemy. These proceedings exasperated the parish people; and two of Lord Cromarty's officers, who had wandered into the glen of Loth, on their return from Caithness, were killed there by three countrymen who met them. Before the return from Caithness of this invading force, the militia of the county had time to assemble, and having attacked them to the west of Golspie, the Earl of Cromarty's forces were defeated in a running fight between Rhives and the Little Ferry, and the Earl, and almost all his officers and men who were not slain, were taken prisoners. This occurred two days before the battle of Culloden was fought; and while the Earl was hurrying south to join the rebel army.

*Land-owners.*—His Grace the Duke and Earl of Sutherland is heritor of the whole parish, which, at all times, formed part of the ancient Earldom of Sutherland.

*Parochial Registers.*—There is no register of births and mar-

riages for this parish, of any earlier date than the close of the last century; and this is a defect common to almost all the neighbouring parishes, which has been often attended with the most vexatious and injurious consequences to persons in humble life, who required to establish their propinquity to deceased and remote relatives. Older registers may have existed; but, as there was no legal provision for the care and preservation of such records, the system under which they were entrusted to the parish schoolmasters, afforded little or no security for their preservation. All parish registers are now under better and safer management than formerly; but many persons who have directed their attention to the matter, are convinced, that, as national records, the parish registers of Scotland admit of being placed under more strict control, and more certain protection, than have yet been devised for insuring their full public benefits.

*Antiquities.*—The old Castle of Helmsdale, situate on an elevated green bank, close to the River of Helmsdale, where it mingles with the sea water, is the only remarkable ruin now remaining in the parish. The date of its erection is not known: but the building is of that square form, with sharp angles, generally attributed to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in the north of Scotland. It was a hunting-seat of the Sutherland family, adjoining the old deer-forest of Sledale, and the Ord, and is distinguished in the annals of the county, as the place where John, the eleventh Earl of Sutherland, and his Countess, were both poisoned in July 1567, in a diabolical, but fortunately abortive attempt to poison the whole family, and thereby divert the succession to their honours and estates, out of the direct line of descent. Several of those very ancient edifices, known as circular or Pictish towers, stood formerly in the parish of Loth, and one of them, at Lothbeg, was entire at the time Pennant visited the county in 1769. It is now only distinguished as a circular cairn of small stones. Another of these towers stood at Wilkhouse; one to the east of Midgarty; and a very large one, called *Dun-Phail*, crowned the brow of the high ground, close to the public road, and about half-way between Port Gower and Helmsdale. The foundation of this last tower could only be traced of late years, and the large stones forming that foundation have been dug up recently for building purposes. The old Hunting House in the Glen of Loth, of which Pennant gives a plan, has also disappeared. \*

\* Pennant's description of the above hunting houses is, that "They consist of a gallery, with a number of small rooms on the sides, each formed of three large stones,

In the west side of the steep bank of the Kintradwell Burn, an artificial opening or cave, and built and roofed with stone, called *Cosh-geavag*, now shut by an accumulation of soil and rubbish, is said to lead to subterranean apartments, which, from descriptions given by persons who entered them, before the mouth of the cave became impeded, are supposed to have been places of refuge or sepulchre. At a remote period, a chapel, called after St Ninian, stood at Navidale, and another, called John the Baptist's Chapel, close to the present bridge of Helmsdale; and at both these places, there are burying-grounds, still used as such. Another of these chapels stood at Easter Garty, the ruins of which are still recollected; and it is said that a fourth stood at Kintradwell, called St Trullev's Chapel, although the existence of this last one is not certain. Several barrows and tumuli are scattered throughout the parish, and the heads of ancient stone battle-axes have been found in some cairns supposed to point out the resting-place of persons slain in conflicts; and at *Stronie-Rungie*, a low-lying point of the coast between Culgower and Wester Garty, a number of battle cairns still mark the place where it is said foreign invaders were successfully opposed and overcome.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of Loth has been, for several years past, and is rapidly increasing. The early state of its population cannot be traced satisfactorily; but some occasional facts have been ascertained, which warrant the conclusion, that the number of inhabitants was stationary for the last two hundred years, until about the year 1811. Thus, in February 1651, the "Committee of War," for the shire, in fixing the number of men for a militia regiment, allocated those from the parish of Loth as follows:

" Clynetraidwall and two davochs of Lothbeg,	7 men.
The three davoch lands of Craaik and ye davoch of Lothe and ye glen,	7
Lothmore and Eister Helmsdail,	7
Culgor, West Garthie, and West Helmsdail,	7
Marie, Midgarthie, and East Garthie,	7
Navidail,	2

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These numbers of selected fighting men bear about the same proportion to the strength of the regiment then raised, which the

*viz.* one on each side, and a third by way of covering. These are made with the *vast flags* this country is famous for. At the extremity, is a larger apartment, of an oval figure, probably the quarters of the chieftain. The passage or gallery is without a roof,—a proof that they were only temporary habitations. Their length is from fifty to sixty feet. These buildings are only in places where the great flags are plentiful. In Glen Loth are three, and are called by the country people *Uga*."



parish afforded of males able to carry arms, and between the ages of 16 and 60, in the year of the last Rebellion 1745, when nearly 8000 men were enrolled as militiamen, on the estate of Sutherland. At this last period, the relative proportion also of men from each of the townships, does not much differ from the allocation in 1651,—thus :

Kintradwell, and part of Lothbeg,	33 men.
Crakaig, Loth, and the Glen,	41
Lothmore and Easter Helmsdale,	33
Culgower, Wester Garty, and West Helmsdale,	33
Marril, Midgarty, and East Garty,	22
Navidale,	14
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The Government returns give the following result for this parish :

In 1801, the population was	1374
1811,	1330
1821,	2008
1831,	2234

This increase is to be attributed to the successful establishment of the herring-fishery at Helmsdale, and to the settlement of several small tenants in that track of improvable land, chiefly near the coast, from Port Gower to Navidale. These causes of the increase have been in very active operation since the date of the last Government census, and, without attempting to anticipate, in exact numbers, the probable increase since that period, by trusting to any less authentic data than the census to be taken in the present year, it is believed by the reporter, that the increase will at least equal that which has occurred during the last two decades, or between the years 1811 and 1831.

The erection of houses in Helmsdale, which, with the exception of Port Gower, is the only village in the parish, is not only annually on the increase : but the accommodation they afford, and the style of building, are improving. This town, begun in 1818, has been regularly and steadily increasing since then ; and the houses being all new, and substantially built, and all roofed with slates or tiles, and the streets regular, the general appearance of the whole place is as pleasing to a stranger as the prosperity of its principal trade, and the internal comforts of its dwellings, have been important and creditable to the inhabitants.

There is no marked peculiarity in the habits of the people of the parish, or in their style or manner of dress. They are generally frugal in their mode of living, but have a laudable anxiety to ap-

pear at all times in becoming and respectable apparel. The native language of the country people is Gaelic, but almost all of them speak or understand English, and it may be said that all young persons, male and female, are able to read and write. The baneful but often alluring vices of poaching and smuggling have long ago ceased within the parish, in consequence, chiefly, of the superior and comfortable condition in which almost all the heads of families in it are placed, as tenants holding directly, at very moderate rents, under their landlord, independent of intermediate dictation over their time and industry; and which healthy position precludes all desire to engage in the ruinous practice of illegal offences. The general character of the population is that of a decidedly moral, religious, and industrious people; and nowhere are the safety and security of individuals, and the rights of property, more respected and upheld, and less interfered with, than in the parish of Loth.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The arable lands may conveniently be classed into large farms, and the allotments possessed by small tenants. There are seven large farms in the parish, which, besides valuable ranges of low-lying and hill pastures, have among them 1182 acres of arable land, equal in fertility to any others in the county. These farms are held under leases of nineteen years endurance, and are laboured under the five years shift of husbandry, having annually one-fifth part in fallow, turnips, potatoes, or other green crop; one-fifth part in grass one year old; one-fifth part in grass two years old; and not more than two-fifth parts in corn crop. All the farms are conveniently subdivided, and enclosed with substantial stone dikes, and the farm buildings are modern and suitable.

The lands held by the small tenants are also laboured with considerable skill and industry; and each tenant raises annually barley or bear, oats, and potatoes, besides small patches of turnips and sown grasses, and maintains one or more cows, and often rears his young cattle, and possesses one of the small hardy horses of the country, and a few of the small native sheep, besides swine and poultry in abundance. Their cottages, formerly very rude and mean, have been wisely removed by themselves, in situations where they were placed on improvable land, to more sterile parts of their lots, in order to convert all that can be rendered arable into corn land; and hence, the comfortable stone cottages, of improved construction, which they now occupy, are generally placed on the

highest ridges and more rocky eminences of the different townships. The industry with which the trenching and improving of hitherto waste land is carried on by these small tenants, is easily accounted for, when it is stated, that no advance of rent follows in consequence of any improvement or progressive amelioration of the soil; that the whole benefits resulting from these causes have been enjoyed exclusively by the tenants, and that the rents have been placed on such a reasonable scale, that there was not a single sixpence of the rents of the whole parish left unpaid on last audit day; and that such a proceeding as a distraint for rent has not been known among these tenants, for a long period of years. In addition to these mighty advantages, the whole allotments of the small tenants are very judiciously intersected by branch roads, along which the important article of fuel,—peats of excellent quality,—are readily carted home from the neighbouring hill mosses, and the necessary removal of manure and other field operations are effected with great facility.

*Fisheries.*—The most important fisheries belonging to the parish, are those of salmon in the river Helmsdale, and the herring-fishery at the village of Helmsdale. The former has been celebrated from the oldest period of which we have record, as productive and valuable. For several years past, the river has been fished directly by the servants of the proprietor, who, avoiding all close and severe fishing, and taking every means to protect the spawning fish when ascending the river, and the fry afterwards, besides closing the fishing season, at least two weeks before the time fixed by law, (and which is also done in all the other rivers on the estates of Sutherland,) thus guard, by all available means, this fine salmon stream from the evils of too close and exterminating a system of fishing, so often complained of, when tenants occupy such fishings. The fish are disposed of by contract, at a certain price per pound, and are sent off in a fresh state in ice to the London market.

*Herring-Fishery.*—This very important branch of industry has been conducted with such spirit, and such signal and increasing success, since it was established and prosecuted, on a regular system at Helmsdale, that its history and present condition claim particular notice in any account of the parish of Loth. The unsettled state of the north of Scotland before the suppression of the Rebellion in 1746, may alone be adduced as a sufficient reason for the neglect, down to that period, of the fisheries which now add so materially to the prosperity and well-being of the population of

our sea coasts ; but from that date to the beginning of the present century, there was a period of fifty-four years of uninterrupted internal peace and public security, favourable for the pursuit of most branches of industry, and which could not be materially affected by a distant war such as that with America, during which the fisheries were as completely neglected as ever ; and in this state, it is probable, they would have continued much longer, had not Government and patriotic individuals interfered. Capital is seldom embarked in hazardous and doubtful speculations, unless there be a chance of extraordinary profits. The ultimate success of the herring fishery was by no means certain ; great profits could not, with probability, be calculated upon ; and the Dutch, who, before the present century, supplied the continental markets, were, from their experience and perseverance, and more especially from their superior mode of curing, (then supposed to be known to them exclusively,) competitors of the most formidable description. The herring-fishery was, therefore, generally looked upon as an important national concern, in so far as it reared a hardy class of seamen, but as possessing few attractions for individual speculators. Hence, the first efforts of Government to advance the fisheries were attended with partial success only ; and such is the difficulty of selecting the most efficient means, at a first trial, in some legislative measures, that the principle upon which the Government bounties for the encouragement of the herring fishery were granted, has been subsequently found to be an erroneous one. Busses of not less than sixty tons burden were the description of vessels encouraged ; and all such, when fitted out for sea in a particular manner, were entitled to a bounty of L. 3 per ton, whether fish were caught or not. Consequently, it often followed that busses, after being passed for the deep sea fishery, skulked along shore, or lingered in safe retired creeks, among the Orkney and other islands,—only going to sea when the weather was inviting. The crews also were exempted from impressment ; so that a number of lazy hands were thus obtained by the master, to man the busses, at a trifling expense. This system was directly the reverse of the active and vigorous mode of fishing now prosecuted. The next measure, being a bounty of 4s. on the cran of fish, gutted, cured, and packed, in an improved manner at stations on shore, was, however, a most important and serviceable enactment, and may be considered as giving the first well-directed impulse which the present fishery system received. The curer, at first, when the busi-

ness was imperfectly understood, and when he could only command a limited number of fishermen, sufficiently skilful and experienced, had to incur expenses and run risks, now guarded against; and, at that time, the bounty often formed his only profit,—while without it, it is probable that the business would have lingered or decayed. As the trade prospered under the bounty system, several individuals without capital appeared as curers. They engaged a few inefficient boats, and the premium promised to the crews was often made a postponed payment, consequent on the sale of the cured fish. If regular curing premises could not be procured, an open area with portable sheds was used. The staves, the salt, and the other curing materials were obtained upon credit; and whenever the barrels were packed, and branded by the fishery officer, the bounty was payable and obtained, and this advance paid off the pressing current expenses. Latterly, curers of this description increased too rapidly; but the bounty, which originally worked so much good, (although as the trade increased and was understood, it fostered unsound speculation,) was withdrawn in time to place the herring-fishery on a more safe foundation; because now, few persons will or can adventure in it, who are not possessed of some capital or credit.

The regulations as to the size of the barrel, the curing and packing of the fish, and the branding of the barrels, are still attended to; and indeed, these regulations are so well calculated to secure the proper curing of the fish, that self-interest alone must compel the respectable curer to observe them strictly. Fishery officers are still retained at the different stations, whose duty it is to brand all cured herrings submitted to them, in barrels of the legal size, if of good quality, and regularly cured; and their brand, a crown, stamps them as of prime quality; and thus the fish acquire a character, without which the curer could not obtain the current market-price. The barrel is, in all respects, the same as when the bounty was granted. The breadth of the staves is generally about three inches and a half, and the number in a barrel is 18. The barrel contains 32 gallons; and the number of hoops varies from 16 and 17 to 18. For the West India market an iron hoop at each end is added. The effect of these regulations is equally beneficial to the public as to the curer; for, without them, or similar checks, boatmen and inexperienced persons would pack fish, without regard to quality, mode of cure, or size and description of barrel; and a quantity of inferior and bad fish would get

into market, which might ultimately create a prejudice against all British cured herrings, and lower the price of the commodity so far, that no profit would be obtained for those regularly cured.

The Helmsdale cured herrings are equal in quality to any in Britain, and have attained a very high character in the market. This excellence may be attributable, in a great degree, to the very superior curing-yards, with which all the curers in Helmsdale have supplied themselves. No fish are cured here in the open air, as is frequently done, from the want of accommodation, at other stations, greatly to the prejudice of the commodity; because the rich and admired qualities of the herring are of so volatile a quality, that the slightest exposure of the fish to the sun, or even to the glare of strong daylight, before or during the process of curing, deteriorates the fish. The Helmsdale curing-yards are all perfect in their accommodation, and are cool and ample in their construction. The success attending the Helmsdale fishery has been so steady and progressive, that, although it did not commence until so late as the year 1814, when the first doubtful trial was made there, the number of barrels cured at Helmsdale, and the creeks within what is called, under the Fishery Board Control, the Helmsdale District, have increased more than nine-fold, up to the year 1840, the numbers, as appears from the subjoined table, in the year 1815, being 5318 barrels, and in the year 1839, being 46,571 barrels; and of this last number, no less than 23,815 barrels were exported. This rate of increase considerably exceeds that of the success over the kingdom generally, the latter having only had an increase of six-fold since the establishment, in 1809, of the Fishery Board, which has so materially advanced the true interests of the trade; the numbers at that time, throughout the whole kingdom, being only 90,000 barrels, or not double the number now cured in the Helmsdale District alone; while, last year, the whole quantity cured in Britain were 550,000 barrels.

Table of the Numbers of Barrels of Herrings cured, branded, and exported, in the Helmsdale District, in each year, from 1815 to 1840.

Year.	Barrels Cured.	Barrels Branded.	Barrels Exported.	Year.	Barrels Cured.	Barrels Branded.	Barrels Exported.
1815,	5318	2121		1821,	20561	12863	6585
1816,	14798	3290		1822,	19632	11968	4361
1817,	14176	5944	2445	1823,	25647	16583	8700
1818,	22876	11770	5642	1824,	28804	18891	6598
1819,	28596	13940	4911	1825,	34492	23972	9749
1820,	28199	17318	6447	1826,	12071	6663	1266

Year.	Barrels Cured.	Barrels Branded.	Barrels Exported.	Year.	Barrels Cured.	Barrels Branded.	Barrels Exported.
1827,	25753	17822	5896	1834,	7302	3316	920
1828,	17476	10077	3204	1835,	28377	17365	6517
1829,	19857	12880	5405	1836,	19600	9516	7971
1830,	23310	13637	6923	1837,	36247	19857	14820
1831,	20030	8824	5890	1838,	46345	28114	24294
1832,	11188	6100	3131	1839,	46571	27647	23615
1833,	27432	14315	7990				

The future prosperity of this most valuable addition to the industry of the parish may, with great confidence, be augured, from our knowledge of the sure and judicious foundation upon which it commenced, and also from the efficient means and resources which are now provided, on a permanent footing, for supporting the extension and high character of the trade at Helmsdale, including the settlement of native and regularly bred boat-builders and coopers, and the establishment also of a steam-mill for sawing barrel staves, in the village.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The only villages in the parish are Helmsdale and Port Gower, which are both on the sea coast, and distant about two miles from each other. Port Gower is partly supported by some excellent land adjoining it, which is divided among a few of the villagers, and by a settlement of active fishermen. It possesses a comfortable and pleasantly situated inn; and the Parliamentary road along the coast, towards Caithness, runs along it. Helmsdale enjoys ample means of communication with all parts of the kingdom, having the great North Parliamentary Road running through it, which, on one hand, leads to Wick and Thurso, and on the other, to all parts of the south of Scotland and England; while a large steamer frequents Wick from Edinburgh, during eight months of the year; and the harbour of Helmsdale is often frequented by shipping from various ports of Britain and Ireland. The Parliamentary road through the parish, called the Dunrobin road, was completed, under one contract, in the year 1811, and extends from Golspie to the Ord, a distance of 21 miles and 880 yards, and originally cost L. 6000; and 13 miles of this road run through the parish of Loth. Another road leads from Helmsdale, through the Strath of Kildonan, to the North Sea at Bighouse; and a branch road, leading from Lothbeg, through the Glen, joins the last-mentioned line of road, to the north of the church and manse of Kildonan. The bridge of Helmsdale is a handsome

structure of two arches, and each of a span of 70 feet, and its erection cost L.2200. It was finished in 1811.

The first improvement on the harbour of Helmsdale took place in 1818, when a pier and breastwork were erected, at an expense to the proprietor of L. 1600; but since then, several other sums have been expended in extending and enlarging the harbour; and other improvements connected with it are understood to be in contemplation.

Helmsdale has a post-office, one principal and commodious inn, and several other public-houses; and the mail-coach passes and repasses through the village, daily.

A large distillery, close to the town, had been in active operation for several years, until last summer, when the circumstances of the distillers caused the work to be stopped; and since then, this distillery, and a beer brewery connected with it, have not been in operation.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is now, owing to the great increase of the population of late years in and around Helmsdale, at an inconvenient distance from the greater part of the inhabitants, although it is locally situated nearly in the centre of the parish. It is a new and very handsome church, and in a complete state of repair. In order to accommodate the inhabitants of Helmsdale, and the increasing population of the eastern extremity of the parish, the late Duchess-Countess, and the present Duke of Sutherland, have erected a large, convenient, and substantial church in Helmsdale, which is now about being finished; and of late years, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland has been resident in Helmsdale, who regularly performs divine service there, so that church accommodation is amply provided for in this parish. The present parish of Loth does not appear to have been a distinct religious district before the Reformation, and it is not even named in the charter of Erection of the bishopric of Caithness. It possessed, however, at that period, several religious chapels, of which, that called St John's Chapel, at Helmsdale, was the most important and best endowed; and it is probable that, with the aid of these minor religious houses, the present parish of Loth was, in Catholic times, divided, *quoad sacra*, between the jurisdictions of the Prebendaries of Clyne and Kildonan. A church existed, however, at Loth in 1627, for Sir Robert Gordon states, that, in that year, the church of Loth was repaired. During the period of Scotch Episcopacy, the conjunction of Loth and Clyne appears to



have continued ; for some entries about the year 1618 mention, that " Andro Andersone, minister" of Clyne, had besides his stipend, the kirkland of Loth, and at the same time, Walter Andersone was " reidar at Clyne and Loth," and had his stipend with the kirkland of Clyne. In a deed granted by the Andrew Anderson here referred to, he is designated " Ministro veriti Dei apud Loithe," and as the paper is only signed by his mark, there is added after it " cannot wreitt myself." Hector Pope, who died about the year 1719, was the last minister of Loth who retained the Episcopal form of appearing in the pulpit in a surplice. The succeeding ministers of Loth were, Robert Robertson, William Rose, George Macculloch, George Gordon, and the present minister, and Rev. Donald Ross.

Before the year 1726, the Presbytery of Dornoch, which includes this parish, formed part of the synod of Ross ; but on the 15th May 1726, the General Assembly disjoined this Presbytery from the synod of Ross, and erected the presbyteries of Dornoch, Caithness, and Tongue, into one synod, as they at present stand ; and the meetings of the synod to be held at Dornoch and Thurso, *per vices*.

*Education.*—The parish school is at Port Gower, and is attended by all the children in the neighbourhood of that village, and in the western division of the parish. Another school, supported in Helmsdale by the inhabitants, is well attended by the children in and around that village. There is also a female teacher in Helmsdale.

*Poor.*—The ordinary church collections and annual donations by the proprietor are the available funds for the benefit of the ordinary poor. In judging of the condition of, and necessary support by money payments to, the poor, in a country parish like Loth, a very misleading mistake is frequently committed, by assuming that their wants and destitution are the same as those of the poor in large towns. In such towns, owners of heritable property never permit part of their subjects to be gratuitously occupied by any indigent person, and the very refuse and offals of all personal effects and articles are sacred, by day and night, against all intrusion. On the contrary, in Loth and similar parishes, the actual poor have ever the gratuitous accommodations from the proprietor, of dwelling-places in healthy localities, and small plats of ground for vegetables, and the rearing of common poultry,—of free access to water, open fields, peat mosses, decayed heather, furze, and brushwood, the products of the shore, and

the gleanings of the harvest; from all which, shelter, constant fuel, and limited supplies of food are certain,—while in most districts, the charitable seldom fail to add considerably, and in private to the necessities of the deserving poor. Under such circumstances as these, a few shillings in addition from the parish funds are more valuable than the same sums among the poor of towns. In this part of the north of Scotland, the indigent poor are never neglected; but in order to continue to act towards them as their wants require, it is now found absolutely necessary to protect the northern inhabitants from the hordes of vagrants who have been wandering, of late years, from the southern parts of the kingdom, over the northern counties, and carrying with them all the moral and physical diseases of crowded cities in their most dreaded forms.

*March 1841.*

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

### ON THE COUNTY OF SUTHERLAND.

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THE superficial extent of the County of Sutherland is computed to be 1865 square miles of land, and 38 square miles of water; or 1,193,940 acres of land, and 24,230 acres of water. The extreme length of the county, in straight lines, at three different points, viz. from Inverkirkaig to the Ord of Caithness, is 60 miles; from Rhustoir in Assynt, to the Height of Knockfin, is 56 miles; and from Cape Wrath to Drum-Hallastain, is 42 miles; while the breadth from Dornoch to Strathy-point is 54 miles; and from Rosehall to Whitenhead is 42 miles. Sutherland is situate between  $57^{\circ} 55'$ , and  $58^{\circ} 37'$  of north latitude; and  $34^{\circ} 43'$  and  $5^{\circ} 23' 30''$  west longitude.

*Name.*—The name of the county in the earliest writings extant is spelt *Sudrland*,—thereafter *Southerland*, and now SUTHERLAND, and can be traced back to the ninth and tenth centuries, and is probably of an older date. It evidently originated among the northmen, who acquired settlements about the periods referred to, in Caithness and Orkney, and who, from their northern position, distinguished the country immediately adjoining them, by a general name, signifying *the land south from them*. In like manner, the most southern habitation or township in the county was called *Suderha* (the southern-hall,) and is still known as Sidera, in the parish of Dornoch.

*Boundaries.*—Sutherland is bounded on the south from the Ord, in a south-west direction to the Point of Dornoch, by the German Ocean or Moray Frith; and thence to the west sea, by the county of Ross. The Dornoch Frith, formerly known as the River of Portnaculter, and its leading stream the Oykill, separate the two counties, in a straight line of about 35 miles. Thence, the march wanders among the high grounds, between the two seas; whence the waters shed in opposite directions to the east and west, and where the ancient and natural march was departed from in favour of Ross-shire, in consequence of an award upon evidence

subsequently found to have been false. The windings of the present march at this part of the interior, are of considerable length; but the distance in a straight line from the source of the Oykill, to the east end of Loch Veyatie, where water again separates the counties, is only about 8 or 9 miles. Loch Veyatie, Fewn Loch, and the river and bay of Kirkaig, all within Sutherland, complete the boundary to the West Sea. The western boundary of Sutherland is the West Sea or Atlantic Ocean; and its northern boundary, from Cape Wrath to the confines of Caithness, is the North Sea. There are several islands along both these coasts, which form parts of the county. The county of Caithness forms the eastern boundary of Sutherland; the two counties being separated by the summit of a high range of hills,—well defined,—from Fea-Drum-Hallastain at the North Sea, to the Ord of Caithness at the southern extremity.\*

*Physical Appearances.*—The interior of the county is marked by a lofty range of mountains, which separate the west and north coasts of the county from its southern districts. This range commencing with Sulven in Assynt, and ending with the two Ben-Griams, near Caithness, contains the highest mountains in the county, many of them rising to heights of from 2500 feet to 3230 feet, and presenting varied and very remarkable outlines. The alpine character of this extended range is also preserved in the magnitude of many lakes at the base of the mountains, in the depth of the openings and passes, in the expansion of widely spread mountain sides, and in a variety of romantic valleys, and rugged glens and hollows. Many parts of the interior also form extensive table-lands, chiefly of moss, and unbroken by any marked features. The western and northern districts of the county, separated by the interior mountains from the southern parts, are quite dissimilar to them in appearance and character. Thus, the district of Assynt and Edderachillis, along the west coast, is one of the most remarkable in Scotland, for the general ruggedness

\* In a royal charter defining the bounds of the county of Sutherland, in the year 1631, the following is the description given: "Beginning upon the north at the strype called Faehalodail, which divides Strathnaver from Caithness, and fra that south-east by the top of the hills to the Ord upon the sea coste, including the haill bounds of the Ord, and thair fra south-west till the mouth of the water of Tayne, alias Portnacutar; and fra that west to the water of Oikill, comprehending therein the haill lands and country of Fairincostar, alias Sleyscheillis; and fra that west till Loch-brone and Coygathe, so far as the diocese of Caithness extends, comprehending thairin the said lands and country of Assynt into the west sea, and fra thence north up the sea coste till the northmost point of the land called Ardurines; and fra thence east to the river and water of Halloedail; and fra that east to the said strype called Faehalodail."

and inequalities of its surface, and for a great number of rocky eminences, and of second-rate lakes, which characterize its scenery. Along the north coast, the same description of scenery continues, but in a more modified form, and softened by an open track of arable land at Durness; by the picturesque beauty of Tongue, and its improved policies; by the extensive and beautiful valley of Strathnaver; and the more tame but rather fertile strath of Hallodale. The sea coast of these two districts, also, presents headlands, and numerous cliffs of the boldest description. The eastern and southern parts of the county, again, are marked by several extensive and pleasant valleys, surrounded by high hills, by rich pasture grounds, and by extensive tracks of well-cultivated arable land, in the parishes of Criech, Dornoch, Golspie, Clyne, and Loth. The sea coast in this direction is flat, with sandy shores, except at the eastern extremity of the county, where the majestic headland of the Ord stands erect out of the German Ocean.

*Mountains.*—The mountains of Sutherland are very remarkable features of the county,—in their number,—their height,—their singular and varied outlines,—and the detached position of a few of them. The altitude of the highest of these mountains has been ascertained to be as follows:—

Ben More of Assynt,	3491 feet high.	Ben Uarie,	1923 feet high.
Ben Klibreck,	3164	Ben Vealich,	1898
Ben Hope,	3061	Ben Horn,	1712
Fionaven,	3015	Ben Smorale,	1667
Ben Hee,	2858	Ben Lundie,	1467
Ben Spionnue,	2566	Ben Hutic,	1345
Ben Armin,	2306	Ben Bhraggie,	1262
Ben Griam-more,	1935		

*Rivers.*—The Sutherland rivers are very numerous; but as all of them have their source in the interior parts of this county, and do not receive any tributary streams or supplies from other counties, except two rivers that join the Oykill from Ross-shire, they are not remarkable for size, or the volume of their waters. The larger rivers are all valuable for their salmon-fishings; but none of them are navigable, except the estuaries of the Oykill and of the Fleet, for short distances. The largest of these rivers is the Oykill, which has its rise in Loch-Aish,—a wild mountain-lake near the eastern limb of Ben-More of Assynt. This stream forms the boundary between the counties of Ross and Sutherland, and is augmented in its course by a number of burns, by the rivers of

Eanaig, from the Ross hills, and Cassley, and Shin, two large Sutherland rivers. After the junction of these streams, their united waters are generally called the Kyle of Sutherland; and immediately above Bonar, where the Kyle is crossed by an elegant iron bridge, having one arch of 150 feet span, the River Carron from Ross-shire flows into it. The river thus augmented widens considerably; and downwards, to Tarbetness, it is now generally named the Dornoch Frith, although, for several centuries, it was known as the River of Portnaculter. The tide flows up to a point at a short distance above the junction of the Cassley and Oykill, and vessels of small burden navigate the frith up to Bonar Bridge, although the formidable sand-banks, known as the Gizzen Briggs, at the entrance of the frith, formed by the descending stream being here first resisted by the flowing tides from the Moray Frith, renders the entrance into the frith intricate at all times, and often very dangerous. The Cassley and the Shin are both large and handsome rivers, the former flowing along a lengthened valley of the same name, and the latter issuing out of Loch Shin, and having a course of six miles. There are other three rivers along the east and south coast of the county. The River Fleet forms an estuary, now known as the Little Ferry, but formerly called the River Unes. The upper part of the Fleet, which runs through Strathfleet, is an active rivulet, which, as it increases in size, flows with sluggish stream for several miles before it reaches the opening of the estuary. The next river is the Brora, having a course of about five miles from Loch Brora, before it enters the sea at the village of the same name; and the only other river in this quarter is the handsome stream of the Helmsdale, which, after a course of upwards of twenty miles through the Strath of Kildonan, falls into the sea at Helmsdale.

On the north coast of the county, the river of Hallodale, having a course of about twenty miles through the strath of the same name, joins the North Sea at the bay of the Tor of Bighouse, near the boundary with Caithness. The next river westward is rather a small one, the Strathy, flowing from a lake of the same name. Further on, the Naver enters the sea at a sandy bay of the coast. This river has a course of about thirty miles, from Loch Naver, through the strath of that name, and is about the same size as the Helmsdale. The Borgie or Torrisdale river, a much smaller stream, flows into the sea, within one mile's distance from the mouth of the Naver; but farther westward, as far as

Cape Wrath, there is no other stream deserving the name of river, except the rather unimportant rivers of Hope and Dionard. The former has a very short course of about two miles from Loch Hope to the sea, but carries along with it a considerable body of water; and the Dionard, after forcing its way through all the obstructions of a particularly rugged mountain strath, silently enters the head of the Bay of Durness.

The rivers of the west coast having short courses through wild districts, are more remarkable for the turbulence of their streams, than for their size. The Inchard is rather a small stream, but has sufficient water to afford a salmon-fishing. The Laxford, after a short course from Loch Stack, falls into Loch Laxford, a salt water loch. This stream is proverbially an excellent salmon river, and affords the best angling of any river in Britain, of its size. The Inver is a very rapid and headlong river, issuing from Loch Assynt, and falling into Loch Inver, a deep sea-bay; and the Kirkaig, which divides Ross from Sutherland, is a tolerably large sized stream, having its source and its whole supply of water from Sutherland, it being wholly a river of this county.

*Lakes.*—The fresh-water lakes of Sutherland are very numerous, and many of them are of large size. The largest are connected with, or amidst, the interior range of lofty mountains. The first, as to size, is Loch Shin, the deep reservoir of an immense body of water that reposes on the heights of the parish of Lairg, and stretches towards Assynt. This lake, including the small Loch Griam, at its west end, and which is almost connected with it, is in a straight line, eighteen miles long. It is one of a remarkable chain of lakes, which, with short intervening spaces, extends from within ten miles of Bonar Bridge, the highest navigable point of the Dornoch Frith, on the east coast, to Loch Laxford, an arm of the Atlantic. The other lakes of this chain are Loch Merkland,\* three miles in length, and only distant from Loch Griam about one mile and a-half. The next in succession is Loch More, or, more properly, Loch Rynie, which is only at a distance of two miles from the west end of Loch Merkland. Loch More is about four miles and a half in length; and at a distance of one

\* The name of this lake, as also *Stack* and *Laxford*, are plainly Scandinavian names. *Mærk*, signifying a forest, as well as the march of a territory, or *finca terre*, would, in either sense, be very applicable here; Loch Merkland being within the Dirie-more Forest, and the chain of lakes, of which it is the centre, having been anciently the boundary between Ardnerness and the old estate of Skelbo. *Stack* is the descriptive name of the conical mountain that rises from Loch Stack; and *Laxford* (or *Lax-fjord*) is palpably the Salmon Frith.

mile from its western extremity is Loch Stack, a large and nearly circular lake of about one mile in diameter, with a contracted limb towards the west, which brings the deep water of the lake to within three miles of the head of the sea water of Loch Laxford.

In Edderachillis and Durness, many other lakes of considerable size, add to the beauty of the scenery, or agreeably break the uniform bleakness and sterile appearance of parts of the country; but Loch Hope, which is in this district, requires to be separately noticed, as being a singularly romantic and placid lake of six miles in length, situate at the foot of the majestic Ben Hope. The district of Assynt lies to the south of the chain of lakes already noticed, and may be said to be studded with lakes, having upwards of 200 moderately sized lakes, besides smaller tarns. Loch Assynt, about six miles and a half in length, is one of the most picturesque of all the Sutherland lakes, and presents many splendid views. Lochs Urigill, Cama, Veyatie, Na-gana, Beanoch, Gormloch, and Culfreich, in the same parish, are also large, and some of them romantic sheets of water.

On the other hand, Loch Loyal, which reposes along the east side of the splendid mountain of the same name, is, with its continuation, Loch Craigie, seven miles in length. To the southwest, Loch Maedie, having some small wooded islands, is three miles long; and about five miles to the eastward, Loch Naver extends six miles along the foot of Ben Klibreck. On the east side of this mountain, are the secluded but very picturesque Lochs Corr and Vealloch,—the former three, and the latter two miles in length, and both almost unknown to the public. Still farther to the eastward are Loch Strathy, about a mile and-a-half long, and the lakes which distinguish the upper parts of the parish of Kildonan; but of these we will only enumerate Loch Badanloch, Loch-na-Clar, Loch-na-kuen, Loch Truderscaig, Loch-ari-cliny, and Loch-in-ruar.

In the east district of Sutherland, several small lakes occur; but Loch Brora is the only one of any note. It is greatly admired, and its banks exhibit many of the bold and wild features of the Highlands, combined with verdant meadows, fertile fields, and vigorous plantations, amidst which the waters of the lake contract and expand at three different points, in its length of three miles and a-half. There are some other smaller lakes in the parishes of Clyne, Golspie, Rogart, Lairg, Criech, and Dornoch;

SUTHERLAND.

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but none of them require to be individually noticed in this general Report.

*Islands.*—The islands belonging to Sutherland are all situate along the west and northern coasts. They are very numerous, and some of them are inhabited. Handa, on the Edderachillis coast, is the most remarkable of these islands, from the altitude of its cliffs at one side, and as being the resort of innumerable sea-fowl during the hatching season. The Stack and Skerries, two remarkable islands, or rather lofty and narrow rocks, are the most distant from shore, of the Sutherland islands, and are resorted to in the summer months, by some of the Sutherland tenants, in quest of seals, which are found there in great numbers.

*Rural Affairs.*—The proportion of arable land is very small, compared with the extent of pasture ranges in the county; but the system of agriculture pursued by the tenants of arable farms is not excelled in any part of the more favoured districts in Scotland. The small tenants rear black-cattle, which are generally sold when young, and, being sound and improving animals, are eagerly purchased for the south country feeders. Cheviot sheep are the staple produce of the county; and it is computed, that the permanent stock maintained in Sutherland is not under 170,000.

*Roads.*—Before the year 1811 there were no formed roads within the county; but in that year, the first Parliamentary roads were completed, and since then the rapidity with which the whole county has been opened up, and intersected by leading lines and cross-branches of excellent roads, and all necessary bridges, is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of northern improvements. The Parliamentary Commissioners effected a great deal by the erection of Bonar Bridge, which opens the communication into the county, and across the Dornoch Frith, without being compelled to encounter the always disagreeable, and often precarious passage of a ferry; and by the completion of a road from Bonar Bridge to the Ord, as the great and leading road from the south into Caithness; and also by the completion of another road from Bonar Bridge to Tongue on the north coast. Still, with the exception of these two roads, the county was as completely shut out from the rest of the empire as formerly; but at this juncture, a new era for the completion and maintenance of all necessary lines of road, commenced to the county; and the untired exertions, the liberality and patriotism of the late Duke of Sutherland, effected this mighty and lasting advantage for the county of

Sutherland, which has not only opened up its resources, and paved the way for its further and future advancement in prosperity, but has also been of incalculable importance in a national point of view, as consolidating remote and hitherto secluded districts with the rest of the empire, and securing all the other collateral benefits of well directed labour, and the increase of local wealth and public revenue.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are thirteen parishes in the county of Sutherland, besides part of the parish of Reay in Caithness. Of these the parishes of Assynt, Clyne, Criech, Dornoch, Golspie, Kildonan, Lairg, Loth, and Rogart, nine in number, constitute the Presbytery of Dornoch; and the minister of the Government church of Stoer, in the parish of Assynt, is now an additional member of this Presbytery. The remaining four parishes of Durness, Edderachillis, Farr, and Tongue, constitute the Presbytery of Tongue, which has two additional members in the ministers of the Government churches of Kinlochbervie, in the parish of Edderachillis, and of Strathy, in the parish of Farr.

*Civil History.*—The early history of this county has not been so satisfactorily traced as to authorize an epitome of it in a concise report like the present. Suffice it to say, that its early annals are only to be traced in the history of the ancient Earls of Sutherland, who appear, at the very first dawn of our authentic history, as the powerful and apparently long-settled rulers and proprietors of the territories still enjoyed by their lineal descendant, the present Duke of Sutherland. Sir Robert Gordon's History of the Earldom of Sutherland, which was written in 1690, commences its narrative about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and is continued till the time when it was written. It affords ample details, expressed in quaint language, of the affairs of Sutherland, and has been subjected to several tests, by the examination of other writings and contemporary authorities, which prove the correctness of his leading facts.

There has been no history of the county written since 1690; but materials exist for such a work, including public events in the north of Scotland, in the stirring times of the Revolution of 1688, and of the Rebellions of 1715, 1719, and 1745; which are, at present, either unknown, or ill understood by the public.

*The Sutherland Family.*—The foregoing brief observations on the county of Sutherland, may, with great propriety, be concluded by

a short notice of the antiquity of this illustrious house, whose head has been Scotland's Premier Earl, for some generations. There is ample written evidence of Lords and Earls of Sutherland, in the early part of the thirteenth century; and there is every probability in the supposition that they were of a far more ancient standing, when we find the first written notices of them in deeds, by which they conveyed large tracks of country from *their patrimonial estates*, as gifts for behoof of the church. From this early period, the lineal descent of the succeeding Earls rests on the most undoubted evidence that can be afforded by crown charters, marriage-contracts, and the services of heirs.

There is written evidence that Hugo Freskyn was proprietor of Sutherland between the year 1186 and 1214. Without arguing here the probability that this person held the title of Comes or Earl, there is undeniable proof that his son, "Willielmus Dominus de Sutherlandia, filius et hæres quondam Hugonis Freskyn," died Earl of Sutherland about the year 1248. He was succeeded by his son, William the second Earl, who held the title for seventy-seven years, and died in 1325. He signed the letter from the nobility of Scotland to the Pope in 1320, and was with the Scottish army at Bannockburn, and at Brigland, in Yorkshire, in 1322. The third Earl was Kenneth, son of the last Earl, and he fell at the battle of Hallidon Hill, 22d July 1333. He was succeeded by his eldest son, William, the fourth Earl, who married the Lady Margaret Bruce, second daughter of King Robert the Bruce, by whom he had two sons, John, who died in England while detained a hostage for the ransom of his uncle, David II., and William, who succeeded his father; and as all the subsequent Earls of Sutherland are directly descended from him, they are also lineally descended maternally from the royal family of Scotland, before the accession of the Stuarts to the Throne. This Earl was a very powerful Noble, and held lands in the shires of Aberdeen and Inverness, which he gifted, before the death of his son, the hostage, to several potent persons, (*virii potentes*, as they are called), in order to secure their support to his son's title to the Crown, who had been selected by King David to succeed him. Thus he conveyed the lands of Bonne, Enzie, Kincardine, Tomortine, Kintore, Kilcairne, Fetternairn, Dunnotter Castle, Enzie, Boyne, Cluny, Dunbeath, Downy, Aboyne, and the Barony of Urquhart, to the Hays, Sinclairs, Frasers, Ogilvies, and Gordons. William, the fifth Earl, the son of Earl William and Lady Margaret Bruce, was at

the battle of Otterburn, 5th August 1388, and died in 1389. He was succeeded by his son, Robert, the sixth Earl, who died in 1442; and Earl Robert was succeeded by his son, John, the seventh Earl, who dying in 1460, was succeeded by his son, John, the eighth Earl, who died in 1508, leaving one son and one daughter. The son, John, the ninth Earl, died without issue in 1514, and was succeeded by his sister-german Elizabeth, who thus, in her own right, was Countess of Sutherland, and, consequently, was the tenth person who held the title. She married Lord Aboyne, and, dying in 1535, was succeeded by her son, John, the eleventh Earl, who was poisoned at Helmsdale in 1567, and was succeeded by his son Alexander, the twelfth Earl, who died in 1594. He was succeeded by his son, John, the thirteenth Earl, who died in 1615. John was succeeded by his son, also named John, the fourteenth Earl, who died in 1679, and was succeeded by his son, George, the fifteenth Earl, who died in 1703. Earl George was succeeded by his son, John, the sixteenth Earl. He, Earl John, rendered eminent services to his country,—in the senate as a Peer, and in the field as a General in the Army, and obtained the Royal authority for adding to his paternal coat of arms, the double *Tressure circonfeurdelire*, to denote his descent from the Royal family of Scotland. He died in 1733, and was succeeded by his grandson, William, the seventeenth Earl, who died in 1750, and was succeeded by his son, William, the eighteenth Earl. This last Earl died in 1766, leaving only one infant daughter, the late Duchess-Countess of Sutherland. Her right of succession to the long-descended honours and earldom of her direct ancestors, was disputed, on the ground that the title did not descend to heirs-female; but after a long, full, and arduous contest, during the young Countess's minority, the House of Lords, on the 21st day of March 1771, solemnly “ Resolved and adjudged, by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the claimant, Elizabeth Sutherland, has a right to the title, honour, and dignity of the Earldom of Sutherland, as heir of the body of William, who was Earl of Sutherland in 1275.” The Countess of Sutherland married in 1785, George Granville, Viscount Trentham, eldest son of Granville, first Marquis of Stafford, by his second wife, Lady Louisa Egerton, daughter of Scroop, first Duke of Bridgewater. His Lordship was successively, Earl Gower, and Marquis of Stafford, and was created Duke of Sutherland in 1833. The Duchess of Sutherland being also Countess of Sutherland in her

own right, was the nineteenth representative of the family who held the title, and which remained with Her Ladyship for the long period of 72 years, 7 months, and 13 days; she having died in London on 29th January 1839. Her Ladyship was succeeded in the Earldom of Sutherland, by her eldest son, the present George Granville, Duke of Sutherland, K.G., who, thus, is the twentieth Earl of Sutherland, in direct lineal descent, from the first Earl of this long ennobled family.

The Duke and Earl of Sutherland is descended, in the paternal line, from several ancient and noble families of England: *1st*, From Sir Allan Gower of Stittenham,—an estate still held by his Grace,—who was Sheriff of York at the period of the Conquest, (1066); and, according to others, from William Fitz-Guhyer of Stittenham, temp. H. II. A. D. 1167. *2d*, From Richard Leveson of Willenhall, in the county of Stafford, who was grandfather to Richard Leveson, temp. Ed. I., A. D. 1289. *3d*, His Grace is also, through his paternal descent, the representative of the Granvilles, Earls of Bath, and, as such, is descended from Robert, the youngest son of Rollo, first Duke of Normandy. This descent is stated in the first patent of peerage granted to the family by Charles II., which bears, “Whereby he justly claims his descent from the youngest son of the Duke of Normandy, as we ourselves do from the eldest.” This descent makes his Grace Count of Corbeil, Baron Torigny, and De Granville.

In his father's maternal line, his Grace is descended from the Princess Mary, second daughter of Henry VII. and, as such, would have been a claimant to the throne, had the will of Henry VIII. been carried into effect, (Hallam's Constitutional History of England, Vol. i. p. 316.) In the same line of descent, his Grace is one of the claimants to the ancient barony (in fee) of Lord Strange of Knockyn, now in abeyance among the representatives of Ferdinando, fifth Earl of Derby.

His Grace's father and mother had two descents in common; the one through two females, descendants of Richard de Abruicis, Earl of Chester, who married respectively into the Derby and Bruce families; and through the Scotch line, the late Duke of Sutherland was descended from a daughter of William the Lion of Scotland, through the De Ross of Hamlake.

*March 1841.*

TABLE shewing Ecclesiastical State, &c. of Parishes in the County of Sutherland.

Parishes.	Population in 1831.		Ecclesiastical State.			Parochial Schoolmasters		Emolums.		Savings Banks.		Annual amount of Contributions to the Poor.						
	Rms. belonging to Ch.	Individuals	Do. Do.	Families of Dissenters or Seceders	Individuals	Do. Do.	Amount of Parochial Ministers' stipend	Schools in Part	Salary.	Fees.	Total.	Number.	Amount yearly invested.	Amount yearly withdrawn.	From assessments or voluntary contrib. by Heritors.	From Church collections.	From Alms, Legacies, &c.	Total.
Dornoch,	643	3360	...	1	...	17 chalders.	7	L.34 4 4	L.6 0 0	L.40 4 4	1	...	L.6 0 0	L.36 0 0	L.25 0 0	L.67 0 0		
Cricht,	400	2562	...	0	...	14 chalders.	3	30 0 0	10 0 0	40 0 0	...	...	...	16 0 0	Int. of L.150	20 0 0		
Golspie,	...	1149	...	...	...	181 bolls vict. and L.75.	2	34 4 4	26 0 0	60 4 4	...	...	6 0 0	19 0 0	7 0 0	...		
Rogart,	...	1805	...	...	...	L.138, and 15 bolls, &c.	8	34 4 4	16 0 0	50 4 4	...	...	...	16 0 0	Int. of L.200.	...		
Lairg,	206	1045	...	0	...	L.184.	1	34 4 4	8 10 0	42 14 4	...	...	...	12 0 0	25 0 0	...		
Farr,	418	2073	...	0	...	L.166, 14s.	4	34 4 4	...	...	...	...	...	20 0 0	...	...	28 0 0	
Duirness,	206	1153	...	0	...	L.150.	4	24 0 0	4 0 0	28 0 0	...	...	8 0 0	12 0 0	8 0 0	...	20 0 0	
Assynt,	...	3161	...	...	...	L.158, 6s. 8d.	7	25 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	7 12 0	...	...	13 15 0	
Edders-	...	1965	...	...	...	L.150.	2	35 17 9	...	...	...	...	6 0 0	14 0 0	...	...	20 0 0	
chillis,	...	257	...	...	...	L.150.	1	25 0 0	...	...	...	...	...	9 0 0	4 0 0	...	13 0 0	
Kildonan,	...	1711	...	...	...	98 qrs. bar. and L.23.	2	34 4 4	12 0 0	46 4 4	...	...	6 0 0	20 0 0	...	...	...	
Clyne,	...	2080	...	...	...	L.150.	3	34 4 4	...	...	...	...	6 0 0	18 0 0	...	...	24 0 0	
Tongue,	...	2231	...	...	...	...	*4	34 1 7	10 0 0	44 1 7	...	...	†27 2 0	24 19 0	14 3 0	...	66 2 0	
Lech,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

\* From Abstract Education Returns 1834.  
 † From Report on the Poor by Committee of General Assembly 1833. Sums here stated are the yearly average for the years 1835, 1836, and 1837.

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**CAITHNESS.**



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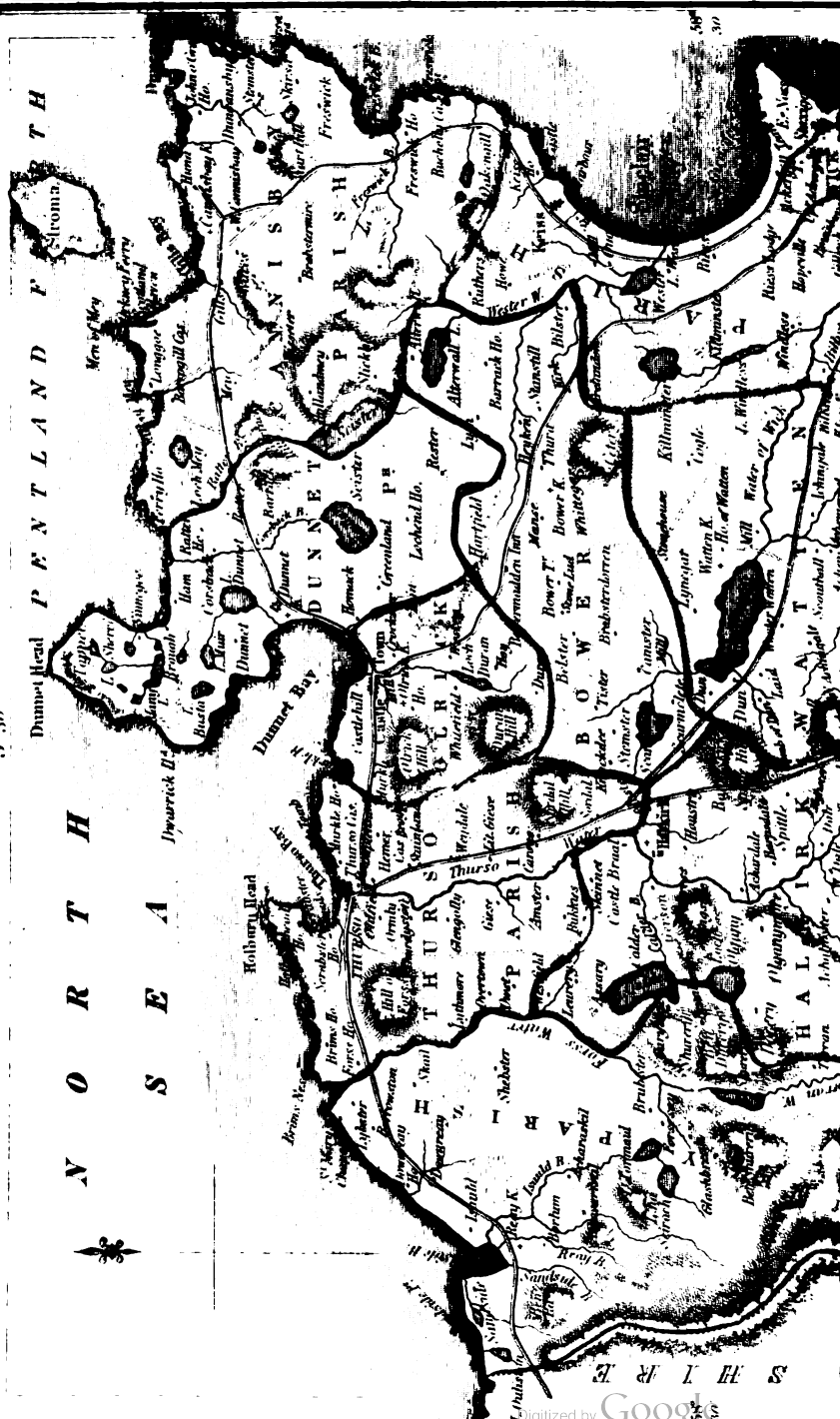




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## PARISH OF THURSO. \*

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. W. R. TAYLOR, MINISTER.

---

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name of this parish is taken from that of the river which runs through it. It is made up of the words *Thor*, the name of one of the great northern deities, and *aa*, which, in the Icelandic dialect, signifies a river; and so means *Thor's river*.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The mean length of the parish is about 7 miles, and the breadth about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , and the area about 34 square miles. It is bounded on the north, by the sea; on the west, south, and east, by the parishes of Reay, Halkirk, and Olig respectively. Its form is that of an irregular quadrilateral figure.

*Topographical Appearances.*—It rises by a gentle acclivity from the sea shore, and in no part attains to any very great elevation. It presents various irregularities and undulations on its surface; but, speaking generally, the land is flat. The coast, which extends about eight miles, is in general rocky, though, in some parts, especially near the town of Thurso, it is flat and sandy. The bay of Thurso, which forms the coast of the parish of Olig and part of that of Dunnet, forms about five miles of the coast of this parish; and, as seen from the town and neighbourhood, presents a very beautiful and striking appearance. It is included within the promontories of Dunnet-head, (the most northerly land in Scotland), situated in the parish of Dunnet on the east, and of Holburn-head, situated in this parish, on the west. Holburn-head, the only head-land in this parish, is about two miles to the north-west of the town of Thurso. At the extremity of this headland, there

\* Compiled by the Rev. W. R. Taylor, Minister, assisted by Hugh Davidson, Esq. Chief Magistrate of Thurso, who furnished the chief part of Head IV.

is a remarkable insulated rock, called the Clett, about 480 feet long, 240 feet broad, and 400 feet high, and distant from the land about 240 feet. This rock is considered a great curiosity, and is frequently visited by strangers. In the summer months, it is covered with flocks of sea-fowl; and this adds considerably to its striking and interesting appearance.

*Climate.*—It is stated in Henderson's View of the Agriculture of Caithness, that for three-fourths of the year, viz. from September to June, the wind generally blows from the west and north-west; and that, during the other fourth of the year, it is variable from south-west to south-east, and is but seldom northerly. The climate is healthy, though variable. During a great part of the year, the air is keen and piercing; but in summer there is a good deal of mild and warm weather.

*Hydrography.*—There are two small rivers in the parish. The principal river in the parish and in the county, is the river Thurso, from which the parish takes its name. It rises in the heights of the parish of Halkirk, among the hills bounding Sutherland, and after reaching this parish traverses it from south to north, and flows into the sea in the immediate vicinity of the town. Its length is about thirty miles, and its greatest breadth about 100 yards. It adds much to the beauty of those parts of the parish through which it flows, at least, as much as can consist with unwooded banks. The other stream in the parish, and the fourth in size in the county, is the Water of Forss. It rises in the parish of Reay, and after reaching this parish divides it from that of Reay, forming the boundary between them, and flows into the sea at Cross-kirk Bay, near the House of Forss.

*Geology.*—The principal rocks in the parish belong to the so-called old red sandstone. The general direction of the strata is from north-east to south-west. The dip on the shore of Thurso is north-west, and the inclination about twenty degrees. In some of the quarries inland, the dip is south-east.

The soil consists chiefly of clay and loam, resting on sandstone flag and slate-clay rock.

*Zoology.*—The chief kinds of fish in the bay of Thurso are, had-dock, cod, herring, and salmon. The herring appear in May, and continue until August. The salmon would go up the rivers to spawn in August, but are prevented till the 14th of September, until which time the rivers are shut. It is considered injurious

that the rivers are not open sooner, as the number of spawning fish is thus reduced. The spawning fish return to the sea about the month of April. The principal crustacea found in the bay of Thurso are lobsters.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Sir John Sinclair mentions that there is an account of this parish in Macfarlane's Geographical Collection, preserved in the Advocates' Library; but it is presumed that the account drawn up by Sir John himself, and contained in his Statistical Account of Scotland, is the fullest that has ever been written.

With regard to the ancient history of Thurso, Sir John observes that the town appears to have been a place of very considerable trade and consequence, many centuries ago; and, in proof of this, states, that, according to Skene's account of the assize of David, King of Scotland, the weight of Caithness was ordered to be observed in buying and selling over all Scotland; which could not, he thinks, have been the case, had not Caithness been distinguished for the extent of its commercial transactions, of which Thurso was probably the centre. It was not, however, till the year 1633, that Thurso was erected into a free burgh of barony. The only other events connected with its history, which Sir John considers worthy of being recorded, are the two following: In the reign of Charles the First, it was visited by the Earl of Montrose; and in the spring of 1746, a band of rebels, under Lord M'Leod, marched into the county, but returned without doing more than obliging the landholders to pay them part of the land-tax, and were, on their return, attacked and worsted near Dunrobin Castle. There is a small map of the parish prefixed to Sir John Sinclair's Account.

*Eminent Characters.*—Of the eminent characters connected with the parish by birth or residence, the name of Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, author of the former Statistical Account, whose patriotic and indefatigable labours for the welfare and improvement of his country, and of his native county in particular, are so well known, claims special notice. Nor would it be right to omit the names of his three daughters;—Miss Hannah Sinclair, the writer of a short but very admirable letter on the Principles of the Christian Faith; Lady Colquhoun, who has written two or three pious works of a plain and practical, but very attractive character; and Miss Catherine Sinclair, who has already given to the world

several volumes of tales and travels, and has distinguished herself as a very elegant and lively, as well as instructive writer. Sir John, in his account of eminent characters, states, that the Oswalds of Glasgow, who were eminent merchants there, were originally from Thurso; and that Richard Oswald, merchant in London, and one of the plenipotentiaries from Great Britain in settling the peace in 1763, was an unsuccessful candidate, upon a comparative trial, for the office of schoolmaster of Thurso. He makes mention also of a Mr M'Intosh, son of a schoolmaster in Thurso, who became an eminent portrait painter in Moscow; and of two young ladies of the name of Liddell, natives of Thurso, who had removed to Edinburgh, who showed a great turn for music and painting, and attained to considerable eminence in the latter art.

*Chief Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners in the parish, besides the Crown, which possesses the lands of Scrabster, are, Sir George Sinclair of Ulbster, the present excellent and accomplished Member for the county; James Sinclair, Esq. of Forss, who is constantly resident, and who deserves much commendation for his anxiety to provide the young on his estates with the means of a proper education; Sir John Gordon Sinclair of Murkle, and Sir Patrick Murray Thrieland of Fingask.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers, including the Session records, extend to seven volumes, of about 600 folio pages each. The first entry is in 1648.

*Antiquities.*—About half a mile to the west of Thurso, in the centre of the crescent-formed bank which skirts the bay, stand the ruins of an old castle, beautifully situated on the sea, once the residence of the bishops of Caithness. Scarcely any of the building remains, but it appears to have been a place of considerable size and strength. About two miles to the east of the town, is the burial place of Earl Harold, the possessor at one time of the half of Orkney and Zetland, and of the half of Caithness, who was slain in battle in the year 1190, while endeavouring to recover his property from the hands of a tyrant, the wicked Earl Harold. Over his grave the late Sir John Sinclair, on the suggestion of Mr Alexander Pope, minister of Reay, one of the greatest antiquaries in the north, erected an edifice, called Harold's Tower, which, as seen from a distance, possesses somewhat of a striking appearance.

*Modern Buildings.*—The principal modern building in the parish is the parish church, which is a very handsome structure, and a great ornament to the town. It cost about L. 6000.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of the parish, as given in the account of the parish already referred to, as preserved in the Advocates' Library, was 2200, 900 in the town of Thurso, and 1300 in the rest of the parish. The date of this account is not known. In 1755, the population was 2963; and at the date of Sir John Sinclair's Account in 1798, it was 3146. In 1831, the population was 4679, of which 2124 were males, and 2555 females. The number of the population residing in the town of Thurso in 1831 was 2429, and in the country, 2250. The yearly average of births for the last seven years was about 140, and of marriages about 16. The number of persons under 15 years of age is about 1600.

There are very few individuals or families of independent fortune residing in the parish. There are no proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 or upwards, except those already mentioned as the chief land-owners in the parish. They are five in number. The number of families in the parish in 1831 was 1036, 596 in the town, and 440 in the country. The average number of children in each family is two, or rather less. The number of inhabited houses was in 1831, 739; 367 in the town, and 372 in the country. There were 17 houses uninhabited or building in 1831.

There are 2 insane persons, 4 fatuous, 2 blind, and 2 deaf and dumb.

The language generally spoken is the English. The Gaelic is spoken by a few, but it is yearly losing ground.

The ordinary food of the labouring classes consists of meal in its various preparations of bread, pottage, brose, and gruel; milk, potatoes, and herring.

*Character of the People.*—The general character of the people, intellectual, moral, and religious, no doubt requires great improvement; yet, as compared with that in other parts of Scotland, it is rather above than below mediocrity. The bulk of the people are quiet and orderly, and manifest considerable regard for religion and religious services.

Neither poaching nor smuggling prevails to any great extent.

The number of males employed in agriculture is 366  
employed in manufactures and in retail trade and handicraft, 402



The number of professional persons and other educated men,	57
of labourers not agricultural,	218
of other males,	61
of male servants, of whom only three are above 20 years of age, is	13
of female servants,	254

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—

The number of acres, standard imperial measure, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, is about	12,000
The number of acres which have never been cultivated,	10,000
The number that might, with a profitable application of capital, be added to the cultivated land of the parish,	7000

There is no undivided common. The number of acres under wood is 40. The trees planted are, plane, fir, ash, elm, oak, and mountain-ash: the management of which is on the whole tolerably good.

*Rent.*—The average rent of arable land in the parish is L. 1 per acre. The average rent of grazing is at the rate of L. 2 per ox or cow grazed, and 6s. 6d. per ewe or full-grown sheep pastured for the year.

*Wages.*—The rate of labour for farm-labourers is 1s. 6d. per day, and for country artisans from 2s. to 3s. The rate of mason-work is L. 2 per rood.

*Live-Stock.*—The common breed of sheep are the Leicester and Cheviot, and of cattle the Highland and Teeswater; to the improvement of both of which much attention has been paid.

*Husbandry.*—The most approved system of husbandry pursued is that called the five crop shift, being a rotation of turnips, bear, hay, pasture, and oats. Great improvements are taking place in the reclaiming of waste lands, and in draining, which is practised to a considerable extent on the most improved farms, and is yearly extending to others.

*Leases.*—Leases generally extend from seven to nineteen years in the larger description of farms. The smaller farms are in general occupied without leases to the great injury of the land, and also of the tenant.

Farm-buildings are improving rapidly, and are in general in a comfortable state. Inclosures are increasing, but not in the same ratio.

The principal improvements which have recently been made in the parish consist in the dividing, draining, and enclosing of commons, and in the building of comfortable cottages for the settlers on their respective lands.

The great want of capital may be stated as the principal obsta-

cle to improvement. To this are to be added the low price of farm produce, and the want of leases.

*Quarries.*—There are in this parish several slate, freestone, and whinstone quarries. The slate quarries have been for some years extensively worked, and the flags which they furnish have been exported to London, Newcastle, and Glasgow, and other cities and towns in England and Scotland, where they have been used for pavement. About 250 men are employed in dressing these flags.

*Fisheries.*—The principal fisheries carried on in the parish are, the herring, salmon, haddock, cod, and lobster. The salmon fishings rent at L. 1000, the others are free.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Produce of grain of all kinds,	L. 28000
potatoes, turnips, &c.	6000
hay,	4000
land in pasture at L. 1, 10s. per cow or ox, and 5s. per ewe,	5000
gardens and orchards,	200
thinnings of woods,	5
fisheries,	5000
quarries,	2000
miscellaneous produce,	2000

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, L. 52,205

*Manufactures.*—The manufacture of straw-plait employs about 58 females; the manufacture of leather 15 men, and a rope-work 12. Linen and woollen manufactures, and the manufacture of herring nets, occupy about 200 persons.

*Navigation.*—There are 14 ships or vessels belonging to the port. The number trading to the port, but not belonging to it, is about 40.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.*—The town of Thurso is the only market-town in the parish. It is pleasantly situated on the sea at the mouth of the river which bears its name. It commands a very noble and extensive sea-view, comprising, first, the beautiful bay of Thurso, included within the two commanding headlands of Dunnet and Holburn; next, the more exposed and stormy waters of the Pentland Frith; and beyond, the islands of Orkney with their lofty and rocky sides, terminating westward in the majestic promontory of Hoy.

Thurso lays claim to considerable antiquity. As already stated, it was a place of some consequence several centuries ago. The

old church, which was only quitted as a place of worship in 1832, and which contained 900 sitters, was said to be upwards of 500 years old.

The town is made up of an old and a new town united together. The new town is built according to a regular plan; and though this cannot be said of the old town, yet it contains a few regular streets, and some good and substantial houses. The new town is yearly increasing in size.

The present population of the town is, as has been stated already, upwards of 2400. It has three magistrates, nominated by the superior of the burgh, Sir George Sinclair.

*Means of Communication.*—The ordinary means of communication are enjoyed by the parish. There are good roads and a daily mail-coach to and from the south. Three times a week there is a coach between Thurso and Tongue. There are two sailing vessels from Thurso to Leith, and, except during the winter months, there is weekly a steam-boat from Wick to Leith. To Wick, which is twenty-one miles from Thurso, the mail-coach travels daily, performing the journey in two hours and a half.

Thurso is a post-town, and has a daily dispatch and arrival to and from the south. It is itself the most northern post-town in Great Britain. There is a post three times a week to and from Tongue and the places intervening, on the west, and a daily post to and from Castleton and Dunnet on the east.

The turnpike road along the coast of the parish from east to west is eight miles and a half long, of which three miles are to the east of the town, and five miles and a half to the west. Besides this road, there is the mail-road to the south, which traverses about six miles of this parish. There is also another road to the west of the mail-road, and almost parallel to it, on the west side of the river, leading from Thurso to the village of Halkirk. There are only four miles of this road in this parish. From this road, another road branches off to the west, about two miles from Thurso, and joins the coast-road at Reay. Of this branch, there are about two miles and a half in this parish, besides the two miles from Thurso to the point at which it branches off.

The only public carriage which travels through the parish is the mail to and from the south, and to and from the west, as already stated.

There are several bridges in the parish, and all in good condi-

tion. The principal is that over the river Thurso, at the entrance to the town from the south and east. This bridge is a very large and substantial and ornamental one. It was not in existence at the time of Sir John Sinclair's Account, in which much is said of the great inconvenience felt by the want of a bridge. It is difficult to imagine now, how this want could have been so long borne. There are not many fences in the parish; but where they are to be found, they are generally in good condition.

There is a harbour at Thurso at the mouth of the river, where vessels of twelve feet draught land and lie in safety. Scrabster Roads, within the bay of Thurso, distant about a mile from the town, affords good and safe anchorage for vessels of any size; and it is at present in contemplation to erect a pier there.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church has been already spoken of as a very handsome structure. It is situated in the town of Thurso, which, considering the number of people in the town, is manifestly the most convenient place for its erection. It is distant three miles from the eastern extremity of the parish, and six from the southern and western extremities. On the north it is within a quarter of a mile from the sea. It was built in 1832, and opened for public worship in January 1833, and is, as might be expected, in a good state of repair. It affords accommodation for 1540 persons. There are but 32 free-sittings set apart for the use of the poor.

The manse was built about the year 1770, and was repaired in 1831.

The glebe consists of about 7 or 8 acres, and may be of the yearly value of L.15.

The stipend is 18 chalders standard imperial measure, half meal, half barley. There being no barley fiars struck in the county, the barley is paid according to the fiars' price of bear. L.10 are allowed for communion elements.

There is no place of worship in the parish attached to the Establishment, except the parish church,

There is no missionary in the parish. There is a catechist supported by the people, with the aid of a small salary from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The office has been for some time vacant, but a new appointment is about being made.

There is a meeting-house in the town belonging to a congrega-

tion of Original Seceders. There is also an Independent chapel. A small Baptist congregation assembles in a room in a private house. The ministers of these places of worship are paid by their hearers.

There is no Episcopalian or Roman Catholic chapel in the parish.

The number of families attending the Established Church may be about 800, and the number of individuals about 2400.

The number of families attending the other places of worship may be about 200, and the number of individuals about 600. Some of these are from other parishes.

The average attendance in ordinary weather at the parish church is from 1400 to 1500; and at the Dissenting places of worship 500.

The number of communicants connected with the Established Church is about 300.

There is a Bible Society in Thurso, supported by Christians of all denominations, which collects about L. 30 annually. There is a Parochial Association for support of the Assembly's schemes, whose funds, except for Church Extension, are derived wholly from collections at the church door. The sum collected may also average about L. 30 per annum. This is independent of an annual sum of L. 38, subscribed for church extension for five years, and which has already been paid for one year.

There is a Society in the parish for the relief of the destitute sick, supported by Christians of all denominations, whose receipts may average L. 15 annually.

The average amount of collections at the parish church for religious and charitable objects, including the L. 30 already specified, and including also the ordinary collections for the poor, is about L. 120. Of this sum the ordinary collections for the poor make up L. 80.

*Education.*—The number of schools in the parish is about 16, viz. 1 parochial, 12 unendowed, 2 supported by societies, and 1 by subscription. Besides these, an Assembly school is about being opened.

In many of these schools only English reading is taught. In others, are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and in female schools, sewing; and in a few, the usual higher branches.

The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is the maximum. The

salaries of the Society teachers are L.15 and L.12. The promised salary of the Assembly teacher to be appointed is L. 20. With the exception of the parish school and two or three others, the amount of fees is very small. The parochial teacher possesses the legal accommodations.

The general expense of education for the year in the parish school, is 10s. for beginners, increasing to L.1, 10s. or L.2 for the more advanced. In inferior schools, the expense for beginners is about 6s. a-year, and 10s. for the more advanced. In female schools, in which the higher branches are taught, the expense is considerably greater than in the parish school.

About 200 children between six and fifteen years of age cannot read; about 600 cannot write. The whole number of children between six and fifteen is about 950. The number of persons above fifteen who cannot read is about 120.

The people in general are alive to the benefits of education, and are anxious to have their children educated.

After the Assembly school is opened, there will be no part of the parish so distant from school as to prevent attendance, nor will there be any additional schools required; but some of the schools in existence are in a very precarious state from the want of any endowment.

*Literature.*—There are two circulating libraries in the parish, and two reading-rooms.

*Charitable and other Institutions.*—There is no almshouse, hospital, dispensary, or asylum. There are 5 Friendly Societies, the oldest of which has existed about forty years, and the latest about twenty. Their design and tendency are manifestly good, but they are not by any means in a flourishing state. There is no Savings Bank.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 160. The average sum allotted to each is 5s. The annual amount contributed for their relief is about L.112, of which there is collected at the church door L.80; L.25 is voluntarily subscribed by the heritors for the support of two lunatics; and L. 6, 18s. is the interest of two sums left as legacies. With a few exceptions the poor do not consider it degrading to apply for parochial relief.

*Prisons.*—The county jail is in Wick. There is merely a lock-up-house in Thurso, where criminals are confined till they be sent to Wick. Within the last year there were five persons

confined here, three for rioting, and two for theft. The longest period any of them was confined here was ten days.

*Fairs.*—There are three fairs held in the parish, the Petersmas, in the end of June; the Georgemas, in July; and the Marymas, in the beginning of September. They are intended chiefly for the sale of cattle and sheep.

*Inns and Alehouses.*—There are 2 or 3 inns and about 30 alehouses in the parish. These last cannot but have an injurious effect; but it is hoped both their number and their influence are decreasing.

*Fuel.*—A good deal of English coal is used in the town of Thurso; but many of the town's people, and all the people in the country, with a few exceptions, consume nothing but peats. These are to be found in abundance in the parish; and the tenants have a right to take of them at no other cost but that of the time and labour, (which, however, are considerable,) required for casting them and carrying them home.

October 1840.

## PARISH OF REAY.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. FINLAY COOK, MINISTER. \*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation, Boundaries, &c.*—THE parish is situated between 58°, 36' and 59° north latitude, and between 2°, 59' and 3° 30' west longitude. The greater part of it lies in the county of Caithness. A part, however, denominated Strathalladale, is in the county of Sutherland. Its length is 18 miles, and its breadth 9 miles. It is bounded on the east and south-east, by the parishes of Thurso and Halkirk, in Caithness; and on the west and south-west, by the parishes of Farr and Kildonan in Sutherland.

*Name.*—There are various conjectures respecting the etymology of its name. It is supposed to be a corruption of *Mein-Reidh*,

\* Drawn up by Mr W. G. Forbes, Parochial Schoolmaster of Reay.

or *Miora*—two Gaelic terms signifying smooth and plain, that part of the parish particularly named Reay, being smooth and plain, in comparison of the other parts which are in general rugged and hilly. But the most probable derivation is, that Reay is a corruption from Urray, the name of a Pictish hero, who inhabited the castle, to this day called Knock-Urray. The ancient orthography of the parish was Rē, or Rāe, but the modern is Reay. It would appear from the fragment of an old poem, formerly among the northern Highlanders, which was sung in honour of Dornadilla, that Reay was a place of some note. The lines are:—

“Dun Dornigil MacDuff,  
Ain n'taodh re Miora do n'trath.”

*Eng.*—“The dun or castle of Dornadilla, the son of Duff, built on the side of the strath next to Reay.” But that Reay was anciently a place of consequence appears from a discovery made in 1751. A water-spout which fell in that year five miles above Reay, occasioned so great a torrent as to cut out a new channel through the sand between Reay and the shore 16 feet deep, which discovered the remains of a town. The ends of seven houses, built with stone, were seen in a line, and the remains of several others, with some pieces of pavement. The stones being of good quality were carried off, and the banks soon falling prevented any farther search. Pieces of earthenware were found among the ruins. Tradition says that Reay was a burgh of regality. A market cross stood there formerly; but it has now been removed to New Reay.

*Topographical Appearances.*—Its figure, particularly on the south and south-east, is very irregular. There are no mountain ranges. The only considerable mountains are, part of Ben Greim, Ben-na-Bad, Ben Shurery, Ben Radh, and Ben Ruaidh. There are, besides, several hills of considerable height, Knock-na-Bareibhich, Knock-Sleitill, and Muillanan Liadh, &c. Strathalladale, lying in the county of Sutherland, presents the appearance of a valley from top to bottom, extending in length eighteen miles. The only flat and low lands lie along the coast.

The shore at Borrowston presents a number of small caves; one in particular, into which, when a stone is cast, it emits a hollow echoing sound, resembling that of Gling Glang, which is the name given it by the inhabitants. On the same shore, there is also a strong natural arch, covered with green turf, on a level with the adjacent ground, and leading over a chasm about forty feet deep, into which



the tide flows. In Ben Rādh there is a cavern said to have been formerly the resort of a gang of robbers, the entrance of which is formed by two natural stone pillars inclining towards each other. There are several other caves of various forms and sizes to the west of Fresgo-Head.

The extent of the sea shore is about nine miles, a considerable part of which is clayey, incumbent on a horizontal rock, and its aspect is bold and rocky.

The principal bays are those of Sandside and Bighouse, the former of which is about a mile in breadth, surrounded by beautiful sandy links, to the extent of about a mile. These links produce excellent pasture, and in them are found great quantities of various kinds of sea-shells. The principal headland is Fresgo-Head at Sandside.

*Climate.*—The atmosphere is dry and healthy. Thunder and lightning, followed by heavy falls of rain, generally occur in the months of June and July. When flashes of lightning are seen during the winter months, they prognosticate severe gales of wind from the north-west, accompanied by rain or snow. The country people remark, that when on a clear night they observe the descent of a meteor called by them a falling star, it indicates an approaching storm. The Polar Lights are seen frequently during autumn and winter, and sometimes at other periods of the year. When seen low in the horizon they are said to prognosticate fair weather, and when extended across our zenith, foul and stormy weather. The prevailing winds are from the north and north-west; and in the winter and spring seasons, there are frequent hard gales from those quarters, and as there are no woods nor high lands on the north side of the parish, the inclemency of the weather is greatly felt. From the beginning of May to the middle of June, the prevailing wind is generally from the north-west, with a bleak cloudy sky, which depresses vegetation very much, and is said to nourish that pernicious insect called the grub caterpillar.

The most prevalent distempers of the district are, fevers, consumptions, and rheumatisms. The mortality occasioned by the small-pox, measles, and chincough has for some years past much abated. Fevers frequently cause a considerable mortality.

*Hydrography.*—Many parts of the parish abound with perennial springs of excellent water. A few years ago, a mineral spring was discovered near a place called Helshetter, the water of which is thought to be not much inferior to that of the Strathpeffer wells.

There is another mineral spring issuing at the foot of a rock at Craigtown in Dunreay, on the sea shore, of superior quality. The mineral springs in general are seemingly chalybeate. In Brawlbin there are perennial springs, remarkable for the purity and lightness of their waters, which are rather of a whitish colour. But as these waters are seldom applied to the cure of diseases, they do not engage the attention of the public.

Of the lakes, which are numerous but small, the principal are, Loch Shurery, Loch Cailm, Loch Scye, Loch Sleitill,—the last of which in particular abounds with superior red trout, some of which measure from two to three feet long. The scenery is varied, and in general not uninteresting. The Halladale river takes its rise near Knock-na-Bä-Reibhich, in the boundary between the parishes of Kildonan and Reay, and in its course runs in a direction almost due north, through a strath of the same name, until it discharges itself into the bay of Bighouse. Its length is upwards of twenty miles and average breadth twenty yards. Again, the Forss river, which originates from a small lake south of Ben-na-Bad passes near Loch Cailm, and through Loch Shurery, and after various windings falls into the bay of Crosskirk, dividing this parish on the east from the parish of Thurso.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—*Mountain Rock Formations.*—There are numerous interesting displays of the sandstones and sandstone slates so prevalent in the county; and of the primitive formations there are granite, syenite, hornblende rocks, gneiss and quartz rock.

*Limestones and Ores.*—In 1802, there was discovered upon the estate of Sandside, the property of William Innes, Esq. a little to the west of his house, a bed of limestone, apparently ten feet thick; the bed dips to the north. A little to the west of that, another limestone bed occurs, four feet thick, of which the dip is north-west; and still farther west, red granite comes boldly down to the sea, interspersed with several veins of granite, and large veins of felspar. On the east side of this ridge of granite occur the strata, which are general on the coast, of a bluish slate. Near Lake-na-Clachan Geal, was found oxyde of manganese of considerable purity, imbedded in decomposed red granite. There has been opened at a place named Ary-Leive, the property of the same gentleman, a fine limestone quarry, in which the strata dip north-east. It is at present wrought on a large scale, and the lime is much used in the cultivation of new lands. Large quarries of

freestone are found in different parts of the parish. And shell marl is dug up in large quantities in Dunreay and Brawlbin, which is of no small advantage to the adjoining lands.

In the Caithness division of the parish, the soil is fertile. Towards the sea coast, about Borrowston and Dunreay, the soil is clayey, incumbent on a gray freestone and bluish slate, and very tenacious of moisture, but sandy about Reay and Sandside.

In the Sutherland division, the soil is composed of dark earth mixed with crystalline sand, and yields good crops when properly cultivated.

*Zoology.*—Of the animals found in the parish, the rarer are, deer, roebucks, badgers, foxes, otters, goats, and polecats. The birds are, eagles, cormorants, marrots, kingfishers, herons, swans, woodcocks, blackcocks, moorfowl, &c.

Formerly in the spring season, large flocks of a small bird of the sparrow kind used to appear; but for some years past, they have not been seen. The rivers abound with salmon, grilse, trout, and eels, as also flounders. Lobsters are plentiful on the coast.

*Trees.*—There are neither forests nor plantations in the parish, except a few natural birches in Strathalladale. The soil seems to be nowise congenial to their growth. A green hill to the east of the manse, named Koltag, produces different plants adapted for medicinal purposes.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Tradition relates that, at the time when the Danes overran these northern parts, a son of a Danish prince, named Alluva, was slain, and interred at a place in Strathalladale, called after his name Dalalluva, and that another Danish prince, named Farquhar, was interred at Brubster, in a place to this day denominated Clashna Farquhar.

*Eminent Men.*—Under this head falls to be noticed the late Rev. David Mackay, who was minister of the parish upwards of half a century. In early life, he felt the power of divine truth on his soul, and as he advanced in years, he progressively realized the sweet influence of the Gospel, imparting light, purity, and peace to the heart, and sanctity and consistency to the life. Amid the varied trials he was called to bear during a life of eighty-four, and a ministry of more than fifty-one years, the word of God was his support. He cultivated with assiduity an acquaintance with those literary and scientific subjects that tend to render the minister of the

Gospel, an intelligent, judicious, and instructive interpreter of the word of God; and from his pen appeared some interesting papers, distinguished by perspicuity, accuracy of reasoning, and orthodoxy of sentiment. Perhaps the most remarkable feature in his character was the interest he took in young men of talent, and the unwearied efforts he made to bring them forward from humble life, to stations of usefulness and respectability. His purse, his pen, and his whole energies were put forth, in order to foster rising merit, and patronize pious and gifted youth. And there are now those adorning important stations in the church, and in our highest academical institutions, who fondly and gratefully cherish the remembrance of a time when he, under God, was their only patron, and his recommendation their chief passport to the situations of importance which they now hold.

*Land-owners.*—Sir John Gordon Sinclair of Murkle, Bart.; the Duke of Sutherland; Major Innes of Sandside; James Sinclair of Forss; Captain Macdonald of Shebster, are the chief land-owners.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest entry in the parochial registers is dated 1745: but the registers were not regularly kept until the year 1783.

*Antiquities.*—At Lybster, in the eastern part of the parish, stand the ruins of a Roman Catholic chapel, near which is a spring of water, thought to be the sacred fount; and also in Shebster lie the ruins of another chapel of the same description; close to which is a tomb, wherein lies a coffin, formed of four blocks of stone from 6 to 7 feet long, and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad. Along the Halladale strath are the remains of several circular towers, about 60 or 70 feet in diameter. The walls are thick, and artfully built of large stones, without mortar. They do not seem to have been intended for dwelling places, nor is it easy to determine to what purposes they were appropriated, unless it was for beacons, or watch-towers,—which is most probable, as they stand in sight of each other. On the top of Benfrectan, in Shurery, is an ancient fort, nearly a mile in circumference, the walls of which are upwards of twelve feet thick at bottom.\*

\* Benfrectan, or the hill of the watch, is steep and rocky on three sides, and is connected with another hill by a narrow rock. In one of the steep sides of the rock there is a cave, narrow at the mouth, but capacious within. Shelves of rocks upon each side have the appearance of side benches. The length of the cave is about 25 feet, breadth 9 or 10 feet, and it has a small aperture on the top. It was the asylum of two disaffected families for some time in 1745.

The hill of Shebster has the remains of two forts of the same kind, at some distance from each other. Tradition says, there had been a subterraneous passage between these two buildings, and this is rendered probable by the appearance of the ground.

## III.—POPULATION.

The amount of the population by census 1801 was	2406
1811,	2817
1821,	2758
1831,	2881—males, 326; females 1555
The population of the village of New Reay, is	188—males, 80; females 108
The annual average of births for the last seven years is	80
of deaths, as nearly as can be ascertained, is	40
of marriages,	20
The average number of persons under 15 years of age is	187
from 15 to 30,	607
30 to 50,	665
50 to 70,	324
upwards of 70,	98
The number of families and individuals of independent fortune residing in the parish, is	6
of bachelors,	12
of widowers, upwards of 50 years of age,	20
of unmarried women, upwards of 45 years of age,	100

Number of insane in the parish, 2; blind, 9; deaf, 6; dumb, 10.

*Language, &c.*—The Gaelic language is still spoken, but has greatly lost ground within these last twenty years. The inhabitants are in general industrious, temperate, economical, and very hospitable. Some years ago, the best dress of the women was a blue duffle cloak: now they appear on Sabbath days in silk and muslin gowns, shawls, and straw bonnets. The farmers' wives do not now make those coarse low-priced cloths for the market, which they made formerly, owing to their having no sheep, and the price of wool being high. The ordinary food of the peasantry is oat-cakes, potatoes, fish, milk, and, on particular occasions, they have mutton, beef, &c. They are in general intelligent, moral, and religious. The distress at present existing in the parish, however, is great in the extreme. The most of the parish has been converted into sheep-farms, and consequently, the poor people have been ejected from their houses and lands, many of them reduced to indigence and misery, and others necessitated to emigrate to a foreign land. Formerly, smuggling or illicit distillation prevailed very much,—which was attended with very pernicious consequences in regard to health and morals.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—By ancient calculation, the parish contains 271 pennylands of arable ground, at eight acres to each pennyland. The pasture ground unfit for cultivation is very extensive; but its precise extent has not been ascertained.

The average rent of arable ground per acre is L. 1; of grazing, L. 1, 1s. per annum; for an ox per month, 4s. 6d.; for a cow from L. 1, 1s. to L. 1, 4s. per annum; for a ewe, 3s. per annum.

*Wages.*—Maid-servants' wages in the half year, from L. 1, 5s. to L. 1, 10s., and men-servants', from L. 3 to L. 4, 10s. per half year. The prices of provisions are as follow: Beef, 4½d. to 5d. per lb.; mutton, 4d. per do.; pork, 3d.; butter, 8d. to 10d. cheese, 3d. to 4d.; tallow, 5d. to 6d. per lb.; average price of beans per boll, L. 1; oatmeal, 16s.; geese, from 2s. 6d. to 3s. each; hens, 8d. to 10d.; eggs, 3d. per dozen; salmon, 6d. per lb.; haddocks, from 6d. to 8d. per dozen.

Day labourers in husbandry receive from 1s. to 1s. 8d. per day without victuals; carpenters and masons from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per day.

*Live-Stock.*—The Cheviot breed of sheep are the most common since the introduction of sheep-farming. Our small native breed of sheep is fast decreasing. Our breed of cattle is the black Highland. Prior to the introduction of sheep-farming, improvements in agriculture were daily increasing, and still a considerable extent of new land is cultivated from the moor or hill, by Major Innes of Sandside and Captain Macdonald of Shebster. A great part of Major Innes and Captain Macdonald's lands are enclosed. The roads have been greatly improved, and bridges built where they were necessary. But the greatest improvement is at Halladale, belonging to the Duke of Sutherland. A new channel, at a vast expense, has been dug for the water, and a high and strong embankment raised to confine the river from flooding an extensive meadow of very excellent pasture, thought to be worth upwards of L. 200 per annum.

*Leases.*—The general duration of leases is seven, fourteen, nineteen, and twenty-one years; but leases are in fact seldom granted, which is a principal obstacle to agricultural improvements, as the tenant, who may be removed at the will of the proprietor, cannot depend on reaping the benefit of his labour; he is, therefore, loth to incur expenses in improving his farm.

*Quarries.*—Quarries of freestone have been opened in different parts of the parish, one in particular at Glen-Craggach, from 40 to 50 feet deep, from which large blocks of stone for millstones are extracted.

*Fisheries.*—For several years past we have had a herring-fishery established here, at Portskerry, Sandside bay, and Lybster; as also salmon-fishing at the same ports.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The nearest market-town is Thurso, which is eleven miles dis-

tant. The only village is New Reay. A mail-coach runs between Thurso and Tongue, and passes here every alternate day; and there is a post-office at Reay and at Melvich.

A very neat and commodious harbour has lately been built in the bay of Sandside by Major Innes, on which upwards of L. 3000 have already been expended. While it encourages and promotes trade and commerce, it is also of great advantage to the herring-fishing.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church was built in 1739, is at present in good repair, and conveniently situated for the greater part of the population. It affords accommodation for 650 sitters. All the sittings are free, except in one gallery, built out of the poor's fund, and rented for behoof of the poor of the parish. The manse was built in 1788. The extent of the glebe is from 6 to 7 acres. It lies at a mile's distance from the manse, and lets at L.5 Sterling, but there is also a small croft contiguous to the manse, which may be worth about L.2. The amount of stipend is 190 bolls, 1 firiot, 2 pecks grain, with L. 60 Scots, allowance for communion elements. A missionary preaches every third Sabbath at Dispolly in Strathaladale, supported partly by the Royal Bounty, and partly by the people. There is a catechist, too, supported in the same manner, and elected by the kirk-session. We have no Dissenting nor Seceding chapels, nor indeed any Dissenters. Divine service on the Lord's-day is well attended.

*Education.*—There are five schools in the parish—the parochial school at New Reay, an Assembly's school at Melvich, and three supported by individual subscription. The branches of instruction generally taught in them, are, English reading, writing, arithmetic, and English grammar, and in the parochial and Assembly schools, Greek, Latin, mathematics, geography, &c. The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is the maximum. The number of young between the ages of six and fifteen years who can neither read nor write is about 54, and the number of those upwards of fifteen years unable to read or write is about 200. The people in general are alive to the benefits of education, and there is a great and visible change in their conduct and morals since the diffusion of knowledge became so general. That pernicious attachment to the drinking of spirituous liquors, which formerly prevailed, has now been in a great measure abandoned.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is at present upwards of 100, and average

sum allotted each per year, 5s. The annual amount of contributions for their relief is principally from church collections. There is certainly a disposition among them to refrain from seeking parochial relief; and they do consider it degrading, but sheer necessity urges them to it. There are no prisons.

*Fairs.*—Two fairs are held at the cross of New Reay, one in the beginning of September, and the other in the end of December; but very little business is transacted at either.

*Inns.*—There are four inns or public-houses; but we are happy to state, that the people are now so far alive to the evils of whisky-drinking, and the poverty and misery attendant on intemperance, as to frequent them but very seldom.

*Fuel.*—The fuel commonly made use of is peat. Every one cuts and prepares this for himself.

*July 1840.*

## PARISH OF CANISBAY.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF CAITHNESS AND  
SUTHERLAND.

THE REV. PETER JOLLY, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, Extent, &c.*—It is difficult to say what is the origin of the name of this parish. Some have supposed it to be a corruption of "Canute's bay." Others imagine it to be from the plant *Canna*, which seems to have been at one time very abundant in the place. This latter derivation appears the more probable, from the circumstance that in all the older parochial registers the name is spelt *Cannasbay*.

The figure of the parish is on the whole exceedingly regular. It forms the north-east corner of Scotland; and is bounded on the east, by the German Ocean; on the north, by the Pentland Frith; on the west, by the parish of Dunnet; and on the south, by the parishes of Bower and Wick. From east to west along the Pentland Frith the length is upwards of 8 miles; and from north to south, where it is washed by the German Ocean, the breadth is nearly 8 miles, but the mean breadth may be estimated at 6



miles. The island of Stroma, situated in the Pentland Frith, and about a league distant from the mainland, belongs to the parish. The word Stroma is supposed to be of Danish or Norwegian origin, and signifies *the island in the current*. Stroma contains about a square mile of surface; thus the whole extent of the parish may be stated at about 50 square miles.

Canisbay is remarkably level. The Ward or Watch hill is the only eminence of any moment in the parish. Its height above the level of the sea may be about 300 feet.

The principal headlands are Grey-head, Skirsa-head, St John's or Mey-head, and Duncansbay-head. The last mentioned headland, the *Berubium* of Ptolemy, from which the shore runs nearly due west and due south, is decidedly the most beautiful promontory in the north of Scotland. It is about two miles in circumference, and is indented by several large ravines or *goes*, as they are here termed. It contains one remarkable fissure open down to the level of the sea, into which the tides ebb and flow through an opening at the base of the intervening rock. It has a natural bridge across of about six yards wide, which is called by the inhabitants, the *glupe*. In the west end of the island of Stroma there is a similar chasm about thirty yards from the precipice. The sea has access to it also by an opening at the bottom; and the natives of the island are in the habit of descending into the chasm, (a task which is not extremely difficult to accomplish,) and of going out at the entrance below, and of fishing from the rocks.

The coast on the east side is bold and precipitous; on the north it is more level, though in different places the rocks are of considerable altitude. Near Duncansbay Head are two insulated rocks of an oval form, surrounded by the sea, called the Stacks of Duncansbay. They shoot up fantastically to a great height. One of them is considerably larger than the other: and when seen from a little distance, they look like the huge spires of some old Gothic edifice. During the spring and summer months they form the rendezvous of innumerable sea fowl; and on the top of the larger stack the eagle has its eyrie.

The only bays are, Freswick bay on the east; and Duncansbay and Gills bays on the north. Along Freswick bay, the beach is composed principally of sand, a mixture of sandstone and shells. The beach at Duncansbay is altogether of broken shells. At Gills, the beach consists of flat rocks interspersed with shingle. There is a sandy beach at Huna, a mixture of shells and sand-  
ly any thing deserving the name of a bay.

*Meteorology.*—The temperature of the atmosphere is milder than might be expected in this high latitude. The summers are not very warm, nor the winters very cold. This may be attributed to the flatness of the surface, and to the sea bordering on so great a part of the parish. The most prevalent winds are from the west and south-west. After the autumnal equinox, there commonly falls a great quantity of rain for the subsequent six months. The weather, on the average of the year, may be described as moist and variable, rather than tempestuous. The aurora borealis is often seen here in great splendour. It begins to be visible in the month of September, and is occasionally of uncommon brilliancy. It has been observed in a few instances to assume a dark purple tinge, which gives it an awfully beautiful and magnificent appearance.

*Climate.*—There are no diseases peculiar to the place. The most prevalent distempers are, fever, inflammation, and rheumatism. The employments of the greater part of the inhabitants, exposing them to the moisture and variableness of the climate, may partially account for the predominance of these.

*Hydrography.*—The Pentland Frith separates the Orkney islands from the north of Scotland. It forms a communication between the German and Atlantic Oceans, and is reckoned twenty-four miles in length, and from twelve to fourteen miles in average breadth. At the east end of the frith, stretching from Duncansbay Head; is a rough and dangerous piece of sea, called the Boars of Duncansbay; and opposite to St John's Head in Mey, there is also a similar piece of sea, called the Men of Mey. In both places, the tide is very rapid, and the roughness is produced by the collision of different currents. The Men of Mey and the Boars of Duncansbay appear only alternately, the former with the ebb, and the latter with the flood-tide. The current in the Pentland Frith is said to run at spring-tides nine miles, and in stormy weather ten miles an hour. For about half an hour at the turn of the tide, little or no current is perceptible. North-east from Duncansbay Head, in the eastern entrance of the frith, and about six miles distant, lie the Pentland Skerries. On the larger of the two, a light-house was erected some years ago. It consists of two towers, the one considerably higher than the other, with a stationary light on each. Now that a light-house has been erected on Dunnet Head, at the western entrance of the frith, the navigation has become comparatively safe even at night.

*Springs.*—There is abundance of fresh water springs in the pa-

rish. There are also some mineral springs of the chalybeate kind. The most remarkable of these is one near the old castle of Freswick. The loch of Mey is the only loch in the parish; its circumference may be about a mile and a-half, and its depth is not great. There is no river,—and only a few rivulets or burns, collected from the different mosses in the winter season; the chief of these is the burn of Freswick.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The rocks in general are composed of a red sandstone, and in some places of a rock resembling grey-wacke. At Quoys there is a little limestone; and at Mey, on the property of the Earl of Caithness, there is abundance of it to be obtained. A light black loam, with an intermixture of moss, forms the general character of the cultivated ground. The lands of Mey have in some places a mixture of clay. Heath and deep moss, with an occasional patch of rough pasture grass, cover fully nine-tenths of the parish.

*Zoology.*—There are no rare or uncommon animals. At one period, indeed, wolves are said to have existed in the parish. Between Brabster and Freswick, there is a hollow, called Wolf's Burn: the tradition is, that the last wolf seen in Caithness was killed in this particular spot. All around the coast, cod are tolerably numerous: and lobsters also are caught in considerable numbers. Coal-fish, or, as they are provincially termed, *cuddens*, are at some seasons of the year caught in immense quantities, and are of great use to the poorer inhabitants, as they not only serve for food, but supply plenty of oil for light.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Eminent Men.*—Under this head we may notice the Rev. John Morison, D. D., for eighteen years minister of this parish. He was the author of several of the paraphrases approved by a Committee of the General Assembly, and appended to the Version of the Psalms used in the Church of Scotland. His are, the 19th, 21st, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, and 35th. His versions of the 27th and 28th were said to have been slightly altered by Logan, who was his contemporary and intimate friend. Several effusions of Dr Morison's youthful muse appeared in the Edinburgh Weekly Magazine, under the signature of Musæus. By the testimony of all who knew him, Dr Morison was an accomplished scholar, and an eloquent preacher. He was a native of Aberdeenshire, and died on 12th June 1798, in the 49th year of his age.

*Land-owners.*—The proprietors are, the Right Honourable the Earl of Caithness; William James John Alexander Sinclair of

Freswick, at present a minor, patron of the parish ; and George Sutherland Sinclair, Esq. of Brabster.

*Parochial Registers.*—The registers commence in 1651, and were regularly kept till the Restoration. From that period down to 1706, there are no records of any kind whatever. The only other gap occurs a few years prior to 1747. From this latter date down to the present time, the registers have been regularly kept ; all the births and marriages are registered ; the deaths are not.

*Antiquities.*—This parish seems at one time to have been divided into districts, and to have had chapels for religious purposes in each of them. Scarcely a vestige now remains of any of these chapels, but several aged individuals remember to have seen some of them. They are still known by name. At Mey, on St John's Head, there was one dedicated to St John ; at Freswick, one to St Maddan ; at Brabster, one to St Tustan ; at Duncansbay, one to the Virgin Mary, the locality of which is still known by the name of Lady Kirk ; and it is highly probable that what is now the parish church was originally intended only for the use of the adjoining district. At Freswick are to be seen the ruins of an old castle, called Bucholie Castle. It seems to be of very great antiquity. Pennant in his Tour says that it was inhabited by a Danish nobleman of the name of Suenus Asteilf in the twelfth century. It is situated on a high rock, almost surrounded by the sea, and appears to have been a place of considerable strength. On the top of Duncansbay Head, and about fifty yards from the precipice, may be traced the site of a circular building of about twenty feet diameter, which is supposed to have been a watch-tower, and to have communicated with a similar one on the top of the Warth Hill. The distance from Duncansbay Head to the Warth or Watch Hill is about two miles, and a signal from the one would of course be readily perceived at the other.

There are no traces of camps or forts ; but from some entries in the Session records it would appear that either Cromwell or some of his officers were in this remote corner. Thus March 29, 1652, " No session holden, by reasone the Inglishie being quartered in the bounds, the congregation was few in number, and ther was not a sederunt of elders, nather was ther any delinquents charged." Again May 2, 1652, " Ther not being a sederunt, by reasone of a partie of Inglishie horsemen being in our feilds, whilk made the congregation fewer in number, and severall of the elders to be absent." And again, December 30, 1655, " Adam Seaton

convict of drinking on the Sabbath, and haveing masking plays in his house for the Englishemen, he was ordained to mak publick confession of his fault the next Sabbath."

As this old register contains some curious entries, I shall quote a few of them. "December 27, 1652, Ordained yt for mending ye people, ye better to keepe the kirk, a roll of ye names of the families be taken up, and Sabbathlie, yt they be called upon by name, and who bees notted absent sall pay 40d. *toties quoties.*" Again same day and date, "Item, Ordained yt if ane elder or other paroshiner be fund drinking in ane ailhouse on the Sabbath day, or extraordinarily on the week-day, who bees notted to faill sall pay 40d. for the first falt, and mak publick confession before the congregation, with certification if any be fund to fall therein againe, they sall undergoe higher censure, especially an elder." Again, "March 4, 1654, For mending the people of Stroma to keepe the kirk better, it was ordained yt no passenger coming over to the kirk sall pay any fraught, and if any yt heve boats stay away they sall pay 3 p. 4d. and others 40d." This is a most salutary regulation, and, I am sorry to say, as necessary now, if it could be carried into effect as it was nearly 200 years ago. I shall only add one other extract. It is regarding the appointment of a schoolmaster in this parish in the year 1660, and furnishes a remarkable contrast even with the present very inadequate remuneration of parochial teachers: "Oct. 28, 1660. So few elders remaining as no session culd be holden, yet the minister with them yt were present haveing the consent of the rest, condescended and agreed with Donald Reid Skinner to be schoolmaster at Cannisbey, for teaching the young children that suld be sent to him, and for his paines 5 bolls victuall was promised him in the yeir, whilk he thinking too little yet accepted to undertake the charge, and to enter with all convenient diligence provideing the said 5 bolls. victuall be duellie payed, and that he may have furniture of peats to supplie his present need."

About a mile and a half to the west of the beautiful promontory of Duncansbay Head stood the celebrated John o' Groat's House. Nothing but the site where this once famous building is said to have stood, is now to be discerned. The traditionary story respecting Malcolm, Gavin, and John de Groat having arrived here from Holland in the reign of James IV. of Scotland; their having purchased the lands of Duncansbay; their commemorating their arrival by an annual festive meeting, and the ingenious plan which John de Groat adopted of building an octagonal house with

a corresponding number of doors, &c., to prevent all quarrels about precedence among the eight different families or proprietors of that name, among whom the property seems, in process of time, to have been divided ;—is so well known, that it would be superfluous to repeat it here.

*Modern Buildings.*—Barrogill Castle, the seat of the Earls of Caithness, has of late received great additions, and is now an elegant and commodious residence. The House of Freswick is a large building, but from its not having been inhabited for many years, is in a state of disrepair. The mansion-house of Brabster is situated in an inland part of the parish, and is not now inhabited : its owner, George S. Sinclair, Esq. has lately enlarged the House of West Canisbay, situated on a part of his property near the sea, and rendered it a comfortable residence.

The parish church received a very extensive repair in the years 1832–33. It was newly floored, seated, and roofed.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population in 1755 was	1481
1801,	1986
1811,	1986
1821,	2128
1831,	2364
1836,	2409

The yearly average of births for the last seven years,	70
deaths,	26
marriages,	13
Number of families in the parish in 1831,	494
chiefly employed in agriculture,	405
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	50

The only permanently residing heritor is George Sutherland Sinclair, Esq. of Brabster. The Earl of Caithness occasionally passes a few months at Barrogill Castle.

There are only two farms in the parish, with the exception of what the heritors themselves cultivate, that let for more than L.50 per annum. The inhabitants in general rent small possessions, varying from L.1 to L.30 per annum. The most common rent is from L. 5 to L. 20. The principal dependence of the people is upon fishing, and, with very few exceptions, all the males fish for themselves and their families.

The houses in general are built partly of stones and partly of turf : they are roofed with turf and straw, and contain two apartments.

The people are sober and industrious, and, were it not for the excessively high rents, would be contented with their situation and circumstances.

There are at present in the parish 2 insane, 3 idiots, 3 blind, 2 deaf and dumb children.

A considerable degree of acuteness and shrewdness is observable among the population, and scandalous offences are seldom heard of. The language spoken is the common dialect of the lowlands of Scotland. Gaelic is not known.

Smuggling prevailed at one time to a great extent in the island of Stroma, and its peculiar situation gave it great advantages for that illicit trade; but, by the indefatigable exertions of the Excise, it has within the last year or two been entirely suppressed. As might naturally be expected, the effects of smuggling on the morals of the inhabitants were most pernicious; and from their being occasionally detected by the excise, and severely fined, their worldly circumstances were materially injured.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—The precise number of acres in the parish has never been ascertained. I should think that not more than one-tenth has ever been in a state of cultivation. The arable ground may therefore be estimated at 3200 acres, and the moorland and pasture at 28,800 acres. The latter is in a state of undivided common, and, from the great depth of moss that covers the greater part of it, would be very difficult to bring it into cultivation. The tenants are in the habit of sending their horses, cattle, swine, and sheep during the spring, summer, and autumn months, to pasture on the common nearest their possessions. Recently, however, the Earl of Caithness has instituted a process claiming a division of the whole commons in the parish, the prelude, it is to be hoped, of a better system.

*Rent.*—The rent of arable land is high; little of it being lower than L. 1, and the greater part as high as L. 2, 2s. per acre. Till of late years, it was the practice to pay part of the rent in money, and part in victual. The proprietor of the lands of Freswick still receives the rent in this latter manner; but the other two proprietors have converted the victual into money, at the rate of L. 1 per boll. This has proved virtually a very great raising of rent, as none of the tenants have, with the exception of the crop 1838, received more than from 12s. to 18s. per boll for their victual at market.

*Rate of Wages.*—Farm-servants are generally hired for the year, and receive from L. 6 to L. 8, with 3 bolls of oatmeal, 3 bolls of barleymeal, and a competent quantity of potatoes, peats, and milk. A day labourer's wages are 1s. 6d. in summer, and 1s. in winter. Females employed as shearers in harvest receive L. 1, with half a boll of meal, and some potatoes; and males L. 1, 2s. to L. 1, 5s., with a boll of meal, and potatoes for the whole har-

vest. A mason's daily wages are from 2s. to 2s. 6d.; and a carpenter's from 2s. 6d. to 3s.; and other artisans in proportion.

*Implements of Husbandry.*—The ploughs now generally in use are made of iron, and cost from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3, and are drawn by two horses. The carts had till lately wooden axles; now they are seldom to be seen, having almost all been supplanted by iron ones.

*Breeds of Live-Stock.*—The sheep are in general of a very indifferent, and, I suppose, indigenous breed. They are small in size, and of every shade of colour from black to white. No attempts have been made to improve them. They belong to the different tenants, who may have from ten to twenty each. Their wool is short but soft. It is spun by the females in the winter season, and either weaved into blankets or knit into stockings for the use of the family. It is also woven into a kind of cloth here called black-grey, which is made into wearing clothes for the more aged members of the family. The breed of cattle is also very inferior. Swine are exceedingly numerous. Every family rears one, and most families two. They grow to a greater size than might be expected from the manner in which they are attended to in their youth, and bring at market from L.1, 10s. to L.2, 10s. The Earl of Caithness, on his farm of Barrogill mains, has a few Cheviots, which answer well. He has also several fine cattle of the Teeswater breed. The proprietor of Freswick has at his farm at Freswick some very fine Highland cattle. And George S. Sinclair of Brabster has on his farm several of the Teeswater breed; and he has lately got a few sheep of a cross between the Leicester and Cheviot, which have hitherto fully answered his expectations.

*Husbandry.*—With the exception of what the proprietors themselves cultivate, the land is wretchedly cultivated. Rotation of crops is unknown among the common people. Bear or big, and oats with potatoes for the use of the family, are the only crops to be seen. From the cultivated parts of the parish lying in general along the shore, and, from the great abundance of sea-weed for manure, the crops of bear are good; but the oat crop is almost always very indifferent. The fructifying qualities of the sea-weed seem to be exhausted in one season; and as neither sea-weed nor any other manure is ever laid on the land allotted to the oats, this may account for their inferiority.

Leases are seldom granted, and this is a very great obstacle to improvement.

Little has been done in the way of reclaiming waste land. The



proprietors do not attempt it, and the people are deterred by the immediate imposition of rent. Some of the tenants are beginning to see the advantage of sowing turnips and grass; but the want of all enclosures, and the common practice of turning at large horses and cattle, whenever the harvest is gathered, to find provender wherever they can, have hitherto prevented improvement, and till the proprietors enforce a different system, will continue to keep this parish behind the rest of Scotland in agriculture.

The tenants have the houses on their possessions valued at their entry; are obliged to keep them in repair; and at their removal they used to get allowance for any improvement in their value during the time of their occupancy, and to pay for any depreciation in value; but of late this allowance or *comprisement*, as it is here called, has been in many instances refused by the proprietors or their agents. No wonder, then, considering all these unfavourable circumstances, that husbandry is in no very flourishing condition, and that the dwelling-houses of the tenantry are far from commodious or comfortable.

*Fisheries.*—There are several boats employed yearly in fishing lobsters for the London market. The crew of each boat consists of two men, and the price received for each lobster is commonly threepence. The whole sum brought into the parish from this source may be estimated at about L.50 Sterling. There are also about thirty large boats of ten tons each, used only for fishing herrings. The crew of each consists of five men. They leave this for Wick and the neighbouring stations in the middle of July, and commonly continue absent from seven to eight weeks. The herrings caught by them are sold fresh to the different curers. The value of one of these boats, with a full drift of nets, falls little short of L. 100, and the annual average returns to each crew may be stated at from L.50 to L.60 Sterling.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount and value of raw produce raised in the parish for the food of man and the domestic animals, as nearly as can be ascertained, may be stated as follows:—

Grain of all kinds, say	L.6000
Potatoes, turnips, hay, and pasture, say	1600
Fisheries, say	1650

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, L.9250

*Manufactures.*—The shores of Canisbay used to yield annually above 100 tons of kelp; but now, from its depreciation in value, scarcely any is made.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-towns, &c.*—There is no market-town in the parish. Wick

is the market-town of the east end of the parish, being sixteen miles and a-half distant from the church, and ten miles from the nearest boundary; and Thurso, of the west end of the parish, being eighteen miles from the church and twelve miles from the nearest boundary.

There are two post-offices, one at Mey and one at Huna. From the last mentioned, the mail-boat with the Orkney bags crosses the frith three times a week: but, by a recent arrangement, it is intended to cross every lawful day. The distance from Huna to the landing place in Orkney is twelve miles, and the freight of the boat is 10s.; but a passenger going along with the mails pays only 1s. To Huna the mail is conveyed daily from Wick in a gig; and to Mey there is a runner from Thurso post-office every lawful day; between Mey and Huna post-offices, a distance of five miles, there is no communication.

*Roads.*—The length of good and passable turnpike road in the parish is twelve miles. An old road that runs for a considerable distance parallel to the new line, and which passes through the inhabited parts of the parish, is principally used by the parishioners, though in a total state of disrepair. By the Act of Parliament that authorized the new line, the old line also is appointed to be kept in repair, but, I believe, want of funds has hitherto prevented this most desirable object from being carried into effect. A cross road through Brabstermire is very much needed to give the inhabitants access to the middle of the county. The roads in this parish, as in Caithness, generally present the rather anomalous fact of being almost all parallel to each other, with scarcely a single connecting cross road.

*Harbours.*—Notwithstanding the great number of boats, there is no regularly built harbour.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The period at which the church was built cannot be ascertained. It received a substantial repair, as was stated before, in the years 1832–3. Previously, the inhabitants had seats of their own, which they claimed as private property; but since the new seating in 1833, the heritors have divided the sittings according to their respective valued rents, and let them annually—a system considered by the people not only an innovation but an imposition. The form of the church is that of a cross: it is as conveniently situated as it can possibly be,—being six miles and a-half from the one extremity of the parish, and five and a-half from the other. Giving the customary allowance to each sitter, the church

would let for 512 sitters, but will accommodate more. There are no free sittings.

The manse received an extensive repair at the same time with the church, but cannot be made a comfortable house. The glebe, including garden and stance of manse and offices, is barely  $4\frac{1}{2}$  Scotch acres in extent, and may be valued at about L. 8 Sterling. The stipend is 120 imperial bolls of oat-meal; 87 quarters, 3 bushels barley; and L. 10 for communion elements.

There are no Government churches in the parish; but to the Government church at Keiss, in the parish of Wick, there is annexed a contiguous district of this parish, containing, according to the census of 1831, exactly 160 individuals. There is no Dissenting place of worship in the parish, unless we give that name to a meeting of a few Scotch Baptists in a room situate at the west end of the parish.

From a survey made in the spring of the year 1836, it appears that there are in the parish, *quoad sacra*, 24 Baptists, and 6 Independents, who along with their families make in all 77 souls. The members of the Establishment in full communion are 182, and with their families, and such as attend the Established Church but are not communicants, comprehend all the other inhabitants. The parish church is well attended in the summer months, but, from the badness of the roads in many places, often indifferently in winter.

*Education.*—The schools are, the parochial school, two supported by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, one subscription school, and two others on the teachers' own adventure. The parochial teacher has the legal accommodations; and the salary is the maximum, with an allowance of two guineas in lieu of a garden. The usual branches are taught, and the fees are extremely moderate. The total income, including the emoluments arising from the office of session-clerk, does not exceed L. 45 per annum. The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge allow their teacher at Mey L. 15; and their teacher in Stroma L. 10, with L. 4 to his wife for teaching females to knit and sew. The whole income of each does not exceed L. 24 per annum. The teacher of the subscription school at Freswick receives L. 14, but no fees: and the schools on the teachers' own adventure, being in the remote and poorer districts, cannot be reckoned as yielding more than from L. 5 to L. 8 each. The branches principally taught in all the schools, are, English reading, writing, and arithmetic. All between ten and fifteen-years of age can read, but the females are not commonly taught to write. There are none upwards of fifteen years of age who cannot read, except a very few aged individuals. The

district most in want of the means of education is the inland part of the parish, where the population is too small to be able to support a teacher, and too remote to benefit by the schools already in existence.

*Literature.*—Two years ago, Messrs Morison and Andrew Snody, natives of this parish, who left it many years ago, and have prospered in the legal profession, made a present of about 100 volumes on religious subjects, as the beginning of a religious library. Mr George Dunnet, merchant in Thurso, also a native of this parish, has since given five guineas for the same benevolent purpose. The books already obtained are all generally taken out, and, from the care with which they have been selected, must prove of great advantage.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is about 90. The annual allowance to each varies from 6s. to 10s.; certainly a very trifling sum, but the poor receive it very gratefully, as a small addition to their other means of subsistence. The collections in the church average about L. 14 annually. There are several small mortifications, the interest of which is divided among the poor along with the annual collections. There is one legacy by a Mr Oswald of L. 100; one of L. 80 by a Mr Innes of South Carolina, son of Mr Innes who was once minister of this parish, and an annuity of 100 merks Scots, left by William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick. To this, there is to be added interest upon an accumulation of L. 205 of William Sinclair of Freswick's annuity, which had not been paid for many years. The whole gross income from interest of mortification and arrears, together with the collections in church, amounts annually to about L. 38 Sterling. There is no other fund for the support of the poor, and assessment for the purpose has never yet been made.

*Fairs.*—Two small markets for the sale of horses, cattle, and swine are held in the parish—one in February at Freswick, and the other in December at Canisbay.

*Inns and Ale-houses.*—There are no less than six inns, which have a pernicious influence on the morals and industry of the people. Half the number would be more than sufficient for all useful purposes. Indeed, Huna inn may be said to be the only one indispensably necessary.

*Fuel.*—The only fuel is peat and turf from the mosses, which appear to be inexhaustible. The only expense incurred is the labour necessary for cutting, drying, and carrying the fuel home.

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

In conclusion, I cannot say that the general appearance of the parish has materially varied since the last Statistical Account was drawn up. The proprietors have no doubt greatly improved around their family mansions; but the general aspect of the parish, in an agricultural point of view, has undergone little or no change. The money brought into the parish by the fisheries is all required to answer the demands of the landlords; and a better system of husbandry and increased comfort to the labouring classes, cannot be expected till the rents are reduced, and encouraging leases granted as in other places. The undivided state of the common has also proved a great obstacle to improvement.

October 1840.

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## PARISH OF DUNNET.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. THOMAS JOLLY, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name Dunnet is apparently derived from the Gaelic *Dun*, signifying hill. The names of many places in the parish are, however, of Danish extraction, as Ratter, Syster, Reaster, Sunnigoe, Ashigoe, Getterigoe, &c.

*Extent, &c.*—The form of the parish is very irregular, its greatest length being about 12 miles, its greatest breadth 6, and the narrowest point, from Dunnet to Brough,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles. It is bounded on the north and north-east, by the Pentland Frith; on the east and south-east, by the parishes of Canisbay and Bower; on the south, by those of Bower and Odrig; and on the south-west and west, by Odrig and Dunnet bay.

With the exception of Dunnet-head, the whole parish may be considered a level district, the elevations being trifling, and running in nearly parallel ridges, from north-east to south-west. The highest point of Dunnet-head rises about 500 feet above the level of the sea,—the average height of the parish above that level does not exceed 150 feet.

The extent of sea coast is about 15 miles,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles of which to the south of Dunnet are level sand, the remainder rocky. The shore round Dunnet-head is quite inaccessible from the land, for about eight miles, except at two or three places where the inhabitants can go down with difficulty. The remainder along the Pentland Frith is low and accessible at several creeks.

*Climate.*—The atmosphere is clear when the wind is from the sea; when from the land it is in autumn and spring moist, and the weather variable. The climate is on the whole healthy. Snow seldom lies any length of time, nor do frosts generally go deep into the soil. Crops are late in ripening—in general from fourteen to twenty days behind the Lothians.

The current in the Pentland Frith is exceedingly strong during spring tides, so that no vessel can stem it. The flood tide runs from west to east at the rate of ten miles an hour, with new and full moon. It is then high water at Scarfskerry at nine o'clock. Immediately as the water begins to fall on the shore, the current turns to the west, but the strength of the flood is so great in the middle of the Frith, that it continues to run east till about twelve. These contiguous currents, running with such velocity from opposite directions, have a strange appearance from the land. With a gentle breeze of westerly wind about eight o'clock in the morning, the whole frith seems as smooth as a sheet of glass; from Dunnet-head to Hoy-head in Orkney. About nine the sea begins to rage for about 100 yards off the Head, while all without continues smooth as before. This appearance gradually advances towards the frith, and along the shore to the east, though the effects are not much felt upon the shore till it reaches Scarfskerry-head, which is about three miles distant from Dunnet-head, as the land between these points forms a considerable bay. By two o'clock the whole frith seems to rage. About three in the afternoon, it is low water on the shore, when all the former phenomena are reversed—the smooth water beginning to appear next the land, and advancing gradually till it reaches the middle of the frith. From the strength of the tides, and the surprising velocity of these contiguous currents in opposite directions, Pentland Frith is a very dangerous navigation to strangers, especially if they approach near the land. But the natives along the coast are so well acquainted with the direction of the tides, that they can take advantage of every one of these currents, to carry them safe to one harbour or another. Hence very few accidents happen but

from want of skill or knowledge of the tides. The frith is about twelve miles broad opposite to Dunnet.

*Hydrography.*—There are ten small lakes on Dunnet-head ; they contain no fish of any kind. There are three, of a mile each, or thereby, in length, and about half that extent in breadth, in the lower part of the parish, viz. the Loch of Hayland, Syster, and St John's. The principal mills are supplied by them with water. There are a few trouts in the Loch of Syster ; the others are frequented by eels. There is a considerable quantity of marl in Loch Hayland. Loch Syster is also said to contain marl, but it has not been searched. The scenery of Loch Syster is very lonely, being nearly surrounded with deep moss in a barren district.

*Geology.*—In this parish there are only two distinct formations of rock. Dunnet-head is altogether composed of freestone, chiefly of a brownish colour, but some of it white, very hard and durable. The strata dip or incline to the north-east, at an angle of nearly 45°. This headland contains 3000 acres. The remainder of the parish is the common flag-stone slate of the county, also generally dipping to the north-east, at an angle of from 20° to 60°. No simple minerals have been discovered in the parish. There are a number of springs, much impregnated with iron ; but this may arise from the slate containing a considerable portion of that mineral.

There are great varieties of soil in the parish. Dunnet-head is entirely covered with moss, to a considerable depth, betwixt which and the freestone, there is a hard pan of moorland, making the moss retentive of water. The cultivated lands round Dunnet are a dry black sandy loam ; also on the shore of the Pentland Frith, the soil is black loam lying on a sandy clay at about five feet from the rock. This soil is generally wet and difficult to drain ; it has no pan, but the clay being retentive, keeps the moisture on the surface. The southern districts of the parish are generally a clayey loam, lying on a bed of clay, from 2 to 5 feet in depth. Where the slate is rotten on the top, the land is dry ; where it is hard, the land is uniformly wet and retentive. There are also about 3000 acres of moss in the low ground, on the east of the parish, varying in depth from 2 to 16 feet, lying on blue clay—producing stunted heath and other coarse herbage. In these mosses, dwarf birch, hazel, and saughs are found near the bottom, in considerable quantities, which show they were formerly covered with brushwood. To the east of Dunnet Bay, there are 2000

acres of land covered with sand, from 1 to 10 feet, (the debris of Dunnet-head, carried into the bay by the sea, and drifted eastwards.) These links were formerly common, and overstocked and poached with cattle. They were subject to break up and drift into the interior, covering up considerable tracts of arable land, where the vestiges of the houses are still seen. They have since been divided and protected; they are now covered with herbage. Bent grows rapidly near the shore, and arrests the progress of the sand, which is forming rapidly into a ridge of knolls already from 20 to 30 feet above high water mark, and covered to the sea with bent. A small portion is still used as a common by the township of Dunnet; the cattle destroy the bent, and it is still subject to breaking up and drifting. On these links, where spongy, a vast number of the marl shells breed on the surface; but except the Loch of Hayland on the east of the links, there is no pond to retain them: hence, except in this loch, there is no marl, as the shells are swept to the sea by the winter floods.

*Zoology.*—Numbers of the various kinds of sea-fowl frequent the coast. There are a few eagles, hawks, and ravens, vast numbers of plovers and snipes, with a fair proportion of partridges and grouse, and almost all the varieties of small birds peculiar to Scotland. Of wild quadrupeds the number is few, comprising otters, polecats, and weasels. Foxes have disappeared from the district; hares abound, and there are a number of rabbits in the links—also a few seals along the coast.

There are still about 400 sheep on Dunnet-head, belonging to the small tenants surrounding it on the east, mostly of the original short-tailed breed of the country. They are the same race as the Shetland sheep—are small and nimble—produce a little fine wool, of various colours; their mutton is very fine, but they seldom get fat, or weigh above 36 lbs. The young lambs are covered with a strong coat of curled hair for a few weeks after lambing, exactly resembling Siberian lamb skin,—hence I would attribute to them a Scandinavian origin. They are altogether a worthless breed, and not easily improved by crossing with more improved races of sheep.

Dunnet Bay abounds with haddocks and other white fish. There is likewise a tolerable salmon-fishing at the mouth of the Burn of Dunnet. Salmon are also taken in the Pentland Frith, near Brough, but the fishing there has not as yet been much prosecuted. There are occasionally shoals of herrings in the bay,



in June and July, but they are not to be depended on as affording a regular fishing. Great numbers of cod and ling are taken in the Pentland Frith, as well as lobsters and other shell fish. The lobsters are collected by a London company at 3d. each, from the fishermen, and forwarded by smacks to the London market. Numbers of London fishing smacks also frequent the frith for cod and ling. In the lakes there are a number of eels; and trouts only in the Loch of Syster. A few of these were put into the Loch of Dunnet, or St John's Loch, a few years ago, by Dr John Jolly. It is not yet ascertained if they have bred. St John's Loch is much resorted to on the first Monday of May, and the first Monday of August, November, and February, O. S., by invalids from all parts of the country. They walk round it, bathe, throw a piece of money into the water, and are out of sight of it by sunrise. Hypochondriacs and nervous people may sometimes feel better after this, from the power of imagination and exertion; but those seriously ill are of course the worse for it, and die occasionally by the road.

The secret of the matter seems to be this: there was a Catholic chapel (St John's,) at the east end of the lake, to the waters of which the saint must have communicated virtuous qualities. The money is evidently the offering to the altar; hence the very worthy practice of curing the sick and enriching the church. After the Reformation, the practice of throwing the money into the loch would begin, it being possible that the minister would instruct them to do so. It is astonishing, that in these days such a superstitious rite should be continued; but so it is, and people who should know better have recourse to it. I do not think it does much good to the people in the parish; it seems most efficacious to those at a distance.

*Botany.*—There are a vast number of rare plants on Dunnet-Head in a dwarf state. It is said to be a field worth the inspection of the scientific botanist. The other districts of the parish possess little rare or curious in this department. There is nothing worthy of the name of a tree in the parish. A few acres of hard-wood were planted three years ago by Mr Traill; and they are promising to grow. Thorn hedges thrive pretty well on the clay soils, and walled gardens produce apples and other small fruit.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The following inscription occurs on a grave-stone in the church-

yard : " Here lies Margaret Wallace, daughter of William Wallace, who was murdered by Alexander Calder, son of Alexander Calder, in Dunnet, because he could not have her in marriage ; August 29, in the year of God 1635." There is still a tradition that the murder was committed on a Sunday morning, and that the murderer, by fleeing to Orkney, escaped punishment.

*Land-owners.*—The parish is divided into three properties, betwixt James Traill, Esq. of Ratter ; William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick ; and the Kirk-session. The valued rent is L. 2309, 12s. 6d. Scots, and the real rent about L. 3600.

The average of births and baptisms for the last seven years has been	61½
marriages for the same period has been	11½

There has not been a register of deaths or burials kept in the parish. Many of those whose forefathers resided in the neighbouring parishes have been buried with them, and many from the neighbouring parishes have, for a similar reason, been buried here.

*Antiquities.*—Vestiges of three Roman Catholic chapels are still visible. One of them was situated at Dunnet-Head, and is supposed to have been a place of penance. There are a number of what are called Pictish houses over the parish. One of these at Ham is still pretty entire. They are supposed by Pennant to have been built by the Danes, who at one time possessed all the lower district of the county. Their construction seems to have been a circular room in the centre, contracting at the top like a bottle, by the projection of one stone over another, with a number of out-buildings or cells all around. A doorway and passage, covered with strong lintels of stone, seem to have led into the centre apartment. There is seldom any thing discovered in them when opened, except deer horns, bones, and shells, and occasionally a quern stone. They are uniformly situated in the best land, which leads us to suppose they were the first settlements for cultivation in the county. Another peculiarity is, that there are always several of them to be seen from the one you stand upon. This may have been for mutual alarm. There are tumuli on all the principal heights in the parish, chiefly composed of small stones, which have evidently been in the fire. We are led to suppose they were beacons. There is one on the highest point of Dunnet-Head, one on the Hill of Barrock, and one on the Hill of Greenland.

The principal building in the parish is the lighthouse, on

the north-west extremity of Dunnet-Head, which has been erected at a great expense, by the Commissioners for Northern Lights. It has proved useful for vessels passing the frith,—they frequently mistaking the Bay of Dunnet for it, and getting wrecked on the sands. Here, on a promontory nearly 500 feet above the level of the sea, exposed to the fury of the gales from the Atlantic Ocean, surrounded with moss, and about three miles from the nearest habitation, the art of man has made a comfortable dwelling, a garden on deep moss producing fine vegetables, and parks where tolerable crops of corn and grass are raised on moss twelve feet deep. The principal light-keeper, Mr Adair, deserves much credit for his perseverance as a cultivator.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population, till within sixty years ago consisted simply of the proprietors and their tenants. The proprietors farmed the Mains; the tenants had all more or less land allotted them, and the pasturage in common. They ploughed the land for the proprietors, carried the manure on their backs, or in creels on ponies. They reaped, thrashed, and manufactured the crop, carried it to market, and shipped it. They gave the proprietor part of their sheep, cattle, swine, geese, hens and eggs, and a small victual and money rent—they were, in fact, next thing to slaves. However, in this state, it is said, the proprietors kept excellent tables and lived well. The people, too, were not without their comforts. All their clothing was of home manufacture, some remnants of which are still to be seen—a kind of stuff of fine worsted, dyed very dark blue. It served for coat, vest, and breeches for Sundays, and also for gowns to the females; a more comfortable dress for a cold climate than the ruffles, ribbons, and flimsy fabrics now-a-days of Glasgow and Manchester.

#### *Amount of Population,—*

	Male.	Females.	Total.
In 1801 -	589	777	1366
1809 -	666	774	1440
1811 -	638	760	1398
1821 -	873	989	1862
1831 -	932	974	1906

The great disproportion of males and females in the beginning of this century was occasioned by the number of young men who had gone to the army and navy, or some other seafaring line; and the great increase of population in 1821, was produced chiefly by

about 300 Highlanders from Assynt and Strathnaver, who had been removed from their possessions by the introduction of sheep-farming, and came to this parish. The greater part of them had removed before 1831. Their habits not being adapted to an industrious life, they soon got in arrears with the landlord, and went off, some to the Highlands, others to America. With the above exception, the increase of population has risen partly from the extension of cultivation, and the fisheries, and the abolition of the feudal service which left the people more to their own resources.

The whole inhabitants may be said to be of the agricultural class, though those along the shore-side are frequently employed in fishing. The parish is occupied by 84 tenants, paying from L. 8 to L. 350 rent yearly, and 201 paying from 5s. to L. 8 yearly: there are besides ten large farms or mains in the occupation of the proprietors.

*Language, &c.*—The English language only is spoken by the original inhabitants. The few Highlanders remaining still partly retain the Gaelic. The children all speak English, and that much better than in the southern counties. Playing the knotty (golf) on New-Year's Day is almost the only game practised.

*Habits of the People.*—The habits of the people in dress and cleanliness have much improved of late years. The ordinary food is oat and barley-meal, with potatoes, fish, pork, beef, and occasionally tea and coffee. The practice of making malt and brewing ale is still understood; but the severity of the excise laws prevents people from a liberal use of this wholesome beverage. There are, no doubt, numbers in the parish who are much pinched in circumstances; but in general, potatoes and fish of one kind or another, and meal and milk, are within the reach of all. Mostly every householder keeps a pig, the pork of which is used in summer, boiled with cabbage, and though there are a number of families very poor, from circumstances over which they have no control, still the mass of the population may be said to live comfortably, and with a considerable degree of independence.

With regard to general character, they are an acute, sagacious, and moral set of people, and possessed of considerable energy in managing their own affairs. With some there is, perhaps, a want of industry, but this originates more from the nature of their situation than from indolence. The fisherman's life is too near akin to the hunter's for constant application, and the smaller te-

nants, having always a home, food, and fuel, do not, perhaps, bestir themselves so much as they ought.

Poaching prevails to a considerable extent among the young men, when there is snow on the ground. Smuggling is unknown, with the exception of small quantities of foreign spirits got by the fishermen from vessels passing the frith, and making a little malt for ale. But all that is done in either way is quite trifling.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The general employment of the people is agriculture and fishing. On the coast all are, to a certain extent, fishermen. After laying down their crofts in spring, they proceed to the lobster fishing. In the end of May and June, they cut their peats, and prepare for the herring fishing, which commences to the west of Thurso about the 1st of July, and sets in at Wick about the 18th. The whole fishermen and most of the young females set off for that station, and remain there for six weeks. They come home in September, get their crops cut, and potatoes dug, and betake themselves again to the fishing of cod, saithes, and *silags*. This is the ordinary routine with the coast side population. In the interior, most of the cottagers go to the herring fishing, and are employed by the proprietors or larger farmers at the harvest, when not needed at home, and afterwards at draining, ditching, and other agricultural operations. There is also a number of shoemakers, tailors, smiths, wrights, and weavers in the parish, but all hold more or less land, and a great portion of them are at some seasons fishermen. The above is the most numerous class in the parish. The next is the tenant, paying from L. 15 to L. 50 rent, who follows no profession save agriculture, and that generally in its ancient form, viz. bear and oats alternately. Most of them, however, now grow a few turnips and a little clover, and are decidedly improving; but, partly from want of skill, capital, and encouragement from proprietors in leases, fencing, and draining, they have made little progress in improving their farms or bettering their own condition. From the circumstance of the produce of the county far exceeding the wants of the population, especially the growth of beef and mutton, and the means of transport by steam being in operation, it is a question whether this class can long hold land, either with benefit to themselves or the proprietors, unless they exert themselves, and produce articles fit for the market, seeing that land is much lower rented here than farther south. And the southern markets being

now opened up, it is folly to think that the land will lie idle, or only half-cultivated, for any length of time.

The next classes are the large tenants and the proprietors' farm-servants, who are constantly employed in agriculture.

There are two retail shops and two public-houses in the parish.

The extent of the parish is about 17,000 acres, whereof 5000 are cultivated, and the remainder improvable pasture, moss, and links. The links may be stated at 2000 acres; the moss 6000 acres, —which leaves 4000 acres still capable of being brought into cultivation. The rent of land varies much according to circumstances. It may, however, be taken as an average at 12s. per acre; for arable land, varying from 5s. to L.1, 10s.; the average of grazing a cow for a year on good land is L.4, on poor soils L.2. Leicester sheep, of which there are upwards of 700 in the parish, pay about L.1 a-head; the sheep kept on the moors by small tenants and on Dunnet-Head, are of little value, perhaps 1s. 6d. each per annum.

*Wages.*—Farm servants' wages are, for men L. 6 to L. 8 yearly, 6½ bolls oatmeal, 2 bolls potatoes, with house and fire, and a chopin of milk daily. Boys less in proportion. Out-door women get L. 1, 10s., 2 bolls meal, with milk and potatoes for the half year. House servants (women) get from L. 1, 10s. to L. 1, 15s. half yearly. Shearers in harvest, for eight weeks, (men) get L. 1, 10s. with a stone of meal weekly, a few potatoes, and a chopin of milk daily. Women, L. 1 wages, half a boll of meal, a few potatoes, and a mutchkin of milk daily. Ordinary labourers get from 1s. to 1s. 6d. per day; women 6d.; wrights 2s.; masons and blacksmiths the same. Mason work, wall height, girth measure, is done for L. 1, 16s. per rood of 36 yards, all materials found. Wood, iron work, and saddlers' are fully higher than in other parts of the kingdom.

The common breed of cattle is an inferior description of the Highland, much deteriorated by importations from Orkney. They are generally sleek-skinned and coarsely made. In many instances they come to a good size, and the cows milk better than pure Highlanders. In most cases, they are badly kept, and of course the great proportion of cattle stock in the parish is bad. The ordinary price of small tenants' two year old stots and queys, taken off by drovers, has for the last fifteen years ranged from L. 1, 15s. to L. 3; the price of cows from L. 3 to L. 6. On the large farms and mains, where the land is well cultivated, and a regular sys-

tem of alternate husbandry introduced, there are good stocks of cattle of the Teeswater breed, reaching at three years old, from 45 to 56 stones beef, and bringing in the London market from L. 15 to L. 18.

The general breed of sheep is the Leicester, with those before-mentioned on Dunnet-Head, and a few Cheviots kept by tenants. The Leicesters have hitherto thriven very well, produce wool equal to any in the kingdom, and get to a good weight at 15 months old. Widders of that age bring from L. 1, 8s. to L. 1, 10s. each, and best ewes nearly the same.

The breed of horses is of all descriptions, from the pony to the first-rate Clydesdale. Mr Gunn of Ratter imported a stallion twelve months ago from Lanarkshire, of an excellent figure, and at a high price (L. 200). The size of cattle, horses, and other stock, as well as the quality of grain and green crops, is regulated by the size of the farms—where large, things in general are good, where small, bad in the extreme. The breed of swine has been much improved of late, by importations of the best English varieties.

*Improvements.*—On the farms in the parish, where improvements have been made, or are making, the mode of reclaiming waste land is, to lay it out in suitable fields with ditches and thorn hedges, protected either with flag, which makes an excellent fence, or stone dikes 20 inches high with a Galloway cope, then under-drain with drains from 3 to 5 feet deep, as is necessary; plough and allow it to lie for two years, then fallow and lime or marl, and if dry soil, make turnips with bone dust, which are fed off with sheep,—then a crop and grass seeds, if sufficiently reduced, if not, two crops,—then fallow and dung, and a crop with grass seeds,—then pasture for three or four years.

Substantial farm buildings have been erected and are erecting where improvements are going on. Mr Traill has expended a large sum in buildings, fences, drains, roads, and every thing else connected with the improvement of his estate. Freswick is also improving of late years. The links, moss, and waste ground, where under sheep, have been pasture-drained, which has improved the surface much. The parish, with a trifling exception betwixt Dunnet and Brough, is well provided with roads, and is rapidly improving, and there is little doubt of its continuing to do so, till its whole resources are called out; and, however the occupations of the population may be changed, capital is only wanted

to employ and give subsistence to more people than it contains at present.

The principal tenants have, in general, leases of from fourteen to twenty-one years. The smaller are at will, but are seldom removed so long as they pay their rents, or conduct themselves with propriety, unless to make way for some other arrangement; and in that case they are generally provided with a possession elsewhere.

*Quarries.*—Dunnet-Head affords excellent freestone for all building purposes, besides mill-stones, rollers, gate-posts, &c. The demand is limited, and the rent about L. 10 yearly. The other parts of the parish are well supplied with quarries for building, making roads, fences, and drains; and in one case there is a tolerable quarry for pavement, which is at present working on Mr Traill's estate of Inkstack, which pavement is sawn in the edges, and wrought up to be fit for exportation to London, at a considerable expense, affording profitable employment to a number of people.

*Fisheries.*—The salmon are *kitted* in the usual way, and sent to London. The cod and ling are sometimes sold as mud-fish in winter; in spring and summer they are dried.

*Gross Amount of Raw Produce.*—

10,000 quarters oats and bear, at L.1,	L.10,000
Hay, turnips, and potatoes,	4,000
Pasture of all kinds,	1,500
Fisheries, exclusive of herrings taken at Thurso and Wick,	400
Quarries,	200
	<hr/>
	L.16,100

*Manufactures.*—Formerly, a quantity of kelp was burned along the shore. It has been discontinued for some years, not paying the expense of manufacture. A number of females are employed in winter making herring nets, and working straw plait; but neither affords above 4d. per day. The growing of flax and making of linen has also been discontinued in a great measure; and from there being no other employment, except a little woollen cloth for home wear, females are not well employed in the winter season.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Towns, &c.*—Thurso and Wick are the market-towns. There is nothing that can be called a village in the parish. Thurso is nine miles from Dunnet church. A sub-office to Thurso was established in 1839. There is no post-office at present. It is hoped this grievance will soon be remedied. There



is one good and safe harbour at Ham, built at Mr Traill's expense. There are three landing places for boats at Dunnet, Brough, and Scarffskerry. A slip has been built at Brough, at the expense of the Commissioners for Northern Lights, for landing their stores. Here a good harbour could be formed. Nothing has been done at Dunnet or Scarffskerry to aid nature.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is inconveniently situated, being nearly at the western extremity of the parish, and distant about seven miles from the most easterly point. But the few inhabitants in that remote quarter are near the church of Bower, and very seldom attend at Dunnet. The great bulk of the population are within four miles of the church. The church is an ancient building, was repaired in 1837, and an aisle added. It is now a comfortable and commodious edifice, capable of containing 700 sitters. The manse is in indifferent repair, and the offices ruinous. The glebe contains eight acres, besides the garden and the site of manse and offices, and is worth L. 12 yearly. The stipend is 112 bolls of oatmeal, 81 quarters, 4 bolls, 1 peck, 1 gallon, 1¼ quart bear, and L. 8, 6s. 8d. of money. The living is in the gift of Sir James Colquhoun. The number of communicants is nearly 200, of whom 58 are male heads of families: There are a few Dissenters in the parish, Burghers, Anabaptists, and Methodists,—not exceeding 40 of all these persuasions.

The average amount of church collections from Whitsunday 1830 to Whitsunday 1836 was L. 10, 16s. 11d. annually. From Whitsunday 1836 to Whitsunday 1837, they were only L. 6, 6s. 2d., in consequence of the church being under repair.

*Education.*—There are in the winter season, four schools in the parish besides the parochial school, supported by private subscription. The salary of the parish school is the maximum, amounting to L. 34, 4s. 4½d. The school fees are moderate and ill paid. The salary, fees, &c. may amount to L. 45 per annum. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are principally taught in all the schools. The parochial schoolmaster teaches the higher branches of education. The people are quite alive to the value of education; but, for the most part, can only send their children to school during the winter months, which prevents there being many good scholars. All, however, are taught to read and write, and have been so for many years. There is a new school erected by Mr Traill in a central part of the parish, to which the Education

Committee of the General Assembly has appointed a teacher with a salary of L.20 per annum, and which will be of great benefit.

*Friendly Society.*—There is one Friendly Society in the parish, but it has been productive of no obvious advantages.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is about 100. The sum allotted to each of the greater part of them is a few shillings twice in the year. The more necessitous are supplied more liberally.

The lands of Hollandmaik in the parish, were purchased in 1835 for the poor, at the price of L. 630, yielding a clear rent of about L. 25 per annum. There is also an annuity of L. 5, 11s. 1½d. payable from the estate of Freswick, and interest of L. 300 capital, at 4½ per cent. L. 13, 10s. which, with the collections, say L. 10, 16s. 11d., make a sum of L. 54, 18s.\* From this sum is to be deducted L. 4, 10s., the interest of L. 100, appropriated by the donor, the late George Oswald, Esq. of Scotston, for paying the school fees of those children whose parents are unable to pay, which leaves the sum of L. 52, 13s. for annual distribution. There are no poor rates. With few exceptions, those among whom the poor funds are divided, are objects of charity; old and infirm people, who have no families to help them; widows with weak families, and the like. There is no general disposition to take parochial relief where they have other means to rely on, such as assistance from children or relatives.

*Fairs.*—There are four fairs or markets held in the parish annually for the sale of cattle, horses, sheep, &c., viz. one at Dunnet, first Tuesday of April, and the great market at the same place, on Tuesday, after 15th August, old style, which lasts two days, and is well attended. There is another on the first Tuesday of October, old style; and the Reaster market, third Tuesday of October, old style.

*Fuel.*—The fuel used is nearly altogether peats: it is of easy access, and good quality. The expense of it is not easily ascertained. A large cart load sells for 2s. Coals are imported at the neighbouring harbour of Castlehill, but little is used.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The arable land, by last Statistical Account, was 1600 Scots, or 2000 imperial acres; it is now upwards of 5000 acres: the rent was then L.950, it is now about L.3600. The system of ploughing with oxen and horses, three and four abreast, has been discontinued;

\* The collections since the church was repaired, L. 13, 17s. 11d. per annum.

iron ploughs and two horses being in general use. The pernicious system of servitude is abolished. Wages of labour of all kinds are more than doubled. The population was then (1791) 1399, it is now 1906,—certainly enjoying more comfort than at that period, and doing a vast deal more business. The houses also, with a few exceptions, have been much improved: in many cases, comfortable cottages have been erected.

The improvement which the parish is susceptible of, has already been pointed out. There is certainly a want of employment for females within doors; perhaps the growth of flax and the working of it as in Flanders, might be of use to remedy this evil. There are also a number of small tenants at a distance from the sea, who would be better employed as labourers, and the land they possess would be more productive under a different system. Seeing the climate forbids the cultivation of the more valuable grains, wheat, barley, beans, and pease, (of all which the soil produces great crops, but they only ripen well in favourable seasons, and are not for a man to meddle with who has a rent to pay,)—the attention of the farmer should be turned to grass, turnips, bear, and oats, which are produced, where well cultivated, in abundance. He should be active in rearing and feeding cattle and sheep for the southern markets, which, now from the introduction of steam navigation, can be sent as cheap in a few hours by sea, as they could be driven by land in a month, some years ago. Thus, by increasing the exports of the parish, and getting money in return, its cultivation may be still farther extended and improved, and the quantity of labour increased, which is the only sure means of adding to the happiness and comfort of the labouring classes in a rural community.

*October 1840.*

## PARISH OF WATTEN.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. ALEXANDER GUNN, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE etymology of the name Watten is uncertain. Some have supposed it to be a Danish word, signifying *water*, and to have derived its application from the circumstance of this parish containing the largest lake in the county.

*Extent, &c.*—The parish extends in extreme length from north-east to south-west about 10 miles, and in extreme breadth from north-west to south-east about 7; and its superficial contents may be reckoned in square miles at from 60 to 65. It is surrounded on the north, east, south, and west, by the parishes of Bower, Wick, Latheron, and Halkirk, respectively; the boundaries or dividing lines, however, cannot with propriety be called natural, but are, generally speaking, wholly conventional.

Its figure, making allowance for some considerable irregularities, may be called rhomboidal. Its surface is in general extremely level, the principal irregularities deserving rather the name of undulations than of hills. The valleys are consequently of very inconsiderable depth, with the exception of that which forms the basin of the principal lake. Its range is from north-west by west, to south-east by east, and the adjoining ground rises with a very trifling acclivity. The medium elevation of its bottom above the level of the sea is thirty feet. There are various glens in the southern part of the parish, but of small size, forming the channels of rivulets which have their sources in wet moorland grounds. Their forms are exceedingly irregular, their connections at an average angle of  $30^{\circ}$ , and their differences in point of elevation very inconsiderable.

*Meteorology.*—Under this head, little can be said either interesting or important. The average temperature of the atmosphere seems to differ little from that of the middle districts of the east

coast of Scotland, at least, where the country is unsheltered by hills. There is generally an excess of cloudy and foggy weather in the end of spring, beginning of summer, and end of autumn. The average quantity of rain is moderate, although occasionally, in autumn, it is such, that, for a considerable period, the streams are swollen beyond their ordinary limits, and the adjacent grounds under water.

*Climate.*—The climate is subject to very great vicissitudes, and the prevalent distempers, which are colds, inflammation of the throat, and other organs, (the latter more rarely), rheumatism, &c. unquestionably originate in the rapid alternations of heat and cold, drought and moisture. The parish is also sometimes, but not very frequently, visited by the usual epidemic diseases. There is seldom a long continuance of dry weather until near the summer solstice, and comparatively little dew falls until that period, when the nights are generally clear and calm. The prevailing winds are easterly, except during the months of June, July, August, and September, when the excess of wind ranges from south-east to west. The most violent gales are always from north by west.

*Hydrography.*—The springs are all perennial, and of a temperature not very different from the annual average of the atmosphere; their magnitude is generally inconsiderable, their water pure and colourless, (with a few exceptions, which are powerful chalybeates;) and the rocks from which they flow, excepting two or three instances of secondary limestone, are clay-slate. The parish contains two lakes, those of Watten and Toftingall, the first extending in length 3 miles, and in its greatest breadth about  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , containing 840 imperial acres, with an average depth of 10 feet, and surrounded by gently rising ground, generally in the highest state of cultivation; the other being about 5 miles in circumference, with an average depth of perhaps 8 feet, and surrounded by bleak dismal moors. Each of these lakes contributes its stream to the river of Wick, the channel by which the numerous rivulets having their source in the moorland grounds find their way to the ocean. The direction of these streams is generally northerly, until they arrive at the river of Wick, when it becomes east by south, with a small velocity. They vary much in length, and the course of the longest does not exceed 10 miles, including 2 miles of the river of Wick within the boundaries of this parish.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—A very characteristic geological feature of this parish, and a feature that belongs more or less to the

county generally, is the remarkably horizontal position of the strata. In a great many cases, there is not the slightest dip or inclination perceptible; and when this does appear, the average angle does not exceed  $10^{\circ}$ . The strata are almost universally intersected by minute fissures, perpendicular, and often rectilinear, the principal of which seem to run from east to west; these again are met, but not traversed, by others, often at right angles. Traversing veins are rare, and in no instance do they exceed an inch in thickness. In one part of the parish, they are met with running generally from north-east to south-west, composed of gypsum, and in some instances of felspar, and met in a very irregular manner by minute fissures. It is in this district that the greatest inclination is found, as well as the greatest derangement of the strata.

The rocks are composed entirely of flagstone slate or clay-slate, with two or three very trifling exceptions, consisting of limestone and whinstone, the former occurring perhaps not more than twice, in small quantity, and the latter hardly oftener. All these rocks appear to be of the secondary order, and although, from the limited observations which it has hitherto been possible to make, it cannot be decisively stated, yet there is reason to think that the clay-slate generally is superimposed over a bed of limestone, and has an average thickness of from 10 to 20 feet or upwards. Few or none of the simple minerals seem to have been met with imbedded in rock, but the beds of the rivulets are frequently strewn with the usual debris of primitive rocks, such as small pieces of granite containing minute portions of garnet and schorl, fragments of mica schist, quartz, &c.

Among the alluvial deposits covering the solid rocks, we may mention first those occurring along the course of the streams. Where the water has worn out for itself a deep channel, and a perpendicular section of the bank is presented, these deposits are seen frequently to consist of alternate horizontal layers of clay, light-coloured towards the surface, and darker as it descends, and coarse gravel, composed, as that in the beds of the water-courses generally is, of clay-slate, porphyry, sandstone, white and red, quartz, mica, and occasionally bog iron-ore. These layers of gravel rarely exceed 3 feet in depth, those of clay often occur with a depth of from 8 to 16 feet, containing disseminated portions of rock of various sizes. By far the most general, indeed the universal alluvial deposit resting on the rocks elsewhere is clay, hard, tenacious, of a bluish colour, and containing in greater or less

quantities gravel and pieces of rock imbedded. This clay occurs in quantity underneath a layer of peat in several places 16 feet in depth. Superimposed upon this sort of clay is often found another of a yellowish colour, less tenacious and in smaller quantity. Marl occurs pretty extensively in the bed of the principal lake, but rarely elsewhere. It does not exceed 4 or 5 feet in depth, and is generally covered with several feet of mud. Bog iron-ore occurs in various places, generally in dry, clayey moorland ground, but only scattered over the surface. Of peat there is a very great quantity, varying in depth from a few inches to 16 or 20 feet, and always resting on a bed of clay. It contains, as is usual, immense quantities of wood, oak, birch, and pine: very large pine trunks are frequently found, being sometimes met with even at the depth of 16 feet, with the bark and wood apparently quite entire, very light, and highly inflammable. The bark is generally of a silvery gray colour, and the wood dark-brown. Here chiefly occur horns of deer, and the very few other remains of animals that have been hitherto discovered.

The soil is generally composed of a clayey loam, in which the clay preponderates, with an average depth of from one to two feet, and naturally wet, from the very retentive nature of the subsoil. Though the soil is now much improved by draining, the only other varieties occur in the low flats adjacent to the water courses, which are composed of sand and other alluvial matters, and in the moorland districts where the peat predominates over the clay. Boulders are not unfrequent in the first mentioned soil; they rarely exceed two or three feet in diameter, and are composed of granite, limestone, whinstone, sandstone, &c. but most frequently of porphyry.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners are, Sir Ralph A. Anstruther, Bart. of Balcaskie; William Horne, Esq. of Stirkoke; William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick; Sir P. M. B. Thrieland of Fingask; Major-General William Stewart of Strath, &c.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers have been regularly kept since 1701, and are not very voluminous.

*Antiquities.*—There are numerous remains of Pictish houses, apparently similar in every respect to those elsewhere found, but in such a state of ruin that nothing material appears which has not been already often noticed. In one part of the parish, there still exist what are supposed to be the remains of a Druidical circle, in a beautiful natural amphitheatre, covered with verdant turf,

appearing to have been at all times destitute of wood, as the places of Druidical worship were, and situated in the midst of moors, once the site of seemingly boundless forests. There exist many traditions in the parish relative to the incursions of the Danes, and conflicts of the clans, but altogether so vague, and unauthenticated by positive evidence, as to be wholly unworthy of notice.

### III.—POPULATION.

The only existing data from which an estimate can be formed of the ancient state of the population of the parish are the registers of births and marriages. The average amount which the register of somewhat more than a century back gave is about 3000 inhabitants, or nearly triple the present number. The amount of population by the census of 1811 was 1109; by that of 1821, 1158; and by that of 1831, 1234. It is believed that since 1831 the population has decreased, chiefly from the great size of some of the farms, the introduction of sheep, &c. There is no town or village in the parish. The yearly average of births for the last seven years is 32, of marriages, 8. There are no resident heritors in the parish. The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards is 7. The number of families, 241; of houses inhabited, 241; of houses uninhabited, 9; number of blind, 1.

*Habits of the People, &c.*—In the language generally spoken, in the habits of the people as to cleanliness, and in the style and manner of their dress, a remarkable improvement has taken place within the last forty years. They appear on the whole to enjoy a reasonable degree of comfort and contentment, are distinguished for industry and economy, and their general character may be inferred from the fact, that crimes requiring the cognizance of the civil power are so rare as to be almost unheard of.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—As nearly as can be estimated, the number of acres standard imperial measure in the parish, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage, is about 5500. Supposing the contents of the parish to be sixty square miles, or 38,400 acres, the number of acres constantly waste, or in pasture, will be about 33,000, composed in many parts of deep flow-moss, and, with the exception of some small green patches along the banks of the streams, generally of little use as pasture. It is unsound for sheep, of which stock very few indeed have of late years been kept by the



smaller tenants, whose farms are, in general, adjoining to the above-mentioned moss ground.

By a calculation, as accurate as circumstances admit of, it appears that there are upwards of 5000 acres presently waste that might be added to the cultivated land of the parish; and from the apparent quality of the soil, as well as the result of experiments already made, there is no doubt of their affording in time a fair return for the capital employed in bringing them into a productive state.

The commons are all divided, or in process of division, except one of no great extent (Kilminster), on the east side of the parish.

It can scarcely be said there is wood in the parish, except a few trees at the old garden of Achingale, which have attained a pretty good size. Sir Ralph Anstruther has planted about an acre at Watten; it was trenched and well drained, has been now planted about twelve years, and appears thriving. There seems little doubt of raising wood by the above process, if it is protected. Hard-wood seems to thrive. There are about 10 acres of natural copse at Scouthil, composed chiefly of dwarf birch, hazel, and quaking-ash, but its height is trifling.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per acre is not easily ascertained. Enclosed land may be valued at 16s. per acre, and the general rent paid by tenants for their whole land, both arable and pasture, is at the rate of from 12s. to L.1 per arable acre. The pasture is often four times the extent of the arable, and there are some tenants not possessing more than 20 acres of arable and meadow ground, who have 800 acres of moor pasture. A cow's keep throughout the year may be taken at L. 4 on arable, and L. 2 on waste land. Leicester sheep, of which there are some large flocks in this parish, pay about L.1 a-head; the sheep kept on the moors by small tenants are of little value, and may be reckoned at 2s. per head yearly.

*Wages.*—Farm-servants' wages are, for men L. 8 yearly, 6½ bolls oatmeal, 2 bolls potatoes, one chopin of milk daily, with house and fire; for boys less in proportion. Out-door women for the half-year, L. 1, 15s., 2 bolls meal, milk and potatoes. House servants, L. 1, 10s. to L. 1, 15s. Shearers in harvest, men L. 1, 10s. with a stone of meal weekly, a few potatoes, and a chopin of milk daily; women, L. 1, 1s. 13 lbs. oatmeal weekly, potatoes, and half a chopin of milk daily, house room and fire. The above for six weeks, or the duration of harvest and raising the potatoes. Of ordinary la-

bourers, men get from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 8d. per day in summer, and from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d. in winter; women get 6d. in winter, and 8d. in summer. Wright's work may be stated at 2s. to 2s. 6d. per day; blacksmith's the same. Mason work L. 2 per rood of 36 square yards. Iron, wood, and leather are about the same prices as in other parts of the kingdom.

*Live-Stock.*—The native breed of cattle is an inferior description of the Highland breed, generally sleek-skinned and coarsely made. In many instances they get to a good size, and the cows milk better than the pure Highlanders. There is not sufficient attention paid to them in general, and, of course, a considerable proportion of the cattle stock in the parish is inferior. The general price of two year old cattle taken off by drovers to the south country markets has for the last few years, including the present, ranged from L. 3 to L. 8 each; the ordinary price of cows from L. 5 to L. 11.

The few sheep kept by the smaller tenants are Cheviots; but, being ill-treated, and many of them dying of rot, they generally come to very little account.

These remarks are applicable only to the smaller class of farms, on which the old system of husbandry still obtains, which is as follows: viz. on the best land, bear after manuring, followed by two crops of oats, and this followed in endless succession: on the outfield arable, two or three crops of oats, and then five or six rest; a few potatoes and turnips, and a patch of sown grass. The number of farms, however, managed after this mode is every year decreasing.

Where a better system obtains, there are, of course, better stocks of cattle. A cross with the Teeswater has become very general, and seems likely, as agriculture improves, to supersede the native breeds. Leicester sheep, and Cheviot crossed with Leicester, are reared extensively, thrive well, and equal in weight any in the kingdom. Their wool gives great satisfaction in the southern markets.

*Improvements.*—A great and rapid change to the better has taken place in agriculture during the last twenty years. There are several very extensive farms in the highest state of cultivation, thoroughly drained; some of them to a considerable extent furrow-drained, and enclosed with fences consisting of dry stone dike, hedge, and ditch. On one of these, the farm of Wester Watten, belonging to William Horne, Esq. of Scouthel, it is believed that

there are from twenty to twenty-five miles of fences of this description.

It may be worthy of remark, that, about fifty years ago, the late Sir Robert Anstruther improved the Mains of Watten most judiciously, enclosed it with hedges and dikes, built a steading on it, and laid it out in the best style. The late Mr Horne of Langwell was the first to follow his example on his property of Wester Watten above-mentioned, which, from being almost entirely waste and unproductive, was converted, under the able management of Mr James Purvis, now manager to Mr Traill of Ratter, into one of the finest, as it certainly is one of the largest farms in the north of Scotland. What his uncle did to Wester Watten, Mr Horne of Scoutel, well known for many years past as the greatest and most successful improver in this county, has more recently done to his property of Lynegar, also in this parish; and Sir R. A. Anstruther of Balcaskie, the principal proprietor in the parish, has, for some years past, been pursuing a most admirable system on his extensive estates, viz. that of granting, on improving leases, moderate-sized farms, regularly subdivided, fenced, and intersected by good roads, with all requisite encouragement to the tenantry, as respects draining, manure, comfortable dwelling-houses, &c. His tenantry are amply supplied, at a low rate, with marl raised by dredging in a small loch adjoining the west end of the parish.

It is the opinion of many, that, under such circumstances as these, the system of moderate-sized farms would eventually prove the most advantageous to the landlords in a pecuniary point of view, as it certainly would in a moral and economical, both to them and to the country at large, being the only means of preserving a class of men now fast wearing out, and whom the rapid extension of sheep-farming threatens in many districts to annihilate altogether—the substantial peasantry of Scotland, the trustiest bulwark of the aristocracy, and the best defence under Providence of the altar, the throne, and the constitution; a class of men among whom religion, morality, and good order have flourished more than among any other; a class who are seldom appreciated as they should be, and whose services may be most needed when they cannot be had.

A wonderful stimulus has been given to agriculture, and the rearing of improved stock in this parish, as well as others in the county, by the easy access to the southern markets, opened up by steam within these few years, for fat cattle and sheep, a great

number of which are now annually shipped to Leith, Newcastle, and London. Great advantages have also followed from the spirited exertions of the county gentlemen to improve the breed of cattle, sheep, horses, &c., by giving annual premiums to the exhibitors of the best stock. So successful, indeed, have these been, that this county need not now dread a competition in these matters, open to all Scotland, as was amply shown at the Highland Society's meeting at Inverness in 1839.

*Produce.*—Average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained :—

Oats, 6500 quarters, at L.1, 1s. per quarter, . . . . .	L. 6825	0	0
Bear, 860 do. at L.1, 8s. per do. . . . .	1204	0	0
Potatoes, 2800 bolls at 10s. per boll, . . . . .	1400	0	0
Turnips, 300 acres, at L.7 per acre, . . . . .	2100	0	0
Hay, 30,000 stones, at 6d. per stone, . . . . .	750	0	0
Land in pasture and miscellaneous produce, . . . . .	700	0	0
Total yearly value of raw produce, . . . . .	L.12,979	0	0

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.*—There are no market or other towns in the parish. The nearest market-town is Wick, distant eight miles.

*Means of Communication.*—The means of communication enjoyed by the parish are, one post-office, (at the bridge of Watten), being a sub-office to Wick,—twenty miles of turnpike roads, (along seven miles of which the mail passes daily, and a carrier twice a week), and various bridges, all of inconsiderable size, excepting two at Watten and Dunn.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is very inconveniently situated, being distant from the north-east extremity of the parish only one mile, and nearly nine miles from the south-west. The date of its erection is unknown. It appears from the session records to have been repaired in 1714. Since that period, it has received several repairs, and was propped with wooden supports two years ago. It is in a very bad state. It may accommodate from 700 to 800 persons, and the sittings are all free. The manse was built in 1778. There is a glebe of 24 acres, worth about 15s. per acre, and the amount of stipend is 14 chalders, half meal and half barley, with L. 10 for communion elements. There is no Government church, Dissenting, Seceding, Episcopalian, or Roman Catholic chapel in the parish. There is one missionary in the Highland part of it, supported partly by the Royal Bounty Committee, and partly by the people; also, a catechist. The number of families attending the Established Church

is nearly equal to the number of families in the parish, and the church is generally full. The average number of communicants is about 120. There is one society in the parish—a Bible, Jewish, and Missionary Society. The average yearly collections for religious purposes are about L. 25, and for charitable L. 20.

*Education.*—The number of schools in the parish is 3, of which one is parochial, one endowed by the General Assembly's Education Committee, and one supported by fees. The parochial schoolmaster has the maximum salary of L. 34. He is obliged from age to have an assistant, who receives the fees, averaging L. 12, and occasional donations from the heritors. The general expense of education is, for reading, 1s. 6d. or 2s.; writing and arithmetic, 6d. each additional per quarter, Latin, 5s. Poor children are taught gratis at the parochial and General Assembly's schools. There are no children upwards of six years of age who are not in course of learning reading, writing, and arithmetic. Some aged persons there are, who cannot read, but the number of these is exceedingly small. The people universally are much alive to the benefits of education, and two additional schools are required which they are unable regularly to maintain.

A parochial library has been established this year, which already possesses upwards of 300 volumes; there are also two Sabbath schools very efficiently taught, and numerous attended.

*Friendly Society.*—Under this head there is nothing to particularize excepting a Friendly Society instituted in 1819, for the purpose of aiding its members when sick, and their widows after their decease. It is sufficiently desirable in this point of view, but in other respects its advantages are not very obvious.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average of persons receiving parochial aid is 35, and the average sum given to each 15s. per annum. The average sum at the disposal of the kirk-session for all parochial purposes, is about L. 34, of which L. 20 arise from church collections, the remainder being the interest of legacies, and sums collected many years ago by fines, and economy in the distribution of the funds. There is no other regular mode of procuring funds for the poor. There are none unemployed who are able and willing to work, and there are none so destitute as not to have a cottage, plenty of fuel, and a spot of ground for cabbages and potatoes.

*Fairs.*—The following are held in the parish, for the sale of horses, cattle, sheep, and other stock, for hiring servants, and

other purposes of markets generally. 1. Roodsmass, on the first Tuesday of May, (old style); 2. Roodsmass, on the third Tuesday of September, O. S.; 3. Wester Market, on the last Tuesday of October; 4. Magnusmass, on the last Tuesday of December. Also three cattle-trysts, on the first Mondays of July, August, and September, on the Hill of Backless.

*Inns.*—There are 4 of these, being three more than the public accommodation requires. They receive almost no countenance from the people of the parish.

*Fuel.*—The fuel almost universally used is peat or turf, procured from the peat-bogs, with which the parish abounds, at an expense of about 6d. per cart load, exclusive of carriage.

October 1840.

## PARISH OF ÖLRICK.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. WILLIAM M'KENZIE, MINISTER.

### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE word *Olrick* (or *Olrig*), is of Norwegian derivation, and may be interpreted “the son of Erick:” it was applied to this parish in allusion to a settlement made by some chief of that name on this part of the coast, about the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century, when an invasion of this northern part of the kingdom is supposed to have taken place.

*Extent.*—The length of the parish from north-west to south-east is 5 miles, its medium breadth 3 miles: and it contains  $15\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, or about 10,000 imperial acres. It is bounded on the west, east, and south by the parishes of Thurso, Dunnet, and Bower,—and the sea is the boundary on the north.

*Soil and Produce.*—The soil throughout the parish may be considered good; and as improvements in agriculture are carried on, on the most approved plans, perhaps there is not a parish in the north of Scotland where better crops of all kinds of useful produce are raised. There is abundance of marl in the parish,

which, along with sand and sea-weed, afford every facility in the way of manure. The common of Hilliclay being now divided and enclosed by the respective proprietors, and fast yielding to cultivation, very little of the parish can be considered as unfit for husbandry, and what is not already under cultivation, affords excellent pasture for young cattle and sheep,—of the latter of which there is a large increase of late years, and that of the best description.

*Minerals, &c.*—Limestone and freestone, slates and flags abound in the parish.

In the raising of stone for pavement much has been done for some years back. The finest quality of this is found on the property of Mr Traill of Ratter, the stratification being so very regular and plane, that it answers admirably for streets, without any surface dressing. The layers are from three-quarters of an inch to five inches thick and upwards in the quarry; the colour of the stone from a smoke-gray to blue. This stone is very hard, and exceedingly strong and durable. Some of the oldest houses in Caithness are roofed with it, and it has been employed with advantage for granary floors, being laid on joists at the ordinary distance, in the upper as well as low flats of buildings. The inhabitants of London, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other towns are now reaping the benefit of pavement exported from this parish. At Castlehill, machinery is employed in sawing the edges and polishing the surface of the stone, which is now used in this prepared form for lobby floors, tables, hearthstones, and mantel-pieces, and other purposes within doors. Upwards of 100 labourers are constantly employed, and numerous cargoes of this useful commodity are exported every season; the proprietor having erected a neat and commodious harbour for his own use, has now the pleasure and advantage of seeing his own and other vessels coming in and going out in safety in the immediate neighbourhood of his mansion-house,—the tonnage required being from 3000 to 4000, and the annual shipment of pavement alone being from 300,000 to 400,000 square feet.

On the estates of Orlig and Murkle, there are also quarries of slate and flag of good quality.

The line of sea coast belonging to this parish is not more than two miles from east to west. At the extremities of this line are the bays of Castlehill and Murkle, both abounding with fish of every kind peculiar to the coast, sought after (with the exception

of the salmon-fishing, let to a respectable tenant), now only by the labourers as a recreation from other work, and for the use of their families.

Allusion has been already made to the harbour at Castlehill; and it is much to be regretted that no steps have been taken for having a harbour also erected in the bay of Murkle, which is so well adapted for the purpose, and which would afford shelter to vessels in distress, or retarded in their progress by contrary winds, being almost naturally locked in from the effects of that dangerous neighbour, the Pentland Frith, and there being abundance of water at all times of tide.

*Lakes.*—The only lake, that of Durran, mentioned in the former Statistical Account, was drained many years ago, and has amply rewarded the proprietors,—the surface of water being now exchanged for inexhaustible pits of marl and rich meadow pasture.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest date of these is 1700, since which period the record of session, including births and marriages, has been regularly kept; but no record of deaths seems to have been kept in this parish at any period.

*Antiquities.*—Torfæus mentions a nunnery, the site of which is obviously indicated by the burn of Closters (cloisters), running through the farm of Redlands, on the estate of Murkle, and not far from a green hillock resembling the Pictish cairns, which abound in the county, and of which there are several in this parish.

On the top of the hill of Olrick, on the southern boundary of the parish, there are evident remains of a watch-tower, which, in former times, must have been of no little importance, from the extensive view it commands of the coast and the country round. From this spot the bays of Sandside, Scrabster, Dunnet, Freswick, and Reiss, Dunnet-head, the hills of Canisbay and Noss-head, all in this county, together with some of the islands of Orkney, and also some of the mountainous parts of Sutherland, Moray, Banff, and Aberdeen shires are visible,—affording one of the most extensive and finest views to be found in this northern part of the country.

On the boundary of the parish on the east, towards Dunnet, it is said there existed a church, the position of which is ascertained by the name of St Coomb's Kirk (perhaps in honour of St Columba), being still given to the spot; and there is a farther tradition, that this church and the adjoining manse, sup-



posed to have been the parish church and manse of the united parishes of Dunnet and Olrick, were, in the night season, suddenly overwhelmed with sand during the prevalence of a storm, the minister and his family effecting their escape with difficulty by the roof; and it is probable that it was at this period that the adjoining lands of the property of Tain shared the same fate. The district is now known by the name of the Links of Old Tain.

The only other place in the parish worthy of note is Murkle, on the western boundary; which name is believed to have been originally *Mort Hill*, or the field of death, applied in allusion to a battle fought between the Danes and natives, in which the latter were victorious. It is said that the Scottish chief, on seeing a large hollow at the head of Murkle Bay filled with the enemy, called out to his followers, "clear the den," which was responded to with such destruction of the invaders, that the place got the name of *Clear Den*, or *Clairden*, which it bears to this day.

*Land-owners.*—The only two residing heritors are, James Traill, Esq. of Ratter, and James Smith, Esq. of Olig, who have done much for the encouragement and comfort of their numerous tenantry. The other non-residing heritors are, the Earl of Caithness; Sir John Gordon Sinclair, Bart.; and the Trustees of the late George Miller, Esq., who bequeathed the small property of Swarlet for the benefit of the poor of the parish of Thurso.

### III.—POPULATION.

By Dr Webster's Report in 1755,	-	875 souls.
By Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account in 1792,	1001	
By Government census in 1821,	-	1093
By Do. Do. 1831,	-	1146

And by a census taken up by the present parish minister in 1835, in order accurately to meet some Government queries, the population was found to amount to 1352 souls, composed chiefly of farmers, farm-servants, and labourers. This increase is to be attributed to the erection and prosperity of the village of Castle-town, (the only one in the parish,) on the property of James Traill, Esq. of Ratter, and to the employment and liberal wages throughout the year afforded by him to numerous workmen in raising and preparing pavement for the southern markets. The number of inhabitants in this village, which is rising in importance, from the granting of perpetual feus, and several handsome houses being built in consequence, may be computed at 320 souls.

The average of marriages for the last seven years is	-	10
births,	do. do.	32
deaths,	do. do.	17

The latter average raised from the effects of small-pox.

In their general character, the people may be stated to be sober, industrious, intelligent, and attentive to the outward ordinances of religion.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture, &c.*—The extent of the parish being about 10,000 acres, 6000 may be reported as cultivated, and the remainder, with the exception of about 500 acres of links and moss, is capable of cultivation.

There are 20 acres under wood on the estates of Castlehill and Odrig. The oldest was planted by the present proprietor, James Traill, Esq. about fifty years ago, consisting principally of ash, plane, elm, oak, mountain-ash, and larch. Some of the trees have grown as high as 50 feet. The ash seems to thrive the best. Fir does not succeed.

*Rent.*—The rent of arable land varies much, depending in a great measure on proximity to the sea-coast. Near the sea it may be stated at from L. 1 to L. 1, 5s. per acre; in the interior from 12s. to 15s. is near the average. The rate of grazing a cow is L.2 in summer, and L.1, 10s. for wintering. Keep of a Leicester sheep is worth from 15s. to 20s. during the year.

*Wages.*—Farm-servants' wages are, for men, from L. 6 to L. 8 in money per annum, with 6½ bolls meal, 2 bolls potatoes, house-room, fire, and a chopin of milk daily. Boys less in proportion. Out-door women get L. 3, 4 bolls of meal, with lodgings, fire, milk, and potatoes. House female servants L. 3 to L. 3, 10s. yearly. Harvest labourers are engaged for eight weeks. Men get L. 1, 10s., and one boll meal, with a chopin of milk daily, and a few potatoes; women L.1, and half a boll meal for the harvest, with potatoes and a mutchkin of milk daily. The price of labour has risen considerably within the last two years, from the great demand for hands at the stone-works, making roads, furrow-draining, enclosing, &c. and may be stated for common labourers 1s. 6d. per day in winter, and 1s. 10d. in summer. Women get now pretty generally 8d. a day for turnip-hoeing, and 6d. in winter for barn-work, pulling turnips, &c. Wrights, masons, and blacksmiths get about 2s. 6d. per day. Mason-work of ordinary wall height and girth measure is done for L.2 per rood of 36 square yards. Blacksmiths get L.2, 10s. per annum for each pair of horses. They uphold the horses' shoes, iron-work of ploughs and carts. Saddlers get from L. 1 to L. 1, 5s. for upholding the harness of each pair of horses during the year.

*Breeds of Live-Stock.*—The common breed of cattle among the proprietors and larger tenants is a cross with the Highland and Teeswater, which Mr Traill introduced some years ago. They have answered very well, and are a vast improvement compared with the old stock. The smaller tenants still keep the old breed, an inferior description of highlanders.

The breed of sheep is the Leicester, which was also introduced by Mr Traill eight years ago: it has succeeded beyond expectation, both as to weight and the quality of the wool. There are now about 1500 sheep of this kind in the parish; and the number is yearly increasing.

*Husbandry.*—The husbandry of the parish is of all kinds, from the best modern systems to the most antiquated. On the improved farms the five and six shift courses are followed. Turnips eat off with sheep, and business managed much the same as in the southern part of the kingdom. On the lands occupied by the smaller tenantry (they occupy more than one-half of the parish,) the system is continual cropping, or nearly so, viz. bear and oats alternately. Numbers are beginning to sow a few turnips and grass-seeds; but there is scarcely as yet any regular rotation introduced. However, with the great command the parish has of manure, viz. marl, sea-weed, and shell-sand, vast quantities of bear and oats are raised of good quality—Angus oats generally weighing from 40 lb. to 42 lb. per bushel, and bear from 48 lb. to 52 lb. A part of the parish (Murkle) is remarkable for producing black oats. They degenerate everywhere else by repeated sowing except here; the consequence of which is, that the whole county take a change of seed of their oats from Murkle.

The mode of reclaiming waste lands is,—first enclose with ditch and thorn hedge, protected with flags set on edge; then drain out the springs with three feet or four feet drains as required; plough in and allow it to lie a year or more; lay on marl or shell sand at the rate of twenty to twenty-five loads per acre; then cross plough and work it down for turnips with dung, or bone-dust, or both; feed the turnips off with sheep; then oats, or bear and grass seeds; then pasture with sheep for a few years; and the land is generally afterwards fit for any rotation. The quality of the soil being good, considerable progress is made and making in thus reclaiming waste lands. Furrow draining has also been introduced on Mr Traill's estate. The effect is wonderful, and the practice will, though expensive, in a few years, be common.

The principal tenants have in general leases of from fourteen to twenty-one years, with stipulations as to cropping. The small occupiers are at *will*, and are wearing out,—the tendency of the present system of improvement being to throw the whole lands into large farms.

Where the farms are large the steadings are substantial and commodious; slates, flags, and building stones of the best quality being abundant; the fences are also very good, either stone walls or hedges protected with flags. On the small farms the houses are almost wholly built with seal covered with divots,—chimneys few in number—and fences of a very indifferent description.

The principal improvements made in the parish have been done by James Traill, Esq. of Ratter, and James Smith, Esq. of Olig. The other proprietors are non-resident, and do not seem to give much attention to their estates. Mr Traill may well be called the author of all improvements in the county; which a single view of his property in this parish, after surveying Caithness, will sufficiently testify, either as regards culture, plantations, buildings, harbours, roads, live-stock, or crops; indeed, what he has accomplished could scarcely be credited as being the work of one individual, and is and will be a great example to Caithness proprietors in all time coming.

The obstacles to improvements are the state of occupancy by small tenants, and the want of capital.

The rental of the parish is about L. 4000 a year; L. 50,000 laid out on buildings, enclosures, roads, and drains, would not do more than put the parish into a fair state of cultivation. It is, therefore, easily seen that its final improvement must be a work of time. The facilities of procuring manure; the excellent materials for buildings, enclosures, and drains, got from the refuse of the flag quarries, are its great advantages, and will ultimately produce great results. The surface is capable of producing more than double of what it does at present; and as a matter of course will pay double rent; there is, therefore, little doubt, that ere long, in consequence of easy access to the southern markets by the aid of steam-vessels, that capital will find its way to call out the dormant and neglected resources of this and every other parish in the county of Caithness.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The parish is well accommodated with roads. The county line, from Thurso to Wick, passes through it, and there is no

deficiency of cross-roads. There is a daily post between Castle-town and Thurso; and a regular carrier to Wick.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The present church, conveniently situated for the parish, seems to have been built in 1633, and though frequently repaired, has never had any addition made to it. It has never been divided, nor seated at the expense of the heritors. It affords accommodation for only 403 sitters, at 18 inches; and this being far below what the increasing population require of seat-room, the heritors have lately adopted a very handsome plan by Mr David Cousin, architect in Edinburgh, agreeable to which a new church is now building, which will afford the requisite accommodation, and be a great ornament to the village of Castle-town, at the east end of which it is situated. The manse was built about fifty years ago, and along with the offices underwent considerable repairs in 1825. There is a glebe attached to it of 8 Scotch acres, which may be valued at L. 10. The amount of stipend is 14 chalders, half barley and half oatmeal, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements. The number of communicants is 120. There is no Dissenting place of worship in the parish; the number of Dissenters is under 100; and these belong to the Original Seceders, Independents, and Baptists, the great majority of whom readily signed a late petition to the Legislature in behalf of the extension and endowment of the Established Church.

*Education.*—There are one parochial and four other schools in the parish. About one-eighth of the population may be computed as attending school.

The salary of the parish teacher is the maximum. All the usual branches of a classical and commercial education are taught. The fees are moderate, in no case exceeding 7s. per quarter, whatsoever branches are taught. The other teachers are upon their own adventure. There is not a person in the parish above five years of age but who can read, and, with few exceptions, also write. The children of such as are in indigent circumstances are educated gratuitously. There is a Sabbath school, where the youth of both sexes are carefully instructed in the principles of the Christian religion.

*Library.*—There is a parish library consisting of some hundred volumes of useful books, of a miscellaneous and religious character.

*Friendly Societies.*—Of these there are three in the parish, from

which much benefit has been derived by the aged and infirm, as well as by widows and orphans. Allowances are also made for defraying the funeral expenses of members and their widows. The Castletown Society alone, since its commencement in 1797, has distributed nearly L. 4000. These Societies have prevented many from being on the poor's roll.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 35, whose circumstances are taken into due consideration without any special or fixed sum being allotted. There is a mortification of L. 100, left by the late Dr Oswald of Scotstown, the interest of which, along with L. 25 of collections, and some seat-rents in the church, under the direction of the session, placed at their disposal last year L. 36, 12s. 4d. There is no assessment of the heritors. Particular care is taken in the admission of parties on the poor roll—vagrancy is discouraged—no pauper certificate for begging has been granted during the last fifteen years—and in various cases, the heritors and parishioners have subscribed liberally, in order to prevent families from becoming a permanent burden upon the parish.

*Fairs.*—There are three annual fairs held in the parish, in March, June, and November, for the sale and purchase of cattle.

*Inns.*—There are two in the parish, which are well kept, but one would be fully sufficient for the accommodation required by travellers.

*Fuel.*—Moss is not very abundant in this parish; but there is now an abundant supply of English coal to be had at the village of Castletown: it is conveyed in vessels that are constantly arriving at Castlehill for cargoes of pavement.

*October 1840.*

# PARISH OF HALKIRK.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. JOHN MUNRO, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE ancient name of this parish was St Fergus and St Thomas. It had this name because the parish of St Fergus was united to that of St Thomas's soon after or about the time of the Reformation. It is very probable that the tract of country now known by the name of the parish of Halkirk, or the united parishes of Halkirk and Skinnnet, contained at some remote period more than the two parishes above alluded to: the number of burying grounds, and the ruins of several places of worship, afford a presumptive proof of this. Some of these, however, are said to have been chapelries in the times of Popery. The etymology of the modern name, Halkirk, is involved in the greatest obscurity, and, as there is no tradition regarding it, the conjectures of imagination are the only sources from which any thing probable can be drawn.

*Extent, &c.*—The very irregular figure of the parish makes it difficult to ascertain its real extent. The extreme length is 24 miles, the breadth varies from 12 to 3 miles. From these considerations, we may suppose that the parish contains about 90 or 92 square miles. The parish is bounded on the north by the parish of Thurso; on the north-east and east by the parishes of Bower and Watten; on the south and south-west by the parishes of Latheron, Kildonan, and Reay; on the west by Dorrory, a detached part of the parish of Thurso; and on the north-west by the parish of Reay.

*Topographical Appearances.*—There is neither hill nor mountain remarkable for height in the parish, except the Spittal hill, partly in this parish and partly in the parish of Watten, and about three miles south-east from the church of Halkirk. The elevation of this hill above the level of the sea is not known; its height, how-

ever, is such that the greater part of the county may be seen from its summit. From time immemorial till within the last seven or eight years, it was customary to have an annual market on the very top of this hill. From the name of the market, *the Jamesmas*, it is evident that it had its origin during the prevalence of Popery in Scotland. This market is now held in a place equally central and far easier of access, and will be afterwards mentioned under another head.

*Hydrography.*—There is a considerable number of lakes in the parish, from twenty-two to twenty-four, including small and great. The loch of Calder is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length, and from one mile to half a mile in breadth. The next in magnitude is Lochmore, which differs very little in size from the other. Both these lochs have a very pleasing effect on the scenery. In traveling towards either of them a person does not see them till they burst at once on his view, and they form a striking and a lively contrast to the moss and the heath with which they are surrounded. There are two rivers which pass through the parish. By the inhabitants of this parish, the principal of these rivers is called the river of Halkirk, but at Thurso, near which it enters the sea, it is called the river of Thurso. The source of this river is *Alltan na cat*, or Cat'sbrook, which is about eight miles south-west from Lochmore and in Sutherlandshire. Though this brook is considered the source of the river, there are several lakes, upwards of twenty, which pour their waters into the river. Some of these lakes are in this parish, and some in the mountains which divide this county from Sutherlandshire. As this river flows through a wide extent of country it receives into its channel and discharges into the sea a great quantity of water. After much rain or a rapid thaw it overflows its banks, and, during the harvest months, has at times done great damage to grass and other crops which lie within its range. Its course is nearly through the centre of the parish; and, taking into calculation its various windings, its length from the source to its junction with the sea is from 40 to 50 miles. The other river, that of Forssy, divides this parish from Reay on the north-west, and joins the sea at Forss, in the parish of Thurso. This river, after great falls of rain, comes down in torrents, and does much injury to corn and grass in low situations near its course. It is from 15 to 20 miles in length. Trout and salmon are taken in both the rivers, and trout of various kinds in the lakes.—There are two springs in the



parish which may be noticed. Tobair Acraig, the well of Halkirk, about a mile south-east from the church, is believed to be medicinal, and partakes of the nature of chalybeate waters. The other is at the north-west end of the Loch of Calder, and is believed by the inhabitants in its vicinity to be useful for the cure of diseases. It is of the same nature with the one just mentioned. It may be observed that marl is found in the Loch of Calder, and that a year or two ago, exertions were made, which are still persevered in, to raise it by means of a boat having machinery attached for the purpose. Another loch, that of Leurary, the whole bottom of which is a bed of marl, was drained a number of years ago, and the loch being now dry, this substance is easily obtained, and is found very useful for agricultural purposes.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners in this parish are, Sir George Sinclair of Ulbster, Bart. M. P. for the county; Lord Duffus; Sir Patrick M. B. Thriepland of Fingask and Toftingal, Bart.; James Sinclair, Esq. of Forss; Charles S. Guthrie, Esq. of Scots Calder; Donald Horne, Esq. of Langwell; David Henderson, Esq. of Westerdale; James Smith, Esq. of Olig; and Adam Duff, Esq. of Banniskirk. None of these except Mr Henderson of Westerdale reside in the parish.

*Parochial Registers.*—The old registers of this parish were destroyed many years ago by some ill disposed persons. The present ones commence with the year 1790.

*Antiquities.*—One of the relics of antiquity in this parish is the Castle of Brawl. It is situated on the north bank of the river Thurso, which flows through the middle of a valley, long and broad, commencing to form at the sea, and extending fully twelve miles into the interior. A place equidistant from both the extremities of this valley, and at which there is a peculiar winding in the course of the river, attractive and pleasing to the eye, is the spot chosen for this once strong and well fortified, but now ruined haunt of ancient heroes. Under the general designation, Castle of Brawl, are comprehended two distinct buildings, belonging to different eras of architecture. The most ancient of these is a tower 39 by 36 feet; and there still remain 35 feet of the height. The walls are 9 feet thick; and in the centre of the east wall is formed a stone stair leading to the very top of the building. In the walls there are several recesses 2 feet and 2 feet 8 inches in breadth, which may contain two or three persons in a standing po-

sition. These recesses diminish gradually both in height and breadth towards the outside of the wall, and each of them ends in a narrow opening, which appears to have admitted all the light which found an entrance to this gloomy abode of the heroes of battle and of rapine. These openings seem also to have been calculated as convenient positions from which those within the castle could shoot at such of their foes as dared attack them in this fastness, which, before the invention of gunpowder, must have been of considerable strength. There are other recesses in the walls, not unlike small rooms, 5, 6, 7, and 8 feet long, by 3, 4, and 5 broad, and 6½, 7, and 8 feet high. On the ground floor in the north side there is a strongly built dismal hole, 10 or 12 feet by 4½, and about the same height with those already mentioned. It is covered with massy stones, and must from its appearance have been a place either of concealment or of imprisonment. The whole superstructure is of a hard durable species of stone found in the vicinity. On the north-west side of the tower there is a fosse, 6 feet deep, and about 20 broad, which protected it on that side, and the river afforded it some defence on the other. The other building in ruins, or rather the commencement of a more spacious and commodious castle, projected on a more elegant plan, belongs to a more improved era of architecture, and is of a modern date compared to the tower. The front height of this ruin varies from 12 to 15 feet. The building is erected on a bank elevated 6 or 7 feet above the bed of the river, and looks towards the east, on which side, and within a very short distance thereof, the river flows with a murmuring hum over a rough stony channel. All that seems to have been built of this well projected and pleasantly situated castle is the ground floor, 100 feet in length by 50 in breadth, divided into six vaults, four of which have two port-holes in each; and there is one in each end of a passage which runs betwixt the end and the centre vaults. The diameter of these port-holes varies from 3½ to 4½ inches. Each vault has a door communicating with the passage just mentioned, and to each end of which there is a stair descending from the back of the building. The dimensions of these vaults are 16 and 17 feet square, by 12 in height. Some of them have small windows 1½ feet by 1 foot. All the light admitted into two of them enters through a very narrow opening above the port-holes. By whom and at what period the tower was built and inhabited, and by whom the more modern building was commenced and so far carried on, are questions not

easily solved. Some say that the former was inhabited by a succession of the Bishops of Caithness and Sutherland, and that the latter, so far as it was finished, was the work of one of these bishops. The only foundation for this lame tradition is a story, quite a true one, that one of the bishops who occupied the see was burnt by some lawless miscreants in his castle of Halkirk. There is no reason for confounding Halkirk with Brawl, as they are on opposite sides of the river. The place where the horrid deed was perpetrated was a residence which the bishops had on the Halkirk bank of the river, opposite the Castle of Brawl. There is no vestige of a ruin to point out where the bishop's residence stood. It is probable, however, it was in a field to the north-east of the present manse, where the parochial ministers had their residence till the present house was built. The total removal of every stone of this building has obliterated the memory of its existence. This has been the means of ascribing to the bishops the ruins which remain; it has been the means of placing them in a tower over which they never had any control; and of fathering on their invention and power a project which never owed its form or its existence either to their wealth or to their contrivance. The more probable opinion is, that the Castle of Brawl was a residence of the Harolds and Sinclairs, who were Earls of Caithness, the former at a very early period, and the latter ever since the Harolds lost the title. At Brawl there is an extensive garden, by far the most ancient in the county, belonging to the family of Ulbster, which, notwithstanding its northern latitude, and its being rather neglected, produces considerable quantities of fruit, and in and around it stand chestnut, ash, and elm trees, of good size both in height and circumference.

There was also a castle on the rugged crag of Dirlot, said to have been inhabited by a bold and daring freebooter of the name of Sutherland, a near relation of the Dunrobin Sutherlands, whose lands of Dylrid and Cattak were forfeited for treason, and given to M'Kay of Strathnaver by charter, dated at Inverness, 4th November 1489. The rock of Dirlot is said to have been surrounded at one time by the river, and accessible only by a draw-bridge. The nature of the ground gives some countenance to this tradition; but now the river flows entirely on one side of the crag, on whose summit the gray remains of the castle are to be seen. There was also a place of defence, and of no small importance, at the north corner of Lochmore, where the river issues

from that lake. There was another at the east end of the Loch of Calder. These relics of towers, castles, and forts, are the only monuments remaining of the wealth and the power of the chieftains of days that are gone; these are the only remnants of their possessions; the only indications of their greatness. The fame of their possessors is not recorded in story: if the bard ever sung of their valour; if tradition for a while spoke of their achievements in war, or commended their heroism in the day of battle, the song of the one is no longer sung in the hall, and the tongue of the other is for ever silent. If a little green hill, or three gray stones did for years point out the tomb of their rest, they are now thoughtlessly trodden upon by a race to whom their names and their deeds are alike unknown. If a rude unsculptured pillar marked out the spot or the field where they fell, it stands on a lonely moor, or the side of a barren hill, without a name engraved either by tool or tradition.

There are also some remains of ecclesiastical antiquity. Of these are the relics of St Thomas's Chapel at Skinnet. Here was left to stand the sacred chair of St Thomas, of exquisite workmanship in stone, an object of some curiosity; it may be of superstitious veneration, till broken down and used in building a fence. Within the walls of the chapel which still remain, as well as in the ground around, a few continue to bury their dead. There was another of these chapels at Banniskirk, of which there are no remains; its stones have been removed, and the silent mansions of the dead, by which it was surrounded, have been ploughed up, and added to an adjoining field!

A third of these ruined chapels, St Magnus, said to have been founded by the same individual who was the originator and the benefactor of the Kirkwall Cathedral, is at a place called Spittal. It appears to have been 60 feet by 20, and the walls, though in a dilapidated condition, have been left to decay under the slow but sure process of the blasting elements, and the demolishing progress of time; and no views of expediency have induced the proprietor of the lands on which it is built to increase his revenues by demolition and sacrilege; nor has the occupant of the farm, in the centre of which it stands, so far forgotten the reverence due to the mighty dead, as to enlarge his fields by disturbing their repose, scattering their ashes, and exposing their bones to the bleaching influence of sun and of rain. Here was the cemetery of the clan Gunn, at one time a powerful and a warlike

race, who inhabited the mountainous parts of this county, as well as the Kildonan district of the Sutherland county, and who, notwithstanding the high mountains, the many mosses and morasses which intervene to render the journey tedious and laborious, are said to have carried their dead, especially the remains of their chiefs and principal men, from the glens of the Crask and Knockfinn, in order to be interred in the Chapel of Spittal. There was, besides, the Chapel of St Peter at Olgimore, that of St Columba at Dirlot, and that of St Ciran in Strathmore. These last bear the names of the early propagators of Christianity in Scotland; but whether built in their time, or by others in honour of them after their day, is a subject that must for ever remain in doubt. If the pure doctrines of Christianity were for a time declared in these ancient places of worship, it is certain, that during the dark ages they were the temples of idols and their superstitious worshippers. In proof of this, it is traditionally reported, that a band of marauders made the image of St Ciran the butt of their arrows, and thus for their own amusement destroyed the last of the dumb idols worshipped in this part of the country. Of the Clachans of Gerston and Achardale, little remains except the name, and the certainty that each of them contains the ashes of the dead. It is evident from this enumeration of ruined chapels, whatever was the quality of the instruction given, that the people had more easy access to the public worship than at present. Whatever superior advantages the present generation enjoy compared to those that are gone, it appears that the latter were more zealous in supporting a false religion than the former are in supporting and attending the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

### III.—POPULATION.

Were we to be guided by the former Statistical Account, we would be led to think that the population was greater at the time it was written than at present. There cannot, however, be the least ground for such an opinion, as the Government census shows an increase at each of the periods it was taken. No part of the parish has been depopulated, and, in moors where ten years ago there was no house, a considerable number of dwellings is now built. The occupiers improve as much of the waste ground as their circumstances enable them. The gradual increase of the population is to be attributed to the cultivation of waste ground,—the improvement of which is carried on by those poor and industrious individuals who build houses in moors, and by farmers who

employ labourers to cultivate wastes adjacent to the arable land they occupy. Thus there is a demand for labour, and the soil yields a produce sufficient to remunerate the farmer for the capital he may have laid out.

In 1831 the population was	2847, viz. 1322 males ; 1525 females.
In 1836,	- 3085
of whom about	1180 were under 15 years of age,
	875 were between 15 and 30 years,
	645 - 30 and 50
	294 - 50 and 70
	91 were upwards of 70 years.

There is a population of 170 in the village of Halkirk, and the rest spread over the extent of the parish. The average number of marriages is 18 in the year, and of baptisms, 74. There is no register of deaths kept.

*Language.*—The Gaelic language and the Scots dialect of English are spoken in the parish. A considerable majority of the old people speak the Gaelic ; but there are not many of the young who cannot speak the Scotch, which, it is acknowledged, prevails now more than it did thirty or forty years ago.

According to the usages of this parish, and, indeed, of the county, the terms for hiring farm as well as domestic servants, commence for the summer half year on the 20th of June, and for the winter half year on the 26th of November, or the 9th of June, and 15th of November old style. This is a very unequal division of the year, inasmuch as it makes a difference of very nearly seven weeks betwixt the summer and the winter half year. But this is not all ; for servants who complete their service on the 20th of June are not considered entitled to their wages till towards the end of August,—the time of a great annual market at Thurso, and as a great number of servants attend this market it gives them an opportunity of mis-spending their wages. A servant, whose term of service ends on the 26th of November, is not paid his wages till the 12th of January thereafter, which is the day observed by the country people as New-Year's Day,—a time when servants are too apt to spend their hard-earned penny in drink and other equally useless purposes. The dwelling-houses of the peasantry, constructed without much regard to the rules of architecture, have a forbidding appearance. This description is applicable to the greater number of houses. In most cases, all the houses necessary for the generality of tenants are built in a continued line. The barn and the kiln are in one end of this line, after ~~these fol-~~ lows the dwelling-house, generally divided into three

After this come the byre, stable, and other necessary houses, arranged in an order by no means the most convenient or pleasing. Some have of late built houses of better construction, which have a more pleasing aspect, and must at the same time afford their occupiers more comfort than houses built after the structure followed till very lately in this county. It may be mentioned that attention is paid to cleanliness, both in the domestic economy and dress of the peasantry, and the sober and the industrious enjoy that share of the comforts of life with which people in the lower ranks are generally found to be content; and that they are so in this parish, the writer knows from the experience of several years spent among them. In a population so great, there must of necessity be individuals of very different dispositions, and of various degrees of intelligence; but, keeping out of view occasional brawls and a few squabbles which very seldom occur, the great mass of the population is to be considered as composed of good moral characters, who, in outward behaviour, conduct themselves in a manner becoming the Christian name; and there is a reason to hope, that not a few have felt the vital influences of the gospel of peace. The whole of the inhabitants, with the exception of thirty-three\* individuals, are attached to the Established Church of Scotland. Making allowances for the distances which they have to travel, and the very bad roads by which they must come, the people on the whole are regular in attending public worship on the Sabbath, as well as catechetical exercises on week-days. That they are exempted from the failings and short-comings of our nature, is what can be neither expected nor affirmed. That a few young men, prompted by folly and the mere love of sport, should occasionally trespass against the game laws, can surprise no one who considers the temptations to which individuals are exposed in a place where wide extended moors, with abundance of game, are inducements to the sportsman too powerful to be resisted. This is not an apology for breaches of law; it is a mere statement of facts, which, when considered, must make the rarity of such breaches highly creditable to the inhabitants of remote districts, who can often commit a trespass of this nature without the least fear of detection.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The parish, as already observed, may be consi-

\* Of these, six, an exciseman and his family, who were Episcopalians, have lately left the parish.

dered in extent as about 90 or 92 square miles,—73,600 imperial acres : about 6000 of these are cultivated, as many under natural or meadow grass, and the rest is moor, moss, lakes, rivers, &c. The rate of annual rent is as high as L. 1, 10s. and as low as 2s. 6d. per acre. From what has already been done, it is quite evident that a great proportion of what is now waste ground might be improved to advantage, and, were the people encouraged to labour in this work, many would undertake the cultivation of such ground in preference to going to America at the imminent risk of their lives, and in violation of those feelings which make man cleave to the rugged rocks of his native mountain, the remembrance of which is associated in foreign climes with his recollection of the home and the country of his fathers. It is much to be regretted that those who do their utmost to subdue the stubborn soil of the moor and the mountain meet with so little encouragement. Instead of being made to pay a rent of 5s. or 2s. 6d. for every acre brought into cultivation, it would be better policy to give four times the sum for every acre so cultivated, for at least five or six years after a poor person commences such laborious and expensive work, and then a moderate rent might be charged for an equal number of years. A plan of this nature would encourage individuals to improve waste grounds, which, as they are, yield no food for man, no revenue for the proprietors,—whereas, by following a different system from that adopted, they might be made to support the labourer, and to pay the landlord a certain per centage for moneys expended in inducing people to embark in the work. A good deal is certainly done, but infinitely more would be cheerfully performed under a system which would hold out inducements for adding to what one may already possess, instead of deterring him from doing anything that way, by the certainty of 5s. being added to his rent for every acre brought into cultivation.

*Quarries.*—There are quarries of limestone in different parts of the parish. The lime made from these is used in masonry ; but it answers better in agricultural processes than for any other use it can be applied to. There are also quarries of flags. These are much used in flooring in country houses ; they are also used in paving ; for which they are remarkably well adapted. Great numbers of them are annually exported to Leith, Aberdeen, &c.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.*—The nearest market-town is Thurso, about seven miles from the parish church.



*Means of Communication.*—There are three roads through the parish by which people can travel to Thurso ; these are not finished to the different extremities of the parish. They have been made within the last three years on Macadam's principles, and are in very good repair. An annual market is held in the village of Halkirk on the Tuesday before the 26th December. Its name is St Magnus ; it is not much attended. Another annual market is held within two miles of the church. The site of this market is the hill of Ruggy, which is partly in this parish, and partly in the parishes of Thurso and Bower. The market is principally a cattle one ; the situation is central ; and people from all parts of the county can conveniently attend. Five roads may be said to lead to the place where it is held : one from Thurso, one through Bower and Watten, one from Wick, one from Latheron, and one through this parish.

There are two bridges on the river of Halkirk ; one at the village not more than a quarter of a mile from the church. It was built in 1731, consists of three arches, and is very convenient and useful. It has of late undergone considerable repairs, and, if no unforeseen accident happen, it may stand for centuries to come. The other bridge is at Dale, five miles farther up the river than the Halkirk bridge. It contains two arches, each thirty feet span. It is quite new, having been finished in 1834. There is also a timber bridge in the Mission at Dirlot. It is intended for the convenience of people coming to hear preaching at the Mission-house, and is equally convenient for general and ordinary communication.

There is a mile of turnpike road passing through a corner of the parish, and the mail-coach passes through this part of the parish twice every day, but the inhabitants do not enjoy the benefit of it, for all letters for the parish are carried to Thurso, and sometimes lie there a day or two before they are brought to the Bridge-end of Halkirk, to which there is a penny-bag thrice a week. This is kept up at an expense of L. 9,—a much greater expenditure than could be incurred were there a bag with all letters for the parish left at one or other of the houses in that part of the parish through which the mail passes. Besides this mile of turnpike, there are three branches of county road,—the whole making an aggregate of about fifteen miles.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church is situated on the east side of the river,—near the extremity of the parish on that side,—on the other, however, the parish extends three miles towards Thurso.

The distance from the church to Achpheadair (Peter's-field) and Knockglass, the extremities on the west and north-west, is from five to six miles and a-half; the distance to Banniskirk and Achchipster, the extremities on the east and south-east, is three miles and a-half to the former, and six and a-half to the latter; and the distance to Dalghanachain, Glutt, and Rumsdale, the utmost extremity to the south, is from twenty to twenty-four miles. The church was built in 1753, and underwent a substantial repair in 1833. It accommodates about 756 individuals; 18 sittings are set apart for the poor by the heritors, and about 20 are provided for them by the minister and session, by placing benches in wide passages. Till after the last repair of the church, none of the heritors rented their proportion of sittings in the church; some of them have since let the sittings to the tenants, and others have not. A few farmers have claimed and obtained the same right to a seat in the church that they had previous to the repair. The highest rent charged for a sitting is 4s. and the lowest 1s. The manse was built about the same time with the church, and underwent some repairs in 1823. The extent of the glebe is from  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 imperial acres; this includes the site of the manse, the garden, &c. The annual value of the whole is from L. 8 to L. 10. The stipend is 15 chalders of victual, half meal and half barley, and L. 10 for communion elements. There is a missionary employed in the most distant parts of the parish, who is partly supported by the Committee for managing the Royal Bounty, and partly by the inhabitants of the mission district of the parish. The missionary has three preaching stations—one at Achrenny in this parish; one at Halsary in the parish of Watten; and the third at Halladale in the parish of Reay. To the Halsary district there is attached a part of the parish of Latheron. The population in this parish within the bounds of the mission is 784; these are very much scattered, and are often prevented from attending the missionary's preaching by the river and other streams, which, especially during the winter and spring, are so much swollen, and that perhaps on the day the missionary is to preach in the district, that it is impossible for many to attend, and very likely they will not hear sermon again till the missionary is there three weeks thereafter. This produces great evils,—it begets indifference to the means of grace, and at last, in too many cases, a total neglect of these means. This is not to be attributed to the missionary, nor, humanly speaking, to the people, but to the system on which the mission is establi-

and the utter impossibility of any one man being able, however gifted with abilities and zeal, to discharge aright duties requiring continual devotedness and unwearied labours to perform them either with success or efficiency. Is it to be supposed that a minister can administer religious instruction to a population of at least 2500, scattered over the remote parts of three parishes, and the greater number of the distant glens and valleys in the high and mountainous districts of the county of Caithness? Here is committed to the pastoral superintendence of a missionary a boundary, the extremes of which, by a practicable road, are from forty to fifty miles distant from one another. The distance, however, is the least of the obstructions in the missionary's way, and of the difficulties he has to encounter in the discharge of his highly important duties: there are moors, mosses, and quaking fens which disjoin one valley from another, and which make it impossible, except by circuitous routes, to pass from glen to glen during the winter and spring months. The number of sittings in the mission house is 403, of which 351 were let when a survey was made during the spring of last year; the highest rent charged is 1s. and the lowest 6d. per sitting. The whole church accommodation then in the parish is 1159 sittings, which is by far too few were the people within a distance that could enable them to attend regularly. It is questionable, however, how far the mission-house, from the circumstances mentioned, with preaching once in the three weeks, ought to be reckoned church accommodation. There are two catechists employed by the minister and session, but they are principally paid by the parishioners. The parish church and the mission chapel are the only places of worship in the parish. The total of all denominations who do not attend public worship in the Established Church is about 33 individuals; some of these are Seceders, others Independents, and a few Baptists and Episcopalians.

The number of communicants in the parish is 110. These bear a small proportion to the population; but it is better to have a few whose walk and conversation are in conformity with the faith and the doctrines of Christianity, than to admit a promiscuous multitude, whose only motive might be the enjoyment of the outward privileges conferred on the partakers of this sacrament.

*Education.*—The number of schools taught in the parish during the last two or three years is 13. One of these is the parochial school; another is supported by the Society in Scotland for Pro-

pagating Christian Knowledge; and the others, three of which are female schools, are wholly supported by the parents of the children. The branches taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, English grammar, and at the parochial school Latin and all the other branches. The salary for the parochial school is the maximum, and the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge allow their teacher at Assary L.15. The amount of fees varies according to attendance, from L. 3 to L. 5, per quarter; the quarterly fees for each individual is 1s. 6d. for reading; 2s. for reading and writing; 2s. 6d. for arithmetic; 3s. for book-keeping and English grammar; and 5s. for Latin and geography. That the people are alive to the benefits of education, is evident from their supporting so many schools at their own charges, to instruct their children in the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Were schools established at all the stations at which the people employ teachers, the inhabitants generally would be within such a distance of a school as would put it in their power to cause their children attend. The total number of children who attended the different schools during the year 1835 was 411, and the average number for some years is 390.

*Friendly Societies.*—There are five Friendly Societies in the parish. The object of these is to give a weekly allowance to sick members, a sum for funeral charges when any of the member's family dies, and a quarterly allowance to the widows of members, who shall have contributed to the funds of the society at least seven years previous to their death. The total number of members in these five societies is 644; and the number of widows supported by them is 29. The funds of the Halkirk Village Society amount to L. 300. This is the first that was established in the parish. The others have been instituted at various periods since; and one thing that stimulated their founders to get them established may have been the success that attended the first. These societies are useful, inasmuch as they put in the power of heads of families to provide so far for their wives and children, as to leave them independent of parochial relief.\*

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The annual average number receiving parochial relief during the last ten years has been 95; and the average yearly sum given to each is 5s. Some of the absentee

\* Since the above was written, an innovation has been introduced into these societies, which is likely to end in the dissolution of some of them. The cash was given out to some necessitous members, and, as this in too many instances was done without proper security, the money is not likely to be all repaid.

heritors give occasionally a donation of L. 1 or L. 2, in aid of the poor's funds. There has been received in this way since 1828, about L. 13, 7s. There are two legacies of L. 100 each, the interest of which is given to the poor. The average of the church collections for the last few years has been L. 20, which, with the interest of the L. 200 and the donations, generally amount to L. 30 or L. 32. Out of this sum the session pay their clerk, precentor, officer, &c. This, the only mode of supplying the wants of the poor, is, (except in very few cases,) found adequate to relieve the poor and the needy, on whose part there is no desire to become chargeable to the parish when they can avoid it; indeed, the very small sum the funds afford is no inducement to any, except the truly destitute, to apply for parochial relief. In addition to what the very poorest receive from the session, they beg among the farmers, who are sufficiently liberal in giving them meal and other provisions, fully as acceptable to, and necessary for the poor as money.

*Inns.*—In the village of Halkirk there are three inns, and four in other parts of the parish. Of the whole, three might be required, but it is most surprising how such public nuisances are allowed to increase to so alarming an extent, to the manifest injury of the morals of the youth of the parish.

*Fuel.*—There is great abundance of moss in every part of the parish, from which the inhabitants have an excellent supply of peats, the only fuel used in the parish. Every farmer is allowed to cut as many peats on his landlord's property as he requires, and, as farmers either cut and bring home their own peats, or employ their servants in doing so, the expense is very little, and seldom thought of, as the people have more time than money.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The most striking contrast betwixt the present state of the parish and its state forty years ago is, that there is more cultivation carried on,—more of the waste grounds improved,—a better system of husbandry introduced,—and the quantity of grain raised is much greater than at the former period. The new roads lately made, and those intended to be made, as soon as an increase in the funds at the disposal of the trustees permits, will, in the course of some years, enable landlords and tenants to carry on improvements, which must convince almost every one how little has yet been done of what it is possible to accomplish.

*Drawn up in 1834,  
revised October 1840.*

## PARISH OF LATHERON.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. GEORGE DAVIDSON, MINISTER.

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### L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent, &c.*—THE parish of Latheron is situated on the south-east coast of Caithness, and bounded in that direction by the German Ocean and Moray Frith; on the west, by Sutherlandshire; and on the north and east, by the parishes of Halkirk, Watten, and Wick. It is 27 miles in length along the sea coast, and from 10 to 15 in breadth, containing about 300 square miles.

*Name.*—By the last Statistical Account, the ancient name of the parish is said to be "*Loinn*, derived from *Luidhoin*, which signifies, in the Gaelic, *lodged or bedded bear*, because the lands contiguous to the church are of a good quality, and yield excellent bear." But there is another derivation, which has always appeared to the present writer equally probable and rather more natural, viz. from the Gaelic words *Làthair Ròin*, which signifies the *resort of seals*,—a species of animal with which the whole coast is covered. Numbers of them are still taken, as will afterwards be noticed, and no doubt, in former times, the oil obtained from them afforded one means of support to the inhabitants. Besides, this derivation seems to accord best with the Gaelic name *Làtharn*, and to admit of a more easy transition into the modern or English name of Latheron. But especially it will be found by a reference to the Norse or Icelandic language, that the derivation here preferred is much confirmed as to its probable correctness,—the words in that language having very much the same meaning.

There is also another derivation suggested by the aspect of the parish, which seems scarcely less probable than that now conjectured, viz. from the Gaelic *Lath-àr-shònn*, signifying the day of the slaughter of heroes, or *Lathair shònn*, the place of heroes. Indeed, considering the ancient predilection for commemorating

the warlike achievements of heroes who had particularly singalized themselves, together with the many relics of bloody warfare still extant, this derivation has strong claims to a preference to the former.

*Topographical Appearance.*—The general aspect of the parish is remarkably diversified, presenting a continued and frequently rapid succession of “hill and valley;” in which respect, it forms a striking contrast to all the other parishes in the county. In the western extremity, in particular, the ravines are so deep and precipitous as to render the access to them difficult and sometimes dangerous; whilst in the same quarter, the hills and mountains of various height and figure are in great abundance. Of the former the Ord of Caithness, Brenahogleish, and Benachielt are of chief importance, and of the latter Mòr-bhèiu or Morven, Scaraben, and the Pap, are most conspicuous. The view from their summits is very extensive, embracing, in a clear atmosphere, a great part of twelve different counties, besides a vast range of the Atlantic and German oceans. Of the three, Morven, as its Gaelic name indicates, is by much the highest, and is supposed to be more than a mile above the level of the sea, whence it is generally the first land in this quarter seen by mariners, and, as a landmark, is of great use in stormy weather. It is worthy of notice that, as indicating wet or dry weather, it possesses the confidence of the whole county. During harvest especially, all eyes are directed towards it, and it never deceives. Near its summit, there is a delicious spring, which is very refreshing to the traveller exhausted in gaining its top. The straths are numerous and very beautiful, particularly those along the rivers of Langwell, Berriedale, and Dunbeath. Scenery more highly romantic and picturesque than that on the two former, is not to be met with in the north of Scotland. They are admired by every traveller. Their steep banks were once densely and extensively wooded, and still there is as much remaining as to contribute to their beauty, if not to their value. The whole line of coast is composed of bold and perpendicular rocks, rising from 100 to 300 feet above the sea; forming a barrier to the tremendous surge which frequently rolls in from the ocean. It is also much indented, in consequence of the numerous streams that flow from the interior, and at their junction with the sea form inlets more or less spacious. These afford a very convenient shelter for the boats engaged in the herring-fish-

ing. The caves are numerous, and some of them from 50 to 60 fathoms long. Very fine massive specimens of crystallized lime have been taken from the tops and sides of them, and are still preserved. But they are chiefly celebrated for the great numbers of seals that frequent them at all seasons, which renders them not merely convenient but often lucrative. The caves are usually visited in November, and entered by means of a boat during the night when the seals are at rest. The boat is well manned with experienced hands, having each a large piece of wood, and a torch or candle. They require to use great caution in approaching the cave, as the seals are always on the alert, and upon hearing the least noise rush forward with astonishing rapidity towards the sea, in which they immediately disappear, putting the water into great agitation. When the boat is perceived before taking the ground, most of them escape in this way. As soon as the boat has grounded, the men leap out with great agility, and, intercepting the seals in their progress downwards, strike them on the head, when they instantly fall. On any other part the blow has no effect. In this manner, several scores have been captured at a time; but of late from twenty to thirty is considered a good taking.

The principal headlands are the Ord, Berriedale-head, and Clyth-ness.

*Climate.*—The climate, generally speaking, is dry, and, for ordinary constitutions, extremely healthy; to which the elevation of the land and the consequent rarity of the atmosphere much contribute. These circumstances, however, seem to favour heavy gales of wind, which are frequently experienced, particularly from the west and north-west. The temperature of the atmosphere may be about 56° Fahrenheit.

Considering the extraordinary density of the population, diseases are by no means frequent. Fever and rheumatism are certainly most prevalent. It has been observed that the former is very commonly carried by infection from the lower parts of the county, and the latter appears to be much occasioned by the want of warm clothing suited to the laborious habits of the people. Formerly, all the small tenantry were in possession of a few sheep, and by this means provided themselves with suitable clothing; but of late, owing to the great increase of population, and the consequent demand for land, their farms have been so reduced in extent by division and subdivision from year to year, that comparative-



ly few sheep can be kept by them, which, both in respect to food and clothing, is most disadvantageous. Instances of longevity are very frequent,—several persons now living are nearly 100 years of age, and one man has completed his 105th year, and is still in possession of all his faculties. As formerly stated, the Moray Frith forms the boundary of this parish on the south-east. It varies in breadth from 50 to 60 miles, possesses fine fishing-ground; but in stormy weather the sea is easily raised into what sailors call a short tumbling swell, which frequently proves fatal to fishing boats. The tides are of considerable rapidity, and may be about two hours and three-quarters before Leith. Perennial springs abound throughout the parish, and the temperature of such as have been tried is found, some of the more copious at  $54^{\circ}$ , and the less so at  $56^{\circ}$  and  $58^{\circ}$ . Many of them are much impregnated with iron. There are three rivers in the parish, viz. Dunbeath, Berriedale and Langwell, which abound with trout and salmon. They have their source from twelve to sixteen miles from the sea, but are very small in summer, though much swollen in winter, and very rapid. The only lakes are Rangay and Stempster, in both of which there is plenty of trout and eels. On the east side of the former, there are the remains of a small fortification, which was evidently surrounded by the water of the lake by means of a ditch; and contiguous to the latter are the ruins of a Druidical temple and the Arch-Druid's house.

*Geology.*—The geological features of this parish are totally different from those of the rest of the county, and merit more notice than the prescribed limits of this Account admit of. The greater part of Caithness is what is called a secondary formation, consisting chiefly of clay flagstone, having more or less calcareous matter, with a few instances of the red sandstone, elevated into lofty headlands at Dunnet and Duncansbay. On approaching the northern boundary of the parish, betwixt Ulbster and Bruan, a great change is observable in the physical character of the country. Beyond this point, the southern portion of the county, embracing this parish, along the eastern coast is hilly and much diversified. A number of streams intersect it, swelling in the winter to a great size. The elevated portion of this district rises from the knotty promontory of Clyth-ness, and forms several irregular terraces, occupying the north part of the parish. The lowest of these dip  $25^{\circ}$  to  $30^{\circ}$  inland, while the higher and more rotund incline only  $8^{\circ}$  or  $10^{\circ}$ .

Near the shore, blue calcareous flagstone occurs, and is overlaid by a series of sandstone beds of considerable thickness. Bena-cheilt is the highest part of this region, and round it the strata are arranged in a fan-shaped form, so that while the beds on the coast, at Nottingham and Latheron, dip westerly, at Braehungay on the south side of this hill, they veer round to the N.E. against the hill; and still farther inland, at Achavanich, the dip is E.S.E. Between Latheron and Dunbeath, the beds rise into micaceous sandstones alternating with blue calcareous flagstone. At the latter place they consist of bluish and gray close-grained sandstone, with occasional alternating of greenish and bluish flagstones, and are prolonged into hills in the interior, distinctly resting upon the old red conglomerate, or puddingstone of Braemore, connected with the chain of mountains forming the southern boundary of the county. Along the coast, the same slaty beds continue to prevail in high cliffs to the south of Berriedale. At Borgue, there is an isolated mass of the old conglomerate, probably owing its existence to the degradation of the nearest point of the Scarabins, a primary mass of quartz rock. This range of high bare rock is clasped on each side by the conglomerate series, composing nearly the whole of the surrounding hills, which, being prolonged between the Scarabins and the granite of the Ord, terminate in the cliff between Berriedale and Ausdale. The coast thence to the Ord is occupied by red micaceous flagstone, succeeded by some beds of red sandstone rising into a perpendicular cliff about 300 feet high at Trefad. Masses of the conglomerate also present themselves occasionally, particularly in the cliff at Badbea. Farther south, the cliff again changes its character, and is occupied by great crumbling masses of red marl and sandstone, containing a few bands of bluish flagstone. These gradually pass into a strong red sandstone, which is separated from the granite mass of the Ord by a high cliff of conglomerate. The junction is nearly marked by a cascade of the Ausdale rivulet, which tumbles into the sea from the height of 100 feet over these conglomerate rocks.

The necessarily brief and imperfect outline here given affords no adequate idea of the interesting geological character of this district. To convey a more complete view of it would be inadmissible here. It may be proper, however, to state that the old conglomerate, composing the southern hills of this parish, and stretching thence along the borders to the west side of the

county, is considered as forming the lowest bed of the secondary formation, being succeeded by beds of siliceous and calcareo-siliceous flagstone and slate-clay, which occupies the great body of the county from sea to sea, sinking at length under the highest or uppermost of the secondary series, the new red sandstone of Dunnet and Duncansbay Heads.

*Soil.*—The soil varies considerably in nature and quality in different parts of the parish. On the estates of Langwell and Dunbeath in the west end, it is generally of a sharp gravelly description, and very dry. Latheronwheel and Latheron, being next in order, are less gravelly, but sufficiently sharp and mellow. Torse, Swiney, and Lybster rather wet and cold, having for the substratum a strong tenacious clay, which renders it later in bringing the crops to maturity; whilst the estate of Clyth in the eastern extremity very much partakes of the dry, sharp loam of the centre and western districts. Upon the whole, the soil may be pronounced shallow, but easily wrought, and, with good management, capable of producing all kinds of grain, together with clover, turnips and potatoes. In many parts it abounds with detached rocks and large stones, which form a serious obstacle to the plough; and though much has been done towards the removing of them out of the cultivated ground, yet still much remains to be done, and this circumstance presents a great discouragement in the way of improvement; yet it is, nevertheless, progressing rapidly.

*Zoology.*—Before the introduction of sheep-farming, deer were to be found in considerable numbers on the estates of Langwell, Braemore, and Dunbeath, but for many years back they are rarely to be met with; but grouse, ptarmigan, and blackcock are in great abundance. The salmon on the rivers are of uncommonly fine quality. The rivers of Berriedale and Langwell unite when about 200 yards from the sea, and it is remarkable that the native fish of one river are rarely to be found in the other. At the spawning season, the salmon of both rivers seem to bear one another company till they come to the point of separation, when, from a curious peculiarity of natural instinct, each selects its native stream. There are about twenty different species of fish caught on the coast. Those of greatest importance in an economical point of view are, herrings, cod, haddocks, skate, and flounders.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

From the want of authentic records as to the early history of

this parish, very little can be noticed under this head. Judging, however, from the number and variety of the remains of those places of strength which it contains, together with the other war-like relics of barbarous and feudal times with which it is everywhere bestudded, there can be no doubt that it formed the scene of many a well fought field. But, as usually happens in such cases, tradition has been very fertile in supplying the lack of more correct information. One tradition out of many may be noticed as highly probable. It refers to the last invasion of this county by the Danes. On that occasion they landed near the town of Thurso, under the command of the young Prince of Denmark, and the natives, not being in sufficient strength to oppose them, retreated across the county, followed by the invaders, till they came to the hill of Ben-a-gheil, in this parish, distant twenty miles from Thurso. By this time, the ranks of the natives having been greatly increased in number, and being now in view of the coast where their retreat must be stopped, deriving courage also from the very favourable position they occupied on this hill,—they resolved to try the fate of a pitched battle. Having taken their ground, the enemy soon came up and attempted to dislodge them, when they poured down in one dense mass, broke the enemy's ranks, killed their leader, and routed their whole force. A huge stone, placed perpendicular in the ground, resembling a pillar, marks the place where the Prince fell; and from this occurrence the hill itself seems to derive its Gaelic name, Ben-a-gheil, signifying the hill where they yielded, or were overcome.

*Eminent Men.*—One of the most eminent men known to have been connected with this parish, was the late Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Bart., author of the former Statistical Account of Scotland, the Code of Agriculture, &c. &c.; a man who was an ornament to the age in which he lived, and of whom any parish or county might deservedly boast. Sir John was principal proprietor in this parish, and the estate of Langwell, then in his possession, was his favourite resort during the periods of his residence in the county. Here he commenced some of his earliest and most extensive improvements in the several departments of plantation, agriculture, and sheep-farming, in the first and last of which he completely succeeded; and much of the beauty and utility of this valuable property is owing to his spirited and persevering exertions, seconded, as they were, by the skill and good

taste of his successor, the late James Horne, Esq. of Langwell. On Sir John Sinclair's merits as a man of varied talent, an able and extensive author, an accomplished scholar, or skilful statesman, it is not intended here to enlarge, as the subject more properly belongs to his native parish of Thurso. He was possessed of a singularly intelligent, active, and benevolent mind, insomuch that no parish or district of country could have enjoyed his presence for any length of time without being benefited thereby. Indeed, such was the quickness of his perception, and the warmth of his philanthropy, that even in his passing visits to quarters where he had no personal interest, he seldom failed to suggest some measures for the improvement of the soil, and especially of its inhabitants, and was always ready, from his own resources, to assist in carrying them into execution. Of this a very striking instance occurred in the highlands of Perthshire, and was communicated to the writer when visiting the person with whom the transaction was entered into. On one occasion Sir John happened to be travelling along Loch Tay side, and observing the country very densely peopled with small tenantry, and that the lofty range of mountains, green to the very summits, with which this beautiful lake is surrounded, were chiefly pastured by sheep, inquired how the people, in so remote a quarter, disposed of their wool; and being informed that each family employed one, two, or three spinning wheels, according to the number of females it contained, it readily occurred to him that a spinning mill might prove a great acquisition in the district, and find abundant employment. He accordingly sought out the ablest person for such an undertaking, and was directed to a Mr M'Naughton in the vicinity of Kenmore. To him he immediately repaired, and, after enumerating the advantages likely to arise to the whole neighbourhood from such a concern, together with the great probability of its success, and the prospect of the emoluments which it held out, strongly urged him to undertake it. This Mr M'Naughton at first declined, assigning as a reason, that neither he nor any other individual in the place could afford to run the risk of a failure. "Well," said Sir John, "but will you conduct it, provided I take the risk upon myself?" To this Mr M'Naughton, after some hesitation, assented. The mill was soon procured and commenced operations, and so completely were Sir John's predictions realized, that in a few years thereafter, Mr M'Naughton erected other two

at his own expense in other parts of the country ; a circumstance no less gratifying to the originator, than advantageous to the surrounding community.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners of the parish are, Sir George Sinclair of Ulbster, Bart. ; William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick ; John Sutherland, Esq. of Forse ; Donald Horne, Esq. of Langwell ; Colonel Gordon of Swiney ; Lord Duffus ; Sir Ralph A. Anstruther, Bart. ; Temple Frederick Sinclair, Esq. of Lybster ; and Donald Munro, Esq. of Latheron.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest date of the parochial records now extant is 1755. They have been pretty regularly kept till 1770. There is then a chasm of nearly thirteen years to 1783, after which they have, with few exceptions, been correctly kept ; especially since 1813, the entries are scrupulously correct.

*Antiquities.*—From the great number of castles in this parish, it would appear as if the chief strength of the county were concentrated in it. There are no fewer than eight of them along the sea-coast, and for the most part built on the very brink of high and perpendicular rocks overhanging the sea, and inaccessible from that quarter. They were also so constructed as to admit of separation from the land at pleasure, the chief connection being by means of a draw-bridge. The greater number of them are now in ruins, but, from the height, strength, and thickness of the walls of those that remain, it may easily be conceived what a formidable obstacle they presented to an invading enemy in those times, standing as they do in such close succession. Beginning at the south, their names are Berriedale, Achastle, Dunbeath, (still inhabited,) Knockinnan, Latheron, Forse, Swiney, and Clyth. Several of them are still celebrated for the warlike deeds of their brave, though ferocious original possessors, and it is highly instructive to contrast the security, peace, and tranquillity of those who now surround them, with the insecurity, rapine, and bloodshed that prevailed in former days. It is hardly necessary to add, that these ruins present not the slightest traces either of the graces of ornament, or the embellishments of art, which so tastefully adorn more modern architecture.

*Modern Buildings.*—The only buildings of recent erection deserving of notice are the churches of Berriedale and Lybster. The former is a Government church, of very neat construction, though small in size. It was built in 1826, and contains about 300 sitters.

There is a very comfortable manse close by it. Both are very compact, and a great ornament to the district in which they are placed. The latter, viz. Lybster, was built by subscription in 1836. It is a substantial, well-finished, and most comfortable church. It contains 805 sittings, and cost L.630. It is placed in the village of Lybster, from which it takes its name, and to the importance of which it contributes not less by its utility than its acknowledged ornament.

### III.—POPULATION.

From the want of correct records, it is impossible to ascertain the ancient state of the population with accuracy. There can be no doubt, however, that it has been progressing during the last century at a very rapid rate. It is stated in the former Statistical Account, that the population had nearly doubled during the seventy years preceding 1794, when it amounted to 4006; and such has been the extraordinary rapidity of the increase during the forty years that have since elapsed, that it is now fully double that amount. Where this extraordinary increase of country population is to terminate, and by what means a suitable provision is to be made for their comfortable support, it is difficult to imagine. At present there are no indications of a decrease, unless sheep-farming, which commenced some time ago, should become more general.

The chief cause of the recent astonishing increase in the population is unquestionably the great and growing extent to which the herring-fishing has been prosecuted along the whole coast, and the extraordinary success with which it has generally been attended. Upon its permanency or failure, therefore, mainly depends the future continued increase, or rapid decrease of the population.

The present number of the population residing in villages is	-	535
In the rest of the parish,	-	7445
The yearly average of births for the last seven years, is	-	197
No record is kept of deaths.		
The yearly average of marriages,	-	52
The average number (in 1831) of persons under 15 years of age, is	-	2839
betwixt 15 and 30,	-	1790
30 and 50,	-	1501
50 and 70,	-	791
upwards of 70,	-	169
The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards,	-	9
Males unmarried, upwards of 50 years of age,	-	57
Females, do. . 45 do.	-	348
Number of families in 1831,	-	1406
Average number of children for each family in the parish,	-	2

Number of families employed in agriculture in 1881,	1068
trade, manufacture, or handicraft,	161

Number of fatuous persons, 20 ; blind, 3.

*Language, Habits, &c.*—The Gaelic language is generally spoken by the lower class of people throughout the greater part of the parish, but it has certainly lost ground during the last forty years, and, in proportion as the improved system of education advances, it will no doubt continue to decline still more. In proof of this, the presbytery of Caithness have lately come to the decision to discontinue the preaching of the Gaelic language in the eastern district of the parish occupied by the mission of Bruan, where a missionary was last year appointed, who has no Gaelic. Formerly the missionary always preached in both languages, but, in all probability, this system is not likely to be again resorted to. It is a singular circumstance that, for a long period, the burn of East Clyth seems to have formed the boundary between the Gaelic and English languages. On the east side of it, scarcely a word of Gaelic was either spoken or understood, and on the west side the English shared the same fate ; and this was the more wonderful, as both sides were rather densely peopled. Now, however, the English has not only made encroachments upon the Gaelic territory, but has extended itself over the whole neighbouring district ; and, indeed, were it not that its progress was considerably impeded by the importation of several colonies of Highlanders from the heights of Kildonan and other parts of Sutherlandshire about twenty years ago, when the sheep system commenced there, its triumphs, ere now, would have been still more extensive.

A very decided improvement has, for many years back, been observable both in the external appearance and internal comforts of the cottages of the peasantry. The old hovels are fast disappearing, and neat substantial houses, having vents and chimney tops in one or both ends, are occupying their places. With these improvements in the accommodations and comforts of the people, there has, as might naturally be expected, been a somewhat proportional advance in their habits of cleanliness and manner of dress, in both of which many of them display considerable taste and neatness. Indeed, there is reason to fear that the youth of both sexes are, in the article of dress, rather in danger of exceeding their means. The ordinary food consists of oat and bear



meal, potatoes, and fish of various kinds, of which there is usually an abundant supply. In the latter article, few parishes are possessed of equal advantages, for, in addition to the opportunities of obtaining white fish of excellent quality when the weather is moderate, each family lays in a regular stock of from one to three barrels of cured herrings, according to the number of persons of which it consists. This, with potatoes, milk, and a moderate quantity of bread, together with a little animal food occasionally, forms a wholesome and nourishing diet at all seasons.

Considering the many disadvantages in respect to religious and moral training under which this parish has long laboured, arising from its immense extent, and the density of its population, crowded together, in many quarters, in large masses,—the extraordinary lack of respectable and exemplary families located among them, so necessary to give a tone to the morals of the lower classes,—the very unfavourable nature of their ordinary avocations towards the fostering and maturing of religious habits,—together with the scarcity of competent instructors to maintain a strict and continuous pastoral superintendence among them,—considering these acknowledged disadvantages, it is wonderful and pleasing to perceive the hold which religious principle and moral responsibility possess over the people generally; whilst in very many particular cases, the acuteness and intelligence discoverable on religious subjects, combined, as frequently happens, with fervent and unobtrusive piety, are not less striking and refreshing to contemplate, than diffusive and beneficial in their consequences. That instances of ignorance and irreligion, attended by their natural offspring, vice and immorality, are to be met with, cannot be denied; but, in a community so circumstanced, the great wonder is, that they do not prevail to a much greater extent. This is to be attributed, under Providence, to the wholesome checks and remedies which have more recently been applied, by extending, as far as possible, the improved system of education, and providing additional facilities of religious instruction and pastoral superintendence over the more remote and destitute districts; a system which, even in its infancy, is already producing a marked improvement on the habits of the people generally.

Upon the whole, the peasantry may be said to possess a tolerable degree of knowledge for their station in life. With few exceptions, they are well acquainted with the catechisms and leading

doctrines of our church, which maintain a powerful influence over them in all the relations of life. In particular, their minds are deeply imbued with suitable impressions of an overruling Providence governing all things according to the Divine will; a principle which, whilst it moderates their joy in prosperity, powerfully supports them under adversity. Of this there were innumerable instances of a very pleasing nature during the three past years, when, as is well known, the crops were almost a total failure all over the Highlands. The patient resignation and deep submission with which this heavy calamity was borne, could not fail to excite the admiration of every attentive observer. Instead of riot, robbery, and bloodshed, which in many other quarters follow in the train of less formidable privations, here the public peace was never disturbed; but, on the contrary, life, and even property in general, were alike secure as in more favourable circumstances. To behold 7000 people suffering under the most distressing destitution for three successive years, many families without a handful of meal in their houses for weeks together, others satisfied with a little water-gruel once a-day, and still nothing but quietness and submission prevailing, what a triumph for that sound Scriptural education to which they are early habituated, and consequent religious principle of which it seldom fails to be productive! A high veneration for the being, attributes, and worship of the Deity is everywhere observable. The sanctity of the Sabbath is universally upheld. Scarcely a movement is to be seen during that sacred day excepting to or from the places of public worship, which are remarkably well attended. The important duty of family worship, so necessary for the formation and exhibition of the Christian character, is also very generally observed.

But whilst it is truly pleasing to dwell upon the ascendancy which these principles and habits possess among the great body of the peasantry, yet a regard to truth requires the admission, however painful, that instances do occur, from time to time, of a character directly opposite. Of these one of the greatest irregularities is that of drinking ardent spirits, to which not a few are addicted, especially during the winter season. This degrading practice was formerly occasioned by the extent to which the smuggling of whisky was carried on; but the system of heavy fines or imprisonment, introduced many years ago in all cases of detection,

was the means of checking it in a great degree. But this system was soon relaxed on account of the expenses attending the imprisonment of delinquents. Then followed a more vigilant and active *surveillance* on the part of the excise, particularly the indefatigable exertions of one active officer, a Mr M'Mahon, whose very name spread terror all over the county, from the Ord of Caithness to John O'Groats, by the havoc he made upon this nefarious and demoralizing trade. He was neither to be bribed nor deceived, and scarce a single case escaped his detection in the whole range of the county. This has given the finishing blow to smuggling in this quarter, and for several years not a single case has occurred here. The good effects of this change are already apparent in the districts where the practice most prevailed; but it is only when the present generation shall have passed away, that the full advantage will be appreciated. Another practice attended with very pernicious effects is that frequently adopted by fish-curers, of giving from five to seven gallons of whisky to each boat's crew during the herring-fishing season, which, on an average, will be at the rate of one bottle to each crew of four men every fishing night; and although some have the prudence to reserve a considerable part of it, yet others consume their whole allowance. By this means young men are led into drinking habits very early. It is a great evil, and loudly calls for a remedy.

Poaching in the moors and rivers can hardly be said to exist, owing to the strict regulations adopted by the proprietors. Indeed such is their authority over the tenantry, that it is completely in their power to suppress smuggling, thieving, and even habits of excessive drinking at any time, were they to put that authority in vigorous execution, and to act in concert. But so far is this from being always the case, as it certainly ought to be, that it is no uncommon occurrence to see individuals notorious for one or other of the above practices, when removed from one property, received on that immediately adjoining it; by which means they sometimes become more injurious to that from which they have been removed, (by theft for instance,) than if they had been permitted to remain unmolested. Besides, how cruel is it towards those among whom such characters are placed! Were certificates of moral character strictly insisted upon from every new tenant, many irregularities would be greatly checked—a precaution urgently called for.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—Although the lands in this parish are well adapted for agriculture, and although it contains several farms in the very highest state of cultivation, yet, as the great body of its inhabitants are engaged in the herring-fishing, and make the cultivation of the soil little more than a secondary concern, it is, perhaps, less agricultural than many other parishes in the county, that are greatly inferior in extent, population, and internal resources. Its pastoral qualities are peculiarly valuable, and likely to be put in still more extensive requisition.

It contains fully 140,000 imperial acres, of which about 9000 are arable, and about an equal quantity capable of being made so, though at a considerable expense, from the great number of rocks and isolated large stones near the surface. There are probably not more than 250 acres of undivided common in the whole parish, and about 720 acres of wood of all descriptions; by far the greater part of which consists of natural brushwood, chiefly along the romantic banks of the rivers Berriedale, Langwell, and Dunbeath. At the former, however, there is a considerable extent of planted wood of all kinds, and well attended to in respect to pruning, &c.; and at the latter, there is a tasteful plantation just laid out, which will in a few years appear highly ornamental as well as useful. At Braemore and Latheronwheel also a good deal has been done, and with considerable success; as also at Lybster, where neither pains nor expense have been spared for many years back. But here the roots have to contend with a less favourable soil, whilst the trees themselves are much exposed from the want of natural shelter, the ground being flat, and the soil damp and tenacious,—two obstacles formidable in an ungenial climate; yet there is a striking evidence of what can be done by pains and perseverance.

*Rent.*—The average rent of arable land is certainly very high, considering the indifferent crops raised by the small tenantry generally. It is about L.1, 5s. per acre,—more than can be realized by the occupiers generally,—but then the fishing is expected to make up the deficiency. The rate of grazing may be about L. 2, 10s. for a cow, and 9s. for a sheep on arable ground, and 15s. for a cow, and 3s. for a sheep on hill pasture.

*Wages.*—Day-labourers, employed in ditching, draining, or roads, usually receive at the rate of 2d. per hour, or 9s. per week. Masons and carpenters from 2s. to 3s. per day; men and women employed for harvest work, the former L.1, 10s. and the latter L.1,

with an allowance of meal and potatoes sufficient to support them until the crops are secured. Farm-servants obtain from L. 6 to L. 8 a-year, according to their qualifications, and 6 bolls of meal, together with potatoes and a little milk. Women for household work are from L. 3 to L. 4 with their victuals, &c. in the family.

*Breeds of Live-Stock.*—Much attention is now being paid to the improvement of the breeds of sheep and cattle. Cheviot sheep of the finest description are reared on the farms of Langwell and Dunbeath, and frequently obtain prizes at the shows at Inverness. On several corn farms, crosses between the Leicester and Cheviot breeds are becoming common. The same system is pursued in respect to cattle, and the crosses most in repute are between the Teeswater and good Highlanders. For this description there is a ready demand at good prices, and, in all probability, the great attention now paid to the rearing of stock is only in its infancy. The great facilities now afforded for the conveyance of stock by steam to the Edinburgh and London markets with such regularity and rapidity, is fast drawing forth the resources of this county generally, and every parish in particular.

*Husbandry.*—Although the greater portion of the land is occupied by small tenantry, with whom the cultivation of the soil forms but a secondary concern, yet there are several extensive and well-managed farms in the parish, on which crops of the best description are raised. The six-year shift is that in most general use, viz. turnip, barley or bear, two crops grass, one cut and the other pastured, and two crops oats, one of potato or Hopetoun, and the other of Angus or dun oats. Wheat is sometimes raised of good quality; but in the general run of seasons it has not been found a profitable crop, owing chiefly to the want of sufficient warm weather to bring it to maturity. Pease and beans are also tried, and sometimes succeed; but they may be considered a very precarious crop, owing to the wet weather often experienced during harvest, when it is extremely difficult to secure them in a good state.

Draining has of late been practised to a very great extent on the principal farms, and with evident advantage. For example, one small field of about four acres has been drained this year at an expense of about L. 20. Even furrow draining has been tried on a small scale, and in all probability will become more general. Lime has been found most serviceable on dry lands, and has been a good deal in use; but the depressed state of farm produce for many years back has operated as a great discouragement to the

use of this expensive but valuable manure. Considerable tracts of waste ground have been reclaimed by almost all the proprietors during the last twenty years; chiefly, however, with the view of extending the farms under their own management. Among these improvements, none have been so perfectly executed as those on the beautiful estate of Langwell, by the late proprietor, James Horne, Esq. A considerable portion was trenched at a great expense where the soil was shallow, and other parts of moor-ground, having from one to two feet of moss on the surface, were first ploughed, then burnt, and laid down with a large allowance of lime, carted a distance of ten miles. This was done twelve or fourteen years ago, and has never yet been turned up, yet it continues to retain a rich and close sward of pasture grass, without discovering any symptoms of relapsing into its original heath, as so generally happens when the work is done in a less perfect style. On the estates of Dunbeath, Latheronwheel, Forse, Lybster, and Clyth, much has also been done, though in a less expensive manner. The system pursued by the smaller tenantry has in several respects been improved of late. Instead of four small horses and a driver to every plough, two horses without a driver are now universally used. And, instead of the clumsy awkward plough formerly in use, the neat iron plough is becoming very general. The land is also better cleaned, although the rotation of oats and bear alternately is very little changed; only a greater breadth of potatoes is planted, and good white and dun oats have supplanted the old black and gray inferior qualities. In a few cases also small patches of grass are sown out after potatoes. This practice would speedily become general, were it not for the want of enclosures to preserve the grass from being injured during winter, and that there is no winter herding.

*Leases.*—Leases of fourteen or nineteen years are granted on the larger farms, but the small tenantry generally hold their farms only from year to year—a system alike prejudicial to their comforts, and the interests of the proprietor. Short leases are, however, becoming more common, and will no doubt speedily become universal.

The condition of some of the farm-buildings is excellent, others of them again are exceedingly bad. But, as in all other things connected with rural economy, there has been a progressive improvement of late. The same observations are applicable to the enclosures. These chiefly consist of stone fences, together with whin and thorn

hedges. Most of the stone fences are old and decayed, and do not suit the improved system of keeping a suitable portion of each farm under sheep. Should the present system be persevered in, as is most probable, they will require to be renewed. Indeed, this is to commence immediately on the farm of Clyth, the property of Sir George Sinclair, where a new farm-steading and proper enclosures are forthwith to be erected on a new lease of that excellent farm. All the new houses are slated, and in other respects very commodious.

*Improvements.*—The principal improvements which have taken place within the last thirty years, in as far as agriculture is concerned, may be briefly enumerated as follows: fully 2000 acres of waste ground reclaimed; better accommodations in farm-buildings; a vast extent of enclosures executed; agriculture much more systematically and advantageously pursued; more attention given to the culture and clearing of the land; draining practised much more extensively, and executed in a more skilful style; better breeds of horses, cows, and sheep; superior facilities both for expedition and security in conveying them to the southern markets; a much wider breadth of turnips sown and heavier crops raised, and consequently a much larger quantity of stock reared and fed, and fitted in a much shorter time for the butcher. After shipping the stock at Wick in the morning, it is possible for them to be shown in the Edinburgh market next afternoon; thus accomplishing in the astonishingly short period of thirty hours what used to occupy nearly as many days, to the much greater damage of the stock.

Great as these improvements are, nothing but the want of capital prevents their proceeding at a much more rapid rate; and were additional encouragement to be given by proprietors, by granting leases to the small tenantry on reasonable terms, a great deal more might be done, even upon the existing resources of the people. One of the greatest obstacles with which the spirit of improvement has now to contend, is the non-residence of almost all the proprietors; a circumstance which did not exist, to the same extent, until very recently; and hence the same interest can hardly be expected to be taken, either in promoting the comforts of the inhabitants, or in reclaiming or ornamenting the lands. But it is hoped that this inconvenience may only be of short duration.

*Fisheries.*—There are four descriptions of fisheries prosecuted in this parish, viz. the herring, cod, salmon, and lobster. Of these the herring-fishery is the most considerable, forming as it does,

the principal source whence the revenue of the parish is derived. This fishing commences about the middle of July, when the herring usually make their appearance in small shoals on the coast, and continues till the middle of September. Great numbers of young men come from Assynt in Sutherlandshire, and Lochbroom and Lewis in Ross-shire, to engage as hired hands. They are employed by the owners of the boats to make up the boats' crew along with themselves, and receive from L. 3 to L. 4 each, for six weeks, besides their victuals. Each boat carries four men, and is furnished with from twenty to thirty-eight nets, according to the size of the boat. A good boat costs L. 50, and her drift of nets L. 76; a sum too large for one individual, and consequently there are generally two and sometimes more who share in the same boat. They usually last in a seaworthy state about twelve years, and the nets six years. No employment can be prosecuted with greater spirit and assiduity; and few scenes are more enlivening, both on land and water, than it occasions, especially when any measure of success attends the labours of the fishermen. The boats usually leave the shore from five o'clock to seven o'clock in the afternoon, according to the direction of the wind and the distance at which the fish are supposed to be found, and shoot their nets about dusk. In this state they remain, with the boat attached to each drift by means of a head rope, and slowly carried east or west by the tide, until about three o'clock the next morning. Then all hands are employed in hauling in the nets and fish at the boat's stern, where they remain together, dispersed all over the boat, till it comes to shore, when they commence the operation of disengaging the fish from the meshes of the net, by shaking the nets. This operation is frequently performed at the time of hauling the nets, should time and the weather permit. The herring being thus separated from the nets, are immediately landed and deposited in the curing box, where a number of women are engaged in gutting and packing them in barrels with salt. Having delivered their fish, they bundle up their nets, carry them on shore, and spread them out carefully one over the other. Here they remain to dry, until taken up again in the afternoon to be used as formerly. After securing their boats, they return to their homes, take some refreshment, and a few hours repose, as their time permits, and proceed to take up their nets, and put to sea again for the next night's fishing. In this manner they proceed for five successive nights, every week. Sometimes, however, when the quan-



tity of fish to be delivered is large, they do not get to bed for days together. This makes it a very fatiguing and even oppressive employment. But the prospect of success is so very enticing, that it is submitted to with wonderful cheerfulness.

The boats used in this parish may contain from 30 to 50 crans or barrels (for both are nearly alike,) of herrings, and it is difficult to say which of the sights is most pleasingly interesting to a stranger, that of beholding on a fine evening the whole coast, as far as the eye can reach, covered with human beings in their little barks, as they issue forth from every creek, and disperse in different directions, full of life; or that of attending at one of the stations in the morning, and witnessing the return of 40, 60, or 100 boats, all crowding into one creek, most of them, perhaps, laden with fish to the gunwale, and then the scene of bustle and animation that succeeds and continues till night! And what ought not to be omitted as being still more delightful to a seriously contemplative mind, it is not unusual, where there are boats having individuals of acknowledged piety, for the crew to engage in worship after shooting their nets. On these occasions a portion of a psalm is sung, followed with prayer, and the effect is represented as truly solemn and heart-stirring, as the melodious strains of the Gaelic music, carried along the surface of the waters, (several being similarly engaged,) spread throughout the whole fleet.

But not unfrequently the scene is sadly reversed, for in the midst of the joys of life, we often are in death. A storm suddenly arises during the night. The boats are all riding quietly at their nets and unprepared to meet it. Some endeavour to haul their nets, others cut from them, and make for the place of greatest shelter, whilst others, afraid to put up sail and encounter it, abide by their nets in the hope of the storm's abating. In proportion to the danger at sea, are the confusion and anxiety on land. The shores are instantly crowded by inquiring relatives, hurrying from place to place in search of husbands, brothers, or sons. Astonishing instances of preservation often occur; but no season passes without serious losses to individuals, either of boats, or nets, and sometimes of lives. The risks are very great, and the employment, even when successful, most trying to the constitution.

The following presents a pretty correct state of the fishing of 1838 at the different stations in the parish. The fishing stations with the boats attached to each are, Dunbeath, 76; Latheron-

wheel, 35; Forse, 32; Swiney, 10; Lybster, 101; Clyth, 53; and East Clyth, 18: in all 325 boats. Connected with these there are 1321 fishermen, 106 coopers, 937 women as packers, and 178 labourers, in all 2540 persons,—besides about 50 fish curers, many of whom take an active part in the business. The number of barrels cured at all these stations in 1898, was 39,093, exclusive of the fish cured by the fishermen and others at their own houses, which may be estimated at about 2800 barrels,—besides quantities of green fish purchased at all the stations by strangers from all parts of the county in exchange for cash, milk, butter, cheese, &c. &c.—say 907. The average price per cran of green fish was 9s., and that per barrel when cured, L.1. The barrels are made at the different stations, the hemp spun and the nets wrought in the fishermen's families during the winter and spring months. From all this, it may be conceived what an engrossing and important concern the herring-fishing has become in this parish.

But, notwithstanding these advantages, which are confessedly great in a temporal point of view, yet it is very doubtful whether they are not more than counterbalanced by the pernicious effects upon the morals of the people, which never fail to result from this employment, especially the young of both sexes. No doubt the sound religious education now becoming so general, has a tendency to counteract such habits. Indeed, this is already apparent, and it is to be hoped, if persevered in, will become still more so. At all events, as matters now stand, it is evident that the failure of the fishing would be attended with the most ruinous consequences, so that it becomes no less the duty than the interest of the landed proprietors, whilst encouraging the fishing, by which the value of land has been so greatly enhanced, to afford every practicable facility to the diffusion of knowledge, by means of education and religious instruction both to young and old. These have ever been found the best safeguards of morality in a country, and are the surest means of rearing and perpetuating an enlightened, intelligent, and industrious peasantry.

The cod-fishing is not carried on to any great extent, although there are immense quantities to be found on the coast, particularly at the commencement of the herring fishing. At this period there are a good many caught; but as soon as the herring appear in such numbers as to induce the fishermen to shoot their nets, then the cod-fishing is deserted, that of the herring being

much more profitable. On an average there may be about 10,000 cod cured in a season, for which 6d. each may be obtained.

Lobsters also are in great abundance, and frequently many of them are taken in boxes; but this trade is little attended to, as the herring trade has been the all-engrossing business for many years back.

There are two salmon-fishing stations in the parish, viz. at Berriedale and Dunbeath, the former belonging to Mr Horne of Langwell, and the latter to Mr Sinclair of Freswick. At Berriedale, salmon and grilse are frequently caught in great abundance, particularly since the herring-fishing was discontinued there. It is rented by the Messrs Hogarth of Aberdeen, and the fishing at Dunbeath by Mr Martin of Dundee, the former at L. 275, and the latter at L. 27. This great difference in rent is chiefly occasioned by the herring-fishing at the latter place having a tendency to annoy the fish, and frighten them from the shore. In other respects, Dunbeath seems the preferable station, as the channel of the river is always open. The fish on both rivers are good; that of Berriedale particularly so. Very few of them are sold in the parish, on account of the high price demanded; salmon 1s., and grilse 6d. per lb. They are kitted and sent to the London market.

*Raw Produce.*—It is difficult to ascertain with accuracy the precise amount of raw produce raised in the parish; but an attempt has been made to approach it pretty nearly, though with considerable difficulty, under the following heads:

Grain of all kinds, about 11,882 qrs. at L.1, 5s. per quarter,	L.14,852	0	0
Potatoes, 4535 bolls, at 10s. per boll,	2,267	10	0
Turnips, 286 acres, at 1.6 per acre,	1416	0	0
Hay, meadow and cultivated, 40,300 stones, at 6d. per stone,	1,007	10	0
Land in pasture to graze, 3765 cows, at L.1 each,	3,765	0	0
Do. do. 12,000 sheep, at 5s. each,	3,000	0	0
Fisheries—herring, 42,800 crans, at 9s. per cran,	19,260	0	0
Do. cod, 10,000, at 6d. each, L.250; salmon rented at L.302,	552	0	0
Miscellaneous produce not enumerated above,	750	0	0

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, L.46,870 0 0

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.*—There is no market-town in the parish. The nearest to it is Wick, the county town, which is at the medium distance of twenty miles. Several villages have been projected, but none of them have yet arisen to any consequence except Lybster, which contains many excellent houses, and a population of fully 400 individuals. Several new buildings are now in progress, and many of the inhabitants are very respectable. It was com-

menced by the late proprietor, Lieutenant-General Sinclair, in 1802; but it is only within the last twenty years that the spirit of improvement has been particularly called forth. It is now a rising place, and evidently promises to be of considerable consequence at no very distant period, should the herring-fishing continue to flourish, of which there is every prospect.

*Means of Communication.*—There are two post-offices in the parish, viz. Dunbeath and Lybster, the former of old establishment, and the latter more recent.

The great north road runs from one extremity of the parish to the other, a distance of twenty-eight miles along the coast, and is of immense importance in facilitating the means of communication. The mail-coach from Inverness to Thurso has continued to run since the completion of this road, about twenty-two years ago. The weekly communication by steam from Leith and Aberdeen to Wick and Orkney, has considerably lessened the number of passengers by the coach.

The bridges along the Parliamentary and county roads are kept in excellent repair.

*Harbours.*—Considering the vast importance of this coast in a commercial point of view, the great number of vessels that frequent it in connection with the fisheries, and the many risks to which life and property are exposed in consequence of its bold, rocky, and exposed character, it is much to be regretted that so little has hitherto been done in order to obtain safe and commodious harbours. With the exception of a neat little pier at Clyth, which is occasionally of service in loading vessels in very moderate weather, the only attempt that has yet been made in this way is at Lybster, where the proprietor, T. Frederick Sinclair, Esq. has, in a very spirited manner, and at considerable expense, been engaged for several years back in providing a harbour for the encouragement of the increasing trade and population of that place. This has been effected by running a stone pier of about 300 feet in length along the west bank of a rivulet which runs into the sea at this place, and which formerly was usually choked up by the shifting beach, now confined behind the pier. By this means shelter and accommodation have been effected for upwards of one hundred boats of from ten to fifteen tons burden, besides admitting decked vessels of one hundred tons burden. Within the last three years, from sixty to eighty of the latter have loaded and discharged cargoes during the summer and harvest seasons; and it

is supposed that it is practicable, by a small additional outlay, to deepen the harbour so as to receive vessels of the necessary tonnage even at low water. The value of such an improvement on the coast would be incalculable, considering the thousands of individuals engaged in the herring fishing. At present, there is not a single place to run to at low water, when vessels or boats are suddenly overtaken with a heavy storm, as not unfrequently happens, to the great loss of life and property. Dunbeath is also remarkably well calculated for a harbour, and in all probability the time cannot be far distant, when something on an extensive scale will be attempted there. Nature has done her part admirably, and it only requires the hand of art to turn her varied resources to good account. Petitions have this year been numerously signed and sent to the Admiralty, praying the appointment of a survey of this coast, in order to select one or more of the fittest stations with the view of erecting harbours for the protection of property, and the lives of the fishermen, now exposed to such imminent hazard. Should these applications succeed, as it is to be hoped they eventually will, then a new era will arise with respect to agricultural and commercial pursuits, and it will only require the united efforts of enterprising and intelligent men to occupy the field thus opened up, and call forth a spirit of industry hitherto unexampled in this quarter.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situated close by the sea, and is seventeen miles from the western extremity of the parish, eleven miles from the eastern, and ten from the northern extremity. It is, however, sufficiently central for the population, though it must be obvious, from the great territorial extent, that comparatively few of the inhabitants, were they solely dependent upon it, could derive much benefit on account of the distance to which they are removed. The church seems to have been built about the year 1734. It received a large addition by way of an aisle in 1822, and was, besides, new roofed and new seated. It may contain about 900 sitters, and no seat-rents have been demanded since it received extensive repairs in 1822. It is one of the largest and most commodious country churches in the county. The only thing wanted to its comfort is that of having it ceiled above, which it is hoped may, ere long, be accomplished.

The manse was built about forty years ago, and is a substantial building, with sufficient accommodation. The glebe consists of 15 acres of arable land. Its extent was a little increased by an

excambion about fourteen years ago, and it may be worth about L.20 per annum. The amount of the stipend is 16 chalders, the one-half meal and the other barley, with L.10 for communion elements.

As stated under a former head, there is a Government church at Berriedale, in the west end of the parish. It was built in 1826, and accommodates 300 sitters. The district connected with it now forms a *quoad sacra* parish. In consequence of some of the families having been removed since the church was built, it is now too remote for the more populous districts connected with it, but is, notwithstanding, still very useful; and were a small church to be erected in the eastern quarter, where the minister could preach every alternate Sabbath, it would be still more so. There is an excellent manse near the church, as also a garden and small glebe. Both the latter were furnished by the late proprietor Mr Horne of Langwell, and are continued by his successor Mr Donald Horne. The stipend, amounting to L.120, is paid by Government, and the population is fully 1400. There was also a church built at the village of Lybster in 1836 by subscription, and the district connected with it constituted a parish *quoad sacra*. It is four miles east of the parish church, has a regular minister settled in it, and a population exceeding 2500 souls. A manse has not yet been built, nor a glebe assigned, but the minister has been provided with a good house in the meantime, and a stipend of L.100 per annum, which is paid from the seat-rents. The church is a neat, commodious, and well-finished building, constructed of the best materials. It contains 805 sitters, and the contract price was L.890, all of which was cleared off the same year in which the house was finished. Its great utility in that district is universally acknowledged. All the seats are let, the church crowded, and yet the parish church as well attended as formerly. This is the only attempt hitherto made, on the Church extension plan, in any of the counties north of Inverness, and it has succeeded far beyond the most sanguine expectations of its promoters. How long the people, who are almost all composed of the poor and working classes, may be able to afford seat-rents equal to their minister's stipend, must depend upon the future success of the herring-fishing. It is hoped, however, that Government will ere long see the expediency and necessity of appropriating a small sum by way of stipend to assist such necessitous places. The proprietors connected with the district contributed liberally towards its erection as also several others both in and out of the parish, together wi

the whole body of the inhabitants of this and the other parishes of the county. It was a favourite measure, in which all felt interested; and it would have delighted the writer to record here the names of all the principal subscribers, could it be admitted, in testimony of the grateful sense he entertains of the handsome and cordial manner in which his appeals in behalf of this important object were responded to by all classes.

There is a mission on the establishment of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at Bruan, in the eastern extremity of the parish. This station was formerly connected with Berriedale, where the missionary resides. The disjunction took place in 1826, when the Government church was erected at the latter place. A comfortable manse has been erected at Bruan for the missionary, which cost L.232, and the expense was defrayed by the people connected with the district. A glebe of four acres of excellent land was handsomely made over to the mission by the late Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, Bart., whose estates are chiefly benefited thereby. The mission-house stands on the boundary betwixt this parish and Wick, and now accommodates about an equal number from each parish. The church is seated for 600. The population from both parishes is 1800, and the mission is one of the most compact anywhere to be found. The present missionary's stipend has recently been augmented to L.100, only L.25 of which is paid by the Society—the remainder is paid, or at least promised, by the people, and raised from the seat-rents as far as these can be realized. This district also ought to be made a parish *quoad sacra*, more especially as it is now completely disjoined from the parish church, by that of Lybster intervening betwixt them.

About 350 of the inhabitants of the interior of the parish are connected with the Royal Bounty Mission of Dirlot, in the parish of Halkirk, and attend public worship at the meeting-house of Halsary, where a new and more suitable house is about to be built, and is much needed.

There are four catechists in the parish. They are appointed by the kirk-sessions, with the consent and approbation of the people among whom they labour, and by whom they are paid. There are no Dissenting or Seceding chapels in the parish. An attempt was made a few years ago to introduce dissent into the village of Lybster, where the most strenuous exertions were made and great expense incurred by the United Secession body to establish a congregation, but it has signally failed, and is now given up as hope-

less. This might have been foreseen from first, as there were no members of that or any other Dissenting denomination there, and the inhabitants generally neither desired nor countenanced such a measure.\* With the exception of a few strangers who may settle among them, the people are most devotedly and conscientiously attached to the Established Church, to which the whole population of 8000 belong, with the exception of about twelve families in the eastern extremity of the parish. One, and sometimes both the heads of these families usually attend the Secession church at Wick, but the young people belonging to them generally attend at the mission of Bruan on Sabbath. Considering the poverty of many of the inhabitants, excepting those from the very remote districts where meetings are frequently kept by the catechists or others for the convenience of the people, divine service is remarkably well attended in the several places of worship. On this subject it is recorded, with peculiar satisfaction, that, within the last few years, a marked improvement has taken place in the attendance of the young, and there is every reason to hope that it will be progressive. This is to be attributed not merely to the public exhortations addressed to parents from the pulpit, but also to the more than ordinary attention of the parochial and other schoolmasters in inculcating this most important duty upon their scholars.

The average number of communicants has varied from 130 to 180 during the last seven years. The fewness of their number is to be ascribed to the feelings of reverential awe with which they view this solemn ordinance, and the diffidence they experience as to their being possessed of the necessary qualifications for engaging in it.

The yearly collections for the poor may be averaged at L. 52, and those for religious purposes at L. 30.

*Education.*—Hitherto there has been only one parochial school in this extensive parish. There are, however, 14 unendowed and three Society schools; two supported by the General Assembly, and one by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge; in all 18, besides a few female schools where reading as well as needle-work is taught. The languages and the higher branches of mathematics are taught in the parochial and Assembly's schools,

\* Since the above was written, the United Secession have returned to Lybster, in the hope of better success, as the church there is about becoming vacant, by the translation of its able and popular minister to the Gaelic Church in Edinburgh.



when required; but only the elementary branches in those unendowed; and many of the latter, being in remote districts, where the people are very poor, are kept open during only six months of the year, viz. winter and spring. In all the schools the Scriptures are read daily, and the catechisms taught. The salary of the parish teacher is the maximum, and the fees may amount to from L. 20 to L. 30 a year. That of the Society teachers is from L. 20 to L. 25 each, and their fees from L. 8 to L. 10. The unendowed teachers are by far the worst paid; their emoluments may average from L. 3 to L. 4, including fees, though usually they have their victuals in addition. From the smallness of their emoluments it will readily be conceived that the acquirements of these teachers cannot be great. They are selected from the most talented and promising of the scholars in attendance at the parish school, where they are again to be found in attendance how soon their own schools close in the beginning of summer. Here they spend the summer and harvest in revising their former studies, and adding as much as possible to their stock of already acquired knowledge. By these means they return with fresh vigour and increased resources to their former stations in winter. Thus they continue to advance in the higher branches of education, until qualified for the Society or even parochial schools. But to these schools again, the different districts look for other young men to supply their places, so that the district schools are a kind of nurseries for the more advanced seminaries, which in their turn liberally repay the debt they have incurred. There have been five of these district teachers prosecuting their studies most creditably at the university for several years back.

It is proper to notice that there is another parochial school being built at Dunbeath, in connection with the Government parish of Berriedale. Mr Sinclair of Freswick, at the recommendation of his curators, has, in the handsomest manner, agreed to bear the whole expense of furnishing the necessary accommodations. These will at least cost L. 300; they are upon a scale more than ordinarily liberal, and will be finished this season. The benefits to result from such an establishment in that quarter, it is difficult to calculate, and the example of Mr Sinclair and his liberal minded curators cannot be too highly recommended. From the exertions made in furnishing the means of education, there are few of the young who cannot read; the greater number also learn to write; but among those who are far advanced in life,

there is a considerable number who can neither read nor write. The people in general are certainly alive to the benefits that arise from a good education, and therefore make considerable exertions, according to their small means, for supporting schools among them. No doubt several of the unendowed schools are of very inferior quality, as may be expected from the trifling remuneration that some districts can afford, so that what is wanted is not so much additional schools as additional salaries, and consequently better qualified teachers. Without the former, it is hopeless to attempt to raise the character of the latter beyond what has already been done. There are four stations at least, where Society schools could be most advantageously located, and for which applications have frequently been made, though hitherto without effect. It has already been observed, that the improvement in the conduct and morals of the young people is everywhere recognized by those who are acquainted with the parish; and that this change is in a great measure to be ascribed to the additional facilities and improved system of education, cannot be doubted. The proprietors have already done much, and it is to be hoped, that the altered state of society for the better will encourage them to persevere, until all the scattered hamlets of this extensive and populous parish, second perhaps to no landward parish in Scotland, are brought under the influence of a sound, moral, and religious education.

Having already noticed the recent improvements of an agricultural nature under that head, it may not be improper here to enumerate briefly those of an ecclesiastical and educational nature, which have taken place during the last twenty years, being the period of the incumbency of the present writer. The parish church, remodelled and greatly enlarged,—a Government church, manse, and glebe, established at Berriedale, and that district formed into a *quoad sacra* parish, with a separate minister,—a new church built at Lybster, with a separate minister settled there, and also formed into a *quoad sacra* parish,—the mission of Bruan, confined to that station, instead of two as formerly, and a commodious manse built for the missionary, with a suitable glebe attached;—all of these ministers, actively and laboriously engaged in communicating religious instruction, and discharging the duties of pastoral superintendence among the people. As to education, there has been a new parish school, with schoolmaster's accommodation erected; another parochial school in the course

of erection at Dunbeath; an Assembly school established at Berriedale, with schoolmaster's accommodation; another Assembly school similarly provided at Reisgill, together with eight unendowed schools in different localities; the general qualifications of the teachers considerably raised; the system of teaching vastly improved; and, consequently, the number of scholars almost incredibly increased: the general average exceeds 1200. But still much remains to be done in both departments; and as it is pleasing to reflect, that, in carrying forward these improvements, the harmony and good understanding subsisting betwixt the heritors and the present incumbent, have never been interrupted; a circumstance not a little creditable to the heritors, considering how many demands were necessarily made upon them; so it is to be hoped that the same cordiality and good feeling will be mutually maintained in prosecuting those that are still in contemplation. The readiness with which they have promoted these improvements, is very commendable.

*Friendly Societies.*—There are two of these of long standing, one at Dunbeath and the other at Lybster. In many instances they have been remarkably useful, both in respect to widows and orphans, and also the aged and infirm; but for several years back, they have not been becoming more flourishing, either as to members or funds. However, it is to be hoped that they may yet revive.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of persons at present on the poor's roll is 202; each of whom only receives at the rate of from 4s. to 8s. at the time of distribution, which is once a-year. Such of them as are able, make their rounds through the parish occasionally, in order to obtain aid from those families whose circumstances enable them to assist them; and those that are bed-ridden or infirm have assistance sent them by the charitable and well disposed around them. There being no parochial assessment, the collections made at the church doors, together with the interest arising from a few benefactions, furnish the funds from which the poor receive the small pittance which can be assigned them. The average church collections may amount to L. 52 yearly, and the interest from benefactions to L. 18. The latter consist of L. 100, left many years ago, by the late Rev. Dr James Oswald of Glasgow; L. 100 by the late John C. Sutherland, Esq. of Forse in this parish; L. 100 by Conductor Sutherland of North America; and L. 40 by Mr Alexander Finlayson Macdonald of same place. Much to the credit of the poorer classes, they very

generally manifest a strong disinclination to seek relief from the poor's funds. There is a degree of virtuous pride, as well as strong natural affection very prevalent, which induces the children to support their aged and infirm parents to the utmost of their ability; and when applications are made for parochial relief, the cases are usually found to be very necessitous. This feeling is always encouraged, and its opposite discountenanced by the kirk-session, by every possible means. Hence, in ordinary seasons, very few indeed apply for certificates of poverty; and it is truly astonishing among such a large population, almost solely composed of the poorer classes, how very few are to be met with, asking charity. The numbers of this description from the south are very great, and generally of very indifferent character; but resolutions have recently been entered into by the county gentlemen, with a view of checking this great grievance, which, it is hoped, will have the desired effect. No year passes without many gross deceptions being practised upon the unsuspecting inhabitants, by designing persons of this description.

*Fairs.*—There are four fairs held in the parish for general purposes, two at Dunbeath and two at Lybster, during the year.

*Inns.*—There are not fewer than 26 public-houses, for retailing spirits, &c. in the parish, when six would have been quite sufficient for every necessary purpose.

*Fuel.*—Almost all the fuel used consists of peats. The expense attending its manufacture and carriage makes it ultimately very little cheaper than coal; only, it is more convenient, being always at hand.

October 1840.

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#### ADDENDA.

The following is a list of the Ministers of the parish:—1637, Gilbert Anderson; — Mr Munro; 1652, John Ross, translated to Inverness in 1663; 1667, Niel Beaton, died 1715; 1717, Andrew Sutherland, died 1732; 1734, James Brodie, died 1773; 1775, Robert Gun, died 1819; 1820, George Davidson.

There are no Crown teinds in Latheron; but there are unappropriated teinds belonging to other persons, which amount to nearly L.400.

## PARISH OF BOWER.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. WILLIAM SMITH, A. M., MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, &c.*—THE name of the parish is supposed to be derived from a Danish word signifying a *valley*. Its extent is 7 miles in length and 3 in breadth.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*State of Property and Antiquities, &c.*—The boundary of the parish was formerly, in the greater part of its extent, the boundary of distinct properties.

The estates of Tister (formerly written Thuspisteer,) and Northfield, in this parish, connected with Durran, in the parish of Olrick, had belonged to the family of Mr Sinclair Worth of Durran. Both of these estates are now the property of the Earl of Caithness.

The property of Lyth, in this parish, separated by a burn only from How and Myreland, in the parish of Wick, belongs to Mr Sinclair of Barrack. That of Bowermaddon, and half of Mursay, in this parish, have been added to Tain and Hoy, in the parish of Olrick.

The boundary of Bowermaddon and Mursay was supposed to extend to the burn of Amatan; and the intervening house and farm of Hartfield is partly in this parish, and partly in that of Dunnet. The mills on these two last have been pulled down, and a new one erected in place of them, on the boundary of Bowermaddon.

The estate of Scarmclet, on the south-west side of this parish, has been acquired by Sir R. Anstruther, and added to his property of Dunn, in the parish of Watten, and improved by a new farm at Blackcarn, beyond Larel, and a steading of buildings at Bleedy-quoy, and the erection of an excellent new mill. On the premises on which the old mill stood, Sir Ralph Anstruther has caused a school-house to be built.

The improvements formerly begun on the estates of Scarmclet and Clayock, by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Williamson of Banneskirk, have been considerably advanced by Sir Ralph Anstruther, by the erection of new farms and steadings, and dividing the possessions of the tenants by ditches 6 feet wide by 3 feet deep, which preclude the encroachments of cattle, and lay the land dry. Mr Henderson of Stempster has inclosed many acres by ditches, and improved his property by digging marl pits.

The estate of Brabsterdorran (said once to have belonged to the earldom of Caithness) was lately acquired from that of South Dunn, by Colonel Stewart of Strath, and resold to David Henderson, younger of Stempster: it is now more than four or five times the value of what it was when it belonged to the late Mrs Henrietta Sinclair Wemyss of South Dunn.

The improvements begun on it by General Stewart, by the erection of a dwelling and offices on the site of the old mansion, some hedging, draining, and road-making, have been further advanced, and the mains enlarged, with extended tillage, fallowing, and enclosures with stone and turf dikes, as also drains; on the Mains, there were added a steading of offices, and a thrashing-mill driven by water, besides a new farm at lower Gillock, bounding with Lower Scarmclet and Quoyne.

On the hill-ground to the east, beyond Brabster and Lister, at nearly equal distance from Brabster, Campster, and Belster of Lord Caithness's property, is placed the standing-stone called Stone Ludd, which, by an old tradition, is supposed to be the memorial of a battle fought and gained.

Torfaeus mentions a fight begun in the moss of Skitten, (*paludibus Skidensibus*), now oftener called Kilmster, by two brothers for the Earldom of Caithness,—Liotus, the elder, being supported in his right by the King of Norway,—Scullius, the younger, being aided by the King of Scotland. It is said that the younger was slain in battle, and buried in Hofn, probably Stone Hone, near Watten; and that the elder, victorious brother, was mortally wounded. It is not improbable that the stone was raised as a memorial of Liotus, the Earl of Caithness and Orkney, in the tenth century.

The lands of Bowertower and Auckhorn, Seater, Hastigrow, Kirk, and Stanstill, with Whitegan, belong to David Sinclair Wemyss of South Dunn, and still make up the highest share of the valuation of the parish. The mansion-house of Stanstill is let to a

tenant, with the mains enlarged, and a new square of offices, and thrashing-mill driven by horses.

The estate of Thura was, within the last forty years, purchased by the late William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick. It is now the property of his son. The Mains have been lately improved by drains and extended enclosures.

Among the improvements in this parish, those carried on by John Sinclair of Barrack, on the property of Lyth and Alterwall, may be reckoned the greatest. He has added several hundred acres to the land in his own possession, laid much ground dry, multiplied enclosures, and on some of the pastures for sheep added wire fences, besides erecting a new mansion-house, and squares of farm-steadings.

### III.—POPULATION.

Population by census of 1801,	-	1572	
1811,	-	1478	
1821,	-	1486	
1831,	-	1615	
Number of families in the parish in 1831,			236
chiefly engaged in agriculture,			161
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,			19

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—All that the writer has to observe on this subject will be found under the head Civil History of this Account.

### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Amount of stipend, 14 chalders. Value of the glebe per annum, L.5. There are only six Dissenting or Seceding families in the parish.

*Education.*—There are four schools in the parish, one of which is parochial, and another a General Assembly's school. The salary of the parochial master, including the amount of an equivalent for garden, is L.35, 16s. 2d., and his school fees may amount to L.14 per annum.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—Average number of poor for the three years 1835–36–37,—53. Average amount of the sum distributed for their support, L.18, 14s. 9d. This consists of church collections, and interest of Dr Oswald's legacy of L.100.

October 1840.

# PARISH OF WICK.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF CAITHNESS AND  
SUTHERLAND.

THE REV. CHARLES THOMSON, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE vocable *wic* in Danish, Saxon, and other northern languages of Gothic origin, signifies *a corner, a flexure, a bending reach* in a river, *a bay*. Hence the derivation of Wick, formerly spelled Weik, which has always been the name of this parish, is obvious. A well-defined and rather beautiful little *wic*, or bay, which, no doubt, formed a comparatively safe and commodious harbour to the Danish and Norwegian pirates\* of ancient days, communicated its appellation to the village which gradually rose on its northern shore; and, finally, the name was extended to the whole parochial district which, ultimately, became connected with the town.

*Extent.*—The parish of Wick is  $15\frac{1}{2}$  miles in extreme length from north to south; its average breadth is about 5 miles; and its superficial extent may be estimated at 77 square miles, or 61,600 imperial acres.

*Boundaries.*—The parish of Wick is bounded, on the south by the parish of Latheron; on the south-west, by the parish of Watin; on the north-west, by the parish of Bower; on the north, by the parish of Canisbay; and on the east, by the Moray Frith.

*Coast.*—The coast of this parish presents along its line, which is about twenty-six miles in length, a great variety of features. Near the northern extremity, on the townland, or estate of Nybster, it is formed by lofty rugged rocks. These are succeeded by gently sloping fields, on the northern limit of the Bay of Keiss. Almost the whole of the shore on the bosom of this capacious bay is low,

\* The northern pirates received the name of *Vikings*, that is bay-men, because they lurked in the *wics*, or bays. *Wick* is yet in use in the Scottish dialect, as the *wick o' the mouth*, the *wick o' the ee*.



and formed of flinty sand. Towards the southern side, it is composed of comminuted shells. The coast now becomes bold and rocky till it reaches the Noss, or, as it is usually, but tautologically, styled, Noss-Head. From Noss to Staxigoe it is composed of lofty, black, and rugged rocks, which are continued with more or less of the same savage character to Proudfoot, the northern side of the entrance to the Bay of Wick. At the Head of Wick, opposite to Proudfoot, the same kind of rugged, rocky coast recommences, and continues, with but trifling interruptions, till it passes beyond the southern boundary of the parish. On the coast of the parish of Wick, there are numerous *goes*,\* or small inlets of the sea, with steep and rocky sides. Commencing at the south side of Keiss Bay, the principal of these, between it and Noss-Head, are Braidgoe; Caldersgoe; Sclatygoe; Ruthigoe; Girnigoe, crowned with the hideous ruins of Castle Sinclair and Girnigoe, the principal ancient baronial stronghold of the Sinclairs, Earls of Caithness; Manigoe, supposed to be properly Moneygoe, because it is reported, and the fact, that in it several parcels of base copper coins have at different times been found, corroborates the tradition, that Earl George the Wicked entertained in it one Smith, a coiner of bad money; Sandygoe; and Mursligoe, the cove frequented by seals. An entrance from this goe leads under a small rock, by a dry passage, into an immense cavern under Noss-Head. Between this headland and Broad Haven, are Staxigoe, so called from some *Stacks*, or detached rocks, which rise above the sea at its entrance; and Eltrigoe. Papigoe lies in the Bay of Wick. A passage is said to lead a considerable way from the sea, to a small knoll called the Pap, whence the name of Papigoe.

On the shore to the south of Wick Bay, lies a black and frightful chasm, on which stands the dismantled tower of Auld Wick. At sea, this ruin forms an excellent landmark, and is by sailors called the Aul' Man o' Wick. Southward from Auld Wick is the Burgh of Hempriggs, so called from its having been in very ancient times the site of a *bruch*, or fort, the traces of which are still visible. It forms a small fishing haven. In the mouth of it stand the Stacks of Hempriggs. The principal of these is an immense outstanding rock, perforated from side to side, and from top to bottom; the resort, in the breeding season, of innumerable sea-

\* This ancient relic of Norwegian colonization is pronounced in one syllable, with the *g* hard, as if written *gyoes*.

fowl; and always of a pair or two of merlin hawks. The Brig o Tram, Craig-Ammel, Brickigoe, and Falligoe, near the southern termination of the parochial coast, are some of its more interesting features.

Keiss Bay, called also Reiss Bay, from the townland of Reiss, which lies upon it; Ackergill Bay, from the noble Tower of Ackergill, which stands on its shore, and likewise Sinclair Bay, from the neighbourhood of Castle Sinclair and Girnigoe; and the Bay of Wick are the only two bays on the coast. The former is by far the larger. Ships have often been stranded on its shore. This has arisen from its having been mistaken for the eastern entrance of the Pentland Frith. A lighthouse ought to be erected on Noss-Head.

This dangerous promontory, Proudfoot, the Head of Wick, and Ulbster Head, are the most important headlands on the coast.

*Surface.*—The surface of the parish of Wick is in general flat, or but very gently sloping in different directions. The northern parts generally face the south, and the southern have a northern and north-eastern exposure, as shown by the run of the water. Its aspect is bleak, unpicturesque, and tame. The heights of Yarrows and Camster, towards the south-west of the parish, are the only hills deserving of the name. Their elevation above the sea is considerable; but their appearance is dull and heavy.

A spacious valley, forming the fertile strath of Stirkoke, stretches in a westerly direction from the Bay of Wick to the Loch of Watin,—a distance of about twelve miles, without ever attaining an elevation of more than 60 feet above the level of the sea. Half a mile above Wick, a similar valley, running southwards in a circum-linear direction, and keeping nearly parallel to the sea coast, but bending a little more to the west, arrives at a somewhat greater elevation at its southern extremity, than the former. Another valley, containing the deep and extensive moss of Kilminster, separates the parishes of Wick and Bower.

*Meteorology.*—The climate of this parish is that of the whole of Caithness,—very windy, humid, and variable. The average number of days in the year with rain is 190; with snow, 36½; and with frost, 35. The fall of rain is pretty equally distributed throughout the twelve months. The quantity of rain that fell in 1840, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December inclusively, was as follows:—

Months.	Inches.	Months.	Inches.	Months.	Inches.
January,	- 4.85	May,	- 2.86	September,	- 5.32
February,	- 1.56	June,	- 1.99	October,	- 6.18
March,	- .78	July,	- 3.	November,	- 3.61
April,	- .97	August,	- 2.43	December,	- 1.74

Total, 35 inches and 29 decimal parts, or rather more than one-fourth of an inch.

Fogs, which are often very dense and wetting, generally come from the east. They seldom last above an hour or two. This is owing to the breezy character of the weather. The days with fog amount in the year to 35. Westerly winds prevail. The winter is in general windy. In the beginning and the fall of the year, it is often exceedingly tempestuous. The following table, calculated from observations made for several years, will give some intimation of the various atmospherical conditions of the climate of this part of Scotland.

Barometer.	Spring.	Summer.	Autumn.	Winter.
Mean average,	- 30.04	30.12	30.05	29.94
Highest,	- 30.85	30.80	30.70	30.70
Lowest,	- 29.00	29.40	28.90	28.90
Range,	- 1.80	1.85	1.40	1.80
Thermometer.				
Mean average,	- 47°	56½°	56°	65°
Highest,	- 58	70½	65	55
Lowest,	- 32	52	44	33
Range,	- 26	18½	21	22
Prevailing winds,	S. E. to S. & N. W.	W. to N. & N. E.	S. E. to S. & N. W.	S. to N. W.
Days with rain,	- 42	50	51	47
Days with snow,	- 18½	0	2	16
Days with frost,	- 14	0	1	20
Days with fog,	- 8	9	6	8

It appears from this table that the range of the barometer is least in summer, and of almost equal extent in the other three quarters, and that of the thermometer is nearly equal throughout the year; the greatest range of each instrument being in spring. The range of the prevalent winds in winter is very circumscribed. In spring and autumn, they go round half the compass, and in the same direction from south-east by south to north-west. In summer, their range is also limited, but not to such a degree as in winter.

The winters are becoming milder and more open than they formerly were. The number of days in the year with frost, and of those with snow, is decreasing. This present winter, however, has been very severe; much more so, indeed, than any preceding win-

ter in the memory of the oldest inhabitants. Snow seldom falls for more than a day, or lies above two days, at a time. Thunder is very rare. It generally occurs at a great distance; and lightning seldom strikes or does any injury.

In 1784, a halo, "superbly bright and luminous, consisting of two bows, concentric, with an apparent interval of from three to four feet between them, and extending over a great part of the hemisphere, was distinctly seen." \* What are usually called falling stars are frequently seen shooting across the nocturnal sky. The polar lights are visible almost every night, and generally prevent it from ever being very dark.

*Diseases.*—Fever, rheumatism, pleuritis, catarrh, cough, inflammation of the throat, are amongst the most numerous of the diseases. Pulmonary consumption is not frequent amongst adults; but infants with any weakness about the chest are generally carried off in childhood by hooping-cough, which is often very general and fatal, or by different pectoral affections. Rheumatism was not common till about the beginning of the present century, when the homely warm woollen clothing of olden times began to give place to the flimsier though gayer cotton dresses, which are now very generally worn. Itch is exceedingly prevalent among the children. The kind of food on which the lower orders chiefly subsist, the state of their habitations, the scantiness of their clothing, and their indifference to cleanliness, along with the contagious nature of the complaint, sufficiently account for this. Fever of a typhoid type is seldom absent from one lane or other in the burgh of Wick, Louisburgh, and Pulteneytown, whence it breaks out, and becomes epidemic in the neighbouring country. It is generally most acute soon after the close of the fishing-season. Nor is it difficult to account for its severity at that period. During the fishing there are not fewer than 10,000 persons added to the ordinary population of the place; and these are necessarily crowded together, sometimes to the number of ten or twelve, in one small room. This circumstance, taken in connection with the great consumption of spirits, and the very filthy state of the houses, shores, and streets, with putrescent effluvia steaming up from the fish-offals lying everywhere about, render it a wonder that typhoid diseases are not much more prevalent. The shortness of the fishing-sea-

\* Statistical Account, Vol. x. p. 31.

son, the greater supply of food, and the state of excitement and activity in which all connected with the fishing live during the period of its continuance, are no doubt the great counteracting preservatives. Indigestion, arising from the almost exclusive vegetable food of the commonalty, is very frequent. The small tenants, especially the females, are perhaps most liable to this complaint; which seems to be on the increase. Small-pox is seldom long absent from the parish, and is often very fatal. Great numbers of the people have a strange antipathy to vaccination. They brand it as a tempting of Providence; whereas their rejection of this preservative is this sin. British cholera is endemic and epidemic, and often makes its appearance, especially in the latter form. It is never fatal in ordinary circumstances. Pestilential cholera visited Wick during the fishing season of 1832, a short while after its appearance at Thurso. The number of cases reported amounted to 306, of which 66 proved fatal.

From various calculations it appears, that the proportion of sickness in the different sexes gives 141½ females to 100 males. Under twenty years of age, more males are sick than females; between twenty and seventy more females than males; and above the latter age, they are equal. The proportion of sickness, to such a degree as to demand medical attention, is about 5½ or 6 per cent. of the population. The deaths are about 20 per cent. of the sick.

Instances of great longevity are not uncommon. There is at present an old lady, resident in the burgh, who has entered into her 101st year, and an old farmer, in the landward part of the parish, who has entered into his 102d. Both these venerable persons are in the perfect possession of all their mental and bodily faculties.

Maniacs are very rare. Idiots and fatuous persons are remarkably common.

A singular *lusus nature*, which occurred in the person of a child in the neighbourhood of Wick, about eighteen years ago, may here be mentioned. This child had a perfect eye on the back of the head. It lived for two years; and it is evident had the use of the supernumerary organ, from its never allowing a cap to be kept over it.

*Hydrography.*—It is needless to describe the well-known stormy Moray Frith, which, as has already been said, forms the eastern boundary of the parish of Wick.

The burns of Slickly, Stanstill, and Kilminster contribute to supply the Loch of Wester, which lies within three-quarters of a mile of the shore of Keiss Bay. This loch is about a mile long and a third of a mile broad. Its outlet forms the River or Water of Wester, which, after a winding course, flows into the Bay of Keiss. On the very highest ground of Noss-Head is the Loch of Noss, which, notwithstanding its elevated situation, and though no streamlets fall into it, is seldom if ever dry. The Loch of Kilminster lies in the middle of the moss of that name, and does not exceed three-fourths of a mile in breadth. The Loch of Winless is to the south of the Loch of Kilminster. The waters of both fall into the River of Wick.

The River of Wick, by far the largest stream in the parish, is the outlet of the beautiful Loch of Wattin, in the parish of that name. It lazily flows in a south-easterly direction through the rich and loamy strath of Stirkoke, till, after a winding course of eleven or twelve miles, about nine of which are within the parish of Wick, which it divides into two parts of almost equal extent, it disembogues itself into Wick Bay. Its average breadth is about thirty feet; but in rainy seasons, it overflows its banks, and overfloods the strath through which it winds. The principal streamlets which it receives within the parish of Wick from the north, are the Burn of Winless, which issues from the loch of that name, the streamlet which flows from the Loch of Kilminster and Altmarlach, close on the west side of the upper glebe.

On the south side, the Burn of Bilbster is the first considerable streamlet which the River of Wick receives within the parish. The Burn of Hauster collects the greater part of its waters on the north and east of Camster, a townland belonging partly to Wick and partly to Latheron, (one of its sources being the little moss-fed Loch of Carnlia); and after a sweeping course of eight miles around the south side of Stirkoke, falls into the same river, upwards of three miles below the Burn of Bilbster. In the north end of the Moss of Tannach is Loch Dhu, three-quarters of a mile in circumference. Its outlet falls into the Burn of Hauster. Half a mile to the south of Loch Dhu, lies the Loch of Hempriggs, about a mile in length from north to south, and more than half a mile in breadth. The natural outlet of this loch is the Burn of Newton, which falls into the River of Wick, below the Burn of Hauster: but a lade, which has been cut from it, carries a runnel of

water of fifty horse-power into Pulteneytown for various industrial purposes. This loch is supplied chiefly from the Loch of Yarrows, two miles and a half distant to the south-west, into which runs the water of the drained Loch of Brickigoe. Two trifling lochs, one of which is named Wairows, among the hills of Yarrows, send out, towards the sea, a little stream, which divides into two streamlets, one of which runs into the Loch of Sarclet, lying half-way between Sarclet and Ulbster House; and the other falls into the sea at Falligo, southwards of Ulbster. The Loch of Sarclet, which is not above three-fourths of a mile in circumference, discharges its waters into the sea, a little to the south of the village of that name. The waters of the valley of Camster fall away, to the south, into the parish of Latheron.

Except a few rather pretty braes towards the mouth of the River of Wick, the scenery, both on the lochs and on the brooks of the parish, is as tame and unpicturesque as it possibly can be. Most of the well-water of the parish of Wick is impregnated with lime or iron. Chalybeate springs of considerable strength occur a little to the south of the Castle of Auld Wick, and on the face of a low bank to the north of Proudfoot, the north-eastern extremity of the Bay of Wick.

*Geology.*—Of the hilly ranges on the south and west of the parish, the formation is principally composed of greywacké and greywacké slate, with a few limestones, sandstones, &c. Towards the summit of the Yarrows Hills, a gneiss formation abounds. With these exceptions, the rock-formations of this parish consist almost entirely of the coarser kinds of the clay-slate or flagstone, so prevalent in the flatter grounds of Caithness. This is an immense formation of alternating beds of silicious and calcareo-silicious flagstone or slate-clay; dark, foliated, bituminous limestone; pyritous shale; sandstone, &c. The silicious beds predominate in the lowest position in this formation, and the calcareo-bituminous bed gives the type to the intermediate part, becoming more silicious and arenaceous at the upper posture, and so graduating into the superior division. The aggregate thickness of these deposits is very great.

The cliffs along the coast to the north of Keiss are chiefly composed of grey, brown, and greenish sandstone in thin layers, alternating with pyritous shale, which disappear in the Bay of Keiss. At the Castle of Girnigoe, there is a remarkable section of the

dark-bluish calcareous flagstone, which continues along the coast to the cliffs southwards of the burgh of Wick. This deposit differs from the general formation of the district in being in thicker beds, on which account it is much used in building. The stratal dip is generally to the north-east, with, however, numerous interruptions.

Of the cliffs to the south of the Bay of Wick, the stratal dip is in the same direction, and the flagstone is surmounted by soft greenish micaceous shale and sandstone. The operations near the southern side of the new harbour of Pulteneytown have brought into view a very singular disposition of the superior recumbent detritus. This, for the space of about 100 yards, is composed of large stones, huddled together like the rubbish of a quarry. The bank of fine bluish clay, resting upon this, is of considerable height. Imbedded in it, and near its summit, lies a conspicuous mass of coarse-grained dark-grey granite, of perhaps twenty tons in weight. It has been blasted with gunpowder, and various idle attempts have been made, but happily without success, to destroy this huge and remarkable boulder. A similar granitic boulder is found opposite, on the northern side of the bay. These are the only specimens known of this kind of stone in the parish; and they bear evident marks of having been rolled along by some mighty current.

Farther along the coast, on the south side of Wick Bay, nearer the Castle of Auld Wick, where the sea-cliffs are above thirty feet in height, and far above the reach of the high tide, the uppermost strata have been deranged by some mighty force directed upon them from the Moray Frith. Enormous masses of rock have been broken off from their beds, and thrown upon one another in most terrific confusion. One prodigious mass has been heaved from its bed below, and placed upon a similar rock immediately above, on which it is supported by a small stone between them, so that a person can walk beneath it.

About four miles to the south of Wick, the line of bearing of the schistose rocks is altered; and from a point near Ulbster, where they begin to dip in an inland or westerly direction, a great change is observable in the physical character of the country.

*Fossil Organic Remains.*—Ichthyolites are universally spread over this extensive deposit; and their occurrence is not confined to one particular stratum, but is characteristic of this vast schis-



tose formation, from the lowest to the highest beds. They have been found at Wester, near Keiss Bay, and elsewhere. These stone-fish occur in beds of dark-gray calcareous schist, highly bituminous and micaceous. In general, the animal remains are easily distinguishable from the imbedding matrix by their dark colour. Professor Agassiz, the celebrated naturalist, who has devoted so much of his time to the study of fossil fishes, has determined, and for the first time, with accuracy, the characters of our Caithness species.

*Mineralogy.*—Minerals are not abundant. The laminated beds of the rock-formation are, over all the parish, much intersected by symmetrical joints and fissures, which are filled up in numerous instances with trap. This often has the direct effect of altering the stratal inclination, and indeed of twisting and contorting it in all imaginable directions. Quartz or felspar likewise often fills up these fissures; the smaller of which are sometimes occupied entirely with calc-spar. The clay-slate contains many varied pyrites. At Staxigoe there is a vein of ironstone. Running down into the harbour of this village, there is a vein of lead-ore imbedded in felspar. Between Staxigoe and Broad Haven are several small veins of copper-ore. At the latter village there is a pretty good appearance of alum-rock. Immediately to the south of the Castle of Auld Wick, is the best vein of copper in the parish. It was wrought about eighty years ago by a company of miners, who carried off several ship loads of ore; but, having found a better vein in Shetland, it was abandoned; but not, however, before they secured themselves against competition, by taking a lease of it from the proprietor. Sulphate of barytes occurs on the coast opposite to the House of Ulbster, and is in some places three feet thick.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Tower of Ackergill, there is a considerable vein of a kind of parrot-coal, which emits a bright flame in burning, but is not reduced to ashes.

Marl of various qualities abounds in this parish. The draining of the loch of Brickigoe has made accessible a bed of most excellent marl of 20 feet in depth.

The soil varies in different places. The moss at the foot of the hills of Yarrows, the one between Sarclet and Ulbster; the Moss of Tannach, and the Moss of Kilminster, the last of which is many feet in depth and of great extent,—are the principal deposits of peat-earth in the parish of Wick.

From three to four hundred acres in the strath of Stirkoke are covered to the depth of from three to five feet, with an alluvial and loamy soil, which has evidently been brought by the River of Wick in repeated floods from the parish of Wattin. This track is one of the richest meadows for the grazing of cattle in Caithness, but is subject to frequent inundations. On the banks of the Hauster Water, and, in several other places, a deep covering of detritus and shale is to be met with. These contain many fragmentary remains of ostraceous shells, which are found at a height of from 100 to 150 feet above the level of the sea.

Though the soil is in some places light and sandy, and in other places rich and loamy, yet in by far the greater part of the parish it consists of a stiff hard clay, produced by the decomposition of the clay-slate. In general, the subsoil is composed of a close, retentive, gravelly clay, mixed with fragments of slate not yet decomposed, and resting on the surface of the flagstone or clay-slate. This construction retains the moisture which, along with the humidity of the climate, renders the soil not merely damp, but in many places wet, and thus offers the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the land.

*Botany.*—The two Scottish heaths, *Erica cinerea*, heather, and *E. tetralix*, bell-heather, abound on the moors. A purely white variety of the former is occasionally found. The bilberry, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, blaeberry; the *Empetrum nigrum*, cranberry; the black bear-berry, *Arbutus alpina*; and the red bearberry, *A. Uva ursi*, may likewise be found on heathery banks and heights. *Myrica gale*, the Scottish myrtle, is occasionally found shedding its agreeable perfume across an impassable bog. One of the most elegant of our indigenous flowers, the birds'-eye primrose, *Primula farinosa*, called also from its flowering in April and August, *Primula Scotica*, the Scottish primrose, adorns, with its lovely little purple flowers, the savage heights of the coast of the Moray Frith. It is also called the *powdered beau*, from the white dust which plentifully covers the under side of the petals. The primrose, *Primula veris*, is found on the burn sides. A very dwarfish species of willow may be met with creeping among the heather in wet places. Orchidaceous flowers, baldairies, in great variety abound. The Links of Keias are begemmed in the season with the beautiful little white flower of Parnassus, *Parnassia palustris*. White and red clovers are indigenous; the former

often springs up spontaneously on ground which has never been cultivated, when a little lime may have fallen upon it, or it may have been casually turned up by the wheel of a cart or the plough. This is also the case with a species of hearts-ease. The tubers of *Orobis tuberosus*, knappards or caperoilie, which have a sweetish taste, somewhat like that of liquorice, are sometimes chewed to allay hunger. Corncockle, *Agrostemma Githago*, which has but very lately made its appearance in this quarter; betony, *B. officinalis*, found, though but dwarfish, on the road sides; ground-ivy, *Glechoma hederacea*; and foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, found near Thrumster, are of comparatively rare occurrence. The last plant is provincially called *dead men's bells*, and has many superstitions connected with it. But the rarest plant in the parish of Wick was the white water-lily, *Nymphaea alba*, which was found only in one spot in all the county of Caithness. This was the Loch of Brickigoe, on the estate of Thrumster. But some time ago this loch was drained for marl, and the pride of the Cathansian Flora destroyed. Roots, however, were taken from the Loch of Brickigoe, and planted in a pond near the House of Stirkoke, and at different places in the county of Caithness.

Lichens in great variety, and often of great beauty, clothe the rocks and stones in all parts of the parish. The rein-deer lichen, *L. rangiferinus*, grows to the height of about three or four inches among the heather.

*Woods.*—There are at present no natural woods in the parish. Trees have been planted to a considerable extent around the houses of Hempriggs, Stirkoke, and Thrumster; but neither the climate nor the soil is congenial to their growth, and they do not thrive. Elder is excepted; almost everywhere it flourishes amazingly. Quickset hedges have, in many places, been trained into good fences.

But though the parish of Wick is at present destitute of natural wood, such does not appear to have been always the case. It is said, that, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the hills of Yarrows were covered with copse-wood, which was destroyed by fire, for the purpose of expelling the wolves, with which the place was infested. But the most remarkable evidence of ancient woods is found in the Bay of Keiss. Between the links and the sand, and running down under the sea, there are found the re-

mains of a submarine forest. These are like peat moss, entirely composed of decayed wood. The barks of various kinds of trees are quite discernible; and even the seeds of the birch and ash are so well preserved, as to appear but lately from the tree. No large trunks are found; only small specimens of oak, ash, birch, and plane-tree; but none of fir.

*Mammalogy.*—Remains of bovine ruminants of a very large size have been found in the mosses and marl-pits of this parish. The wolf and the wild-goat were once common in the district, but have both been extinct long ago.

The wild-cat is occasionally seen. Otters are often found. The Links of Reiss are stored with rabbits. Hares are numerous. The fox breeds in the rocks about the coast. Moles are superabundant. Weasels, ferrets, and polecats, are not uncommon. Ermines have been found at Stirkoke. A stray deer from the heights of Morven is occasionally met with.

The native breed of horses, still employed by the smaller tenants, is diminutive and weak. Their provincial name is *garrons*. The original stock of cattle was also small, but the beef was excellent. Probably the ancient Cathanensian breed of sheep is not yet altogether extinct in the parish of Wick. They are very small, with a dirty brown fleece and four small horns.

*Ornithology.*—By the kindness of Eric Sutherland Sinclair, Esq., surgeon in Wick, who has paid much attention to this subject, this Report is enriched with the following “List of birds found in the county of Caithness, and principally in the parish of Wick.” It cannot fail to be extremely interesting; and may astonish some with the extent and variety of Cathanensian ornithology. Mr Sinclair has formed with his own hands an extensive ornithological collection illustrative of the natural history of the district. All the birds in the subsequent list, except those marked with an asterisk, are in this learned gentleman’s museum.

The names of birds found in the county of Caithness, and principally in the parish of Wick.

*Aquila Chrysaëta*  
*Haliaeetus Albicilla*  
*Accipiter fringillarius*  
*Astur palumbarius*  
*Falco peregrinus*  
 — Subbuteo  
 — Tinnunculus  
 — *Æsalon*

CAITHNESS.

*Buteo vulgaris*  
 — Lagopus  
*Pernis apivorus*  
*Circus rufus*  
 — cyaneus  
 — cineraceus  
*Otus vulgaris*  
 — Brachyotos

*Strix flammea*  
*Ulula stridula*  
*Hirundo rustica*  
 — urtica  
 — riparia  
*Cypselus murarius*  
*Caprimulgus Europæus*  
*Muscicapa grisola*

I

<i>Muscicapa luctuosa</i>	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	<i>Spathulea clypeata</i>
<i>Lanius Excubitor</i>	<i>Troglodytes Europæus</i>	<i>Chauliodus strepera</i>
<i>Merula viscivora</i>	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	<i>Anas Boechas</i>
— <i>pylaris</i>	<i>Columba Palumbus</i>	<i>Querquedula acuta</i>
— <i>trusica</i>	— <i>Enas</i>	— <i>Crecca</i>
— <i>hincas</i>	— <i>Livia</i>	<i>Mareca Penelope</i>
— <i>vulgaris</i>	— <i>Turtur</i>	<i>Oidemia nigra</i>
— <i>torquata</i>	<i>Phasianus Colchicus</i>	— <i>fusca</i>
<i>Circus aquaticus</i>	<i>Tetrao Tetrix</i>	— <i>perspicillata</i>
<i>Saxicola (Enanthe</i>	— <i>Scoticus</i>	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
— <i>Rubetra</i>	<i>Lagopus mutus</i>	<i>Fuligula ferina</i>
— <i>Rubicola</i>	<i>Perdix cinerea</i>	— <i>Marila</i>
<i>Erythaca Rubecula</i>	— <i>Coturnix</i>	— <i>cristata</i>
<i>Phœnicura ruticilla</i>	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	<i>Harelda glacialis</i>
— <i>Tithys</i>	— <i>purpurea, rare</i>	<i>Clangula vulgaris</i>
<i>Salicaria arundinacea</i>	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	— <i>histrionica</i>
<i>Sylvia sibilatrix</i>	— <i>Phœopus</i>	<i>Mergus Merganser</i>
<i>Regulus auricapillus</i>	<i>Totanus fuscus</i>	— <i>Serrator</i>
<i>Accentor modularis</i>	— <i>Calidris</i>	— <i>cuclullatus</i>
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	— <i>ochropus</i>	— <i>albellus *</i>
— <i>Boarula</i>	— <i>Glareola</i>	<i>Podiceps rubricollis</i>
— <i>flava</i>	— <i>Macularius</i>	— <i>cristatus</i>
<i>Anthus aquaticus</i>	— <i>Glottis</i>	— <i>cornutus</i>
— <i>pratensis</i>	<i>Hypoleucos totanus</i>	— <i>minor</i>
— <i>arboreus</i>	<i>Scelopax Rusticola</i>	<i>Colymbus glacialis</i>
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	— <i>major *</i>	— <i>arcticus</i>
— <i>arborea</i>	— <i>Gallinago</i>	— <i>septentrionalis</i>
<i>Bombycilla garrula, very</i>	— <i>Gallinula</i>	<i>Uria Troile</i>
<i>Plectrophanes nivalis [rare</i>	<i>Tringa Canutus</i>	— <i>Grylle</i>
— <i>Lapponica</i>	— <i>rufescens</i>	<i>Mergulus melanoleucus, rare</i>
<i>Emberiza Miliaria</i>	— <i>Temminckii</i>	<i>Alca Torda</i>
— <i>Citrinella</i>	— <i>minuta</i>	<i>Fratercula Arctica</i>
— <i>Hortulana *</i>	— <i>maritima</i>	<i>Phalacrocorax Carbo</i>
<i>Schœniculus Emberiza</i>	— <i>variabilis</i>	— <i>cristatus</i>
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	— <i>subarquata</i>	<i>Sula Bassana</i>
— <i>montanus</i>	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	<i>Sterna Hirundo</i>
<i>Fringilla Cœlebs</i>	<i>Crex pratensis</i>	— <i>minuta</i>
— <i>Montifringilla</i>	— <i>Porzana</i>	<i>Larus minutus</i>
<i>Carduelis Spinus *</i>	— <i>Baillonii, rare</i>	— <i>ridibundus</i>
— <i>elegans</i>	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	— <i>canus</i>
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	<i>Fulica atra</i>	— <i>rissa</i>
— <i>montana</i>	<i>Hæmatopus ostralegus</i>	— <i>eburneus</i>
— <i>minor</i>	<i>Streptilas Interpres</i>	— <i>glaucus</i>
<i>Coccothraustes vulgaris</i>	<i>Arenaria calidris</i>	— <i>Islandicus</i>
— <i>Chloris</i>	<i>Vanellus cristatus</i>	— <i>argentatus</i>
<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	<i>Charadrius pluvialis</i>	— <i>marinus</i>
<i>Pyrrhula vulgaris</i>	— <i>Morinellus</i>	— <i>fuscus</i>
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	<i>Anser palustris</i>	<i>Cataractes vulgaris</i>
<i>Pastor roseus, very rare</i>	— <i>ferus</i>	— <i>pomarinus</i>
<i>Corvus Corax</i>	— <i>erythropus</i>	— <i>parasiticus</i>
— <i>Corone</i>	— <i>Bernicla</i>	<i>Procellaria glacialis</i>
— <i>Cornix</i>	— <i>Brenta</i>	<i>Puffinus cinereus</i>
— <i>frugilegus</i>	— <i>ruficollis</i>	— <i>Anglorum</i>
— <i>Monedula</i>	<i>Cygnus ferus</i>	<i>Tbalassidroma pelagica</i>
<i>Pica melanoleuca</i>	<i>Tadorna vulpanser</i>	— <i>Bullockii *</i>
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	— <i>rutila</i>	

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There can be no doubt that the aboriginal inhabitants of the district which now forms the parish of Wick, were of Celtic origin. This is proved by several names of places and rivulets, such as

Auchairn,\* Altimarlach, Drumdriy, which are significant in the Gaelic language.

The Celtic inhabitants were invaded and evidently subjugated by the Pechts or Picts, a people of Scythic, or more properly Scuthic, extraction, who sailed from Scandinavia to Orkney; whence they passed into Caithness across the straits denominated from them the Pechtland, softened into the Pentland, Frith, and spread themselves over almost the whole of Scotland. Many traces of them are yet to be met with in the parish of Wick, both in traditions, and in the shape of those singular and curious architectural ruins called to this day by the common people, Pecht's houses. The designation *Cruithnich*, pronounced *Greenich*, that is, wheatmen, by which the Pechts are known in the Gaelic language—the durability of their habitations extending even to present times, when all traces of the turfen huts of their Celtic predecessors have long ago passed away—the legendary marvels of their strength and skill—and the superstitious awe with which, even to this day, the places of their residence are regarded, evince that the Pechts must have been a people greatly superior to the Celts, and far advanced beyond them in knowledge and civilization.

About the year 910, Harrold the Fair-haired, a Norwegian king, having expelled the pirates who infested the Northern Seas, from the Orkneys, carried the war into Pictland, where he was defeated with great slaughter. On his return to Norway, he granted the Orcadian Islands to Ronald, a powerful Norwegian chieftain, to comfort him for the loss of Ivar, his son, who had fallen in battle. Ronald made over this grant to Sigurd, his brother, who, having speedily reduced the Orcadians, passed into Caithness, and subdued it, with Sutherland and Ross, under his authority. Under a succession of Norwegian earls, a very close and frequent intercourse subsisted after this event, for ages, between the north of Scotland and Norway; whence numerous bands of Norwegians successively came and settled in Caithness. Surnames of Norwegian extraction, as Swanson, son of Swen, Manson, son of Magnus, Ronald, Harrold, &c. are frequent in this parish. The termination *ster*, softened from *stadr*, a *steading*, which enters into the names of Camster, Ulbster, Stemster, Hauster, Thuster, Bilbster, Sibster, Wester, Thurster, and Nybster, shows

\* Auch-charn, the field of the heap of stones. Alt-na-marlach, thief's-burn.

also the prevalence of Norwegian colonization within the district now forming the parish of Wick.

The clan Gun are said to have originated in the twelfth century within the parish of Wick, where they once were very powerful, and still are very numerous. About the year 1100, Olaf, a man of great bravery, dwelt in the isle of Graemsay, one of the Orkneys. He had three sons, Waltheof, Gun, and Swen.\* From the second of these, traditionally called the Great Gun of Ulbster, where he dwelt, the clan Gun deduce their descent.

About 1140, Ronald, Earl of Orkney, whose name was canonized at Rome in 1192, "was entertained at a town called Wick, by Roald, who had a son that was come to maturity, called Swen, who was one of those that waited at table."† Margad, who managed the possessions at Dungaldsbay, now Duncansbay, of Swen Olafson, who followed the profession of a pirate, went some time afterwards to Wick, and twenty men with him, to transact some business, and before his return slew Roald in his own house, and some others with him. Earl Ronald was urged by Swen, the son of Roald, to avenge the murder of his father; but the Romish saint, after some feeble attempts to seize the person of Margad, who was successfully protected by Swen, his master, was, after still more horrible atrocities had been perpetrated, reconciled at last to both the murderer and the pirate.‡ Some time thereafter, whilst Ronald was on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Harrold the Wicked, Earl of Orkney, spent the winter at Wick, and was robbed of the rents of his estates in Zetland by Swen the pirate, whose stronghold was at Lambsburgh, hodiernally Buchollie's Castle in Canisbay, near the northern boundary of the parish of Wick.§

Caithness continued subject to Orcadian earls of Scandinavian extraction till about 1330, when, owing to the failure of the male line, this earldom went into other families, and the power and influence of the Norwegians passed away.

At, and for some time previously to this era, more than a third part of Caithness, including the district which now forms the parish of Wick, was possessed by a family surnamed De Cheyne. The last of the male line, Sir Reginald, is yet under the designation of Morar na Shien, famous in the Highland districts as a mighty hunter. He was most anxious for a son to heir his vast estates; and when his wife, Mary, brought him a daughter, he ordered, in a paroxysm of fury, the child to be destroyed. It was,

\* Pope's Torfaeus.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.

§ Ib.

however, conveyed away; and a little sister escaped, in a similar manner, the rage of her twice disappointed father. Years rolled on, and Morar na Shien often lamented his childless condition. At length, on some public occasion, a great festival was held, at which Sir Reginald noticed two young ladies, who far outshone the rest of the company. Morar na Shien expressed his admiration, and lamented to his wife his cruel infatuation, by which he had been deprived of daughters, who, had they been allowed to live, would have been about the age of these peerless beauties. Mary de Cheyne hastened to confess her justifiable disobedience to her husband's orders, and introduced the young ladies to him as his own daughters. Overpowered with joy, Sir Reginald de Cheyne acknowledged them as his, and constituted them heiresses of his extensive possessions. Morar na Shien died about the year 1350. Mariotta, his elder daughter, married John de Keith, the second son of Edward the Marischal, by whom she had a son, Andrew, who became possessed, in right of his mother, of the lands of Ackergill and other estates in the parish of Wick. Marjory, the younger, was heiress of Duffus, and married Nicholas, the second son of Kenneth, Earl of Sutherland, who thus obtained the castle and lands of Auld Wick, in the same parish. William, on whom his father, Earl William, passing by an elder brother of the same name, entailed the earldom of Caithness, married a daughter of Keith of Ackergill.

These various marriages brought the Sinclairs, Sutherlands, and Keiths into the parish of Wick; and subsequent events gave rise to the following couplet, which is yet often repeated:

Sinclair, Sutherland, Keith, and clan Gun,  
There never was peace whar thae four war in.

About the year 1464, serious disputes having arisen between the Keiths and the clan Gun, Keith of Ackergill associated with himself the Mackays of Strathnaver, who readily entered into the quarrel, and marched against his enemies. The hostile parties encountered each other on the Moor of Tannach, in the parish of Wick. A desperate conflict ensued, but after a cruel slaughter on both sides, the Guns were at last defeated. To terminate these bitter and bloody feuds, it was arranged that a meeting should take place with twelve horses on each side, between Ackergill and the Cruner, as the chief of the clan Gun was styled. This interview was appointed to be held in the Chapel of St Tears, not far from Ackergill. The Cruner, with the greater part of his sons



and principal kinsmen, to the number of twelve altogether, came at the time appointed, and, as Keith had not yet arrived, they proceeded into the chapel to their devotions. Whilst they were at prayer, Ackergill came up with twenty-four men, on each horse two, and rushing on the Cruner and his followers, overpowered and slew them all, but not before the greater part of the Keiths had fallen. This horrid act of treachery did not pass unrevenged. William, the grandson of the Cruner, afterwards intercepted and cut off George Keith of Ackergill and his son, with twelve of their retainers, at Drummoy in Sutherland. The lands of Ackergill passed into the possession of the Earl of Caithness.

The earls of Caithness, who had acquired the greater part of the parish of Wick, fixed their baronial residence at the Castle of Girnigoe, near the Tower of Ackergill. In 1576, this stronghold became the scene of one of the most fearful atrocities on record. John, the Master of Caithness, surnamed from his great strength, Garrow,\* had incurred the displeasure of his father, George, the fifth Earl of Caithness of the name of Sinclair, because he would not execute the revengeful hatred of the earl against Dornock, and extirpate its inhabitants. Having inveigled the Master into the snares which had been laid for him, his father had him seized at Girnigoe, and cast into a dark and noisome dungeon below ground, in which he dragged out for years a wretched existence. At last his keepers, David and Ingram Sinclair, relatives of his own, determined to destroy him; and after having kept him for some time without food, gave him a large mess of salt beef, and then withholding all drink from him, left him to die of raging thirst.

This inhuman earl died at Edinburgh in 1583, and his body was buried in St Giles's, where his monument is still to be seen. His heart was cased in lead, and placed in the Sinclair's aisle, where his murdered son was buried at the church of Wick. There is evidence that, if not a Papist, he leaned much to Popery.

He was succeeded by his grandson, George, son of John Garrow, who began his career by avenging his father's death. David Sinclair resided at Keiss, and Ingram at Wester. The daughter of the latter was to be married, and a large party were invited to the wedding. Earl George met David on his way to Wester, and ran him through the body with his sword. The earl then rode over to Wester, and accosted Ingram as he was playing at foot-

\* *Garbh*, Gaelic, rough, strong.

ball on the green. "Do you know," said he, "that one of my corbies," so he called his pistols, "missed fire this morning?"—and drawing it from the holster as if to look at it, shot him through the head.

In 1588, the Earl of Sutherland, in revenge for the slaughter of one of his dependents by the Sinclairs, made an inroad into Caithness, and advanced as far as Wick, which he took and burned. One of his followers, having entered the church, found the leaden box enclosing the heart of the late Earl of Caithness, and, disappointed in his expectations of treasure, broke the casket open, and flung the corrupted heart into the air. Proceeding onwards, the Sutherlands laid siege to the Castle of Girnigoe, from which they retired, after having beleaguered it in vain for twelve days. Next year the men of Caithness, having killed the Earl of Sutherland's herdsman, that chieftain sent an army of 300 men, who marched almost as far as Girnigoe, and cruelly ravaged the country. In this inroad, they spoiled the ship, and plundered the goods of one Andrew Wardlaw, a merchant in the town of Wick.

In 1606, the Earl of Caithness, by purchase of some estates, became proprietor of almost all the parish of Wick; but his infamous conduct, which has procured for him in the traditions of this parish, the cognomen of the Wicked, involved him in inextricable difficulties. To recruit his exhausted resources, he harboured at Girnigoe a coiner called Arthur Smith, who filled the country with bad money. This, and his turbulence brought down upon his head the vengeance of the Court; and Sir Robert Gordon, the first Knight-baronet of Scotland, was despatched with ample powers to chastise the treasonable earl. Lord Caithness fled; but Sir Robert laid waste his estates, and took possession of his castles of Girnigoe, Ackergill, and Keiss. The earl at length submitted himself, and was alimented by his creditors with an annuity out of his dilapidated estates. He died in 1643, and was succeeded by his great-grandson, George, who sold in 1672, the whole earldom, title, and all, to the Laird of Glenorchy, and died in 1676.

Glenorchy, who thus had become proprietor of the greater part of the parish of Wick, having married the Countess, assumed the title of Earl of Caithness. His right to this honour was disputed by George Sinclair of Keiss. To vindicate his claim, Glenorchy having obtained letters from the Council, raised a troop of

several hundred men, and marched against Sinclair, to dispossess him of his patrimonial estate. Keiss collected a force of 400 men, and awaited his enemy in the borough of Wick. There he plentifully regaled his followers; who had not recovered from their revelling, when, on the 13th of July 1680, they were informed that the Campbells were crossing the country towards Keiss. Inflamed with drink, the men of Caithness vauntingly rushed on the men of Glenorchy, who were strongly posted on the western bank of the burn of Altimarlach, on the northern side of the River of Wick, close above what now forms the upper glebe. A total rout of the revellers immediately ensued, who turned their backs and fled through the gully towards the river. Numbers were killed in attempting to cross; and tradition says, that the Campbells, in pursuit of the fugitives, passed over the river dry-shod, on the bodies of the slain. Notwithstanding this disaster, the right of Sinclair of Keiss to the title of Earl of Caithness was at last recognized, and Glenorchy was created, as a sort of compensation, Baron of Weik.

The Baron of Weik was hated by the people. They burned the corn and houghed the cattle of the tenants on his estates; till at last, utterly wearied with these incessant vexations, he divided the whole of his lands in Caithness into sixty-two portions, great and small, which he sold in 1690.

In this transaction terminated the civil history of the parish of Wick. Nothing has since occurred within it worth recording.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owner is the Right Honourable Benjamin Dunbar Sutherland, Baron of Duffus, and a Baronet. Lord Duffus is paternally descended from Nicholas Sutherland, second son of Kenneth, Earl of Sutherland, who married Marjory de Cheyne, second daughter of the celebrated hunter, Morar na Shien. Marjory was heiress of Duffus, and likewise of Auld Wick in this parish, of which her descendant is proprietor at this day. The other land-owners are, William Horne, Esq. of Scouthel, who possesses, in the parish of Wick, the estates of Stirkoke and Sibster; Robert Innes, Esq. of Thrumster; Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Keiss and Bilbster; John Sinclair, Esq. of Barrock, proprietor in Wick, of Howe and Mireland; Sir George Sinclair, Bart. of Ulbster; the Earl of Caithness, of Mirelandorn; William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick, proprietor in Wick, of Nybster; the British Society for improving the fisheries are feudatories under Lord

Duffus of Pulteneytown ; and James Smith, Esq. of Orlig, is owner of a small property.

Of these, Lord Duffus and Robert Innes, Esq. are the only constantly resident land-owners. William Horne, Esq. is occasionally resident at Stirkoke. All the rest are non-resident.

*Parochial Registers.*—The records belonging to the Kirk-session have not been well preserved. The earlier minutes of session have been lost. Those at present extant consist of five volumes. Of these, the first, which contains 237 folio pages, commences on the 20th of July 1701, and ends on May 13th 1723 ; the second, which contains 85 folios, begins on May 2d 1742, and ends on September 24th 1758 ; the third, containing 145 folios, begins on October 1st 1758, and ends on January 13th 1793 ; the fourth, which contains 139 leaves, and is a mere ragged fragment of a quarto volume, wanting both beginning and end, commences on the 29th of October 1801, and terminates on February 9th 1816 ; and the fifth, in which the minutes of Session are being recorded, commences on July 12th 1816. The baptismal registers, which have not been regularly kept, consist of six volumes, and commence on the 3d of November 1701. Up till a late date the registers of matrimonial contracts, and of births and baptisms, were strangely mixed and jumbled together. The register of marriages commences on the 28th of August 1840. There is no register of deaths.

*Antiquities.*—Several cairns on the Yarrows Hills are, perhaps, with the addition of some Gaelic names of places, the only remains of the aboriginal Celtic inhabitants of this district.

The curious ruins of the Pechtish habitations are numerous scattered all over Caithness. Several of these are in the southern division of the parish of Wick. Some occupy the most fertile situations ; others again are placed on barren land, where there are no traces of cultivation.

In their outward appearance the Pechtish houses look like little round grassy knolls, about twelve or sixteen feet in height. One at Thrumster, the seat of Robert Innes, Esq., from which the earth has in part been removed, was found to have been composed of two concentric circular walls, built of stone and clay, with a considerable interval between them filled up with earth ; the whole forming a rampart of about eighteen feet in thickness. The enclosed area was occupied with several cells ; and evident marks of five fire-places around the inside of the inner wall were discovered. The whole was very inartificially vaulted with flagstones, and cover-

ed over with a thick coating of earth. Various articles were found among the rubbish ; such as a wooden distaff, which soon crumbled into dust ; a freestone basin ; and three bullets about the size of musket-balls, of a substance like marbles streaked with blue. The skeleton of a tall man, who had been buried in a coffin made of flags, was dug up from the mould which had been heaped up against the outside of the fabric. In most of the Pechtish houses which have been opened, there were found little recesses in the inner walls, which had evidently been used as dormitories for the inhabitants.

There can be little doubt that these remarkable structures were the dwellings of the Pechtish chiefs, who were in all likelihood both the leaders and priests of their people. The power and influence with which, by force and fraud, they ruled over and oppressed the Celts who formed the bulk of the population, have invested even to this day, the places of their abode with dread and terror. It is still deemed *no cannie* to dig up a Pecht's house. Scarcely will a peasant profane their verdant sward with a spade. He stands in dread of the fairies, who yet are believed to haunt such places, or of some other unknown and revengeful power.

A ruin on the Links of Keiss, called Toft-Ferry, is pointed out by tradition as the remains of the first house built of stone in Keiss, and one of the first three built in the parish of Wick. The other two were, one at Harland and one at Hauster.

On the Links of Kiess, and about half-a-mile to the south of Toft-Ferry, there are near the beach other two ruins covered with sand, called the Birkle Hills. These are more conspicuous than Toft-Ferry, being of a conical form, and elevated about thirty-five feet from their base, and about sixty-five yards asunder. They are said to be the ruins of two castles, called Castles Linglass. Tradition reports that the castles were burned down ; and the report is confirmed by the calcined state of such stones as have been dug from the ruins. It is said that a village was connected with them, of which, however, there are now no remains.

An apparently monumental stone at Ulbster, on which are engraved some untraceable sculptures, is said to mark the grave of a Danish princess, whom Gun, the progenitor of the clan Gun, married in Denmark. The vessel in which the Great Gun of Ulbster returned home with his bride was wrecked on the iron-bound shores of Caithness, and the Danish princess was drowned. Elsher's Cairn, between Wick and Papigoe, marks the spot

where it is traditionally reported that an Earl Alexander was slain. Who he was, or whence he drew his title, is not known.

Along the coast, are four very ancient strongholds, three of which are in ruins. The Castle of Auld Wick is perhaps one of the oldest buildings in Caithness. It stands to the south of Wick Bay, on a lofty peninsular rock projecting into the Moray Frith, and consists at present of the grim remains of a strong tower of the rudest masonry, with the merest slits for windows. The space behind it towards the sea, has been occupied with two ranges of lower buildings, the foundations of which are yet traceable. On the very point of the projecting rock, is a flat smooth space, surrounded by the remains of a wall, which appears to have been a kind of garden, promenade, or bowling-green. Rude steps lead down to the sea. The whole has been defended on the land-side by a deep ditch, over which communication has been held with the land by means of a drawbridge. The ruins of this black unsightly tower, still nearly three stories high, form an excellent land-mark to sailors, by whom it is called the Aul' Man o' Wick.

The Castle of Auld Wick was, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, one of the strongholds of Sir Reginald de Cheyne. On his death, before 1350, it passed into the possession of Nicholas Sutherland, second son of Kenneth Earl of Sutherland, and ancestor of the Barons of Duffus, who married Marjory, second daughter of Sir Reginald. The castle and lands of Auld Wick afterwards went by marriage into the family of Oliphant; and tradition says that a Lord Oliphant was slain in a rencounter not far from the tower. By the Oliphants they were sold to the Earl of Caithness; by a subsequent earl, they were disposed of to Glenorchy, by whom they were sold to Dunbar of Hempriggs, and finally by the marriage of Sir James Sutherland, second son of James, second Lord Duffus, with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir William Dunbar of Hempriggs, the lands and castle of Auld Wick have come into the possession of the present Lord Duffus, the lineal male representative of Nicholas Sutherland and Marjory de Cheyne.

The Castle of Girnigoe, which stands a little to the west of Noss-Head, was the chief baronial stronghold of the Sinclairs, Earls of Caithness. Its ruins occupy the whole surface of a bold peninsular rock, which, starting from a shoulder of the mainland, shelters a *goe* or inlet of some width, whence the castle received its name. The ruins are evidently of different ages. The date

of the older and larger portion, which is the one farther out, is buried in remote antiquity. The newer portion seems to have been built in the sixteenth century. The extremity of the peninsular rock is occupied by a chamber said to have been the Earl's bed-room. A trap-door in the middle of the floor led through the rock to the sea. This room communicated by a flight of steps with the court, which stood on a higher level. On the right side, facing the Bay of Keiss, ran a range of low rooms all the way to the dungeon-keep, while towards the land there were only three or four small rooms next the bed-chamber, the rest of the court on that side having been shut in by a high wall, pierced with seven loop-holes. The tower, which consisted of five stories, and is about fifty feet in height, occupied the whole breadth of the rock. The staircase, circular within, stood in the north-east corner next the land. No part of the stair remains. The main part of the tower is of such a size as to contain several vaulted apartments on the ground floor, besides the passage to the newer building. In one corner of the room next the sea there is a narrow stair leading into a cell, partly formed in the rock. A small window opening on the Bay, but beyond the reach of the hapless captive, gives light enough to reveal the gloom which pervades the dungeon. Here languished for several years, till he was ultimately murdered, John Garrow the Master of Caithness, a victim to the hatred of his unnatural father, who revelled in the chambers above, while his son was perishing in the dungeons below. In the north-west corner of the court, a passage leads through the tower to the edge of a chasm in the rock, over which a draw-bridge led to the court of the new castle.

With the exception of one or two outer rooms, and of a narrow chimney-stalk of the main tower, this part of the building is now a heap of rubbish, presenting a singular contrast to the older walls, which are nearly entire. This decay must be ascribed to a defect in the foundation, which seems to have been built with clay. The superstructure being cemented with lime, fell almost in one mass into the hollow between the castle and the mainland, and still shows the sides of several arches of very strong masonry prostrate on the ground. The tower of this part of the castle was not nearly so lofty as that of the other; but much more attention had evidently been paid in the construction of it to internal finishing. Access was obtained from the mainland by a draw-bridge over an

artificial ditch across the neck of the peninsula, through an arched passage into the court.

The situation of this castle is naturally strong, and its occupants could have set at defiance assailants armed with the weapons of ancient days. A garrison could not have been pressed by famine, so long as they commanded the sea, for they could always obtain provisions through the secret passage, and the goe would afford secure accommodation for such small craft as they might employ for traffic with the neighbouring shores.

In 1606, George the Wicked, Earl of Caithness, obtained an act of Parliament changing the old name of Girnigoe into that of Sinclair. Both names, however, are applied to the ruins, which are always called Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe, the latter name being applied to the more ancient portion. A drawing was taken of these castles by Daniell, before Castle Sinclair became so ruinous as it now is.

The tower of Ackergill, anciently written Aikrigill, which stands on the bosom of the Bay of Keiss, is a noble and impressive structure. It is perfectly rectangular, eighty-two feet in height, and battlemented. The walls are extremely massive, upwards of thirteen feet in thickness; and the whole building is venerably grey with the hoar of great antiquity. It is in excellent repair; and is at present the residence of the Honourable George Dunbar, Master of Duffus, to whose father it and the Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe belong.

By whom, or at what time, the tower of Ackergill was erected, is altogether unknown. The lands of Ackergill belonged to Morar na Shien, with whose daughter Mariotta they went into the possession of the Keiths, and, after passing through the hands of the Sinclairs and others, came at last into the family of Duffus.

On the northern side of Keiss Bay stand the ruins of the Castle of Keiss, opposite the Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe. It consists at present of the remains of a paltry tower.

This stronghold was formerly called the Fortalice of Radder. It anciently belonged to the Earls of Caithness. At present, it is the property of Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Newmore and Keiss.

Near Thrumster House is a standing-stone, respecting which there is an ancient tradition in this district, that Margaret the Maiden of Norway, heiress of the Scottish Crown, was wrecked on this coast on her return to Scotland, and buried under the "Standing-Stane o' Thrumster."



The only other antiquity worth noticing, is that of the Sinclairs' Aisle, in the church-yard, opposite the door of the Parish Church. It is in the form of a small but elegant chapel. The walls are entire, but roofless. It was built by that Earl George who murdered his own son in the vaults of the Castle of Girnigoe.\*

An old image of St Fergus, the tutelary saint of the parish in Popish times, habited in a monkish dress, and standing on some sort of animal, which formerly lay in the church, has now been placed in the jail. Its features are altogether effaced.

*Modern Buildings.*—The chief of these is the parish Church. This is a large substantial fabric of the very plainest Gothic, built of blue flagstone, with freestone at the corners, doors, and windows, and on the spire. It is imposing from its size. The Town and County Hall is likewise of flagstone, ornamented in front with freestone, and a belfry like a cupola. The hall itself is a large and well-proportioned room. Its walls are adorned with well executed portraits of the late Earl of Caithness; the late Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster; James Traill, Esq. of Rattar; and Kenneth Macleay, Esq. The Commercial Bank is of freestone, with pillars of the Ionic order. The Congregational Chapel in Wick, the United Secession, the Reformed Presbyterian, and the Popish chapels in Pulteneytown, are very plain buildings. The Academy, built by the British Fishery Company, is a good and commodious building. A new church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, is about to be commenced in Pulteneytown.

A Temperance Hall, capable of holding 1000 persons, is in the course of being erected in Wick, by the Total Abstinence Society of Wick and Pulteneytown.

Hempriggs House, formerly Telstone, the seat of Lord Duffus, though of considerable antiquity, is a large and commodious mansion. The House of Stirkoke, the seat of William Horne, Esq. of Scouthel; the House of Thrumster, the seat of Robert Innes, Esq.; and Rosebank, the property of Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Newmore,—are excellent residences. There are also substantial houses at Ulbster, Tannach, Bilbster, Sibster, Harlan, Reiss, and Noss, and not a few in the burgh of Wick.

The material of which these and all other stone erections in

\* On a stone in the aisle is the following inscription: "Here within lyes intombed one Noble and worthie man, John, Master Fiar of Caithness, of Clyth and Greenland, Knight, father of one Noble and potent Lord, now George Earl of Caithness. Lord Sinclair of Berridale, who departed this life the 15th day of March 1576, 45 years."

the parish are composed, is the universal clayslate, or dark-blue flagstone of the county. This, when the stones are well selected and squared, makes a beautiful wall. Buildings of it, however, from the darkness of its hue, have a very sombre appearance.

Many houses in Pulteneytown, and throughout the landward part of the parish, are built without lime. The wind sifts through their walls, and makes them very cold. The houses of many of the smaller tenants, and of the cottars, are built partly of stone and partly of turf. Some of them are of turf altogether, and are wretched hovels. But these very miserable huts are happily becoming rare in the parish of Wick.

### III.—POPULATION.

About the year 1695, there were in the parish of Wick 2000 catechisable persons.\* The following table shows the state of the population at the periods specified.

In 1707, the population amounted to	.	.	.	3200
1719,	.	.	.	about 4000
1726,	.	.	.	3600
1755,	.	.	.	3938
1792,	.	.	.	5000
1801,	.	.	.	3986
1811, there were 1044 families,	2394 males,	2686 females.	Total,	5080
1821,	1339	3263	3450	6713
1831,	1976	4830	5020	9850
In 1792, there were in the Burgh	200 families,	and 1000 individuals.		
1811,	232 do.—	489 males,	505 females.	Total, 994
In Louisburgh, Pulteneytown, and Bankhead,	401	354		755
		890	859	1749
Population in 1840, males	4325, females	5021.	Total,	9346
Do.	1826,			7520

Increase in fourteen years, 1826

It is impossible to ascertain the yearly average of births, marriages, and deaths, seeing that there is no register of deaths; that the Dissenters do not register their children's births; that great numbers of Churchmen are guilty of the same culpable negligence; and that a register of marriages solemnized within the Establishment, was commenced only about four months ago.

Lord Duffus is the only nobleman resident in the parish. His seat is Hemprigg House. His son, the Master of Duffus, dwells at Ackergill.

*People.*—The Celts were, for any thing that appears, aboriginal in the district. They were in early times invaded and subjugated by the Pechts, a Scandinavian race, whose descendants intermingled their blood with that of their Celtic vassals. The Norwegian conquerors and

\* Records of Presbytery of Caithness, 3d October 1700.

colonists, a people cognate with the Pechts, infused a much larger portion of Gothic blood into the Celtico-Pechtish population of the district. The changes made, a few years ago, on the estates of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, drove a great many Highlanders into Caithness, who found work and sustenance chiefly in the more commercial districts of the county. This Celtic supply is kept up by the herring fishery, which annually brings into Wick very great numbers of young Highlanders, several of whom every year settle in the parish. From all these causes it follows, that the present parishioners of Wick are an intermixture of the Celtic, Pechtish, Norwegian, and, latterly, again of the Celtic races.

This is evident, both from the names and from the physical character, of the people. It is difficult to say whether the surnames of Gothic or those of Gaelic origin predominate. Gaelic baptismal names are likewise very common. The physical character of the people also denotes their Celtico-Gothic origin. Though there are some, yet there are remarkably few red or yellow-haired persons in the parish. Their hair is generally black or very dark-brown, and their complexions correspondent. Their persons are taller and larger limbed than those of their Celtic neighbours, though not so tall nor large as those of unmingled Gothic descent. In general, their countenances are rather roundish than oval; their eyes dark; their teeth short, white and firmly set; and their frames spare, but straight, alert, and sinewy. Many are very handsome.

*Language.*—The language spoken over all the parish is, with exception of that of some Gaelic incomers, a dialect of the lowland Scottish. It is distinguished, however, by several peculiarities. Wherever the classical Scottish has *wh*, the dialect of the parish of Wick has *f*; as *fat* for what, *fan* for *whan*; and wherever the Scottish has *u*, this dialect has *ee*; as *seen* for *sune*, *meen* for *mune*, *feel* for *fule*. *Ch* at the beginning of words is softened into *s*, or *sh*; as, *surch* for church; *shopel* for chapel. *Th* at the beginning of words is often omitted. *She*, *her*, and *hers* are almost invariably used for *it* and *its*. This seems a Gaelic idiom; and the tendency to pronounce *s* and *ch*, as *sh*, seems a relic of Gaelic pronunciation.

*Habits.*—At all seasons of the year, whisky is drunk in considerable quantities, but during the fishing season enormous potations are indulged in. It may seem incredible, but it has been ascertained,

that, during the six weeks of a successful fishing, not less than 500 gallons a day were consumed. Let it be remembered, however, that at that period 10,000 strangers, as boatmen, gutters, &c. were crowded into the town of Wick. Of late years, the people have been more temperate. Snuffing is almost universal among the men, and both it and smoking are very common among the women. About L.3,500 a-year are spent in the parish of Wick on tobacco.

*Character.*—The parishioners of Wick are shrewd and attentive to their own interest. Their shrewdness, however, sometimes degenerates into cunning. Unchastity, both in man and woman, is lamentably frequent, which appears from the records of the kirk-session to have been always the case. They possess, notwithstanding, many most estimable qualities. They are remarkable for natural affection, and show much kindness to their poorer neighbours. No small respect is evinced by the commonalty for the ordinances of religion; family worship is prevalent among them; the Sabbath is much regarded; and their attendance on the preaching of the Gospel is most laudable.

Smuggling is all but unknown, excepting between the fishers and the French fishing-boats during the season of the herring-fishery. Poaching is not frequent; and there is not a pawnbroker in the parish.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The state of agriculture in the parish of Wick, previously to 1790, was extremely curious, and its arrangements as hostile as they possibly could be to all improvement. Each property was divided into townlands. In every townland there were what was called “the mains,” which consisted of a farm, on which were a barn and a stack-yard. The proprietor retained the mains in his own hand. The remainder of the townland was divided into what were called penny-lands, halfpenny-lands, farthing-lands, and octos. These were measured out by shrewd countrymen, called land-riders, or more properly land-redders, for they did not ride. In accomplishing their work, they spaced six spaces as the breadth of a rig of corn-land, and 240 as the length. This they denominated a firlot-sowing of oats. This multiplied by four, the number of firlots in a boll, gave 5760 square spaces, being precisely the number of Scotch ells in a statute Scotch acre. The land-redders knew nothing about surveying, nor had ever heard of a chain, or of an acre; yet it must be

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plain, that, long before the memory of man, their measurement must have been founded on actual mensuration by the chain.

The grass-land, outfield, or in arable, was assigned in fixed proportions to these different divisions; and a certain rent, varying in different townlands, was laid on the grass-land, and a certain quantity of grain to be paid for the corn-land of these various penny, halfpenny, farthing, and octo lands. The townland of Papigoe, for instance, in the neighbourhood of the town of Wick, was divided into fifteen penny-lands, one halfpenny-land, and half an octo. Every penny-land paid eleven bolls of corn, or farm as it was called, and no money. The townland of Kilminister was red into thirty-six penny-lands, each one of which paid four bolls of farm, and L.5, 6s. 8d. Scots as rent of the grass-land. To render the state of matters still more opposed to all improvement, the custom of run-rig was common. This most barbarous custom was said to have originated in times of universal and incessant feuds, as a preservative against one neighbour's setting fire to the field of another, and to make the whole townland equally anxious to resist an enemy in case of invasion.

These penny-lands, &c., were let to small tenants, who, besides the rent already specified, yielded an infinite variety of minute services to the landlord. The tenants of each penny-land, for instance, had to bring out their own plough, fully equipped, early in spring, and plough half an acre of oat-land in the mains, —to send a man to sow the seed,—to send their barrows and harrow the ground,—to send two persons to carry on the horses' backs, for there was not a cart in all the parish, the manure in straw baskets, called caizies, for the bear-land,—to lay the manure on,—to send a plough and till the bear-land,—to sow the seed,—to harrow it with their own harrows: in summer, to mow the natural grass,—to make it into hay,—to cart it,—to carry it to the yard with their own carts,—to build it into stacks,—to send a person to weed the corn,—to cast 400 feal for building houses, and 300 divots for thatching them: in harvest, to cut down a certain quantity of corn,—to carry it, and build it in the stack-yard,—to furnish a certain number of winlins to thatch the mains' stacks, a certain quantity of drawn straw to thatch the mains' houses, and a certain quantity of *simmins*, that is, plaited straw-ropes, to bind down the thatch,—to thrash a certain quantity of corn in the barn,—to dry it in the kiln,—to carry it to the mill,—to carry the meal thence to the girdel, and to ship it on board for exportation,

from 6d. to 10d. a day; women were hired for the a day and a bannock; and domestic servants had half-yearly wages from 6s. 8d. to 13s. Provisions following prices: those which had sold at 1d. per pound: hens fetched 3½d. a piece; cocks 3d.; and chickens were 1d. per dozen; geese, which had sold at 8d a 1s. 6d.; and corn, which, in 1762, had sold at from a boll, brought in 1792, from 10s. to 18s.

the average rent of arable land was from L. 1, 5s. to an acre. A ploughman got for the half year L. 4, 10s. a woman for the same term L. 1, 10s. and victuals; labourers earned in summer from 1s. 6d. a day, to 2s.; in about 2s.; women in summer, 8d. a day; in winter, 6d.; as harvest fee, L.1, 10s., with a weekly allowance of four-pounds of meal; and women L.1, with a weekly allowance of pounds. Wool brought from L. 1, 4s. to L.1, 6s. a stone, price of mason-work from L.1, 15s. to L.2 per rood; and of feet dikes from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 3d. a yard. A good cart brought from L.10 to L.11; and an iron plough, L. 3, 10s. Bear, an average of the last five years, brought L.1, 4s. per quarter; oats, L.1, 1s.; potatoes were 12s. per boll; turnips, L. 5 per e; and hay was about 6d. per stone. In 1840, the price of oatmeal was 15s. per boll; of bear-meal, 12s. per boll; of beef per pound, 4½d.; of fowls, from 6d. to 9d. a piece; and of eggs per dozen, about 4d.

The average rent of grazing for the year is at the rate of L.6 per ox or cow; and of L.1 per sheep on inland, and of 8s. on moory patsure.

*Live-Stock.*—Of cattle there are two breeds. In the *first* place, the pure Highland, which has been much improved of late years by the introduction of bulls and breeding cows, selected from the best Highland stocks in Scotland. *Secondly*, crosses from the short-horned bull and Highland cows have been introduced, and answer well, especially for feeding, as they are brought at an early age to a great size and weight; and, since the introduction of steam conveyance, can be conveniently sent to the southern or metropolitan markets. The common breed of sheep is the Cheviot. This is crossed by the Leicester tup; and the cross thrives remarkably well. These sorts of stock are the most profitable, taken together with the present improved system of agriculture and rotation of crops. Both sheep and cattle, indeed, are in such a forward state of improvement, as to be capable of being brought into compe

with those of the southern districts, and of late years have carried off several premiums at the Highland Society's shows.

In 1833, there were 12,375 acres under the plough. Very great additions have since been made to this amount. Extensive inroads are made upon the waste lands every year. In reclaiming waste land, it is ploughed and fallowed for one or more years, as the soil may require, in order to pulverize it. Then lime is laid on the ground at the rate of from thirty to forty bolls, or marl from eighty to 100 bolls an acre. The ground having been thus prepared, is sown with white crop, and afterwards with turnips, oats, and grass, each year in succession. A vast extent of waste land has been reclaimed under this system.

Thorough draining is indispensable to the improvement of land in the parish of Wick. Furrow-draining has lately been introduced, but has not yet been extensively practised. The most advantageous rotation of crops is the six-shift. This is chiefly followed on the larger farms. On these, also, the fields are generally enclosed either with ditches, stone walls, or quickset hedges, which, in many places, with pains bestowed on them, thrive very well.

The value of the whole produce from agriculture in 1833 was L. 37,120, of which about L. 34,418 were for grain, &c. There is no account of the value of the live-stock at any period.

Of the smaller farmers, the younger and more active follow the larger as closely as their limited means will allow: but still it must be confessed, that a considerable number lag behind, and, from want of skill, capital, or activity, plod on in very nearly the system observed by their forefathers. It would appear, indeed, that a very great number of the farms are much too small. They do not afford employment all the year round to the farmer and his *garrons*. He thus is obliged to drive peats into Wick, or at times to work at day's-wages to the larger farmers, or at any other kind of employment that he can fall in with. Many of them betake themselves to the sea in the fishing-season. Their means are scanty; their education is therefore often very limited; their houses are bad; and their children grow up and have their habits formed in total ignorance of what, in the southern parts of Scotland, are reckoned necessaries of life; and this state of matters, without any desire of improvement, is thus, in numerous instances, perpetuated from father to son. It might, perhaps, ultimately be well for the population of this district, if those numerous insignificant patches of land were laid together, and formed into farms

of from L.30 to L.100 of annual rent, taking care that there should be the greater number at the smaller rent between L.30 and L.60. The state of capital and the physical character of the district apparently point out this as a desirable arrangement. In effecting it, however, very much tenderness ought to be shown. All great changes ought to be gradual. The violent and extensive ejection of small tenants, not having the means of supporting themselves and families till other sources of support are discovered and made available, always occasions an amount of suffering, that can neither be compensated nor atoned for by any consequent agricultural improvements.

*Leases.*—At present, leases are given, varying from fourteen to twenty years in duration. If leases are not taken too high, they plainly form a great encouragement to the tenant. But they likewise are as evidently beneficial to the landlord. The tenant is induced to lay out both capital and labour in improving his farm, by which means the landlord's estate is improved. The relation, indeed, of landlord and tenant involves many reciprocal advantages, obligations, and duties. The comfort of the landlord and his prosperity will be deeply involved in the character, comfort, and prosperity of his tenantry. He should, therefore, endeavour to store his estates not only with the best cattle, but with the best men. It is as much his interest as his duty to promote, both by precept and example, Christianity on his estates. This would be the parent of all improvement. God has placed the heritors of Scotland in most responsible situations. A Christian landlord is an unspeakable blessing to all under his influence, and, next to an unchristian minister, an unchristian heritorship is about the greatest curse that can befall a parish.

*Fisheries.*—There is a small salmon-fishery in the Bay and River of Wick. Probably about 150 men are engaged all the year round in the white-fishery, on the coasts of the parish.

This, however, is of very trifling importance indeed, in comparison of the herring-fishery, which is carried on to a great extent in this district. From time immemorial vast shoals of herrings have frequented the coast. They were, however, in ancient days, almost completely neglected. For nearly 200 years the people contented themselves with catching a few fish on rude iron hooks, and proceeding with that excellent bait to the cod-fishing. About the beginning of the eighteenth century, nets began to be used. Some time afterwards, the attention of Government was directed to the fishery, and



bounties were offered for its encouragement. In 1767, John Sutherland of Wester, John Anderson of Wick, and Alexander Miller of Staxigoe, fitted out two sloops on the bounty, which, however, by some informality, they lost. Next year, they fitted out one sloop again, fished successfully, and, though with some difficulty, recovered the bounty. This adventure not having been very encouraging, their ardour abated for some years; but the place of rendezvous having been at last altered, the herring-fishery thereafter annually increased. Adventurers came from Aberdeen, and from the Orkneys, and established the fishing at Staxigoe, and took leases of 99 years' duration, for the purpose of building stores and houses for the curing of red-herring. Those enterprising fishcurers employed boats and crews from Avoch and the neighbouring towns, on the southern side of the Moray Frith; but these fishermen never went farther from the shore in search of fish than a mile or two, when, if they did not find any, they concluded that none were on the coast. In 1786, the British Society for extending the Fisheries, and improving the sea-coasts of the Kingdom, was incorporated by Act of Parliament. This incorporation greatly promoted the fishery. A great number of boats and crews from the Frith of Forth began to come northwards to the fishing, and the crews, being more adventurous, sought for the fish at the distance of ten or twelve miles from the shore, with most encouraging success. In 1782, 363 barrels of white herring were exported. In 1790, there were at Wick 32 boats, measuring 1610 tons, on the bounty. That year, there were 10,514 barrels of white, and above 2000 of red-herrings exported, besides about 700, estimated to have been consumed in the county. In 1808, the British Fishing Society, incorporated, as has been mentioned, in 1786, commenced their establishment of Pulteneytown, by making a harbour for the accommodation of boats and shipping, and by granting feus in perpetuity for building on liberal terms. In 1809, commissioners were appointed by Act of Parliament, for the purpose of promoting and regulating this branch of national industry.

Under improved methods of curing, introduced by the commissioners, and an additional bounty granted by Parliament in 1815, the fishery increased so rapidly, that, in 1824, the British Fishery Society commenced the construction of an outer harbour, which, having been finished, rendered the port both safe and commodious. This measure consolidated the prosperity of the Wick herring-

fishery. It now could afford to lose the Parliamentary bounties, which, in 1830, were withdrawn.

The shoals of herrings appear on the coast about the middle of July, when the fishing is immediately begun. It is continued for eight or ten weeks. The fishing stations within the parish are at Keiss, Staxigoe, Broadhaven, Wick, and Sarclet. The average annual number of boats employed for the last ten years is about 900; and the average annual quantity of fish taken for the last twenty years is 88,500 barrels. The price of a boat with its fleet of nets and everything complete, is from L.140 to L.150 Sterling. Each boat on an average generally fishes from 100 to 150 crans, at a price of from 10s. to 12s. per cran. A barrel of cured herrings costs L.1.

The following table shows the state of the herring-fishery at Wick in 1840 :

Native boats,	428
Strange boats,	337
	<hr/>
Total of boats,	765
	<hr/>
Crews of said boats,	3,828
Coopers,	265
Women employed as gutters, &c.	2,175
Labourers,	46
Carters,	127
Other labourers employed about the fishing.	150
Seamen in coasting vessels (supposed),	1,200
Fish-curers entered,	91
	<hr/>
Total of persons employed,	7,882
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Total of barrels cured,	68,495
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Barrels bung-packed, branded,	10,333
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Barrels exported to Ireland,	51,250
To other places in Europe,	4,461
	<hr/>
Total of barrels exported,	55,711

The herring-fishery has in a very rapid manner increased the population, and augmented the rental of the parish, and the pecuniary resources of many of the parishioners; but whether it has added to the happiness and comfort of the people at large, may well be questioned. If it has increased the wealth, it has also increased the wickedness of the district; and any one acquainted with the sources of happiness well knows that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Very great care was taken to promote the numbers and success of the fishers of herrings, but little or no care to promote either the number or success of the fishers of men. The

result which invariably follows such conduct has ensued. The population rapidly increased; rents, wages, and prices rose; buildings were erected, and all things seemed prosperous. But there was a worm in this blossom of happiness. The means of grace and of pastoral superintendence were not extended. Multitudes escaped altogether beyond their blissful influence. No care was taken of the 10,000 young strangers of both sexes who were crowded together with the inhabitants within the narrow limits of Wick during the six principal weeks of the fishing, exposed to drink and numerous other temptations. The consequences have been such, as any one acquainted with the propensities of fallen humanity might easily have foreseen; and results have verified the declaration of the prophet, that "the ungodly who earneth wages, earneth wages to put them into a bag full of holes." A people cannot be exalted without righteousness, and with righteousness they cannot be degraded; but morality cannot be communicated nor upheld without the full and abundant administration of the Gospel. When will legislators, heritors, and merchants be convinced of this?

*Manufactures.*—There are in Wick and Pulteneytown four rope-works, which employ, besides the masters, 75 men, with occasional hands. The first of these commenced in 1820. All the rope which they produce is consumed in this port. There is one distillery and brewery, which employs 12 men; one meal and barley-mill, which employs 5; four saw-mills, three of which are driven by steam and one by water, employ 26 hands. A manufactory of pavement for exportation employs from 60 to 80 workmen. There is a ship-building yard, commenced in 1815, with always one or two vessels on the stocks, employing about 50 shipwrights. Twelve boat-building yards employ from 70 to 80, who launch from 80 to 100 boats annually. There has lately been established in Pulteneytown an iron-foundry, which gives employment to from 6 to 8 men, and promises to be prosperous. A Gas Company was formed in 1840, whose works are in the course of being erected; and it is to be hoped, that, by another winter, both Wick and Pulteneytown will be lighted with gas. There are 265 coopers in the parish. The principal, almost, indeed, the sole occupation of females in and about the towns, is the spinning of yarn and making it into nets for the herring-fishing. At this they can earn the miserable pittance of only 2½d. or 3d. a day.

*Navigation.*—A little trade has been carried on from the port of Wick from very early times. In 1588, Alexander Earl of Sutherland burnt the town of Wick, and spoiled the ship and plundered the goods of Andrew Wardlaw, a merchant.

In 1840, twenty-one ships were registered at the port of Wick, amounting to 1154 tons. The tonnage of the ships which have entered this port for the last twenty years may have been about 30,000 tons annually; and the yearly number of sailors about 3000.

A steam-boat began to run from Wick to Leith in 1833, once a fortnight. The Sovereign steam-boat of 200 horse-power, which commences for the season in March, and is laid up in November, makes a voyage, once a week, between Lerwick, Kirkwall, Wick, Aberdeen and Leith. It carries passengers, stock, and goods; and has been of the greatest advantage, not to Wick only, but to Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland. Two smacks ply, each once a fortnight, between and Leith. There is at Wick a Chamber of Commerce.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Town.*—Wick is the market-town of this parish. It is a place of great antiquity; and was at the request of the Earl of Caithness, of whose earldom it formed a part, erected into a royal burgh on the 25th of September 1589. The superiority of it has been bought and sold by the Sinclairs of Caithness, the Glenorchys, the Sinclairs of Ulbster, and the Sutherlands; but the Reform Bill has reduced this once potential privilege to feebleness. It is, therefore, now little valued. The set of the burgh consists of a provost, two bailies, a dean of guild, a treasurer, and seven councillors. There are no corporations or crafts in this burgh. At Michaelmas 1755, the number of burgesses amounted to 53; at the same term in 1801, to 29; and in 1832, when the roll was last made up, to 66. About 15 have since been added. The dues payable on the admission of a burgher amount to L.4, 4s.

In 1660, the customs were let at L.55 Scots; in 1686, at L.63, 10s. The ordinary revenue for 1840, was,

Rent of customs,	-	-	L.30	0	0
Do. of House in Bridge Street,	-	-	6	10	0
Do. of street manure,	-	-	5	0	0
Do. of curing stations,	-	-	7	5	0
Receipts for freedom of trade and burgher dues,	-	-	4	19	0
Feu-duties,	-	-	21	4	6

Total, L.74 18 6

This may be considered as a fair average of the ordinary burghal revenues of Wick, for several years by-past. The expenditure is about L.70 a year. There is no debt.

The records begin, "In the name of the Father, the Sone, and the Holy Ghoste. At the burgh of Weick, the sext day of Januarii, 1660 yeares." They are not voluminous, and are occupied with ordinary burghal business.

In 1840, the population of Wick was,

Males, 561; Females, 693; Total, 1254.  
The number of families was 300.

There is no police.

The land-tax of the royal burgh, recoverable from feuars and traders, is L.11, 14s. The rental amounts to L.2600.

The church and parish school, the town and county buildings, and the jail, are within the royal burgh.

The trade of Wick consists in the export of herring, and of live-stock and grain, and of the import of such articles as the wants of the district require.

Wick is the county town. The sheriff has held his ordinary court here since 1828, when the Court of Session decided in favour of Wick, in the process of removal of the court from Thurso, where they had previously been held from time immemorial. The Custom-house establishment has also been removed hither from Thurso. The customs in 1839 amounted to L.2083. A weekly market, well frequented, is held in Wick on Friday.

*Parliamentary Burgh.*—The royal burgh of Wick, from the date of its erection to the Union, sent a commissioner to the Scottish Parliament. At the Union, it was associated with Kirkwall, Dornock, Tain, and Dingwall, in the return of one member to the British House of Commons. By the Reform Act, Cromarty was united to this batch, the bounds of Wick as a Parliamentary burgh were enlarged, and it was constituted the returning burgh.

The village of Louisburgh, built on leases of 99 years, from Lord Duffus, lies contiguously to the royal burgh of Wick, on the northern side; and that of Pulteneytown, commenced in 1808, by the British Fishery Society, is separated from the latter on the south by the bay, and united to it by a bridge of three arches, over the River of Wick. Wick, Louisburgh, and Pulteneytown, with the manse and lower glebe, Bankhead, and a few more other places included within the boundary, compose the Parliamentary

burgh of Wick. The number of proprietors of houses worth L.10 and upwards in the Parliamentary burgh is 181; of L.10 householders, 233; and of voters, 257, of whom 88 are enrolled on premises within the royal burgh. The rental of the Parliamentary burgh is L. 4770.

In 1840, the population of the Parliamentary burgh was as follows:

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Of Wick, -	561	693	1254
Of Pulteneytown, &c.	1329	1630	2959
Of Louisburgh, &c.	170	209	379
Total,	2060	2532	4592

The number of families was,

In Wick, -	300
In Pulteneytown, &c.	683
In Louisburgh, &c.	80

The number of inhabited houses, 1578.

*Villages.*—The village of Broad Haven, which is a fishing station with 170 inhabitants, is about a mile along the northern shore from Wick. A mile farther on, is that of Staxigoe, not far from Castle Girnigoe, containing 261 inhabitants. It is a place of some antiquity. Two store-houses of the Earls of Caithness, built 250 years ago, are still standing there and in good order. They contain 4 meal-girnels, each girnel capable of holding 1000 bolls of meal; and 4 lofts, each capable of containing 1000 bolls of bear. These were necessary when rents were paid in kind. Staxigoe is another fishing station, with a tolerably good natural harbour for boats. The village of Sarclet, on the estate of Thrumster, lies about five miles to the south of Wick. It is situated on the top of a small bank overhanging a small cove, which, at considerable expense, has been converted into a pretty good harbour for fishing-boats.

*Means of Communication.*—Wick is a post-town. In 1829 the revenue of the post-office amounted to L.1200 a-year. A daily mail-coach from Thurso passes through the town to the south in the morning, and another from the south through the town to Thurso at night. The mail-coach commenced to run on the 15th of July 1819. A daily post-gig runs between Wick and Huna, from which latter place the letters for Orkney are dispatched twice a-week. A steam-boat of 200 horse-power plies once a-week, from March till November, between Lerwick, Kirkwall, Wick, Aberdeen, and Leith.

The Huna road, entering the parish from the north at Nybster,

passes through Keiss, and close to the lower end of the Loch of Wester, near which it is joined by the new line from Bower. Crossing the Water of Wester by a bridge of two arches, this road joins the one from Castleton, at a short distance to the west of the House of Keiss. Its length within the parish is seven miles, and that of the new Bower road nearly four; the road from Castleton, in the parish of Orlig, enters the parish of Wick at Kirk, and, crossing the Moss of Kilminister, where there are two or three trifling bridges, continues in a pretty straight line till it approaches the town, where it bends to the south, and, passing the manse and the church, joins the main-street of Wick, at a distance from Kirk of eight miles. Before it reaches the manse, it is joined from the west by the road from Watin through Sibster-Wick. This road measures seven miles, and is not yet completed through the townland of Winless. From the Castleton road a branch is sent through Louisburgh along the coast by Papigoe and Broad Haven to Staxigoe, a distance of about two miles. The Parliamentary road from Thurso enters the parish of Wick three-quarters of a mile to the west of Bilbster House, and runs in a tolerably straight line down the south side of the River of Wick, till it joins the south road at Rosebank, a distance of six miles and a half. The south road, on passing from the town, crosses the river of Wick on a plain stone bridge of three arches, which cost L.1700, and runs in a winding direction through the estates of Hempriggs, Thrumster, and Ulbster, till it leaves the parish at the Mission House of Bruan, a distance of about eight miles. A new county road leaves the north Parliamentary road at Stirkoke, and, passing through Tannach, joins the south Parliamentary road at Thrumster, a distance of about four miles and a half. A road runs from the south Parliamentary road to Sarclet, a distance of about two miles. All these roads are of the very best description. The whole extent of road in the parish is very nearly fifty miles, of which the Parliamentary line measures fourteen.

*Harbours.*—The harbourets of Sarclet, Broad Haven, and Staxigoe, have already been mentioned. A small harbour has been made at Keiss. The only harbour originally on the coast of this parish, was the mouth of the River of Wick, into which the M'Farlan MS. says, that vessels of between thirty and forty lasts burden could enter. In 1810, the British Fishery Society completed a harbour in the Bay of Wick, at an expense of L.14,000, of which L.8500 were defrayed by Government, capable of con-

taining 100 decked vessels. From the great increase of trade consequent on the prosperity of the herring-fishery, this harbour soon became quite inadequate, and a new one was planned, and in 1831 completed, at an expense of L. 40,000. It is unhappily exposed to the swell of the sea, which rolls in from the mouth of the bay.

The best place, it is said, for a harbour on the eastern coast of Caithness, is at Sinclair's Bay, which is a part of the Bay of Keiss between Ackergill and Castle Girnigoe.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—We learn from Tertullian that, before his time, Christianity was planted in parts of Britain which had been inaccessible to the Roman arms. There is good reason for believing that, before this period, the Romans had a settlement to the north of the Grampians, of which Pteroton, hodiernally Inverness, was the capital. The Christian churches to which Tertullian alludes were collected from among the Celtic tribes, who seem to have occupied, in these ancient days, the whole of modern Scotland, up to the Pentland Frith. Their ministers were styled Culdees, from Cuilidich, *dwellers in remote or sequestered places*: and it was always asserted by them, that their church had been planted by the immediate disciples of the Apostle John. The Pechts, who had invaded and subjugated the Celts, were heathens. The seat of their king was near Inverness, and their kingdom stretched northwards to the Pentland Frith. In 566, the Pechtish sovereign, Brudy II. was converted and baptized by Colum, Abbot or President of the Presbyterian College of Iona. At the Pechtish court Colum met an Orcadian prince, to whose protection, at the Culdee's request, Brudy recommended certain missionaries in Orkney. Presbyterian ministers, or Culdees from Iona, styled also I-colum-killi, the Island of Colum of the Cells, in allusion to the numerous churches which he planted, and from others of their colleges, were speedily settled over all the west and north of Scotland. The places of their residence are generally denoted by the prefix *kil*, which evidently signified a Culdean church; as Kilmarnock, Kildonan, &c. One of them had probably his residence within the parish of Wick, at a place called Kilminister, which, in pronunciation, is often shortened into Kilminster, Kilminster, and Kilmster. In the very middle of the Moss of Kilminister are the ruins of a building, called unto this day the Kirk o' Moss. A causeway, the traces of which are yet distinctly visible, led through the deep and otherwise impassable bog to this ancient place of



worship, which stood on a little knoll. This situation corresponded exactly with the predilection of the Culdees, who loved, in these ferocious times, remote and sequestered residences, whence, indeed, they had their distinctive appellation.

Presbyterianism, derived from the scriptures and Apostolic days, continued for ages the form of ecclesiastical government in the Scottish Church, unmixed with Prelacy till 909, when Constantine the Third appointed Kellach bishop of St Andrews. At this period, the Norwegians established themselves in Caithness, and patronized the heathen deities. About 100 years afterwards, however, the Scandinavian idolatry gave place to the Romish; the Norsemen of Caithness and Orkney having been converted by certain papal ecclesiastics, backed by the sword of Olaf King of Norway. Malcolm Canmore, who began to reign in 1066, founded the prelatry of Caithness, comprehending Caithness and Sutherland, and made Dar, one of his favourites, the prelate. Popery flourished apace within the diocese. Besides the Kirk of Wick, there were within the bounds of the parish, the Kirk of Ulbster, dedicated to St Martin; the Kirk of Thrumster; the Kirk of Hauster, dedicated to St Cuthbert; the Kirk of St Ninian, at the Head of Wick; St Mary's Kirk at Sibster; the Kirk of St Tears, dedicated to the Holy Innocents, near Ackergill; the Kirk of Moss, latterly dedicated to St Duthoc; the Kirk of Keiss; and the Kirk of Strubster. The Kirk of Ulbster is yet entire, and has been converted into a family tomb. Several of the burial-places attached to the other kirks are yet in use. Around the ruins of the Kirk of Moss, there are about twelve acres, said to have been under tillage so late as 1689.

In Caithness, the progress of the Reformation was very slow. Only Wick and Thurso had ministers in 1567; the rest of the parishes of the county were supplied by readers and exhorters. In 1576, Dunnet, Halkirk, and Wick had each a minister and a reader. The other parishes appear to have been entirely destitute of teachers. Wick, apparently, was visited soon afterwards with a long vacancy. The people, in these circumstances, continued attached to popish superstition. They were accustomed to visit the chapels with which the parish abounded, and pay their devotions to the stone images of their tutelary saints and saintesses. Dr Richard Mercheston, minister of Bower in 1613, exerted himself to suppress this atrocious and debasing sin, and procured the demolition of the stone images. On his return homewards, he was drowned by the blind and infuriated idolaters. It was given out,

however, that it was the saints who did it; and that a lapideous saintess, whom he had cast down and broken to pieces, the day before, was seen a-top of him in the water.

The minister, however, and kirk-session were anxious to put an end to such humiliating superstitions, and the sessional records bear evidence of their zeal. But, notwithstanding all their exertions, hagiolatry still lurked in the parish of Wick. Within the memory of persons yet living, it was customary for people to visit the Chapel of St Tears on Innocents' day, and leave in it bread and cheese, as an offering to the souls of the children slain by Herod: but which the dog-keeper of a neighbouring gentleman used to take out and give to the hounds. Till within a few years, it was customary for all the inhabitants of Mirelandorn to visit the Kirk of Moss every Christmas before sunrise, placing on a stone, bread and cheese and a silver coin, which, as they alleged, disappeared in some mysterious way. There are still several holy lochs, especially one at Dunnet, to which people go from Wick, and, indeed, from all parts of Caithness, to be cured of their diseases. They cast a penny into the water, walk or are carried withershins around the loch, and return home. If they recover, their cure is ascribed to the mystic virtues of the *Halie Loch*; and if they do not, their want of faith gets all the blame.

The Kirk of Wick was in Popish times dedicated to St Fergus. It probably stood before the Reformation at Mount Hellie, or Halie, near the eastern end of the town. We have no account of the erection of the edifice in the present church-yard, of which the Sinclair Aisle and Dunbar Tomb are the only remnants; but it must have been built before 1576. It was repaired in 1728, and again in 1752. A new church was erected at the close of the last century. This was found, soon after it was finished, to be very insecure. A new one became indispensable, which, after various delays, having been commenced, was at length finished in 1880, at an expense of L. 4780, 13s. 10½d.

The Right Honourable Lord Duffus is patron of the parish.

*Parish Church.*—Standing at the west end of the burgh, the parish church is very conveniently situated for the great body of the parishioners. Excellent roads lead towards it in all directions. It is nine miles from Nybster, on the north; seven from Bruan, on the south; seven and a-half from Mirelandorn, on the west; and about a mile from the Moray Frith, on the east. It is not inconveniently situated for the great bulk of the parishioners; but

those of Mirelandorn, Winless, and Bilbster, amounting to 369 souls, while about seven miles from the church of Wick, are within two miles of that of Wattin. This mal-arrangement ought to be remedied.

Allowing eighteen inches to a sitting, the church will contain 1981 sitters. It is seated, however, to contain only 1835. All the seats are said to be free. The church is well attended.

Though much too large for the comfort either of the minister or of the congregation, the church of Wick does not afford nearly sufficient accommodation for the population of the parish. This deficiency is in part supplied by the mission of Bruan, and the *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss.

*Mission of Bruan.*—At first, this mission comprehended Ber-ridale and Bruan, at which places divine worship was celebrated alternately. Since a parliamentary church was erected at the former place in 1826, the labours of the missionary have been confined to Bruan.

The mission-house is situated in the parish of Wick, but just within the boundary which divides it from the parish of Latheron. The principal part of it was built in 1798, to which an aisle was subsequently added. It is a very plain thatched building, capable of accommodating 585 sitters. The manse, on which is a debt of L. 50, and glebe of four acres, are within the parish of Latheron. The ground was generously given by the family of Ulbster. The missionary district comprehends the extremity of the parish of Latheron in the southern extremity of the parish of Wick. In 1840, the population of the Latheron portion was 770; that of the Wick portion as follows:—

Adherents of the Church,	450 males,	491 females, total	946
Seceders,	21	37	58
Independents,	10	14	24
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total,	481	542	1028

Almost all the inhabitants engage in fishing.

The endowments of the mission consist of the manse and glebe, and L. 25 Sterling annually, given by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Seat-rents make up the missionary's stipend to nearly L. 100 a-year. But the district is very poor, and this latter source of income varies considerably. An additional endowment, even of L. 50 a-year, would be an unspeakable blessing to this important mission.

*Missionaries of Bruan.*—1 William Mackintosh, afterwards

minister of Thurso ; 2. John M'Donald, now minister of Ferrintosh ; 3. Donald M'Gillivray, afterwards minister of Kilmallie ; 4. Duncan M'Gillivray, now minister of Lairg ; 5. William Sutherland, now in America ; 6. George Davidson, now minister of Latheron ; 7. Archibald Cook, now minister of the North Church, Inverness ; 8. John Sinclair, A. M., present incumbent.

*Parish of Keiss, quoad sacra.*—The *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss was erected 1833, by authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It is composed of the northern extremity of Wick and of the southern extremity of Canisbay. The boundaries have not yet been settled. It is understood, however, that the portion which belongs to Wick is bounded on the north and north-east by Canisbay ; on the north-west by Bower ; on the south by the southern ridge of the valley of Wester ; on the east by the sea. The Wick portion is five miles in length, and three miles and a-half in average breadth.

The church and manse were built by Government in 1827, at a cost of L.1500. They are situated on a rising ground at the northern side of the bay of Keiss. Fronting the west, they command an extensive view of the surrounding country. On the opposite side of Keiss-bay, to the left, are seen the gloomy ruins of castles Sinclair and Girnigoe, with the bold and rugged promontory of Noss-Head. The view is bounded in the distance, by the mighty hills which separate Caithness from Sutherland, called Morven, Skerubin, and Maiden-Paps.

The population of that part of the parish of Keiss which is situated within the civil parish of Canisbay is about 200 souls. The part within the civil parish of Wick contains, of males, 362 ; females, 447 ; total, 809 ; of these, 2 are Original Seceders, 12 Anabaptists, 1 is a Reformed Presbyterian, and 1 a Methodist.

The church of Keiss, which is situated within the civil parish of Wick, is capable of holding about 350 sitters. Were galleries erected, it would accommodate 200 more. There is an endowment of L.120 granted by Government. No glebe is attached to the living.

There is a register of births and marriages kept by the session-clerk, which commenced after the passing of an act of the General Assembly in 1833, constituting the Government churches parishes *quoad sacra*.

*Ministers of Keiss.*—1827, Thomas Jolly, now minister of Bowden; 1829, Thomas Gun, present incumbent.

*New Church at Pulteneytown.*—It is proposed still farther to increase church-accommodation for the parish of Wick, by the building of an Extension church in Pulteneytown, capable of accommodating 950 persons. Subscriptions amounting to L. 662, 13s. 6d. have been obtained for this most desirable object. The foundation stone was laid on March 17, 1841.

*Missionary.*—The Rev. David Mitchell has laboured assiduously, as missionary under the Church of Scotland in Pulteneytown, for about two years. He is supported by subscriptions.

Notwithstanding the accommodation provided at Keiss and Bruan, and that which is proposed to be provided at Pulteneytown, the parish church of Wick, though large, is altogether insufficient for the population. After deducting the 809 included in the parish of Keiss, and the 1028 within the mission of Bruan, there are at present within the parish of Wick, *quoad sacra*, 1842 households, comprising, of males, 3482; of females, 4032; total 7514. Taking the number of those who ought to have church-accommodation at the proportion of 55 to the 100, there ought to be church-accommodation for 4192; but the parish church can accommodate only 1835; thus leaving unaccommodated 2297: Or if Pulteneytown ultimately shall be erected into a parish, then there will remain a population in the parish of Wick *quoad sacra* of 6505 souls. Of these there ought to be accommodated 3577; but the church accommodates only 1835, leaving unaccommodated 1742: Or, making a liberal allowance for Dissenters of all descriptions, and stating their numbers at 2100, which will reduce the number of churchmen to 5414, of whom there ought to be accommodated 2977; but the church accommodates only 1835; thus leaving without accommodation 1142 souls.

But the great deficiency lies in pastoral superintendence. It is altogether impossible for one single minister to superintend effectively 7514 persons, or, making allowance for Dissenters, 5414. This will appear still more evident, when the prodigious influx of strangers, amounting to near 10,000, during the fishing season, is taken into consideration. There is not a parish in all broad Scotland, whence issues a more urgent call for help. We are numerous and we are poor; and, from the fisheries and other causes, are exposed to many and great temptations,

which nothing but the full, unfettered, and frequent ministrations of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, carried home on the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, can effectively counteract.

On December 6, 1840, the number of persons on the Communion Roll was, of males, 192; of females, 355; total, 487. The Lord's Supper is dispensed twice a-year in this parish; and the dispensation of it is attended by immense crowds of people from the neighbouring parishes. It is, indeed, a high solemnity.

*Manse.*—In 1702, the manse was not habitable. In 1709, it was a heap of rubbish. In 1710, a house in the burgh was bought for a manse. In 1728, a manse was ordered to be built on the site of the original one, near the church-yard. The present manse, which stands in the glebe, a little to the west of the town, was erected in 1786. It is a plain but substantial building, and is capable, with some repairs, of being made a very comfortable residence. The office-houses, which are thatched, are ruinous. It is expected that they will speedily be rebuilt.

*Glebe.*—The glebe consists of two parts; the lower, of about 9 acres, in which the manse stands, and the upper, a mile to the west, on the north side of the River of Wick, about 30 acres. In 1836, the glebe was valued by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction at L. 50 a-year.

*Stipend.*—In 1792, the stipend was L. 97, 13s. 4d.; in 1810, it was L. 50, and 160 bolls of victual. At present it consists of 17 chalders, half oatmeal, half bear, payable at the fair prices, and L. 10 of money.

*Teinds.*—The teinds of this parish belong to the Crown. In 1836, the value of the unappropriated teind was L. 340, 9s. 4d.

*Ministers of Wick since the Reformation.*—Andro Philp, before 1567; Thomas Keir, before 1576; Alexander Merns, Reader at Wick; Thomas Pruntoch; John Annand, before 1636; 1638, David Allardice; 1638, John Smart, ejected in 1650, and afterwards minister of Dunnet; 1659, William Geddes, ejected in 1675; 1676, Patrick Clunis, died in 1691; 1692, William Geddes, restored; 1701, Charles Keith, died in 1705; 1707, James Oliphant, died in 1726; 1727, James Ferme, died in 1760; 1762, James Scobie, died in 1764; 1765, William Sutherland, died in 1816; 1813, Robert Phin, died in 1840; 1840, Charles Thomson, the present incumbent.

*United Associate Seceders.*—The congregation of these Dissenters was established in 1770. On the 21st of September 1836, according to their minister, the Rev. William Stewart, it amounted

to 1000, of whom 810 were resident within the parish of Wick *quoad sacra*. According to the Rev. Robert Phin, minister of Wick, their numbers within the parish amounted at that date to 700.

The chapel, which stands in Pulteneytown, was built in 1815, and a manse in 1825. There was, in 1836, a debt of L. 130 on the property. Allowing sixteen inches to the sitting, the chapel will contain 658 sitters. In 1836, the number of communicants was upwards of 200. The minister's stipend is L. 100 a-year, derived from seat-rents and collections, with a house and about half an acre of ground.

*Independents.*—This congregation was established in 1790, in which year the chapel, which stands near Wick, was built. At sixteen inches each sitting, the chapel will hold 666 sitters. In 1836, there was a debt of L. 110 affecting the property. On the 21st of September 1836, the number of Independents resident in Wick *quoad sacra* was, according to the Rev. John Wiseman, then minister, at least 1000; according to the Rev. Robert Phin, minister of Wick, the number was 620. According to Mr Wiseman, the communicants were 129; according to Mr Phin, they were about 100.

*Anabaptists.*—The congregation was established in 1808. In 1836, the parishioners in the habit of attending were about 90: the number of communicants was then 29. They have no minister.

*Separatists.*—The congregation was established in 1824. In 1836 their number amounted to 28; and the number of communicants to 13. They have neither chapel nor minister.

*Papists.*—The congregation was established in 1832. It does not exist but in the fishing-season. A chapel, capable of holding, at eighteen inches a sitting, 306 sitters, was built, in 1836, in Pulteneytown. It is closed, and there is no priest, except during the fishing-season,—when a priest comes, the chapel is opened, and service is performed for those of the Romish persuasion, who, during that period, come to Wick from Ireland and the Highlands.

*Original Seceders.*—The congregation was established in 1835. In 1836, from 60 to 80 persons were in the habit of attending worship. They have neither chapel nor minister.

*Reformed Presbyterians.*—This congregation was established in 1836. The numbers in the parish amount to about 200; the communicants to 45. Their chapel in Pulteneytown was built

in 1839. It is capable of holding, on the ground-floor, about 380 sitters. The galleries are not yet erected. They have no minister.

*Wesleyan Methodists.*—This congregation was established in 1837. Their numbers are not great.

*Education.*—It was a favourite maxim with the Scottish Reformers, that there should be throughout the land a kirk and a minister for every 1000 inhabitants, and a school beside every kirk. The nobles and gentry, however, voted this a pious imagination, pillaged the church, expended the plunder on their own pleasures, and left the poor to perish for lack of knowledge. But the ministers of the Scottish church were Christians. They were not to be daunted by the hostility both of the land-owners and of the government, and by their unceasing exertions and untiring perseverance, schools as well as churches were gradually planted and endowed in all the parishes of Scotland.

Caithness, however, was long behind the rest of the country. In 1567, only Wick and Thurso had ministers; the rest of the parishes were supplied with readers or exhorters. In 1576, Dunnet, Halkirk, and Wick had each a minister and a reader. The other parishes appear to have been altogether vacant. The disturbances and distresses caused in the seventeenth century by the Episcopalian intruders and persecutors, threw the country back into the Popish darkness and disorder out of which it had been rapidly emerging. In 1697, when the Presbytery of Caithness was, after the Persecution, reconstituted by the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, only Thurso, Dunnet, and Reay had ministers of the Presbyterian Church. Most of the parishes were vacant, amongst which was Wick. In one or two, there were Episcopalian incumbents, a sample of the men who had been intruded in the times of Episcopacy, scandalous in their lives, and opposed, or at least indifferent to the promotion of either the religion or education of the people. The people were, in consequence, ill-educated. In 1701, when a call by the parish of Wick was moderated in to Charles Keith, the second minister of this parish after the Persecution, it is stated by the records of the session, that the call "was unanimously subscribed by the heritors and elders present, and consented to by a greater number who could not subscribe."

The Presbytery were incessant and unwearied in their endeavours to remedy this enormous evil, by the planting of schools;



but their benevolent exertions were counteracted by the culpable opposition of the heritors. These Christian men, however, though discouraged, were not in despair. They persevered, and in 1706 Wick and Thurso were legally provided with schools. In the course of the next twenty years, the legal accommodations had been obtained for Canisbay, Dunnet, Wattin, and Bower. The remaining parishes were not provided for a long time afterwards; and even so late as 1772, Reay was without a statutory school. The Presbytery, while they continued to urge upon the heritors the fulfilment of their duty, did not rest satisfied with shuffling and idle excuses, but did what in them lay to secure for their people the blessings of education, by inviting into their parishes qualified teachers, and affording them every encouragement, by bestowing on them the office and emoluments of session-clerk, and by constantly urging on the people the necessity of contributing to their support: nor did they desist till they had procured from the heritors a legal salary and accommodation for all the schoolmasters within their bounds. In 1759, the parish school of Wick had an income of 20 bolls of meal. It has now the maximum endowment.

But those enlightened and indefatigable Christians were not content with securing for each parish a statutory school; in extensive parishes, they planted charity schools. Several were established in the parish of Wick as early as 1728. In April 12th 1763, there is presented to the kirk-session, a list of several heads of families in Ulbster, who, for the purpose of obtaining a school, oblige themselves to keep a certain number of scholars at it; to pay regularly their quarterly fees, and what meal they bind themselves for; whereupon the session declare their willingness to give what assistance they can to a proper schoolmaster in that place, namely, L. 1, 5s. Sterling a-year, to make up for those scholars whose parents are unable to pay the quarterly fees. In 1792, five charity schools were in operation in the parish, but they have long ago been altogether discontinued.

In 1765, the Rev. William Hallawall, who, for several years had been employed as an itinerant minister in Caithness, by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, but had latterly been chaplain to the Charity Workhouse of Edinburgh, and overseer of the children's education for more than twenty years, having "a peculiar regard for the inhabitants of that large and populous parish of Wick, where I spent," says he, "a good part of my time in my younger years, with great satisfaction," mortified, in the

hands of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, certain property, from which L.21 were annually to be paid for endowing, with L.7 a-year, a school at Keiss; another at Noss; and a third at Ulbster. The heritors are to build school-houses and uphold them, and the Presbytery of Caithness to judge of the qualifications of the teachers. These schools were directed to be called "Hallawall's Schools," by which name, however, they do not seem ever to have been known in the parish. Each of the schools receives from Hallawall's mortification, L.7, 10s. annually, and the same sum from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, which makes up their endowment to L.15. a-year. A female teacher at Ulbster is allowed L.6 a-year by this society. She teaches girls to read and sew.

Besides these schools, there is one at Thrumster and another at Stirkoke on the General Assembly's scheme. The proprietors of these estates have built houses, and allow so much land as an endowment, and the General Assembly grants L.25 a-year.

There are at present 18 unendowed schools in the parish, of which 14 are in the town, and 5 in the country. Of these, there are two kept by school-mistresses within the *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss, one at Reiss, and another at Janetstown, both of which are kept by schoolmasters. Between the school at Reiss, and the Society's school at Keiss, the Kirk-session divides, in equal sums, L.3 a year, arising from a small mortification.

Of the 14 unendowed schools in the town, seven are in Wick and Louisburgh, and seven in Pulteneytown. Of the seven in Wick, one is kept by a master, and six by schoolmistresses. Of the seven in Pulteneytown, three are kept by schoolmistresses, and four by schoolmasters.

Besides all these, there is in Pulteneytown the Academy, an excellent building, raised at a cost of L.1700, by the British Society for Promoting the Fisheries, who likewise contribute to the support of the two teachers.

The following statement shows the average attendance of children in 1840:

Endowed schools.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Parish school,	60	31	91
Keiss,	49	18	67
Noss or Staxigoe,	45	40	85
Ulbster.	40	20	60
Thrumster,	36	80	116
Stirkoke,	46	40	86
Academy, Pulteneytown,	70	20	90

Unendowed schools kept by masters.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Reiss, - - -	46	15	61
Janetstown, - - -	16	13	29
One in Wick, - - -	60	12	72
Four in Pulteneytown, -	164	57	221
Unendowed schools kept by mistresses.			
Broadhaven, - - -	15	12	27
Two in Keiss, - - -	37	38	75
Six in Wick and Louisburgh,	30	119	149
Total,	714	515	1229

A Female School of Industry is supported at Stirkoke by Mrs Horne of Scouthel, where sewing is taught in all its branches.

The school at Reiss, on which is dependant a large and poor district, ought to be endowed; and a school should be planted in the populous district of Hempriggs.

It is impossible to state the fees in the various unendowed schools. It may be said, however, that, in general, they are very low. In the Society's schools, the fees for reading are 1s. 6d. a quarter. In the parish school, the fees per quarter are, for reading, 2s.; for reading and writing, 3s.; for reading, writing, and arithmetic, 4s.; with addition of geography, 4s. 6d.; and for all these with the classics, 6s.

A great number of the children are very imperfectly educated. Many do not get to school above a quarter or two. Poverty is partly the cause of this; but it must be confessed, that there is not so deep a conviction of the benefits of education as every Christian must desire to see.

*Sabbath Schools.*—Of these there are, connected with the Church of Scotland, one in Wick, attended by about 250 scholars, and one in Pulteneytown, attended by about 320; and in the country, one at Keiss, one at Staxigoe, one at Reiss, one at Stirkoke, one at Thrumster, and one at Ulbster, which are attended by about the same number of scholars by which the schools at each of these places are attended during the week. Sabbath schools are also kept by several of the Dissenting bodies.

*Literature.*—At Wick there is a library, containing about 1620 volumes. It was instituted in March 1826, and is the property of the subscribers.

There are two reading-rooms, one at Pulteneytown, and the other at Wick; the former established in 1829, and the latter in 1840. Each of them receives about four daily London, and about the same number of provincial newspapers.

The John o' Groat Journal, published at Wick, commenced in February 1836, and has had a uniform weekly circulation, up to the

present time, of 800 copies. About one-half of these is circulated throughout the four northern counties, and the other throughout Britain, and abroad. This Journal advocates what are usually called Liberal principles.

The Northern Star, a fortnightly newspaper, commenced in November 1836, and was discontinued in May 1839. It advocated what are usually called Conservative principles.

About fifteen years ago, the parish was supplied by a flying-stationer, who paid periodical visits to Wick. Now, there are two booksellers in the place, both of whom have a considerable business.

*Charitable and other Institutions.*—The Caithness Agricultural Society, which was instituted about fifteen years ago, holds its annual meeting at Wick. This Society is respectably supported, and has been of the greatest advantage to those objects which are indicated by its name.

There is at Wick a Chamber of Commerce, established about five years ago, which has conferred important benefits on the trade of the place.

The Wick and Pulteneytown Total Abstinence Society was instituted in January 1840. It numbers about 700 members, and has been the means, it is reported, of reclaiming to sobriety several drunkards.

*Savings' Bank.*—A savings' bank was opened at Wick in November 1840. It is established for the benefit of Caithness, and is the only one in the whole county.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The earliest notice of the poor of this parish is in the sessional records, in which it is recorded that, on the 22d of September 1701, the poor of the parish were convened, when seven males and ten females received amongst them L.6, 7s. 6d. Scots. In 1752, L.95, 18s. 6d. Scots were distributed to 34 males and 60 females.

In 1820, there were on the permanent roll of paupers, 36 males and 96 females, in all 132, who received from the sessional funds L.62, 14s.: besides this sum, there was distributed in occasional relief, the farther sum of L.9, 14s., making in all the sum of L.72, 8s. Sterling, distributed to the parochial poor in 1820.

In 1830, there were 41 males and 124 females, in all 165 persons, on the permanent roll. The sum distributed in permanent relief was L.74, 9s., and that in occasional, L.11, 6s., making together the sum of L.85, 15s., distributed in 1830.

In 1840, there were on the permanent roll, 21 males and 76 females. Among them was distributed in permanent relief, L.32, 3s. : the sum of L.21, 0s. 3¼d. was distributed occasionally; in all L.53, 3s. 3¼d.

But these statements by no means give a correct view of the extent of pauperism in this parish. Many are extremely poor. Public begging is common both in town and country. There has been put into the hands of the compiler of this report, a list drawn up by William Bruce, Esq. provost of Wick, of the poor who go round the shops and houses every Saturday "seeking their piece." It contains the names of 8 males and 53 females. At the request of the compiler, a committee, composed of the heritors, ministers, householders, and tenants, examined, in December 1840, into the state of pauperism within the parish, and reported that there were of persons utterly destitute,—

In Wick,	6 men,	22 females.	Total 28
In Louisburgh,	21	29	50
In Pulteneytown	8	43	51
In the landward part of Wick <i>quoad sacra</i> ,	22	50	72
In the parish of Keiss,	5	22	27

Total (besides children), 229

There is no legal assessment for the poor in this parish. By far the largest portion of the funds available for their relief arise from collections at the church-door. The interest of L.300, which has been mortgaged for the poor, is applied to their relief; for which purpose, also, small donations are occasionally received.

The poor are by no means clamant in seeking parochial relief. It is still considered as degrading; and there are numerous instances of persons suffering great destitution, rather than make application for relief; and of individuals in but indigent circumstances themselves, taking destitute persons, who have no claim upon them, into their houses, and supporting them without asking or receiving sessional assistance. But it must appear evident, on consideration of the preceding particulars, that, unless the funds of the session are more plentifully supplied, this state of things will not continue much longer. These means of relief are, at present, altogether inadequate to meet even with the veriest pitance the numerous demands made upon them; and symptoms are appearing, that necessity is more and more overcoming the laudable reluctance of the destitute to make application for parochial relief. To bring on a legal assessment, it needs but the refusal of the benevolent shopkeepers of Wick to give any longer the

weekly penny which immemorially they have spontaneously bestowed on each of the numerous poor who go round on the Saturdays to collect it. Let this be done, and they are threatening to do it, and a compulsory poor-rate, with its innumerable train of economic and moral evils, will come on the parish in half-a-year. All parties will then find out, but when too late, that it would have been their wisdom to have supported, with greater attention and liberality, the good old system of the Church of Scotland. Nothing can arrest the progress of a country such as this to pauperism, but evangelical churches, pastoral superintendence, and scriptural schools. But these in sufficient abundance would, under the blessing of God, which is sure to be conferred on the preaching and teaching of the Truth as it is in Jesus, accomplish this.

The kirk-session is composed of the minister and six elders, of whom one is above eighty years of age, and another is in bad health. The elders do what they can for the spiritual and economic good of the people; but what are they among so many?

*Police and Crime, &c.*—The Earls of Caithness enjoyed, from an early date, the heritable jurisdiction of Caithness and Sutherland. In 1503, James IV. erected Caithness into a separate sheriffdom, and appointed Wick as the place where the courts were to be held. From this arrangement Caithness was, anciently, sometimes denominated the county of Wick, or Wickshire. In 1674, the heritable jurisdictions of Caithness were sold by the Earl to John Campbell of Glenorchy, who sold them in 1718, by auction, to John Sinclair of Ulbster for L.2000 Sterling. When the heritable jurisdictions were abolished in 1748, Ulbster claimed L.5000 as compensation for the sheriffship, L.3000 as Justiciary, and L.1000 as Constable of Scrabster Castle and bailie of the Bishop's lands. The demand was considered extravagant, and he ultimately got only L.3000 for the whole.

Justice in the hands of these heritable sheriffs, in general, failed through their weakness, or was perverted by their wickedness. But, during the seventeenth and the former part of the eighteenth centuries, the courts of the Church, with firmness and impartiality, grappled with this exceeding evil, and often accomplished what the civil magistrates either could not, or, what is, perhaps, nearer the truth, would not attempt. In 1709, we find the presbytery of Caithness informing Queen Anne, that, in consequence of its distance from the seat of government, "this county has for a long time been a stage on which many atrocious villainies have been

acted; particularly, many barbarous and inhuman murders and assassinations of persons of innocence and integrity." The kirk-session of Wick was vigilant and energetic in repressing wickedness of all kinds. Amongst its elders were generally several magistrates, and it exercised a mixture of civil and ecclesiastical authority. On August 31, 1701, "the session taking into their consideration that there are a great many abuses committed, in and about the town of Wick, on the Sabbath day, did and hereby do, for the preventing of which, appoint and ordain that two elders do search the town in time of Divine service and after the same, and make report of irregular persons to the session." Similar appointments are often recorded; and the most unremitting vigilance was exercised. In September 1701, two women are charged "for gathering pease in time of sermon;" a man for "beating his wife;" and, John Naughty "for entertaining persons drinking in time of sermon." The session direct the town of Wick "to put up ane cock-stool." "Alexander Larnoch and his wife are appointed to stand publicly, and to pay 20 shillings Scots for the crime of cursing;" and unto John Johnston the session "offer the alternative either to find surety to pay 8 pounds, or otherwise to be liable to corporal punishment." The latter, "afterwards produced John Sinclair, joiner, who hereby enacts himself cautioner that he shall pay 8 pounds at three terms, namely, 4 merks at Candelmas; 4 merks at Whitsunday; and 4 merks at Lammas 1702. May 25th, 1702, Donald M'Curchie, shoemaker in Wick, who had been guilty both of gross and of contumelious conduct, was ordained by the session "to be carried from the kirk of Wick to the cross, with a paper-hood bearing the inscription of his crime, and to sit there two hours in the stocks with the hood on his head, and thereafter" to give security that he shall pay his mulct, and submit to the customary discipline of the church. The pernicious and most reprehensible practice of levying "mulcts" upon delinquents, by sessional authority, continued till of late years. The people came to regard these fines as just the price of sin; and this feeling is not even yet altogether extinct.

Wick is the county town. The sheriff and other customary courts are held here. The sheriff-court was held at Thurso for a long period previously to 1828; but in that year, Wick, after a protracted litigation, obtained a decision of the Court of Session, declaring Wick to be the head-burgh of the shire of Caithness, and ordaining that the stated sheriff-courts must be held and the

Sheriff-clerk's office kept there. There is a county but not a burghal police.

*Crime.*—During the year from September 1st 1827 to September 1st 1828, there were confined within the jail of Wick, 36 male and 8 female culprits; and during the same period, ending September 1st 1829, there were 21 males and 4 females.

In the course of the four years subsequent to August 1830, the number of cases of crime within the county brought to trial, was 62, of which 55 were tried before the Sheriff, and 7 before the circuit-court at Inverness. This was little more than 15 for each year, or in the proportion of 1 for every 2297 of the population; while for all Scotland the proportion was 1 in 1130. The crimes were, of

Theft,	16
Assault and breach of the peace,	31
Malicious mischief,	5
Deforcement of officers of law,	4
Child-exposure,	1
Concealment of pregnancy,	2
Forgery,	1
Defaming of judges,	1
Reckless riding and injury,	1
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Of the whole number, 30 were committed within the parish of Wick; 11 in Thurso; 7 in Latheron; 5 in Halkirk; 3 in Reay; 2 in Dunnet; 2 in Bower; 1 in Olrick; and 1 in Wattin. In several of the cases a number of persons were concerned.

*Prisons.*—In 1840, there were committed to Wick jail, 29 men and 2 women. The following table will point out a variety of particulars; such as the profession, age, and crime of the culprits. It will also show, that the season of the herring-fishery is most productive of crime, and that of a particular kind.

Date of Commit. 1840.	Male.	Female.	Occupation.	Age.	Crime.
Jan. 7,	1	0	Labourer,	45	Theft,
June 2,	0	1		34	Assault.
July 21,	1	0	Fisher,	25	Do.
July 21,	1	0	Miller,	21	Do.
Aug. 1,	1	0	Fisher,	25	Breach of peace.
Aug. 3,	0	1		60	Exposing a child.
Aug. 8,	1	0	Seaman,	23	Theft.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Mason,	35	Assault.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Farmer,	55	Do.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Do.	71	Do.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Sawyer,	31	Do.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Seamen,	28	Rioting.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Do.	20	Do.
Aug. 18,	1	0	Do.	48	Assault.
Aug. 20,	1	0	Servant,	18	Desert. service.



Date of Commit.	Male.	Female.	Occupation.	Age.	Crime.
1840.					
Aug. 22,	1	0	Fisher,	28	Rioting.
Aug. 24,	1	0	Packman,	27	Assault.
Aug. 24,	1	0	Do.	25	Do.
Sept. 5,	1	0	Fisher,	30	Rioting.
Sept. 24,	1	0	Labourer,	17	Assault.
Sept. 24,	1	0	Do.	18	Do.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Servant,	16	Theft.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Tinker,	31	Do.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Do.	20	Do.
Nov. 18,	1	0	Carter,	28	Utter. base coin.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Joiner,	22	Poaching.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Farmer,	20	Do.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Joiner,	21	Do.
Dec. 1,	1	0	Fisher,	21	Rioting.
Dec. 1,	1	0	Do.	17	Do.
Dec. 11,	1	0	Do.	46	Poaching.

It must not be supposed that all these culprits were from the parish of Wick. The jail is not for the parish of Wick, but for the whole county of Caithness.

The jail was built in 1828, at an expense of L. 1200, the greater part of which was defrayed by the burgh. It is sufficient for the county. Attention is paid to the health of the prisoners. It is governed according to act of Parliament. The Rev. David Mitchell, Missionary in Pulteneytown, has been appointed chaplain, with a salary of L. 20 a-year.

*Fairs.*—The following fairs are held within this parish; Skitten Market, at Kilminister, on the first Tuesday of March; Wick Market, on the first Tuesday after Palm Sunday; Fair of Wick in June. All these are for cattle. Margaretmas, at Hill of Wick, on the Tuesday after the 20th of July, for cattle, and the hiring of persons for the harvest; and Fergusmas,\* at Wick, in the end of November, for cattle.

*Inns and Public-Houses.*—Of these there are in Wick and Louisburgh, 22; Pulteneytown, 23; the landward part of the parish; 9; total, 54.

Instead of this appalling number, every person acquainted with the circumstances of the parish must admit, that a dozen were more than enough for all the necessities of the district. An excess of public-houses is one of the most frightful curses which can befall a community. Their effect upon the morals and comfort

\* The frequent use of the termination *mas*, in the names of fairs and term days in Caithness, shews the deep hold which Popery had taken of the district. Besides Margaretmas and Fergusmas, mentioned above, there are in the county Colmsmas, the term on the 20th of June; Petermas, 29th June, O. S.; Georgemas, 15th July, O. S.; Marymas, 15th August, O. S.; Lukesmas, first Tuesday of October, O. S.; Mansmas, or Magnusmas, first Tuesday of December, O. S.; Tustimas, fourth Tuesday of November, O. S.; and a number more masses.

of the people is most disastrous. Multitudes can trace their ruin in body, soul, and outward estate, to such seminaries of Satan and Belial, as the lower public-houses generally are. Those to whom it belongs to license such places in the parish of Wick have incurred an awful responsibility.

*Fuel.*—The fuel made use of in this parish, is peats and coals. The latter are brought from the Wear and Tyne, and cost about 18s. a ton. Peats, which form the greater part of the fuel consumed by the commonalty, are dug in the mosses of the parish, and sold in the town for 2s. a cart.

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The compiler of this report must apologise for its manifold imperfections. He became a resident in the parish, to which he was previously an utter stranger, only on the 24th of October last. He was requested in December to draw up the report, which he would not have attempted could another person have been found to undertake it. In the midst of the numerous vocations and avocations of a most burdensome charge, he has had to search about for information, and arrange and put it together at short intervals of ministerial labour. To those who have furnished him with materials he desires to tender his grateful acknowledgements, and more especially to the Right Honourable Lord Duffus, and to John Henderson, Esq. Pulteneytown, W. S. From the former he received a great deal of curious and important information respecting the mineralogy, sea-coasts, antiquities, and progressive agricultural changes of the parish; and to the latter he stands indebted for the free use of extensive and most accurate collections made by his learned and godly brother, the late Dr Patrick Brodie Henderson, illustrative of the history and statistics of Caithness. These valuable collections ought either to be published, or lodged in some public library.

*March 1841.*

*Addenda.*—About the middle of the tenth century, Arnfin, Harvard, Liot, Sculy, and Lodvir, sons of Thorfin Earl of Orkney, contended on the decease of their father for the sovereignty. Arnfin was assassinated by the contrivance of Regnhilda, his wife, who

married Havard, of whom she likewise speedily procured the murder, that she might marry Liot, the third brother, of whom she had become enamoured. Sculy determined to dispute his brother's authority. To secure success, he made application to Malcolm I. King of Scotland, who readily agreed to give him assistance, hoping by means of him to wrest the northern counties from the sovereignty of Norway. He created Sculy Earl of Caithness, which was declared a part of the kingdom of Scotland, and supplied him with ships and troops.

Liot was in Orkney when his brother reached the coast of Caithness, and his absence enabled Sculy to overrun the country. He next attacked the islands, but was repulsed, and many of his followers slain. He immediately withdrew to Caithness, whither he was followed by Liot. Meantime Sculy secured the aid of Magbrag, chieftain of Sutherland, and the confederates were encamped in an advantageous position in the Bogs of Skitten, (*paludibus Skidensibus*), a name by which the Moss of Kilminster was anciently called.\* Liot advanced against them, and was assaulted with vigour. His men stood firm; and their enemies, after a vain attempt to break his line, were seized with a sudden panic and fled. The rout soon became complete, and Sculy was slain in attempting to rally the fugitives. Liot having been wounded in the pursuit, died soon after. From him the clan Macleod are said to be descended. Lodvir, the last of these ill-fated brothers, succeeded to the vacant earldom of Orkney.

*Marl.*—The following is the result of an analysis of the marl in the Loch of Brickigoe, on the estate of Mr Innes of Thrumster, by Mr Kemp, Teacher of Practical Chemistry under the Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh.

Pure carbonate of lime,	75 per cent.
Alumina,	8
Silica,	5
Organic vegetable matter,	12
	100

\* The fair held on this moss is to this day called Skitten market.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE COUNTY OF CAITHNESS.\*

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CAITHNESS is the most northern county on the mainland of Scotland. It is divided from the county of Sutherland by a range of mountains and moory hills, extending from the Ord of Caithness to the North Sea, and is bounded otherwise by the sea; the Pentland Frith dividing it from the Isles of Orkney. It extends from north to south about 40 miles, and from east to west about 30 miles. Its area is 618 square miles, or 395,680 acres, of which about 100,000 are cultivated and in pasture, and the rest are uncultivated moor and hills. The valued rent is L. 39,256 Scots, and the real value of the land may now be L. 35,000 Sterling. The population in 1831 was 36,529. The Parliamentary constituency in 1840 was 487.

*Topography.*—The general appearance of the county is flat and uninteresting; the only hills of any eminence forming the boundary with Sutherland. A great proportion of the ground consisting of flat moor and heath, and there being no extent of trees, the interior has a dreary appearance. Along the sea coast, which is generally bold and rocky, the appearance improves; and, from the improvements now going on in various quarters, a more cheerful and pleasant aspect is given to it, especially along the high road from the south towards Thurso. There are a few sheets of water, but none of any extent or peculiar beauty of appearance, and there are no navigable rivers.

*Geology.*—There is no coal formation so far as known. Sandstone of good quality prevails in some places; but the general formation is a black, bituminous, slaty sandstone. Mr Traill of

\* Drawn up by William Sutherland, Esq., W. S.

Ratter has an extensive and profitable quarry of flagstones for pavement, &c. which he works; and there are one or two others in the county. The stones are principally shipped for London and Newcastle.

*Agriculture.*—The science of agriculture and husbandry, in all its branches, has made much progress of late years. The late Sir John Sinclair, who was a native of the county, and held large estates therein, gave a considerable impetus to the spirit of improvement; but it has only been within the last twenty years, that, through the efforts mainly of Mr Traill of Ratter, Mr Horne of Scouthel, and one or two other gentlemen, these improvements have taken the practical shape they have done. The soil of the county, where cultivated, is generally a strong clay mixed with earth, producing green crops of all kinds, of the best quality and luxuriance. Farms are now to be seen of as great extent, and cultivated with equal skill and success, as in any part of Scotland. A great number of cattle of the best description are annually reared and sold in the south; and it was found at a late show of the Highland Society at Inverness, that a great proportion of the prizes were carried off by competitors from Caithness. A large number of sheep is also kept; and one gentleman from Caithness, Mr Paterson of Borlum, it is believed, annually obtains, at the Falkirk Tryst, the highest prices given for sheep and lambs. A considerable part of this county is, of course, still in the possession of small farmers, paying from L. 10 to L. 50 of yearly rent; but their condition is improving, and many of them raise green crops, and pursue a system of rotation. Along the sea coast, the fishermen generally hold small farms, which they cultivate when at home. These, of course, are not in the best order; but it does not seem possible, while the fisheries continue, to alter this system. Marl is found in considerable abundance, and of good quality; and the refuse of the herrings, when properly amalgamated with some other substances, is much and advantageously used in bringing the waste lands into a proper system for cropping.

*Manufactures.*—There are few manufactures in the county. Two or three rope-works; some straw plaiting; and a few distilleries.

*Fisheries.*—The herring-fishing has been for a number of years the principal trade and business of the county. The herrings are got all around the coast; but Wick and the surrounding fishing villages are the principal places of resort. The fishing commences

early in July, and continues nearly two months. There is considerable uncertainty as to the quantity, and of course risk,—so that the profits are frequently small to the curer, and often a loss is sustained. The fishermen are paid a price of so much per cran, which is generally fixed at the commencement of the season; and, if the quantity got be tolerably large, he is sure of a fair remuneration. In consequence of this, he pays a high rent for his house and land, and his condition generally is improved. The quantity caught and the number of people employed, vary each year considerably. On an average, it may be stated that the quantity caught, during the season, may be from 100,000 to 120,000 barrels or crans, and the number of people partially or wholly employed, including fishermen, coopers, packers, &c. about 12,000. The fishermen are paid from 9s. to 10s. per cran; and the barrel when cured is worth about 21s. The number of boats employed may be about 1000, of which 700 are owned in the county, and the rest come from the Frith of Forth and various places in the Murray Frith. Each boat is manned by five men. These statements will show the immense importance of this fishery to the county, and that it is of considerable value in a national point of view. The salmon-fisheries in the rivers of Thurso, Berriedale, and one or two others, are also of some value.

Gaelic is spoken only in the higher parts of the county; in the other parts, the inhabitants, comprising three-fourths of the population, speak the ordinary language of the country, and their manners and habits are those of the lowland Scots. There has been during the last twenty years, considerable improvement in the manners and social habits of the inhabitants: upon the whole, less inebriety—riots and fighting at fairs have almost ceased—and the standard of comfort has been raised amongst all classes. Education is advancing; but it is to be regretted that its importance is not sufficiently appreciated by the mass of the people. The means of communication with the south by steam are every year improving. In the county itself, the roads are both good and numerous.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

TABLE I.—Shewing Ecclesiastical State, &c. of Parishes in the County of Caithness.

Parishes.	Population in 1831.	Ecclesiastical State.				Parochial Schoolmasters		Emolums.		Savings' Banks.		Annual amount of Contributions to the Poor.												
		Farms belonging to Estab. Ch.	Individuals or Families of Dissenters	Do. Do. Individuals	Do. Do.	Amount of Minister's stipend	Schools in Par.	Salary.	Fees.	Total.	Number.	Amount yearly invested.	Amount yearly withdrawn.	From assessment or voluntary contrib. by Heritors.	From Church col-lections.	From Alms, Legacies, &c.	Total.							
Thurso,	4678	800	2400	200	600	18 chalders.	16	L.84	4	4	...	...	L.25	0	0	L.80	0	0	L.112	0	0			
Reay,	2281	...	2281	...	0	190 bolls, &c.	5	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	14	0	0	...	...	38	0	0	
Canisbay,	2264	...	2267	...	77	120 bolls, &c.	6	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	10	16	0	Do.	See text.	52	13	0	0
Dunnet,	1806	...	1854	...	40	112 bolls, &c.	4	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	20	0	0	...	...	34	0	0	0
Watten,	1224	...	...	...	...	14 chalders.	3	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ohrick,	1146	...	1046	...	100	14 chalders.	5	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	25	0	0	...	...	36	12	4	0
Halkirk,	2847	...	2814	...	88	15 chalders.	18	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	20	0	0	...	...	30	0	0	0
Latheron,	7020	...	...	12	...	16 chalders.	18	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	25	0	0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bower,	1615	...	...	6	...	14 chalders.	4	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	14	0	0	...	...	18	0	0	0
Wick,	9850	See text.	...	...	...	17 chalders.	24	34	4	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE II.—Shewing Extent, &amp;c. of Parishes in the County of Caithness.

Parishes.	Acres in parish.	Acres cultivated or occasion. in tillage.	Acres uncultivated.	Do. sup. pos. cap. of cultiv. with prof.	Acres under wood.
Thurso, .	22000	12000	10000	7000	40
Reay, .	—	—	—	—	—
Canisbay,	—	3200	28800	—	—
Dunnet, .	17000	5000	12000	—	—
Watten, .	38400	5500	33400	5000	—
Otrick, .	10000	6000	4000	3400	—
Halkirk, .	79800	6000	67000	—	—
Latheron,	140000	9000	131000	—	720
Bower, .	—	—	—	—	—
Wick, .	—	—	—	—	—

N. B.—The acres uncultivated include those capable of cultivation and those under wood.

Reay.—Scotch acres here stated.





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ORKNEY.



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## PARISH OF KIRKWALL AND ST OLA.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKWALL, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. WILLIAM LOGIE, }  
THE REV. PETER PETRIE, } MINISTERS.\*

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, &c.*—THE royal burgh of Kirkwall is situated in latitude 58° 59' N., and longitude 3° 23' W., and is surrounded by a landward district called St Ola, which forms nearly a square, intersected by several bays, the side of the square measuring about 5 miles. Buchanan considers the name of the town as a corruption of Cracoviaca or Kirkvaa, the ancient Danish name; but it is more probably derived from the extensive walls of the principal and most ancient building, the kirk or cathedral of St Magnus, to be afterwards noticed. The name of the parish is borrowed from Olaus or Olave, the first Christian king of Norway, to which country the Orkney Islands anciently belonged. The town consists principally of one street, in many parts very narrow, running the whole length; parallel to which, however, a new street, called King Street, has been commenced within the last twenty years, and contains several neat and commodious houses.

The principal bays in the parish are those of Kirkwall, Inganess, and Scapa; the two former affording safe and capacious anchorage for ships of the largest size, and the latter being the common place of landing for boats and small craft, from Caithness and the islands south of Kirkwall.

The surface of the parish is, on the whole, not very elevated, the only considerable hill being that of Widford, rising about 500 feet above the level of the sea, and covered with heath, the soil being chiefly mossy. Towards Gait-nip on the east side of Scapa bay, are the highest crags, and in them there are several excavations formed by the action of the sea, one running in the form of a narrow winding passage, upwards of 100 yards

\* Drawn up by the Rev. William Logie.

from the sea edge, being in height apparently from 12 to 20 feet, and adorned with beautiful stalactites of lime.

*Hydrography.*—In the parish, are several ponds, rivulets, and springs of excellent water; and about two miles south of the town there is a pretty strong chalybeate spring, called Blakely's well, to which invalids formerly resorted.

*Geology.*—The prevailing rock is argillaceous schistus, frequently alternating with a coarse sandstone, in some instances of a white and in others of a red colour, sometimes containing veins of limestone with iron pyrites. The clay-slate is frequently traversed by small veins of lime, and occasionally by heavy spar, containing small crystals of galena. It is also often found highly impregnated with bituminous matter, which gives it a black colour, and when recently broken, a tarry smell. The subsoil is, for the most part, a very retentive clay, as might be inferred from the great prevalence of clayey strata. There are considerable extents of peat moss. The soil in the arable grounds is chiefly a good black loam, with either a clay or gravelly bottom.

*Botany.*—The botany of the parish presents nothing rare or peculiar. Gardening is, for the climate, practised pretty successfully. Besides currants, gooseberries, and strawberries, which attain a good size and ripen well, apples, pears, and cherries thrive well; and in one garden, grapes are produced by the aid of artificial heat. Forest trees, except under shelter, do not succeed, partly, no doubt, owing to the sea air, but probably more to the strength of the tree being spent in repeated germinations during the winter, arising from the prevalence of open weather alternating with slight frosts.

*Zoology.*—Of animals the parish contains no rare species. Rabbits are not numerous, and till about twelve years ago, there were no hares, but a few pairs having been then introduced, they have rapidly multiplied, to the no small annoyance and damage of the farmers. The commons abound with plovers, grouse, snipe, and other species of game. Sea birds in great variety frequent the rocks and bays of the parish. Of the domestic animals, the cows and horses are generally rather small in size, but considerably larger than those of the Shetland Isles. Sheep, pigs, geese, ducks, turkeys, and fowls, are reared in considerable numbers, and many are exported, as well as horses and black-cattle, especially since the commencement of steam navigation.

*Fisheries.*—On the coast, fish of all the kinds common in Scotland, and of excellent quality, abound. The cole-fish, in all its

gradations of size, here distinguished by the names of silloch, cuith, cuthine, and saithe, is by far the most useful, constituting a principal part of the food of the poorer classes.

Sea trout are taken in considerable numbers in the bays and small brooks or burns, which they ascend in October and November for the purpose of spawning, returning in the spring months. Salmon are very rarely met with, though now and then a stray fish is caught.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Kirkwall was erected into a royal burgh by a charter from James III of Scotland, dated 31st March A. D. 1486, and is governed by a provost, four bailies, dean of guild, treasurer, and councillors. It is also the seat of the Sheriff-Court, Justice of Peace Court, presbytery, and synod.

*Eminent Men.*—Of eminent characters connected with the parish, those most worthy of notice are, Sir Robert Strange, the eminent engraver; Malcolm Laing, Esq. the well-known historian of Scotland, over whose remains, in the cathedral, is erected a handsome marble tablet, bearing a very elegant inscription in Latin; and Dr Traill, the present accomplished Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in the University of Edinburgh; all of whom were born in Kirkwall.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners are the Earl of Zetland; Mr Baikie of Tankerness; Mr Balfour of Trenaby; Mr Pollexfen of Cairston; Mr Laing of Papdale; and Mr Græme of Græme's Hall.

*Public Buildings.*—The chief public buildings are, the Cathedral of St Magnus, the Earl's and Bishop's palaces, and King's castle, the town house, and grammar school.

Of these edifices, the most deserving of notice is the Cathedral, founded A. D. 1138, by Rognvald or Ronald, Count of Orkney, and dedicated to the memory of his uncle, Magnus, also Earl of Orkney, and canonized for his piety, real or reputed. This stately building still remains in a condition of wonderful entireness and preservation, considering its great antiquity. Its choir having been immemorably used in lieu of a parish church, the cathedral was, for a long period, upheld and repaired, solely by a small fund arising from seat-rents, which, however, being very inadequate for the purpose, the building would speedily have fallen into decay, had not a wealthy native of the county, Mr Meason of Moredun, about thirty years ago, mortified a sum, amounting, after deduction



of legacy duty, to L. 900, for the purpose of repairing and beautifying it, by the annual application of the interest; and this liberal gift has since contributed very much to its preservation. The cathedral is the property of "the provost, bailies, council, and inhabitants of the burgh," to whom it was gifted by the above cited charter of James III., confirmed by a new charter from James V., dated 1536; and a third, by Charles II. in 1661, ratifying the former two. Upon this charter infestment followed in 1669, and all these titles were confirmed by Act of Parliament, 1670, cap. 42. These charters also conveyed to the magistrates and corporation, the patronage of the two benefices in Kirkwall, which, however, the crown-officers, about twelve years ago, claimed for the crown: but the question being carried to the Court of Session, and by appeal to the House of Lords, the right of the corporation to the patronages, and, consequently, to the property of the cathedral, conveyed by the same titles, was found to be valid and impregnable.

The cathedral is built in that style of mixed Gothic and Saxon architecture common in the age of its erection. Its length outside is 226 feet; breadth, 56; height of the main roof, 71; and from the floor to the top of the steeple, 133. The main roof of the choir and part of the nave is elegantly arched, and is supported by 32 pillars, faced with freestone. The side aisles, behind the pillars, are finished above by a series of groined arches, and the whole is lighted by 103 windows, including those in the steeple, some of them in the Gothic style, and of great size. The steeple contains an excellent chime of three large bells, rung by ropes attached to the clappers, so as to produce a kind of melody, in the ancient cathedral fashion.

The Earl's Palace, the ruins of which, still pretty entire, stand near the cathedral to the south-east, was erected, A. D. 1660, by Patrick Stewart, Earl of Orkney, whose father, Robert, was a natural son of James V. The bishop's palace, whose ruins are also situated very near the cathedral, is of much greater antiquity and in a much more dilapidated state. It was honoured by the residence in it at different periods of two royal guests, Haco, King of Norway, who died in this building, and James V. of Scotland, who, in the course of a progress through his dominions, lodged there for a short time and partook of the bishop's hospitality. Of the King's Castle, erected in the 14th century by Earl Henry

St Clair, a very inconsiderable and ruined portion now remains to mark the spot on which it once stood.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers, in the custody of the kirk-session, consist of five volumes of register of baptisms, extending from 1657 to the present time, without interruption; three volumes of register of marriages, from 1657 to the current year; and five volumes of the minutes of session, containing the *res gestæ*, from 1626 to 1840, with the exception of ten years, from 1659 to 1669, the records of which appear to have been lost. No regular or continuous register of deaths or burials was kept till within the last fifty years.

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	.	2621
1811,	.	2283
1821,	.	3246
1831,	.	3721

It appears from a comparison of successive censuses taken since the commencement of the present century, that the population of Kirkwall was, for many years, progressively on the increase. It is, however, the general belief that, since 1831, the population, if not decreasing, has been at least stationary.\* This, indeed, is evident from the fact, that house building, which in former years went on very briskly, has of late been almost at a stand, and many habitations in the town are at present untenanted. This arrest on the increase of population is mainly to be ascribed to the failure of the kelp trade, formerly the staple of these islands, the large profits of which gave a stimulus to industry and trade; and though the fisheries have been greatly extended since that manufacture was given up, or nearly so, yet the emolument arising from the former source has passed into other hands. Those who profit by the fishing are chiefly boatmen and labourers, who lay out their little capital, not in trade in the towns, but in farming or an extension of their fishing speculations.

The average number of marriages, births, and deaths for the five years ending with 1839, appears from the parish registers to be,—marriages, 26; births, 41; deaths, 59.

The inhabitants of the town consist chiefly of shopkeepers, tradesmen of the different crafts, sailors, boatmen, and labourers. Besides these, there are a few resident proprietors, officers of customs and excise, three medical practitioners, two bankers, six gentlemen

\* The new census, taken while this Account was in the press, exhibits accordingly a decrease of 147 in the ten years,—the population being now only 3574.

of the law, and ministers of four communions, five in number; together with several teachers of youth, male and female.

The shopkeepers are very numerous, almost every alternate house, in most parts of the town, containing a shop. The principal shops are well stocked with goods of every description, imported from Edinburgh, London, and other markets; and which are sold on very moderate profits, considering the distance of the markets and the great expense of carriage.

Many of the mechanics execute their work well, but they are generally complained of as dilatory, seldom executing their orders within the stipulated time; though the undoubted fact was probably an extreme case, of a gentleman sending a nursery-fender to be painted, which was not returned till after the boys, for whose safety it was intended, returned, grown men, from college!

The sailors and boatmen, for skill, hardihood, and dexterity in their profession, are not surpassed by their brethren in any part of the world.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—As few of the estates in St Ola have been surveyed or measured, the extent in acres of the cultivated ground cannot be accurately given; but by good judges, it is thought, that the arable ground does not exceed 1200 or 1500 acres, which, on an average, is rented at about 16s. per acre. Considerable improvement in the modes of farming has taken place, of late years; several proprietors, and tenants, having introduced the improved modes of agriculture practised in the south, by rotation of crops, draining, and enclosing. Oats, barley, and bear, potatoes, turnips and artificial grasses, are cultivated with success. Mr Pollexfen of Cairston, besides setting an example of general good farming, on a part of his property in his own occupation, has made such improvements in the production of grass and turnip seeds, as to have attracted the approving notice of the Agricultural Associations; and the seeds raised by him are in considerable request, even in the south of Scotland.

There is a considerable extent of pasture lands in the parish. The common charge for pasturage of an ox or cow is L. 1, 10s. The wages of ploughmen are L. 7, 7s. per annum in money, with allowances of meal, milk, and potatoes; making the whole fee, L. 14 or L. 15. Female domestic servants receive, at an average, L. 3 per annum, with their maintenance. Price of labour, 1s. to 1s. 3d. per day.

The sheep pastured on the commons, which are undivided, are less numerous than formerly, but in their breed, as well as that of cattle and horses, a gradual improvement is taking place.

*Prices of Produce, &c.*—A horse, L. 12 to L. 16; a milch cow, L. 5 to L. 6; a good sheep, L. 1; a goose, 2s. to 2s. 6d.; poultry, 8d. each; beef, 5d. to 6d. per lb.; oatmeal, 2s. to 2s. 6d. per stone; potatoes, 2s. per barrel.

*Manufactures.*—Since the demand for kelp has so greatly diminished, the only kind of industry in the parish, properly falling under this denomination, is the plaiting of straw for hats and bonnets, which, more or less, occupies three-fourths of the female population. This manufacture has been carried on for forty years, and has proved a very seasonable source of emolument to the poorer classes. The raw material is either Tuscan straw imported from Leghorn, or rye-straw raised in Orkney, which is more durable, and very little inferior in appearance. This kind of labour, as at present conducted by the agents giving out the straw to the women to be manufactured in their own dwellings, is not liable to the objection of injuring the morals, as in the case of manufactures which assemble multitudes of the young in one place. In this manufacture, a woman earns from 3d. to 9d. per day, according to her skill and diligence or the time which she devotes to the employment. There are two licensed distilleries in the parish, which export a considerable quantity of whisky, besides what is sold in the place.

*Navigation.*—The town is provided with a safe and commodious harbour, constructed thirty years ago, and well frequented both by coasting and other vessels, including some from Norway and the Baltic.

There are, at present, sixty-eight vessels which sail from this port, as registered in the custom-house books; but as forty-seven of these belong to Stromness, and other harbours through the islands, the number strictly belonging to the town of Kirkwall and trading from it, is twenty-one, the tonnage of which is 1593, and the number of men and boys employed in them, 106.

Considerable quantities of grain, fish cured in the islands, cattle, and other produce, are annually exported, both coastwise and to foreign ports.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—Kirkwall was formerly entitled to only three mails per week; but about a year ago (1839), through

the exertions of the county and burgh Members, a daily post was established ; in other words, the mail-boat is bound, on every lawful day, when weather permits, to cross the Pentland Frith.

A good sailing vessel, for conveyance of goods and passengers, plies all the year between this town and Leith ; and within the last few years, the place has obtained the great advantage of a weekly visit from an excellent and powerful steamer, which accomplishes the voyage to Leith, including several long stoppages, in from 34 to 40 hours.

The roads through the parish have of late years been greatly improved, which has led to the introduction of gigs and phaetons for hire.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish is a collegiate charge, the two ministers officiating in the cathedral alternately. Their stipends were modified, each to L. 150 ; but, being partly paid in kind, have for many years fallen short of that sum. The first minister has a glebe consisting of about 50 acres arable, with pasturage ; and its annual value has, for some years, been somewhat upwards of L. 40. He has also a manse, erected 140 years ago, but which at present is let by the heritors, who pay the present incumbent an annuity in lieu of it. The second minister has neither manse nor glebe ; but, under a late act of Parliament, draws from the Exchequer L. 50 in lieu of both.

The only place of worship in connection with the Establishment, which the inhabitants have ever enjoyed, is the choir or chancel of the cathedral, which is seated to accommodate from 830 to 870 sitters ; but so awkwardly, that it has been ascertained by measurement, that a better arrangement of the seats and position of the pulpit would give at least an addition of 150 available seats. The cathedral is placed in the centre of the parish, and there is no dwelling, more than two and a-half or three miles from the place of worship, while five-sixths of the population are within half a mile of it. The accommodation in the cathedral was probably sufficient for all the church-going population at a former period ; but as the number of inhabitants increased, the want of more church room was severely felt, and a portion of the inhabitants, who could not procure seats, or such as they wished, accepted the offer of the Antiburgher Seceders to establish a congregation there. A chapel in that connection was accordingly erected forty-four years ago, and afterwards rebuilt on a larger scale. Shortly after, an Independent meeting-house was erected,

and more recently, one in connection with the Original or Associate Secession Synod. Thus a majority of the inhabitants are Dissenters, and from the great length of time that they have been so, and their strong attachment to their respective persuasions, there is no probability that, in any circumstances, many of them will return to the Established Church. While the churchman must regret this state of matters, yet, if a Christian, he will rejoice that not one individual in this parish, except through his own fault, is deprived of an opportunity of attending divine ordinances in a Protestant, or even a Presbyterian place of worship, and under pastors of good character, and preaching the Gospel in its purity. Of how many cities or burghs in Scotland can the same be said?

The cathedral, which is used as the parish church, though never designated or legally divided as such, nor upheld by the heritors of town or country, is well attended, notwithstanding that it is damp, and, like all such ancient buildings, inconvenient as a place of worship. While the population was rapidly increasing, all its seats were let, and for the most part occupied. At present, however, and for a few years past, from 60 to 100 seats are unoccupied in the ordinary diets of worship, and 320 are unlet, besides a few free seats held as heritable, and a considerable number assigned gratuitously to the poor. The rents, rendered necessary for paying beadles, repairing seats, firing, and lighting, are extremely moderate, varying from 6d. to 3s. per sitter, which is the highest charge excepting one seat, containing eleven sitters, which rents at 4s.

About four years ago, a few individuals in the parish proposed erecting a new church by subscription, as they thought that, from the circumstance of a great number of the burgh heritors being Dissenters, there was no hope of obtaining a parish church without a law-suit. Many of the congregation, understanding that it was to be used instead of the cathedral, contributed small sums to the undertaking; but by far the greater part of the subscriptions were obtained throughout Scotland and England. The chapel, situated close to the cathedral, and large enough to contain all the church population, man, woman, and child, is now nearly finished, and if it were to be occupied as a substitute for the old and inconvenient cathedral, would prove a great benefit to the place. Such, however, does not seem to be the intention of its proprietors. They applied for a grant from the General Assembly's Extension Committee, to aid in its erection, as an additional and separate place

of worship, to be served by one of the colleague ministers. The Extension Committee granted L.200 towards its erection. Four managers of the chapel have since presented a petition, which lies on the table of the Presbytery, praying them to divide the parish, uncollegiate the ministers, placing one of them in the chapel as minister of one-half the parish, but reserving to him his civil rights and emoluments as a minister of the whole or *quoad civilia* parish. This, in the circumstances of the parish, would be just to convert one of the charges into a sinecure, so far as preaching is concerned; as it is certain, and the petitioners calculate upon it, that when the comparison comes to be between the old and incommodious cathedral, and a comfortable chapel just next door, the whole audience will evacuate the cathedral, while, by the proposal, one of the ministers must still continue to officiate there. As the principal heritors are perfectly willing that the worship should be wholly transferred to the chapel, the proper course appears to be, to obtain the Presbytery's sanction to its occupation as a preaching station, in lieu of the cathedral; and this is the consummation which has all along been desired by the whole community, excepting a few individuals.

*Education.*—The antiquity of the principal educational establishment in the parish, called the grammar school, cannot be accurately ascertained; but it cannot be much, if at all, short of 500 years old: for in the fifteenth century, it is referred to in the town's charter, as an existing establishment. At that time, and long after, it was taught by an ecclesiastic, the prebend of St Peter, connected with the cathedral; and even after the teachers were laymen, we find by the records, that they drew and enjoyed the emoluments of that prebendary, (November 1652). This goodly endowment, however, was, amidst the troubles of these times, alienated from the schoolmaster, and became merged either in the funds for payment of the clergymen of the different parishes connected with the prebendary, or in the revenues of the bishopric, which passed into the possession of the Crown. He, however, retained, and his successors still retain, a payment of thirty meills or bolls of malt,—the fruit of a voluntary contribution made by the clergy and other gentlemen of Orkney A. D. 1649, amounting to 2000 merks, which were mortified in the hands of Lord Morton, on condition of said annual payment of malt, out of the feudal duties of the earldom, then held by the Earl of Morton, and now by the Earl of Zetland. To this there was, twenty years ago,

added a new endowment by John Balfour, Esq. of Trenaby, formerly Member of Parliament for the county, of the interest of L.500, very liberally mortified by him in the hands of trustees, for which the schoolmaster is taken bound to educate eight poor children, recommended by the donor or his representatives. These constitute the sole endowments now possessed by the grammar schoolmaster, which, together with the fees paid by the scholars, make up but a very moderate living. The school at present, and for sixteen years past, taught by a very able and talented teacher, Mr James Craig, is attended by from 80 to 100 scholars, male and female, who are instructed in the Greek, Latin, French, and English languages, mathematics, navigation, arithmetic, and the principles of the Christian religion. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it appears from the records, that the school-house was upheld, and the schoolmaster appointed, by the kirk-session; but since that period, the patronage has been exercised by the town-council, who also, upwards of twenty years ago, erected a new and elegant school-house, in lieu of the old one, which had become ruinous;—and while they continue to uphold the school-house, as at present, and to present, as they have done for some time past, able and respectable masters to the school, it is not likely that their right of patronage will be called in question.

Besides the grammar school, there is one endowed by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and attended by from 50 to 60 scholars, children of the poor; and there are several other schools taught on private adventure. There is a private school for young ladies taught by an accomplished teacher, and a female charity school, supported by benevolent ladies in the town. There are likewise three Sabbath schools, numerous attended, and an infant school.

The benefits of education are generally appreciated by parents; and there are scarcely any betwixt the ages of six and sixty who cannot read.

*Libraries.*—There are two subscription libraries in the town, the oldest of which, called “The Orkney Library,” is on a pretty extensive scale.

*Charitable Institutions.*—There are three Relief or Friendly Societies in the town, affording aid to widows, orphans, and, in the case of one at least, to sick or reduced members. There are also



two subscription Societies for the relief of the indigent or destitute sick.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—This parish, like all the rest in the county, has been hitherto exempt from the evils of legal assessment. The poor receive relief from the parochial funds at the disposal of the kirk-session, from the revenue of an estate in the parish, which the Crown, as *ultimus hæres*, vested in trustees for charitable purposes, and from another fund in the management of the town-council. The United Secession Congregation also afford relief to their own poor.

The average number of poor on the kirk-session's permanent roll is  $81\frac{1}{3}$ , and the average rate of relief to each per annum is from 2s. to L.1, 10s. Besides these, an average number of  $32\frac{1}{3}$  receive occasional relief, amounting to L.7, 0s. 3d. per annum, and from L.5 to L.7s, 10s. have been expended annually on the education of poor children. The funds under the administration of the kirk-session arise from church-door collections, averaging L.39, 3s. 8d. per annum; donations, and dues arising from marriages and burials.

*Prisons.*—There is one prison connected with the town-house, not of the best description; but a new one is in contemplation under the late Prison Act.

*Inns.*—Of these there are several, but one only adapted for the accommodation of respectable travellers.

*Fairs.*—There is one fair, commencing on the first Tuesday after the 11th August, and continuing a fortnight.

*Fuel.*—The principal fuel is English coal; but peats procured in this and the adjacent parishes are much used by the poor.

*June 1841.*

# PARISH OF ORPHIR.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JAMES ANDERSON, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name Orphir, formerly written Orfer, is said to be of Norwegian origin, and to signify *fire land*, or *mossy soil*.

*Situation.*—The parish lies west of Kirkwall on the mainland; and the church and manse are about nine miles distant from Kirkwall.

*Boundaries, &c.*—It is bounded on the west and north, by the parishes of Stenness and Firth, from which it is divided by a range of high hills; on the east and south, by the parish of Kirkwall, the bay of Scalpa, and the sea that intervenes between it and the parish of South Ronaldsay, from which it is distant about twelve miles. The average length, by accurate measurement, is 6 miles, 6 furlongs, and 200 yards; average breadth, 2 miles, 5 furlongs, and 13 yards; and it contains about 18 square miles. The length along the coast, from Claistran to Scalpa is 13 miles, 7 furlongs, and 13 yards; the length, on the land boundary, is 10 miles, 2 furlongs, and 40 yards. The circumference of the whole is 24 miles, 1 furlong, and 53 yards.

*Topographical Appearances.*—From Houton head, the south-west point, there is a succession of hills and valleys north-east, not only through the whole length of the parish, but to the opposite shore of the mainland, where the parishes of Kirkwall and Firth meet.

*Mountain Ranges.*—Houton head is about 300 feet above the level of the sea. The next hills in succession rise gradually; and the Wart hill, which is the highest of the whole, is about 700 feet. From the top of this, when the sky is clear, there is a very extensive, varied, and delightful view, not only over the greater part of the county, but also along the west coast of Caithness, from Dungs-bay head to Cape Wrath, and over several of the loftiest hills in the interior of Caithness and Sutherland. The scene is also

agreeably varied by the frequent view of ships passing through the Pentland Frith, and vessels belonging to the country, on their departure and return. The eagle is frequently seen soaring high over the hills, and sometimes darts on the poultry about the farmers' houses.

*Valleys.*—As the parish is bounded on the west by a succession of hills and valleys, these valleys began to be cultivated soon after the division of the common, which took place in 1818, at the instance of the late Sir William Honyman, the principal proprietor; and twenty-six small farms have been cultivated in these valleys, where there had been no dwelling-house before. In these valleys, the soil is in general rich and deep, and yielded rich crops from their first cultivation. In different parts of the valleys, the cultivation has not yet been carried to the extent that it admits. There are small burns issuing from springs, and running in a south-easterly direction. At their sources, the ground is comparatively steep, and becomes more level, as they approach the shore.

*Caves.*—These are few, and excite no great interest in the mind of the spectator. In Houton head, there is a small cave in the face of the rock, the mouth of which is about 90 feet above flood mark, narrow at the entrance, but widening, and becoming higher towards the inner extremity, which extends to the distance of about 14 feet from the mouth. It acquired some celebrity in 1803, from affording a temporary shelter to two young men in the neighbourhood, who endeavoured to escape from being impressed.

Nearly a mile east from the church, there are three small caves in the face of the rock Bernory, which rises to the height of about 30 feet. One of them may be entered on foot at low water, and extends but a small distance under the rock. The other two can be approached only by boat, extend farther under ground, and at the lowest ebb the sea is about two fathoms deep at their mouths, becoming more shallow as the caves recede from the shore. The sides are irregular, composed of sandstone; the roof a coarse species of freestone, and in general flat; the sides converging towards the top. On the sides and in the crevices, a few wild pigeons build their nests, and lodge at all seasons.

On the side of Scalpa bay, near the line of boundary between this parish and the parish of Kirkwall, there is a cave called the Salt Pans, running parallel to the shore to the distance of twenty paces. The front has the appearance of freestone pillars at irregular distances about five feet high. Above and below, and also behind

these pillars, there are rocks of harder stone. The name is supposed to have arisen from the practice of manufacturing salt by boiling the salt water; but no such manufacture is now remembered to have been carried on at the place.

*Coast.*—From Houton head, westward to the parish of Stromness, the coast is nearly level, and for the most part wholly so. The banks nowhere rise above ten feet, and consist of thin strata of sandstone. Here the strata dip to the east and north. Below flood-mark, some parts are sandy, others covered with small pebbles, and frequently with rugged rocks, on which grows a considerable quantity of tang, of which kelp is made.

At Houton head, the strata dip to the west and south. From this, eastward, is a succession of small bays, in some degree corresponding to the valleys on the west. The shores of these bays are in some cases sandy, but more generally covered with pebbles, and in some cases the banks are from 12 to 14 feet high. The headlands between the bays generally rise to a greater height: the highest, however, do not exceed 40 feet, and few of them reach 30. There is nothing particularly striking in the appearance of these bays and headlands. The strata in the headlands, which consist commonly of grey slate or greywacke, are generally regular, though in some cases they have a waving direction, and sometimes there is a perpendicular line of junction, where the strata, on each side of this line, rise a little, as if compressed by some external force during their formation. Here, the strata dip to the west and north. In the bay of Swanbister, which is the largest of the whole, and nearly two miles broad, there is a sandy shore; and a considerable number of cockles and some spouts are obtained during stream tides.

*Island.*—Cava, the only island, is about a-mile and a-half south-east of Houton head. There are only twenty Scots acres cultivated in it, and these lie in the middle on the south side. It contained twenty-one inhabitants at last census. The cultivated soil is a rich black loam, producing excellent crops, both of oats and bear, there being abundance of sea-weed for manure. Part of what is uncultivated consists of excellent peat moss. The rocks around the shore are chiefly common sandstone, freestone, and some limestone. The circumference of the island is 3 miles, 1 furlong, and 80 yards.

The holm of Houton lies in the bay of Houton, not a quarter of a mile in length and less in breadth; it is covered with a coarse kind of grass used for pasture. Part of it was cultivat-

ed, a few years ago, for one season ; but the soil being near the rock, and the summer dry, the crop was poor, and therefore the cultivation was discontinued. The channel which separates the holm from Houton head becomes dry for about two hours at low water. The inlet on the side next to the church admits sloops into the bay, even at low water. For many years past, it has been in contemplation to convey the mail from Thurso, by a decked vessel, direct to the bay of Houton, from whence runners could bring it soon to Kirkwall and Stromness. This bay was lately surveyed for the purpose, but the result is not yet known.

There is a small skerry, about two miles south-east of the church, called the *barrel of butter*, the origin of which name is said to be, that the tenants on the lands of the Bull, which surround the church, paid to the proprietor a rent of a barrel of butter for the privilege of killing seals on this skerry. It is never completely covered by the sea at stream tides. There is a spot of coarse grass in the middle. On this, seals are seen to bask on a sunny day, but of late, no attempt has been made to disturb their repose.

*Hydrography.*—The frith between Houton head and the island of Walls, is about four miles broad. By this, all vessels from the south and east pass to Stromness, and approach either between the island of South Ronaldsay and the islands of Walls and Flotta, or by Holm sound.

*Springs.*—There is a great abundance of copious springs of pure water. There are also a few chalybeates, which are reckoned salutary and beneficial in nervous complaints.

*Lakes.*—There is but one lake ; the lake or loch of Kirbister, 1 mile, 1 furlong, and 116 yards long ; circumference, 2 miles, 3 furlongs, and 170 yards ; surface, 180 Scots acres ; the depth varies from 3 to 9 feet. It is supplied by small burns in various directions ; and near the south-east, there is an excellent mill. It abounds in small trouts, which are taken by hooks and flies by the people in the neighbourhood : and anglers from Kirkwall occasionally resort to it in summer.

*Geology.*—The rocks along the shore are nowhere high, few above 30 feet. They are generally of sandstone ; in some places, slaty. In the bay at the church, at low water, there are several rocks of the schistose kind, running nearly in a south and north direction, about six feet in breadth, rising from their bed about two feet, sloping on the sides, and exhibiting in the middle the appearance of having been pressed to-

gether in their formation, by some very powerful force from beneath. The distance between these ridges is from four to five feet. There are several of these ridges, and they run parallel to each other. On the west side of this bay, there is a rock of this kind of stone, from 25 to 30 feet high; and about the middle, there is a perpendicular line where the junction exhibits signs, on each side, of great pressure in the formation. Of the freestone, some is coarse grained, and some fine and white. The shores of Swanbister, belonging to Thomas Sands, Esq. abound in this last; and are carried to Kirkwall and Stromness, for various purposes.

There was lately discovered a quarry of excellent gray slate on the side of the hill of Midland next to Houton, at an elevation of about 400 feet, belonging to Hector Moncrieff, Esq. of Houton. In summer 1834, 6000 slates were sent to Kirkwall and South Ronaldsay; 1835, 12,000 were sent to the same places; and last summer, about 12,000.

*Soil.*—In the fields, which have been longest in cultivation, the soil is generally a rich black loam, yields fair crops of corn, rich natural grass; and ryegrass and clover have been tried with success. In some parts, the soil is a cold clay; but a large proportion is sandy and shallow, over rocks of sandstone, and yields light crops.

*Birds.*—The chief of these are: hawks (*Falco*), both dark-brown and grey. Owls (*Strix ulula*), dark-grey. The royal eagle (*Falco fulvus*). Crows (*Corvus cornix*). The starling (*Sturnus*), thrush (*Turdus*), wagtail (*Motacilla alba*), lark (*Alauda arvensis*), linnet (*Fringilla*), swallow (*Hirundo*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), landrail (*Rallus crex*), wild pigeon (*Columba ænas*), moor-fowl (*T. Scoticus*), plover (*Charadrius*).—Of water-fowls are gulls (*Larus ridibundus*), wild goose (*Anas anser*), duck (*A. boschas*), solan goose (*Pelecanus Bassanus*), puffin (*Alca arctica*), auk (*A. torda*), crane (*Grus*).

*Fishes, &c.*—Haddock (*Gadus Æglefinus*), cod (*G. morhua*), ling (*G. Molva*), skate (*Raiæ*), dog-fish (*Squalus Acanthias*), eel (*Muræna anguilla*), whiting (*G. merlangus*), mackerel (*Scomber*), tyrbot (*Pleuronectes hippoglossus*), flounder (*P. flesus*), coalfish (*G. carbonarius*), trout (*Salmo fario*).—Shell fish; cockle (*Cardium*), razor or spout-fish (*Solen*), lobster (*Cancer gammarus*), crab (*C. pagurus*), and buckies of various species.

*Reptiles, &c.*—The frog (*Rana*), toad (*Bufo*), are sometimes to be seen, though rarely, particularly the latter. Gnats or midges are

very numerous in the warm summer evenings, and often troublesome to those occupied in the open air.

*Botany.* — There is a great variety of plants in the pasture and meadow grounds, and they are general over the whole county; some of which are, mint (*Mentha*), marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*), foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), scurvy-grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), water-cresses (*Nasturtium officinale*), cranesbill (*Geranium cicutarium*), trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*).

There are no trees except a few in gardens, which become stunted when they rise above the walls. The willow (*Salix repens*), is found in low ground along rivulets; also (*angustifolia*), but this appears to have been planted. Hazel-nuts have been, of late, turned up by the plough, though none of the trunks have been discovered. Whins (*Ulex Europæus*), are found in some places, and no doubt is entertained that they have been raised from seed. Turnips of different kinds thrive well, as also carrots and cabbages. The soil and climate seem abundantly favourable for leguminous crops.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Earl Paul, the second of that name, who lived towards the close of the eleventh century, had a magnificent palace in this parish, the ruins of which are still perceptible on the shore of Swanbister.

*Eminent Men.*—The late Sir William Honyman, Lord Arma-dale, an eminent Judge in the Court of Session, was a native of this parish, and the principal landed proprietor in it. The residence of his ancestors was in the Hall of Claistran.

Murdoch Mackenzie, Esq. author of the Charts, though a native of Kirkwall, was proprietor of Groundwater in this parish, and of lands in different parts in this county. Thomas Mackenzie, Esq. the present proprietor, is his direct descendant.

*Parochial Register.*—The earliest date of baptisms is 1711; of marriages, 1718; of deaths, 1817. This last was begun, in consequence of the express orders of the General Assembly.

*Antiquities.*—Besides the ruins of Earl Paul's palace, already mentioned, there are, in various places along the coast, from Houton-head eastward, the ruins of various buildings, which are supposed to be the remains of Popish chapels, and have nothing striking in their appearance. There are three tumuli which have not been opened,—one near the church on level ground,—another near the manse, a little more elevated; and both may be seen from

the third, which is on the top of the highest hill. There is no tradition concerning them.

*Buildings.*—The Hall of Claistran is a double house of modern construction, at present occupied by a tenant. The principal landed proprietors have neat comfortable dwellings and commodious gardens, in which a good deal of taste is displayed. As the farms are in general small the dwelling-houses correspond with them, being built of stone and clay, and sometimes not plastered on the inside, with the fire-place in the middle of the floor, or towards the inner end of the apartment, where the family usually sit, with a stone fence of from four to five feet high, and about the same breadth, on the inner side of which the fire is placed. In later times, some improvement in these erections has taken place.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1795, the population was	826			
1811, . . . . .	889			
1821, . . . . .	917			
1831, . . . . .	996			
By the last census, 1841, the number of males is 482;		females, 562;	total, 1064	
The average of marriages for the last three years,			17	
baptisms, . . . . .			16½	
insane persons, . . . . .			1	
		Males.	Females.	Total.
Number of souls in 1831 below 15 years of age, . . . . .	178	169		347
from 15 to 30, . . . . .	106	123		229
30 to 50, . . . . .	89	134		223
50 to 70, . . . . .	60	77		137
above 70, . . . . .	27	33		60
	460	536		996
The average of marriages for the last seven years,				6½
baptisms, . . . . .				18½
Number of bachelors and widowers above 50, . . . . .				15
unmarried women above 50, exclusive of widows, . . . . .				12
insane persons, . . . . .				1

*Character, &c. of the People.*—They are active, industrious, frugal, cheerful, and contented, quiet and social in their disposition. It is rare to hear of any quarrel among them. They have, in general, a deep sense of the principles of religion, and their punctual attendance on public worship, their decency of behaviour, and close attention while there, are exemplary. It follows that intemperance, or petty thefts are rarely heard of, and those who are addicted to such habits, are treated with the contempt they deserve.

The number of artisans is considerable. Many of the young men are much occupied in winter, in making shoes for themselves and others. Weavers and tailors have abundance of employment. There is a great number of masons, and several of them go in summer to work in the neighbouring islands. There are several joiners,



3 smiths, and 1 cooper. Most of the artisans have small farms, but not sufficient to maintain their families. Almost all the young women have, for many years, been employed in winter in plaiting straw for bonnets.

The habits of the people are gradually improving. There is, however, a propensity among the young of both sexes to extravagance in dress. Umbrellas are in general use. English cloths, prints, and merinos are common.

While kelp was in demand, and brought a high price, a considerable number of men and young women was employed in the manufacture of it; but now little is done in this way.

The young people are usually prudent enough in entering into matrimony, and seldom take this step, until they have a tolerable prospect of the means of subsistence. An unfortunate habit, however, has long prevailed among some of the young men, of going in the winter evenings to tippling-houses. This, doubtless, operates unfavourably in various ways, and deprives the individuals of that respectability of character to which they would be entitled, from their industry and economy in other respects. Resolutions were issued by the county gentlemen a few years ago, to put a stop to such practices, by diminishing the number of licensed ale-houses. Their resolutions, however, have not yet produced the salutary effect intended.

A Sunday school was commenced some time ago, which, it is hoped, will have a very beneficial influence.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—The greater part of the farms are from six to eight Scots acres in extent, and at a rent of from 10s. to 15s. per acre, according to the quality of the soil. The common rotation is oats and bear, with a few potatoes: of these, seldom more are raised than what the family requires. Some also raise a few turnips for family use. There are three large farms, paying a rent of from L.50 to L.80 each. On these, there is a rotation of rye-grass and clover, which are not broken up for two or three years: then oats, next potatoes or turnips, and then bear, with which the grass and clover are sown. The greater part of the first year's crop of sown grass is cut for hay, and the field is afterwards used for pasture. Wheat has been tried, but with indifferent success. In some cases, it grew luxuriantly, but was never well filled or fully ripened. In ordinary seasons, it is common to see

the fields cleared against the end of September, and a late crop is always an inferior one.

*Breeds of Live-Stock.*—The black-cattle are, in general, such as are common over the county; and, as an over-stock is frequently kept, they have rather a stunted appearance. A few of what are called the Dunrobin breed have been introduced, and though they do not grow to a large size, they have a sprightly appearance. The price of the latter, compared with the former, is usually as L. 5 to L. 3. The native horses are generally of a small size. Those on the larger farms are of a superior breed, and, compared with the former, may be rated about two to one as to price, that is as L. 8 to L. 16. The native sheep are of a small size, live on the common at all seasons,—on the hills in summer, and along the shore in winter: they are never housed. At Lammas a wedder brings about 5s. A few Cheviots have been tried, but have not thriven well, except on the larger farms. These, in their best condition, bring L. 1, 1s. each.

*Husbandry.*—The one-stilt plough, drawn by three horses, was used on some of the smaller farms, about twenty-five years ago. It is now wholly out of use. Though it had a clumsy appearance, it had this advantage, that it broke the ground in some soils more completely than those now in use. Iron ploughs are coming into use, and are expected to prove more economical than those made of wood. There are a few leases for nineteen years, but they are more generally for shorter periods, fourteen, eleven, or seven years. Very few of the farms are inclosed except the larger ones.

The method of preparing the crop for drying when cut, before it is put into the stack, deserves attention. The band of the sheaf is made in the usual way and pulled by the root, except when the crop is luxuriant, and then it is cut. The sheaf is made of rather a large size. The band is drawn nearer the crop end than the root, and when the ends are pulled and crossed, they are then twisted and turned with dexterity so as to rest against the sheaf, but the ends thus twisted are not turned within the band. The sheaf thus formed is set on end by itself, and the root end spread out a little. It is so placed, that the root end of the band is on the lee-side, from whatever quarter the wind is blowing at the time, and the crop of the sheaf gets a gentle pressure to the lee-side also. The sheaf thus placed is not apt to fall, and after having stood five or six days in this position, in favourable weather, it is fit for being screwed, that is, for being built into ricks on the field. These

ricks consist of twenty-four sheaves, which when put together receive the name of threave. The two last sheaves of the rick are put across each other, and so tied together by portions of themselves, that they are not apt to fall even when the wind is high. The ricks, after standing for a week, in favourable weather, are fit for the stack. It is obvious, that, in rainy harvests, which are frequent in this climate, this method of placing the sheaves and ricks is most favourable for preserving the grain from being injured by the heavy falls of rain. The consequence is, that the crop is rarely injured, in harvest, to any great degree, in the most unfavourable weather.

*Fisheries.*—The principal fishing, of late years, has been of herring. About thirty years ago, herrings were got in Scalpa Bay for a few days in a season; but more lately, they have not been sought for there, nor are they ever found on this coast. There are, however, eight boats, with four men each thus employed.\* They repair to the island of Stronsay toward the end of July, and about two weeks after go to South Ronaldsay, where they remain about a month, or till the herrings leave the coast of that island. Vessels from Rothesay and from Ireland attend to receive the herrings, as soon they are barreled. The price for some years past has varied from 9s. to 12s. per cran or barrel. The average, for each boat this season, has been fifty-five crans. About eighteen years ago, when the spirit of enterprise in this employment became prevalent, a boat completely rigged, with a set of nets, cost L. 90. The price has now fallen to L. 70. This fishing has been found to be a precarious concern, and less lucrative than was expected.

*Lobster Fishing.*—This fishing has been continued for many years on a small scale, on this coast and the shore of Cava. For a few years past, there has been but one boat with two men thus employed. During the fishing season, they carry the lobsters, weekly, to Stromness for the London smacks. Each night's catching is kept in a chest, which floats in the Bay of Houton. The number taken annually is by no means considerable. A few small cod are occasionally got at no great distance from the shore, so are some haddocks and skate. Sillocks and kewths, being the coal-fish of one and two years old, abound along our shores, and in winter most of the men, near the shore, are employed in catching them. They are delicate and wholesome food at this age.

*Produce.*—It would be difficult to ascertain, with any degree of

\* There are now, (1841,) nine such boats.

precision, the quantity of grain raised. Suffice it to say, that, besides supplying the demands of the parish, there are upwards of 240 bolls of meal and grain frequently sent, annually, to Kirkwall and Stromness; and in plentiful years, the tenants of the large farms send grain to the Leith market. The average price of oatmeal is 2s. per stone of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. Avoirdupois, and of bear meal, 1s. 6d. Both sometimes sell for less; but after bad crops, both kinds of meal are imported, commonly from Leith, to Kirkwall and Stromness, to which supplies even some of the farmers are obliged to have recourse.

When there is an extraordinary demand for black-cattle, from sixty to seventy head are sold, early in the summer, chiefly to farmers from Caithness, at a price from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3. A few horses are sold at the Lammas market at Kirkwall, commonly to Caithness people, at from L. 8 to L. 10; and some, in rare cases, bring double this price.

*Kelp Manufacture.*—When kelp was in demand, there were about seventy tons manufactured annually. The tang, on the same part of the shore, was cut only once in the two years. Only about twenty tons have been manufactured annually for some years past, as the price has been small, being only L. 5 per ton at market, whereas it used to be from L. 10 to L. 12. This is a great loss to the proprietors, and also to the tenants who were employed in the manufacture. This loss is on the increase, as the tang, which is not cut once in two years, is apt to be so completely torn from the rocks by the winter storms, that it does not vegetate again.

*Navigation.*—There is no sloop belonging to the parish. Besides the eight herring boats, and one lobster boat, there are 43 employed in taking sillocks, kewths, and other fish; 52 in all; they are also employed in carrying farm produce to Stromness.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication.*—The post crosses from Huna, in Caithness, to South Ronaldsay, where there is a post-office, and proceeds by a runner to Kirkwall and Stromness. There was no public road, by which a cart could pass, until about twenty years ago. Since that period, the statute labour has been employed in forming a public road; and this has for some time past been formed, and the greater part kept in a good state of repair. There is only one harbour, and it is situated in the Bay of Houton,

where sloops and larger vessels lie in safety, and are protected by the Holm from south and south-east gales.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church stands on a bay, on the eastern shore, upwards of a mile east of Houton Head. The manse is delightfully situated on a rising ground, about half a mile west of the church, and well sheltered by hills on the west and north. The church was built in 1829, and contains 574 sittings, the accommodation allowed by law, and is every way comfortable. The sittings are all free. The manse was built in 1789, and is in a good state of repair. The glebe, with hill pasture, would bring L. 15 of rent annually. The stipend is L. 150, of which L. 34, 3s. 8d. is paid by Government annually. The number of Dissenters is considerable, being, by a late census, 107 above fifteen years of age, and 142 below this age.\* They belong to the United Associate Synod. Part attend at Kirkwall, and part at Stromness. There is also one Baptist.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is dispensed once a-year, in summer. The number of communicants is about 300, and about 100 attend on this occasion from neighbouring parishes. Collections are occasionally made for various purposes, and amount annually to from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2.†

*Education.*—There are three schools; one parochial, and two maintained by mortifications. The salary of the parochial school was, at the last augmentation, raised to L. 26. The fees, though fixed, are not demanded; the master accepting, in place thereof, the gratuities, which may amount to from L. 5 to L. 6. The common branches of education are taught, and the master has the legal accommodation. The Mortification schools were founded by natives. The first by Magnus Twatt, who lived and died in the service of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company. He appointed by his will the heritors and kirk-session patrons. This school has been in operation upwards of thirty years, and has a fund of L. 700 laid out on landed security. The other has been only two years in operation, and was founded by James Tait, who, after having been many years in Hudson's Bay, died in Stromness, soon after instituting the school. The sum left by him for this purpose is L. 100, and he appointed the kirk-session patrons.

\* The Dissenters have increased in the same proportion as the rest of the population, and are still about one-fourth of the population, 1841

† In 1840, L.3 were collected for the five schemes of the General Assembly, and L.4 were collected by subscription for cases of destitution.

This sum is lent on landed security, and the teacher receives the interest as salary. He is bound to teach for only one-half of the year, from October to April. He continues, however, teaching the whole year, in consequence of the liberality of the people. James Tait also left L. 100 to the parish of Stromness, for the same purpose.

Till of late, there were a few elderly people who could not read; but, strange as it may appear, some of them could answer the questions of the Shorter Catechism correctly.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of the poor receiving supplies is 15, and distributions are made twice a-year, in March and August. As their circumstances are nearly equal, they receive 4s. or 5s. each at each distribution. The weekly collections amount annually to from L. 9 to L. 10. There is a fund of about L. 50 at interest, which arose from savings from the collections, when the number of the poor on the list was less; and a donation of L. 10 from Lieutenant James Robertson, a native. The poor are not forward in applying for parochial relief, unless when their case is urgent.

*Inns.*—There are three licensed inns, two of which retail ale only, and the other ale and whisky. The last is sufficient for the accommodation of travellers. The others are rather tippling-houses, and do not contribute to the improvement of morals.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The progress of improvement since the publication of the last Statistical Account has been considerable. Green crops have increased a little, and will be more abundant when inclosing becomes more general. Much of the pasture grass around the old cultivated fields might be broken up to great advantage; but this cannot be done, till green crops are more extensively raised. Some improvement in this respect may be expected, as the farmers' attention is now in a great measure withdrawn from the manufacture of kelp. Every tenant has the privilege of hill pasture.

The whole extent of the parish, exclusive of the Island of Cava, is 1250 Scots acres in cultivation; pasture, 1960; common, 6394; in all, 9604 Scots acres. The rental was ascertained, a few years ago, to be L. 575.

It was long the practice of many of the young men to go to Hudson's Bay as labourers and mechanics, as carpenters, blacksmiths, and bricklayers. Few have gone in later times, though the wages have been raised. A labourer receives L. 16 a-year

annually, for the first three years, with maintenance, while employed at the factories. A mechanic L. 25 a-year. The engagement is now for five years, and at the end of three years every one is advanced according to his merit. The great object was to save as much as might render his future days at home, easy and comfortable.

Many of the young men also used to engage at Stromness for Greenland and Davis's Straits. There are only ten thus employed, this season.

The forming of the public road has been a great improvement, so that carts are now in general use; whereas, formerly, loads were carried on the backs of horses. The lately built cottages are much neater than the old ones. The division of the common is also an improvement, and has induced a few families to come from neighbouring parishes to settle where the ground may be cultivated.

It is also pleasant to observe the importance given to education, which will give the rising generation and their succeeding race a very great advantage over their forefathers.

*June 1841.*

## PARISH OF STROMNESS.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. PETER LEARMONTH, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE most probable derivation of the name is from *Strom*, signifying strong, and *Ness*, a point of land: in fact, the tide runs with considerable strength off the point of land which forms a part of the parish.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The parish is pleasantly situated on the south-western extremity of the mainland, or Pomona, as it is sometimes called, and probably commands the finest scenery in the group of islands with which it is connected. The view from the manse, or from the hill above it, has been much admired. The Atlantic Ocean, contemplated from either of these places, whether in the stillness of a calm, or in the awful grandeur of a storm, is an object of the most magnificent nature. The hill

of Hoy, with the green island of Graemsay, which lies to the south, imparts a beauty to the scene, which, in clear weather, is often enhanced by the lofty mountains of Sutherland, which appear in the distance.

*Extent, &c.*—The length of the parish is about 5 miles: its breadth,  $3\frac{1}{4}$ : and the square miles it contains,  $12\frac{1}{4}$ . The southmost point is in  $58^{\circ} 56' 50''$  north latitude; northmost point,  $59^{\circ} 1' 10''$  north latitude. It is of an irregular figure, and is bounded by the Sound of Hoy on the south; by the parish of Sandwick, on the north; by the lake of Stehness and an arm of the sea, on the east; and by the Atlantic, on the west. The hills are situated on the north-west; are naked and barren, being destitute of plantations. Still, they have their beauty. They rise above the level of the sea, to the height of from 100 to 400 or 500 feet,—forming, at some places, a bold and elevated coast, on which the winds beat with tremendous fury, and often dash frail barks to pieces. There are various valleys, well cultivated; and, being interspersed with meadow, they furnish hay for cattle in winter, and often compensate the deficiency of a scanty crop.

There are no caves of any consequence, except one; which has been rendered memorable from being the place where a shipwrecked seaman was wonderfully preserved, during four days in the spring of 1834. This cave lies at the western extremity opposite to Hoy Head, and is often visited by strangers since that event. It is called Johnson's cave, from the name of the seaman who was saved in it. Adjoining to it, and on the same line of coast towards Sandwick, the rock scenery is bold and romantic, affording shelter and a safe brooding place for the numerous sea fowl which abound here. The only headland, called the Black Craig, is directly opposite to Hoy head, and is of great use to seamen in directing them to the sound of Hoy, which lies between them—the only approach to the harbour of Stromness from the west. As this sound is of great importance to vessels, affording them a safe approach from the Atlantic to the harbour, to which, in stress of weather, they are frequently compelled to have recourse for shelter,—it may be proper to give a brief description of it. This cannot be more correctly done, than in the language employed by my predecessor, in his minute and interesting Statistical Account of this parish: “Along the west coast of Stromness, at one league's distance from the shore, there is 40 or 50 fathoms depth of water. There are no shoals in the channel of Hoy sound, on the side next this pa-



rish, but two, which may be avoided by keeping two cable lengths from the shore; one of these shoals is visible at two hours' ebb. As the coast can be seen at a great distance, and there are no shoals but these two, which are not dangerous, there are consequently few vessels wrecked on this coast. The velocity of the spring-tides in Hoy sound, is seven miles in the hour, that of neap-tides, three miles. It is high or slack water in Hoy sound at ten o'clock on the days of new and full moon, and in the harbour of Stromness at nine o'clock. The flood sets from the north-west. An hour before flood is perceived in the channel of Hoy sound, a stream sets from the north, along the west coast, keeping this side of the sound, and continues in this direction; at half-ebb, another stream sets from the south, along the south side of the sound, and continues till high water. These streams, when known and attended to, facilitate the entrance of shipping into the harbour of Stromness."

Since the date of the Old Account, it appears that the increase of wrecks has been considerable. A light-house is greatly needed for the guidance of vessels through the Sound of Hoy: and we are happy to learn that this has attracted the attention of Her Majesty's Commissioners.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

It may be mentioned, that the greater number of vessels which our enlightened nation has sent out to explore the world, and extend the knowledge of geography and the boundaries of science, have, in general, remained some days in the harbour of Stromness. The Discovery ships which were commanded by Captain Cook, on their return from that memorable expedition which proved fatal to that illustrious navigator, lay here two weeks; and the officers presented some of the inhabitants with various curiosities, which they fondly preserve as precious mementos of friendship. Sir John Franklin, distinguished alike for his piety and heroism, both in going out and returning from his northern expedition, remained here for some time. This parish was also the first place where Sir John Ross planted his foot on British earth, on returning from his last northern voyage, when it was thought by the nation at large, that that gallant officer had perished in the expedition.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners are, Thomas Pollexfen, Esq. of Cairston; William G. Watt, Esq. of Breckness. There are also Crown lands. The number of heritors altogether, is 78.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers extend back to the year 1695; but they are neither voluminous, nor have they been regularly kept,—except under the former incumbent.

*Antiquities.*—In the burial-place, there is the ruin of an old church, which probably was erected when Popery prevailed, or perhaps at a later period. Near it, there are the remains of a building, which originally occupied a considerable space of ground, and is generally supposed to have been an establishment of monks, hence called Monk's House. About three-quarters of a mile to the west, stands a venerable building, which was erected by Bishop Graham, one of the last Bishops of Orkney under Episcopacy. Above the door, the bishop's initials, G. G., with the Episcopal arms, and the year of its erection, 1633, are inscribed. There are still tumuli to be seen in the parish.

### III.—POPULATION.

According to the Old Statistical Account, “in the year 1754, there were 1000 persons in the town of Stromness. In the year 1794, there were 1344 souls, and yet the whole population is about the same as that given in 1754; from which, it appears that the population of the country has decreased, in proportion as that of the town had increased. By an accurate census taken in June 1794, the population is as follows:”

	No. of Houses.	No. of Families.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Stromness parish,	184	184	346	449	795
town,	222	342	493	851	1344
Total,	406	526	839	1300	2139

Persons to a family in the parish of Stromness, nearly  $4\frac{1}{3}$ . In the town of Stromness, nearly 4 to a family and 6 to a house. Proportion of males to females, parish of Stromness, nearly as 3 males to 4 females. Town, nearly 12 males to 21 females. The great disproportion of males to females in the town of Stromness is occasioned by the young men going abroad to various parts of the world; to the Greenland fishery, Hudson's Bay, the coal trade; and many are to be found in his Majesty's navy.”

In 1831, the Government census gave the following results:—

		Males.	Females.	Inhabited Houses.
Stromness burgh of barony,	2296	940	1296	385
parish,	708	308	400	123

The population is as follows, at present:—

Number of people residing in the town of Stromness,	2242
Landward part of the parish of Stromness,	760
The yearly average of births for the last seven years,	80
deaths for the last seven years,	50
marriages for the last seven years,	18

The average number of persons under 15 years of age, . . . . .	965
betwixt 15 and 30, . . . . .	745
30 and 50, . . . . .	686
50 and 70, . . . . .	496
upwards of 70, . . . . .	110
Number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 or upwards, . . . . .	7
unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age, . . . . .	65
Unmarried women upwards of 45, . . . . .	90
Number of families, . . . . .	650
Average number of children in each family in which there are children, nearly . . . . .	4
Number of inhabited houses, . . . . .	500
houses uninhabited, or now building, . . . . .	18
insane, 2; fatuous, 10; blind, 4; deaf, 2; dumb, 2.	

Notwithstanding the peculiar temptations to which the people of this parish are exposed, from the great influx of shipping and other circumstances, they are, upon the whole, a moral people. They are most regular in their attendance in the house of God; and, though they come far short of that standard which the word of God prescribes, and many of them are indifferent to their eternal interests, there are still not a few who are alive to the great realities of eternity; appreciate highly their precious privileges, and study to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things, by maintaining a life and conversation becoming the Gospel.

At a former period, smuggling existed to some extent, with its demoralizing effects; but now it is rare.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Number of males employed in agriculture as farmers, . . . . .	87
as cottars, . . . . .	43
Farm servants, male, 22—female, 22, . . . . .	44
Number of males employed in overseeing straw plait manufacture, . . . . .	7
Manufacturer of rope, . . . . .	1
Number of males employed in retail trade or in handicraft, . . . . .	191
Number of wholesale merchants, capitalists, bankers, professional persons, and other educated men, . . . . .	40
Number of female servants in town, . . . . .	66

#### *Agriculture.*—

We believe the parish contains of standard imperial acres, . . . . .	8160
Of this the arable land is, say . . . . .	1865
Infield pasture capable of improvement, . . . . .	908
Undivided common, . . . . .	5387
	—8160

The undivided common is capable of very little improvement, being mostly hill and moss; and there is much of it, that has been rendered incapable of cultivation, by the surface being removed from it for fuel and litter,—a practice which still prevails.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per acre is 10s. Near the town, the inhabitants pay L. 2 for grazing a milk cow.

*Wages, &c.*—The rate of labour varies, according to the kind of work, from 1s. 4d. to 2s. 6d., without maintenance, for farm-la-

bourers and country artisans. Price of an iron plough, L. 2, 2s.; of a small cart, L. 4, 4s.

Comparatively little attention has been paid to agricultural improvement: the land is constantly cropped alternately with oats and bear, with only as much in potatoes as supplies the family. This must necessarily tend to impoverish the soil, and render it less productive. The leases being, in many cases, only from year to year,—the smallness of the farms, the wretched steadings, and the want of enclosures,—all combine to operate against the occupier as well as the proprietor. Indeed, there are many farmers who do not entirely depend upon the produce of their crops for paying their rent; for they are often obliged to seek in the prolific sea, that subsistence which the earth would yield, were greater care taken of it, and a better system of culture practised.

*Quarries.*—There is a slate quarry on the west side of the parish, from which, it is observed, in the former Account, that from 30,000 to 40,000 slates were annually sold. “They are strong, thick, last long, and are the best in the county.” Slates are still taken from this quarry; but, though they are better adapted to the climate than Easdale slates, they are in general not so much used, forming rather a weighty roof. There are no proper stone quarries. The stones which are used in the erection of houses are quarried from the shore, and conveyed to the town in large boats. Some years ago, a Company commenced working a granite quarry near the town, with the intention of shipping for a proper market; but, though the granite was thought of a superior kind, the company, from want of capital, did not proceed with the undertaking.

A lead mine was wrought, eighty years ago; but the ore was not in sufficient quantity to defray the expense, and remunerate the worker.

*Fisheries.*—During the three last years, a few enterprising individuals have endeavoured to establish a herring-fishing station at Stromness; and, though they have not been so successful as could have been wished, they are still resolved to persevere. Should they succeed, their undertaking will tend greatly to promote the prosperity of the town, and be of essential service to the fishermen, as it will enable them to remain at home, instead of going to other stations in the islands,—which must be attended with considerable expense. In the months of May and June 1837, there were about 2000 crans taken.

There are, also, some boats employed every season, in the

months of May and June, in fishing lobsters. At an average, for the last twelve years, there have been 11,622 lobsters shipped annually for the London market, by Gravesend smacks, which call here twice a week during the fishing season.

Some sloops engage in the cod fishing,—though this fishing is not carried on, nearly to the same extent as in some of the other Orkney Islands.

*Manufactures.*—Before the duty was taken off barilla, there was a considerable quantity of kelp manufactured; but since the price has fallen so greatly, it scarcely remunerates the proprietor; and the consequence is, that very little is now done in the manufacturing of that article. Whether this will ultimately be advantageous or disadvantageous to the country, is a question upon which a diversity of opinion prevails. We only remark, that proprietors evidently placed more reliance than they ought to have done, upon the manufacturing of that precarious article, and thereby neglected the improvement of their lands, which would have afforded them a more permanent benefit.

There are a few straw plait manufacturers, who employ a number of women in the town as well as in the country. This manufacture has been, for some time past, upon the decline; and, being at all times dependent upon the caprice of fashion, has lately afforded a scanty subsistence to the many young females who totally depend on it for their support. They are now allowed to plait in their own homes, which has been found more conducive to their health and morals, than doing so collectively, in the houses of the manufacturers, which was the original custom.—There is a small rope manufactory, where ropes of various kinds are made, both for the shipping and for country use. From the former Account, it appears there was a considerable quantity of linen and woollen cloth manufactured. This business has now wholly ceased here, being superseded by the perfect machinery now in use.

*Navigation.*—The shipping belonging to Stromness has of late years greatly increased, and is at present in a very prosperous condition. The kind of vessel which is preferred is the schooner, which is found best suited for the trade in which it is employed. The owners seldom or never insure their vessels, and many of them have succeeded well. The number of vessels belonging to the town is 23; 2 of them brigs, 18 schooners; 3 sloops. Their tonnage amounts to 2132 tons.

The following table, which the captain of the Coast-guard in

Stromness has kindly handed to me, shows how much this commodious harbour is resorted to by all kinds of vessels.

Years.	Months.	No. of vessels.	Tonnage per month.	Tonnage yearly.	Remarks.
1835,	October,	- 36	- 6,671	-	To every one hundred tons, allow four men and one boy.
	Nov.	- 24	- 3,304	-	
	Dec.	- 7	- 901	-	
1836,	January,	- 13	- 1,348	-	
	Feb.	- 10	- 1,606	-	
	March,	- 42	- 6,927	-	
	April,	- 83	- 20,123	-	
	May,	- 19	- 2,657	-	
	June,	- 34	- 3,655	-	
	July,	- 34	- 3,666	-	
	August,	- 51	- 6,579	-	
	Sept.	- 28	- 2,670	-	
				60,207	
1836,	October,	- 36	- 6,365	-	
	Nov.	- 37	- 5,127	-	
	Dec.	- 15	- 2,474	-	
1837,	January,	- 11	- 1,070	-	
	Feb.	- 13	- 2,029	-	
	March,	- 10	- 3,047	-	
	April,	- 31	- 5,479	-	
	May,	- 24	- 3,092	-	
	June,	- 17	- 2,290	-	
	July,	- 32	- 2,543	-	
	August,	- 71	- 6,819	-	
	Sept.	- 62	- 6,182	-	
				46,517	
	October,	- 49	- 7,947	-	
	Nov.	- 43	- 6,684	-	
	Dec.	- 29	- 4,401	-	
1838,	January,	- 23	- 2,419	-	
	Feb.	- 3	- 379	-	
	March,	- 24	- 4,801	-	
	April,	- 49	- 11,117	-	

The Honourable Hudson's Bay Company's ships call here on their outward passage in the month of June, and take with them a number of men to be employed as labourers, artisans, &c. The average number of men who have here been hired yearly to go out to their settlements in North America, for the last four years, is from 35 to 40. Under the sanction of this Company, missionaries are sent out by the Church of England, and Wesleyan Methodists. It would be of great consequence could a missionary or two be sent out by the General Assembly of our church, as there are so many men there who belong to Orkney, by whom the boon would be greatly prized.

For a long period, a number of whalers have called here to obtain their full complement of men for the whale-fishing at Davis' Straits; but lately, the number has considerably decreased. There

have been engaged, for the last seven years, on an average, 292 men annually. The number at one time was much greater.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The only town in the parish is Stromness. At the beginning of last century, it is observed in the former Statistical Account, "it was an inconsiderable village, consisting only of half a-dozen houses with slated roofs, and a few scattered huts, the first inhabited by two gentlemen of landed property, and two or three small traders, the last by a few fishermen and mechanics." In 1719, it was assessed by the burgh of Kirkwall, and continued tributary thereto till May 1743, when it sought to effect its freedom, and happily succeeded; for, by a decision of the Court of Session confirmed by the House of Lords, it was fully emancipated, and thus became instrumental in obtaining freedom for the other villages in Scotland which had formerly been tributary to royal burghs.

It has since rapidly increased in population and in trade, which is to be traced in a great measure to the safety and commodiousness of the harbour,—on the west of which the town is situated. There are few places which afford a better or more beautiful site for the erection of a town. It is composed chiefly of one street, which extends three-quarters of a mile on the side of the harbour; but the houses have been erected without any regular plan. The only object which the first proprietors appear to have had in view, in the erection of their houses, was to secure access to the harbour. Till very lately, the street was not sufficiently wide to admit of a passage for carts and other vehicles. Some improvements, however, have lately been made upon the town, and especially upon the street. It still admits of many, and never can possess that regular appearance which its fine situation so well deserves.

In the year 1815, Stromness was constituted a Burgh of barony; and two magistrates, with nine councillors, have since held authority in it; but having no funds, and there being no jail nearer than Kirkwall, their power is greatly curtailed.

*Means of Communication.*—There is regular communication between this parish and Kirkwall three times a-week, by a gig which conveys the mail. Last June, a mail-coach commenced running, daily, in place of the gig. It was an interesting as well as a novel scene, to see a regular mail-coach in *ultima Thule*. It is, however, a matter of regret, that such encouragement was not given as to enable the proprietors to continue running the coach during winter.

The distance betwixt Stromness and Kirkwall, the only towns in the county, is about 15 miles; and of late the road has been considerably improved. There is a post-office in town, and a south mail *via* Kirkwall arrive Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, when not detained at the Pentland Frith, which is often the case, especially in winter.\*

Enclosures are comparatively rare; which, to a great extent, retards agricultural improvement. Cattle, horses, and swine, which are numerous, being allowed to go at large after the crop is gathered in, greatly injure the fields in a climate subject to rains during so many months in the year. It also prevents the regular rotation of crops, which is so indispensable to proper farming.

The estate of Cairston is, however, an exception. There is a considerable part of it well inclosed: it is also farmed on the most improved system, by the proprietor, Mr Pollexfen. It possesses many beautiful fields, which yield hay, potatoes, bear, and oats, of a superior quality. In the vicinity of the town, a few proprietors have made some inclosures, which have increased the value of their property.

*Harbour.*—The harbour is one of the most commodious in the north of Scotland, and forms a safe retreat to all sorts of vessels. It is frequented during the winter and spring months by many vessels in the coasting-trade, as well as foreign vessels, which find in it a safe anchorage, and are well sheltered from the west wind, (which generally is most boisterous,) by a hill above the town. It lies on the east side of the parish, and is approached by the south, is about a mile in length, and somewhat less than half a mile in breadth.

There are two beautiful little holms or small islands which bound the harbour on the east, and render the anchorage still more safe and secure.

Upon the south side of the harbour, on the property of Ness, a patent slip, with the necessary apparatus, has been lately erected, capable of receiving a vessel of 400 or 500 tons. This was greatly needed, from the number of vessels which pass through the Pentland Frith, and are often compelled to take refuge in the harbour, and to obtain the repairs which their disabled state requires. This slip was erected in April 1836: and in the course of the three succeeding years, thirty vessels were received upon it and repaired, —their tonnage, 3368 tons.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is situate in the town,

\* There is now a daily mail.



the most convenient site for the mass of the population. The greatest distance from the extremity of the parish, is about five miles. It was erected in the year 1814. It is in a tolerable state of repair; but, being much exposed to violent storms, the roof almost every year requires repair. It has accommodation for 1200. There are forty free sittings, and two long seats, which extend along the greater part of the middle passage. The manse was erected in the year 1780. It underwent repair during the incumbency of my predecessor, and before I entered it in the spring of 1833.

The glebe, including what is occupied by house, garden, and a meadow, is about ten acres in extent; if let, its rent would amount to about L.6 per annum.

The stipend is the minimum, with L.8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

There is no other church in the parish, except a small Secession church. The minister receives L.120 per annum, and L.12 for communion elements.

Divine worship is well attended both in the Established Church and in the Dissenting Chapel.

There are 1000 persons in communion with the Established Church. Of that number, about 900 communicate each time at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is dispensed twice in the year. About 400 are in communion with the Secession.

There is, in connection with the Established Church, a Bible and Missionary Society; average amount of yearly contributions about L.20. There is also a Society of a similar nature in connection with the Dissenters. Of the amount of its contributions I am not aware.

In general, we have three or four collections during the year for benevolent purposes,—in behalf of Sabbath schools and the Assembly's schemes. Average amount about L.14.

*Education.*—There are five schools taught by males and five by females in the parish. Eight of these schools are in the burgh.

There is a parochial school; but so situate, and so provided with accommodations, that its benefits do not extend to the town, nor to other populous districts of the country. We deeply regret to say, that, in this parish, the grand design of this excellent parochial institution is, in a great measure, defeated, and the young are deprived of that advantage to which they are entitled by the law of the land.

There are two subscription schools in the town. The other

schools depend upon the fees received. The five female schools are in the town, and the fees afford very inadequate support to the teachers. In the parish school the branches taught are, reading, writing, and arithmetic. In the subscription schools, in addition to these branches, Latin, Greek, French, and mathematics are taught. The teacher of the other school in town has a class for Navigation, which is greatly required here. In the female schools, the common branches, viz. English, writing, arithmetic, and sewing are taught; and, in one or two of the most respectable, music and drawing.

The parochial teacher has the minimum salary. The subscription school teachers receive about L.50 per annum.

We believe there are few betwixt the years of six and fifteen who cannot read. In general, the parents, however poor, make every effort to send their children to school for a short time, to be instructed in the elementary branches of education, especially reading. With respect to the fatherless, in most cases which have come under our notice, some benevolent person is found willing to get them instructed in reading.

We feel called upon to say, that there are few places in Scotland, with such a population as Stromness, where there is such need of an efficient endowed school. There being no endowed school in the town, and the fees of the subscription ones being high, the poor are precluded from the benefit of proper instruction; and when it is known that there are numerous widows (whose husbands have perished at sea), left with their large families helpless and dependent, unable to provide for their sustenance, far less to afford them a good education, it must be evident, that, were a proper school with an endowment established, it would confer an invaluable blessing upon an interesting but long-neglected community. It is hoped that something may be done for this place by the General Assembly's Education Committee. The Sabbath school connected with the Established Church was instituted in the spring of 1830; and was attended at first by betwixt 200 and 300. It has since continued to increase and flourish, and for the last seven years has been attended by fully 300 scholars on an average. There are in all twenty-six classes, which are instructed by male and female teachers, selected from the most pious and best informed of the elders and members.

A Sabbath school, numerously attended, is also regularly kept in the Dissenting church.

*Library.*—A public library was established, nearly twenty years ago. It consists of a number of valuable books, and the leading reviews of the day. For some years past, novels have been excluded, and works of a more solid character substituted in their place. The annual subscription is 7s.

There is a Sabbath school library in connection with the Established Church, and also one in connection with the Dissenting congregation.

*Friendly Society.*—Till very lately, a Friendly Society existed in the town, but it was some years ago dissolved.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of poor persons upon the roll who receive quarterly allotments, is 85. The highest allowance is 4s. per quarter: but in general 2s. or 2s. 6d. is the sum allotted quarterly. In addition to this, however, some allowance is made during winter for fuel; and in case of sickness or old age, the elder of the district where the pauper resides is empowered to give something additional. Our sole dependence for supporting the poor, is on the amount of collections made at the church doors on Sabbath, and the fees for proclamation of banns, and the use of mortcloth. The ordinary collections for the last eight years amount at an average to about L. 50 annually; and extraordinary, to about L. 20. In general the people are so very poor, that they evince no reluctance to seek parochial relief.

There is no prison in Stromness. This greatly weakens the authority of the magistrates, and is unfavourable to the morals of this populous district. Were an efficient jail erected, it would intimidate the lawless, and be an effectual means of preventing crime, and the lesser delinquencies.

*Inns.*—In town, there are 4 inns, kept by respectable persons, in which good accommodation will be found, and every attention paid. In town, the number of houses in which spirits and beer are sold is 27, the number in which beer only is sold, 7; in all 34.

*Natural History Society.*—Some time ago, a Natural History Society was instituted in town, the object of which was to form a museum, and to collect specimens of the islands' productions, birds, fishes, shells, &c. Considerable success has already crowned the laudable undertaking. A number of curiosities, domestic and foreign, have already been placed in the museum. A respectable collection of the birds, &c. of Orkney has been made; and soon, it is hoped, the museum will be an object worthy of being inspected by the tourists who may visit this remote island.

The first annual Report has been published; it contains a list of the curiosities, &c. which have been presented to the Institution.

*Fuel.*—Peat is the fuel most generally used, and is procured from a moss in the parish. The inhabitants of the town are supplied in a great measure from the islands, where the peats are of a superior quality. The more wealthy and respectable families use coals, which are brought from Newcastle and Sunderland.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the former Statistical Account was published, many improvements have taken place; for instance, the increase of carts from 12 to 140, and of ploughs in the same proportion, demonstrates that there must have been some advancement made in agricultural improvement. Still, much remains to be done; and unless a better system of farming, and a regular rotation of crops, be adopted, more substantial and comfortable farm-steadings erected, and the lands to a certain extent enclosed, agriculture must remain stationary, and the peasantry cannot be raised to that respectability which is so desirable, and so conducive to the interest of the proprietor, and comfort of the tenant. The number of horses in the parish is 204; of ploughs, 91.

The burgh has greatly increased in wealth and prosperity, during the last forty years, from the regular increase of the shipping, If the herring-fishing succeed, and a station be established, it will tend still further to promote the prosperity of the place,

*Drawn up 1839.*

*Revised July 1841.*

# UNITED PARISHES OF HOY AND GRÆMSAY.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF KIRKWALL.

THE REV. GAVIN HAMILTON, MINISTER.

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## L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation and Extent.*—THE parish is of a triangular form, bounded by the parish of Walls on the south side; the parishes of Orphir, Stennis, and Stromness upon the east and north sides; and the Atlantic Ocean to the westward. The parish from north-west to south-east is about 9 or 10 miles long, and in general is about 6 miles broad. It may be called a very hilly or mountainous district. One of the hills in particular is so steep in many places as to be almost inaccessible.

The land or arable ground in this place is generally wet and spongy; the soil light, and better calculated for grass than for grain.

Græmsay is a very small island,—a mile and a half in length, and a mile in breadth. Its population in 1831 amounted to 225.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There are no antiquities in the parish, besides the large stone mentioned in the Old Account.

*Parochial Registers.*—These have been regularly kept since the year 1799.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners are, Robert Heddle, Esq.; John Balfour, Esq.; Rev. G. Hamilton; and Harry Cruickshank, Esq.

## III.—POPULATION.

Amount in 1801,	. 223
1811,	. 472
1821,	. 508
1831,	. 546

The amount of the population at present is 647.

During the last three years, there have been no illegitimate births.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The average rent of land per acre is L.1, 5s. Real rent of the parish, L.300.

There have been no recent improvements in the agriculture of the parish which call for notice. Wood is entirely wanting.

*Fisheries.*—The herring-fishing is carried on in this parish to some extent,—seven boats being employed in it.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The whole population is connected with the Established Church. The stipend is the minimum. The glebe is five acres arable in extent, and as many in pasture: value, L.10. The manse was built in 1798, and is at present in a good, habitable condition.

*Education.*—There are three schools in the parish: and none more are required. The salary of the parochial teacher is the minimum, and his fees do not exceed L.5 per annum.

*Poor.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 10. The average yearly amount of contributions for their relief, L.4, 10s.: all of which is from church collections.

July 1841.

## PARISH OF SANDWICK.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. CHARLES CLOUSTON, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE name Sandwick is no doubt derived from the sandy bay, which is the principal one on the west coast between Stromness and Birsay, *wick* signifying a bay.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The extreme length of the parish is fully 6 miles: but various calculations and measurements convince me that its mean length is about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and its mean breadth about  $3\frac{1}{4}$ . It is bounded by Birsay on the north; by Harray and the loch of Stenness on the east; by the same loch and Stromness on the south; and by the Atlantic on the west.

*Hills, &c.*—This parish cannot be denominated mountainous, nor even hilly, when compared with the neighbouring ones, being more flat and cultivated than any of them; but a range of hills forms its west boundary except at the bay; and from these the

hills of Gyran and Lingafield\* stretch eastward near its south side, and those of Vestrafild and Yonbell at its north boundary. These, as well as the lower lands and valleys remote from the sea, slope gently eastward towards the loch of Stenness, forming part of that extensive amphitheatre in the centre of the west mainland, the area of which is little elevated above the loch. Vestrafild, or the west hill, is the highest, and may be about 300 or 400 feet above the level of the sea. A little east of the Sandy bay are eminences or low sandy hills, called Sandfild and Kierfild, which seem to be formed in a great measure of the sand blown from the bay by the west wind, which is prevalent and violent. The latter of these hills was formerly considered beautiful for its verdure, as it was covered with grass to the summit, but for some years it has been forced to submit to the plough, and I suppose it is more profitable, though less pleasing to the eye than formerly.

*Coast, Caves, &c.*—The west coast extends about four miles and a half, and is precipitous at all places except the bay, the highest part being between 200 and 300 feet perpendicular. There are many caves on the coast that form the favourite retreat of pigeons. The softer portions of rock being washed away much more quickly than the harder, there are many deep indentations, or “geoes,” as they are called, where the soft parts have given way, and in some cases the hard portions still remain as insulated pillars, within a stone throw of the precipice, forming very picturesque objects; but the most remarkable thing produced in this manner is the Hole of Row, which is a high natural arch through the peninsular crag forming the south side of the bay, caused by two whin dikes, occurring so near each other, that the intervening strata have been pulverised and washed out by the sea, as high as its waves had power to do so. Immediately south of the arch, the stones on the top of the precipice are arranged like those on a beach by the force of the waves, and, on the top of one of these crags, I once picked up a lump of India-rubber covered with barnacles. Not far from Row, on the nearest part of the coast, is an immense rock, which is well known to have been carried a considerable distance by the sea; it is 16 feet long, 6 broad, and 3 thick, and weighs, according to my calculation, about 24 tons.

*Meteorology.*—I have kept a register of the weather for the last twelve years; the latter half only in this parish, and the former

\* *Fild* means hill.

in the manse of Stromness, where there is no great difference in the climate. As the temperature and pressure of the atmosphere, the direction and force of the wind, with the state of the weather, were noted twice a-day, at ten A. M. and ten P. M., during all that period; it would occupy too much space to insert the whole of that register here; but the following tables, showing the mean state of the barometer and thermometer for each month and year, may be interesting, as applicable to Orkney in general, and must be pretty accurate, being formed from extensive data.

TABLE showing the mean monthly and annual height of the barometer, from 1827 till 1838, inclusive; the line below showing the mean of each month during that time, and the mean of the years. The manse of Sandwick is about 100 feet above the level of the sea.

	Jan.	Feb.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	An.
1827,	29.269	29.767	28.945	29.229	29.156	29.337	29.398	29.638	29.508	29.269	29.305	29.010	29.322
1828,	29.295	29.290	29.141	29.567	29.447	29.272	29.205	29.348	29.437	29.396	29.322	29.219	29.328
1829,	29.955	29.682	29.893	29.386	29.974	29.532	29.849	29.640	29.839	29.934	29.934	30.112	29.817
1830,	30.099	29.708	29.780	29.629	29.894	29.843	29.820	29.828	29.604	30.072	29.614	29.694	29.798
1831,	29.936	29.715	29.752	29.836	30.038	29.930	29.946	29.916	29.863	29.692	29.694	29.604	29.822
1832,	29.846	29.920	29.690	30.074	30.010	29.938	30.067	29.860	29.963	29.815	29.638	29.596	29.868
1833,	30.123	29.298	29.910	29.860	29.912	29.634	29.870	29.767	29.799	29.601	29.508	29.283	29.712
1834,	29.370	29.478	29.804	30.036	29.835	29.760	29.924	28.736	29.924	29.712	29.744	29.863	29.697
1835,	29.759	29.278	29.664	29.899	29.761	29.998	29.851	29.748	29.524	29.626	29.763	30.027	29.742
1836,	29.538	29.654	29.682	29.490	30.296	29.674	29.672	29.769	29.690	29.520	29.321	29.304	29.634
1837,	29.637	29.530	29.880	29.776	29.838	29.853	29.815	29.835	29.761	29.638	29.423	29.703	29.723
1838,	29.446	29.233	29.234	29.171	29.294	29.186	29.189	29.140	29.272	29.292	29.004	29.124	29.223
Month	29.939	29.551	29.618	29.668	29.789	29.700	29.690	29.622	29.666	29.615	29.524	29.550	29.640



TABLE showing the mean monthly and annual temperature, from 1827 till 1838, inclusive, with the mean temperature of all these twelve years, which may be considered the mean temperature of our climate.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April.	May.	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	An.
1827,	35.09	35.09	38.59	43.83	49.16	53.40	55.61	55.04	54.39	50.95	43.11	43.24	46.45
1828,	40.22	38.82	41.45	43.60	45.90	56.04	58.25	57.26	55.41	54.19	45.53	43.24	48.27
1829,	36.14	39.46	40.69	41.51	49.99	53.43	57.12	54.36	50.21	45.56	41.40	39.51	45.78
1830,	37.96	36.71	41.83	44.80	50.77	51.66	56.14	53.14	53.46	49.41	42.76	36.33	46.24
1831,	36.70	37.71	42.65	44.88	48.70	56.13	57.86	58.90	54.73	51.73	40.50	44.07	47.88
1832,	41.49	42.22	42.22	46.24	47.31	54.73	54.25	56.07	52.61	49.38	45.43	41.40	47.77
1833,	37.14	38.37	38.68	43.23	51.43	51.60	54.73	52.40	52.34	49.20	41.58	39.28	45.83
1834,	38.90	40.21	41.11	43.05	48.75	58.02	58.03	56.89	52.90	48.07	44.01	45.17	47.92
1835,	39.75	39.48	41.20	42.25	46.01	51.76	53.57	54.77	53.01	45.70	45.68	40.44	46.13
1836,	39.14	37.46	39.61	41.39	47.77	52.03	52.51	51.83	48.35	45.91	40.93	38.57	44.62
1837,	38.82	39.32	36.54	39.13	45.24	51.06	50.56	53.75	51.58	49.36	41.59	42.44	44.94
1838,	33.56	31.31	38.64	39.23	44.75	48.20	53.86	52.28	50.28	45.77	39.71	41.78	43.28
Month.	37.90	33.01	40.26	42.76	47.93	53.17	55.20	54.72	52.43	48.76	42.68	41.28	46.25

Of meteors, the polar lights are the most remarkable here, being often extremely brilliant and beautiful.

The west or south-west wind is understood to be the strongest, and the stone and lime on that side of a house most exposed to it, are generally the first to give way. A gale from that quarter is frequently prognosticated by the great swell of the sea, which rages even during a perfect calm. On this subject, I take the liberty of repeating an observation, which I have made elsewhere.\* “ This great swell, or ‘ sea,’ as it is here called, generally indicates a storm in a distant part of the ocean, which may reach Orkney a day or two afterwards; hence, on the west coast, this great swell is considered a prognostic of west wind. From this we infer, 1st, that the agitation caused by the wind on the surface of the ocean travels faster than the wind itself; and, 2d, that the breeze begins to windward, and takes some time to reach the point towards which it proceeds to leeward, which tends to overturn the usually received theory as to the cause of winds. Sometimes, however, the distant storm which causes this agitation does not reach these islands at all.” In proof of this, I may mention, that, in August 1831, from the 9th to the 13th inclusive, the great swell of the sea is remarked in my register, every day being also marked calm, with the barometer high and steady. Afterwards, however, I learnt that on the 7th and 8th of that month, there was a gale in latitude 57° 21’ north, longitude 13° 15’ west, which damaged a vessel that put back to Stromness to repair; and on the 11th it began at Bar-

\* Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, p. 629.

badoes, and devastated that and other West India islands; but the gale never reached Orkney, though its effects on the sea were so conspicuous.

*Climate.*—Our insular situation prevents the extremes of temperature that are felt in continents of such a high latitude, the surrounding ocean tempering the heat of summer, and the cold of winter; so that for more than twelve years, the thermometer has only once fallen so low as  $18^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit, and the snow does not lie so long here, as in the more inland parts of the south of Scotland, or, I believe, the north of England. Indeed, the mean temperature of every month was above the freezing point, except that of February 1838. Our mean annual temperature is  $46^{\circ} 25'$ , and the mean height of the barometer 29.640, as will be seen from the annexed tables; but the nature of our climate will be more correctly understood by comparing the mean temperature of each month, as there stated, with that of other places. The highest hill commands an extensive view, not only of the west mainland, but of part of the north and south isles, and from it, and other elevated grounds, may be seen the hills of Hoy, terminating in stupendous precipices; and, in calm and clear weather, those of Sutherland in the distance, stretching out towards Cape Wrath, add much to the beauty of the scene; but during a storm from the west it is awfully grand. The huge accumulations of water that then roll after each other, foaming with terrible violence to the shore, impress the mind with their irresistible power, and might well give a stranger a feeling of insecurity; and, when they dash themselves against the precipice, it seems half sunk, for a time, like a wrecked vessel amid the waves; sheets of spray are thrown far up into the air, and carried over all the country, making springs a mile from the coast brackish, for some days, and encrusting every thing with salt, even fifteen or twenty miles off. I am told by those living a few hundred yards from the spot, that the floors of their cottages are shaken by the violence with which the waves strike the crags; and I have seen innumerable sea insects alive on their summits, and even a limpet adhering to them after such a storm; also numerous fragments of the slaty stone, some of them a foot long, which had been whirled into the air, and had penetrated six inches into the soil in falling.

Our climate, in short, is more remarkable for dampness and storms, than for cold; the atmosphere being often loaded with sea spray in winter, and moistened with the constant evaporation in summer. Pulmonary and rheumatic complaints seem to be pre-

valent, owing to this peculiarity of the climate, and our sudden and frequent changes of weather. Some cases of cramp may also be ascribed to the dampness; and a neighbouring clergyman, who is afflicted with loss of voice, has, more than once, been immediately cured by the air of Edinburgh. Dyspeptic complaints are very common among the peasantry, but they are probably caused by poor diet.

*Hydrography.*—The Atlantic flows up into the bay on the west side, for about half a mile, and the Loch of Stenness, about a mile on the east, leaving little more than two miles at one place, between these two great waters. The Loch of Skail or Aith, which is nearly a mile long, and half that breadth, lies nearly in this space; and the Loch of Clumly, which is more than half of these dimensions, is a little south of that line. These lochs are of no great depth or importance, and contain no fish except eels; but the two latter turn mills, on their passage to the sea and Loch of Stenness, and they relieve the tameness of the scenery,—their surface, when smooth as a mirror, forming a striking contrast to the troubled ocean hard by; and the sunset in fine summer evenings is most splendid, as seen from the manse, when the rays are reflected from the sea, and also from one of the lochs.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—Having been requested by neighbouring clergymen to include their parishes in the description of the natural history of my own, some branches of it will be found more general in their application to other parishes, than would otherwise have been necessary or proper. This is particularly the case with the following remarks on geology.

The rocks of this parish and the adjoining district, I shall describe under the four following heads, viz. I. Granite; II. Slates or flagstones; III. Sandstone; IV. Trap rocks.\*

I. *Granite.*—The district where this rock occurs has been lately ascertained to be much more extensive than it was formerly thought to be; for I have traced it, in company with the Messrs Anderson of Inverness, from Graemsay to this parish. The town of Stromness occupies the southern end of this tract, which is about one mile broad, and extends from the Island of Graemsay, which is the southern boundary, in a northerly direction, for about six miles, till it passes out at a precipice in this parish, on the west coast, where the Atlantic washes its base, and veils it from the eye of the geologist. The sound which separates

\* Professor Jameson, in his "Mineralogy of the Scottish Isles," gave the first sketch of the geology of the Orkney Islands.

Graemsay from the mainland, and is less than a mile broad, interrupts the examination of this rock; but there can be no doubt of its being continued under water. In some places, it has no appearance of a slaty structure; in others, it has so distinctly, though not regularly stratified, and is properly gneiss; and at one place, discovered by Professor Jameson, it passes into mica slate, containing garnets. Hornblende rock is also found in this tract, but there is no extensive exposure of it. In general, it consists of a grey granite or gneiss, which is traversed by veins of quartz or felspar, but more frequently the latter, and exhibits the usual phenomena of such a district, in the interruption and shifting of the veins. A few years ago, L. 300 were laid out in quarrying some of this gneiss, and cutting it into paving-stones for the London market, but it did not succeed. In one place, the workmen came in contact with a rock containing a little galena and pyrites, but, with this trifling exception, it contains no ores nor useful minerals. Between this rock and the schist, there is a belt of conglomerate, at such places as are exposed, of 50 or 100 yards broad, containing pieces of gneiss, quartz, and felspar, imbedded, from a microscopic size to that of a turnip. This belt contains nothing worth remarking, except small veins of galena at one place, which are of no value. It gradually loses the conglomerated structure; and the succeeding strata, though they sometimes alternate, generally assume more of the character of those that rest on them, till at last they pass into

II. *Sandstone Flag, or Secondary Slate or Schist.*—This rests upon the conglomerate, and dips from it wherever I have been able to find it in contact. The best exposures on the west side of the granite are on the north shore of Graemsay, point of Ness, in Stromness, and south-west coast of this parish, where the strata slope west. On the east side of the granite, it is only the strata in immediate contact with it that dip east; for, in the course of 100 yards, they gradually dip more in conformity with the general dip of the country; but they may be seen dipping east on the shore of Graemsay, and at the point of Garson, in Stromness; and again they dip north-east, at the Burn of Cairston, and at the north-east boundary of the granite in this parish.

Of this slate, almost all the Orkney Islands are composed, or at least most of the low land and shelving shores, while many of the surrounding hills and precipices are formed of the superimposed sandstone. It forms a great part of Stromness, and almost all Sandwick and Birsay. It can hardly be described as one rock, as it is

in fact a succession of argillaceous, siliceous and calcareous slates or schists of different thickness, hardness, colour, and composition; but the most common, and that which is most esteemed for building, is when recently quarried, of a dark blue colour, like a hard slate clay, and breaks at determinate angles, diamond-shaped, thus giving the builders easy work; and some quarries afford excellent paving stones of four or five feet square, perfectly smooth.\* By exposure, however, they acquire a rusty reddish or yellowish colour, from the decomposition of the iron with which most of these rocks are impregnated. These strata may be found at all inclinations, from horizontal to perpendicular, but in general they dip to the west, at an angle about 20°. They are generally in thin strata, and in one place are quarried pretty extensively for roofing slate, which is not good enough to export. In part of this quarry the slates are beautifully marked by dendritic iron pyrites. The texture is apparently homogeneous, but when exposed long to the action of the weather the softer parts are worn away, and the harder portions project much, thus demonstrating its compound nature. This is particularly the case along several of the precipices that bound the west coast, where the effect of the weather is increased by the exposed situation, sea-spray, &c. and forms the figured stones which have been considered so curious by many; and indeed the forms that they assume are sometimes exceedingly fantastic, being in the shape of concentric circles, ovals, squares, or triangles, according to the original mixture of the stones in the different strata, but most frequently the figures are spread irregularly on the surface like hieroglyphics. In some places they alternate with strata of a hard, dark *limestone*, which is nearly the colour of the strata between which it lies, and is burnt for lime, but not extensively, as the distance we have to bring our coals renders it expensive. In other places, the strata have a bituminous appearance on the surface, or little cavities which are filled up with a soft bitumen or petroleum, occasionally glance coal? This has excited some hope of discovering coal in this county, which would be an incalculable benefit to all the north of Scotland; but the whole county is so intersected by the sea, and there are such plain and beautiful exposures of all the strata along our shores, that it is hardly possi-

\* The resemblance of these and the Caithness slates to some of the so-called grey-wacke slates of the south of England was remarked many years ago by Professor Jameson. He was in the practice, in his lectures, of pointing out the close resemblance or identity of these slates and red sandstones with the slates and sandstones in the Pentland range at Edinburgh, which lie immediately below the coal formation, and which he held to be members of the old red sandstone,—a formation belonging either to the undermost group of the secondary class or the uppermost of the transition class.

ble for coal to be present in any quantity, without its croppings or outgoings being perceived somewhere.

Fossil fish and vegetables occur in several places, even among the strata within half a-mile of the granite. All the species of these ichthyolites are far from being completely collected and known yet; but it is believed that they prove these strata to be identical with the slates of Caithness, and of the southern shores of the Moray Frith. Flinty slate and chert, passing into lydian stone, abound in these slates. Sandstone, some hundred yards thick, lies in immediate contact with the conglomerate on the north end of the primitive district on the west coast of the parish. It has that diagonal arrangement of the layers called false stratification. It is much more hard and crystalline than the new red sandstone, of a dark grey or brown colour, and is the only good quarry for millstones in this county.

Veins of galena are not uncommon, and one near the manse of Stromness has been worked for about 100 yards, but long since forsaken, as a speculation which would not pay. It is here associated with common heavy spar, and a mineral is found in small quantity along side of it, composed of carbonate of strontia, and sulphate of barytes, which has been described by Professor Traill as an entirely new mineral, and named Stromnite, or Barystrontianite. The other minerals that this part of the formation contains are of no consequence, viz. quartz or rock crystal in veins, calcareous spar in veins. Iron and copper pyrites, the former, most commonly in veins or nodules and heavy spar, occur sometimes of considerable thickness.

**III. Sandstone.**—This rock lies upon the slates, and is by most geologists considered the old red sandstone. It occurs neither in this parish, Stromness, nor Birsay, to which my observations on the slates refer; but to understand the position of these rocks, it is necessary to trace them to Hoy, south of Stromness, where this sandstone rests on the slates. There it rises to the height of 1600 feet above the level of the sea, in the Ward Hill. It varies much in colour, but is generally gray, red, or brown; and is disposed in strata, which are often so soft that it is not much used for building. Government, however, employed it for erecting martello towers, which are fast crumbling away. This sandstone is easily decomposed by the action of the sea, and forms numerous caves and fantastic forms along the precipices where it occurs, of which the insulated rock, called the Old Man of Hoy, that is so conspicuous from Caithness, may be given as an instance. This singular rock

is formed of the same strata as the precipice from which it is disjoined; and as this is nearly 1000 feet perpendicular, it affords a magnificent exhibition of the strata. The top is red sandstone, and the base on which it rests amygdaloid. In this precipice, I found, about twenty years ago, a fine vein of manganese ore, from which beautiful specimens may be procured, and in the other side of the island, that species of iron ore called brown hematite, is found in such quantity, that it was at one time worked.

IV. *Trap Rocks*.—These occur as greenstone, basalt, porphyry, and amygdaloid. All the rocks formerly noticed are frequently intersected with whin dikes, from one to ten feet thick, which are sometimes shifted and contorted, but generally run directly west by compass, (the flag having a seam in that direction), till they disappear under the bed of the ocean. In the space of eight miles along the precipices on the west coast of Stromness and this parish, I have counted eighteen separate dikes of this kind, and, including Birsay, I have no doubt there are more than two dozen. The strata of the slate in contact with these dikes are generally contorted and pulverized, and easily washed away, leaving narrow inlets or “geoes.” One of these, nine feet thick, cuts through the north-west extremity of the granite, and another bounds on its south-east side a mass of amygdaloid, containing zeolite, calcareous spar, green earth, &c. in Walls. The only place where I know of its overflowing the secondary rocks is one which I discovered about twelve years ago in the west side of Hoy, where there is a bed of it fully 100 feet thick, and, I believe, several miles in extent, in the middle of the sandstone. Near the same bed, on the sea shore of Rackwick, I also found a fine vein of fibrous gypsum, an inch and a-half thick. Porphyry also occurs; and Dr Hibbert observed an interesting spot of it near the granite in Cairston.

V. *Alluvial Rocks*.—The alluvial formation of Orkney is not particularly interesting; but we have plenty of clay, in most places abundance of peat, though there is little in Sandwick, and, in many districts, marl. Bog-iron ore is very common on some of our hills; and along our sandy bays, nature frequently erects a barrier of a sort of indurated sand, apparently formed by the mixture of siliceous particles with fragments of shells, which serve for cement. In our peat-mosses, roots of large trees are often dug up, and they have also been found in Sandwick Bay, where they are generally covered by the ocean. Hazel-nuts, deers' horns, &c. have likewise repeatedly been found imbedded in our peat,—and this makes it probable

that forests have formerly grown in these islands, where there is nothing now that deserves to be called a tree, except in gardens.

*Soil.*—The soil of Sandwick is of very different kinds in different places. Immediately east of the bay, it is nothing but sand, which blows about with the wind. In other places, there is a poor yellow clay, formed by the wasting of the clay flag; and our best soil is a rich black clayish loam. These are mixed together in infinite proportions; but there is no depth of mossy soil or gravel. The clays particularly rest on a retentive rocky subsoil, many parts of which would be much improved by draining.

*Zoology.*—The rarer species of animals only being wanted for the Statistical Account, I would not be justified in inserting a complete list, for which I must refer to Anderson's "Guide to the Highlands and Islands," where one will be found, embracing those of Mr Low, Drs Barry, Traill, Neill, and Mr Forbes, to which I have nothing important to add. I may, however, mention, that rabbits are very numerous in the sandy parts of this parish, and hares, which were only introduced into Orkney a few years ago, are now beginning to show themselves. Thousands of gulls, of different species, with scarfs and other sea birds, as well as common pigeons, build on the shelves of our precipices, and some hundreds of the pewit, or black-headed gull, on a little artificial holm in the Loch of Skail. A few pairs of wild swans remain some months in winter in the Lochs of Stenness and Clumly. Wild geese visit us every spring, and several species of duck are found in all our lochs in considerable numbers. There are no trout or other fish of any importance in our lochs; but in the Loch of Stenness, trout, flounders, and various other species are got; and there is great variety in the Atlantic, on our west shores; however, it is only when the sea is smooth that boats can get out to fish. Lobsters are caught in the bay for the London market.

*Botany.*—The plants in this parish are not very different from those in the neighbouring ones, except Hoy, where there is a considerable number of alpine plants on the Ward Hill. The Scotch primrose (*Primula Scotica*), and vernal squill (*Scilla verna*), grow abundantly in this, and most parishes of the county, with some more plants that are rather rare in the south of Scotland. But, for a catalogue of these, I must refer the botanist to the works of Drs Barry and Neill, and my own contribution of 83 new species to the Orkney Flora in Anderson's "Guide," which would occupy too much space to republish here, as they contain altogether 545 species.

It is, however, in cryptogamous plants that the Flora of Orkney



is particularly rich; and we have the pleasure of adding several to the Flora of Scotland, besides the *Chara aspera*, new to that of Britain, Dr Pollexfen has paid particular attention to the sea-weeds; and the addition which I am now enabled to make to former lists of these, prove his diligence in collecting, and acuteness in discriminating,—for though I have also picked up a few of these when accidentally at the sea shore, yet, for the majority of them, I am indebted to him. Without deducting a few that might be subtracted from former lists, but, taking Barry's at 11, Neill's at 13, and mine at 44, there are still 65 new species to be added to the sea-weeds, making the Orkney algæ amount to 133 species, and its flora to 610; and yet much remains to be done, particularly in cryptogamous botany. It is deemed proper to publish the complete list of algæ, including the old and new, on account of the rarity of some, alterations in nomenclature, &c.

I. ALGÆ INARTICULATÆ.		II. ALGÆ CONFEROIDÆ.	
Sargassum vulgare	Nitophyllum bonnemaisoni	Cladostephus spongiosus	
..... bacciferum	..... laceratum	Sphacelaria chirrosa	
Halidrys siliquosa	Rhodomenia bifida	..... olivacea	
Fucus vesiculosus	..... laciniata	Ectocarpus littoralis	
..... ceranoides	..... palmata	..... siliculosus	
..... serratus	..... reniformis	..... tomentosus	
..... nodosus	Plocanium coccineum	..... Mertensii	
..... canaliculatus	Odonthalia dentata	Polysiphonia urceolata	
Himantalia lorea	Rhodomela lycopodioides	..... parasitica	
Lichina pygmaea	..... subfusca	..... nigrescens	
..... confinis	Bonnemaisonia asparagoides	..... fastigiata	
Alaria esculenta	Laurencia pinnatifida	..... elongata	
Laminaria digitata	..... dasyphylla	..... byssoides	
..... bulbosa	Chylocladia clavellosa	Dasya coccinea	
..... saccharina	..... kaliformis	..... Hutchinsiae	
..... phyllitis	..... articulata	Ceramium rubrum	
..... fascia	Gigartina purpurascens	..... diaphanum	
Desmarestia ligulata	..... confervoides	..... ciliatum	
..... aculeata	..... plicata	Griffithsia multifida	
Dichloria viridis	Chondrus mammillosus	..... corallina	
Sporochnus pedunculatus	..... crispus	..... setacea	
..... rhizodes	..... membranifolius	Callithamnion plumula	
Chordaria flagelliformis	..... Brodiaei	..... Turneri	
Chorda flum	Phyllophora rubens	..... arbuscula	
..... lomentaria	Sphaerococcus coronopifolius	..... lanosum	
Asperococcus fistulosus	Gelidium corneum	..... roseum	
..... pusillus	Ptilota plumosa	..... pdyspermum	
Punctaria plantaginea	Iridaea edulis	..... granulatum	
..... tenuissima	Dumontia filiformis	..... thuyoides	
Striaria attenuata	Catanela opuntia	..... corymbosum	
Dictyosiphon feniculaceus	Porphyra laciniata	..... pedicellatum	
Dictyota dichotoma	..... vulgaris	..... Rothii	
Furcellaria fastigiata	..... linearis	Conferva tortuosa	
Polyides rotundus	Ulva latissima	..... implexa	
Delesseria sanguinea	..... lactuca	..... melagonium	
..... sinuosa	..... Linza	..... aerea	
..... alata	Enteromorpha intestinalis	..... fucicola	
..... hypoglossum	..... compressa	..... glomerata	
..... ruscifolia	..... erecta	..... Hutchinsiae	
Nitophyllum ocellatum	..... clathrata	..... rupestris	
..... punctatum	Bryopsis plumosa	..... refracta	

Conferva centralis	Mesogloia multifida	Batrachospermum moniliforme
Ca'othrix confervicola	Gloiosiphonia capillaris	Corynephora marina
III. ALGÆ GLOIOCLADÆ.	Trichocladia vermicularis	
Mesogloia Hudsoni	----- virescens	

There are no forests in this parish; but some trees have been planted within the last fifteen years, and the kinds that seem to succeed best are, the plane, ash, mountain-ash, elm, and willow.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The only plans or surveys of this parish of any importance, in addition to those of the county in general, are those of the townships, in which the Crown holds property, made by Messrs Granger and Miller, and lodged in the sheriff-clerk's office.

*Land-owners.*—The property is divided into very small portions here, as in the neighbouring parishes. William Graham Watt, Esq. of Breckness, holds about a third, and resides on it, cultivating a considerable part. The Crown holds about a fifth; and the remainder is held by nearly seventy other proprietors, most of whom cultivate their own little farms.

*Parochial Registers.*—The date of the earliest entries in our parochial register, of births is 22d September 1728, and in that of marriages, 20th April 1727. They have for some years been kept and preserved with great care; but they do not appear to have been so formerly.

*Antiquities.*—In the former Statistical Account it is mentioned, that, “on the west coast of the parish of Sandwick, close by the sea shore, is to be seen the ruins of a large building, which yet bears the name of the Castle of Snusgar;” also that several tumuli had been opened, one by Sir Joseph Banks, containing three stone chests, each enclosing a human skeleton, in different positions, and bruised bones, teeth, hair, beads, &c.; and others containing smaller stone chests, enclosing urns, in which were found ashes, with fragments of bone, or ashes and fragments of bone without urns. To these antiquities, a residence of six years enables me to add the following.

In the township of Yeskenaby, not far from the boat *noust*,\* are the ruins of a small church, with an enclosure about it like a churchyard; and in several other places, a kirk green or burying ground. Between the top of Lingafold and the loch of Clumly, are the stones of Via, which are worthy of the antiquarian's notice, and which are supposed to be a *cromlech* or heathen altar. Indeed, the figure of that, with the head stone in the hundred and

\* A place for boats.

fiftieth plate of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, published in 1797, might pass for a representation of this monument before the displacing of its pillars.\*

On the hill north of Quoyloo there is a standing stone, and also a curious collection of large and ancient stones, to which the name Haly Kirk is still applied; and a gentleman residing in that neighbourhood informs me, that he recollects one of these, now prostrate, supported by those that are still perpendicular, thus completing that resemblance to an altar, which its name seems to indicate. Not far from the same spot, about 200 yards north-east of North Dike, and about 500 east of the summit of Vestrafiold, are the remains of an enclosure, 800 yards in circumference, and, I believe, of great antiquity, many of the stones being large, and set upon edge, particularly five or six on the north side.

About sixty yards nearer the summit, is a quarry, with enormous blocks of stone detached, so similar to the standing stones of Stenness in size and shape, that I suppose this to be the bed from which they were taken, as I know of no other quarry from which they could be procured, and no other purpose for which people would detach such blocks as these, from 13 to 18 feet long. The nearest circle of the standing stones is about six miles from this spot; but, though they might be considered geographically in this parish, they are ecclesiastically within the boundaries of Stenness. I may, however, mention, that numerous remains of antiquity, probably connected with them, may be seen at the adjoining boundary of this parish, and more particularly about a mile north of them; and within the west corner of the dike of Wasbister is a circle, which seems a miniature of that in Stenness, without the stones, surrounded by a ditch about 12 feet broad, and 6 feet deep, 219 yards in circumference outside of the ditch.

There are in the parish at least five broughs, which their name and situation prove to have been, of old, places of defence. Two of these are on promontories at the precipice in Yeskenaby, one jutting out in the Loch of Clumly, and two in the Loch of Stenness; each of these, not an island, or surrounded by water,

\* The slab of Via is 1 foot thick, 5 feet 10 long, and 4 feet 9 broad. The four pillars under it are each about 3 feet long; and the head stone 3 feet 9 by 2 feet 9 on the surface, and 1 foot 4 thick. It is placed nearly in the centre of an old circular enclosure, 275 paces in circumference, with a small tumulus on the south side of it, which was lately opened, but nothing found in it except a parcel of large stones.

being separated from the land by a ditch, which is still distinctly visible.

I have observed at several places vitrified cairns, similar to those in Sanday, &c. which Dr Hibbert supposes to have been produced by beacon fires. I know not that ours have the same origin; for since that celebrated antiquarian called my attention to the subject, I have, in several cases, seen similar vitrified matter produced by burning a whole stack of sandy peats in the open air, during a strong breeze, which is sometimes done to obtain the ashes for manure.

During last summer, a man, who built a habitation for himself on the common between this and Isbister, in Birsay, found what seems to have been a Pict's house, in a *knowe* from which he took the stones. It consisted of a chain of four circular cells, connected together by passages too narrow and low ever to have formed an abode for men.\* It seems more probable that the rubbish above the cells was the ruins of their residence, and that these were used as cellars or places of security.

Barrows or tumuli are particularly numerous in Sandwick. I believe there are more than one hundred, though it would be neither easy nor useful to count them. Eight of these, situated on the common, have been opened during the last year. A minute description of each would be tedious; but a brief account of the most important, which I opened in company with most of the other office-bearers of the Orkney Natural History Society, must be interesting to the antiquarian. The first, which was the largest of a numerous cluster between Voy and Lyking, was 50 yards in circumference, and about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. It was formed of a wet adhesive clay. On reaching the centre, we found a large flag which formed the cover; and on raising it up, the grave appeared as free from injury, and the pieces of bone as white and clean, as if formed only the preceding day. At its end, which lay north-east by east, was an urn inverted, shaped like an inverted flower-pot; and at its other end, about a hat-full of bones, unmixed with ashes, which had been burnt and broken small, none being more than two inches long and one broad, covered by a stone of an irregular

\* This building was unfortunately demolished before I heard of it; but the following dimensions, which I had from recollection, are probably pretty correct. Cells, 4 feet in diameter, and 4 feet high; passages, 2 feet wide, 2 feet long, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet high; walls, 1 foot thick, or more, according to the size of stone, only built smooth inside, covered with large flags, the lowest across the passage, and the highest across the middle of the cell, with one between.

shape, about one foot across. It was sprinkled with a peculiar mossy-looking substance, of a brown colour, and white ashes, which seemed, from the smell when burnt, to be animal matter. The surface of the urn is dark, not unlike burnt cork, and seems to be rude earthen-ware, into the composition of which, bits of stone enter liberally. It contained nothing that we could perceive, and soon fell to pieces; but I put them together with Roman cement; and it is now in the Society's museum, with part of the bones.\*

The next, in size, of the group of tumuli, was 34 yards in circumference, about 6 feet high, and contained six separate graves. The two nearest the centre seemed the principal ones. A large flag rested against the covers of these on the east side, jutting up about a foot above them. † The space under this flag was quite empty. On removing it and the two horizontal covers on which it rested, the two principal graves were exposed to view. The first was formed of a double row of upright flags, on all sides except the south, next to the second, where there was only a single row, and small pieces substituted at the corners, ‡ the space inside was filled for 9 inches with clay, and the corners of this and the second were also cemented with it. Between the cover and clay flooring, was a vacant space, about a foot deep, into which some fine sand had penetrated or fallen from the cover in wasting, and sprinkled the floor. On removing this, we found a small stone, which covered a cavity in the clay, 1 foot in diameter, and 9 inches deep, containing the bones burnt and broken, as in the first tumulus, and some little pieces of charcoal. It is worthy of remark, that in a tumulus lately opened in Circassia, Mr Spencer discovered a few fragments of unglazed *terra cotta* vases, containing charcoal also.§

The second grave|| was nearly one foot south of the former, and consisted of four flags, set up on a floor of flag, with a heap of

\* The cover was 5 feet 7 in length, 3 feet 2 broad, and 3½ inches thick. The bottom of the grave was on the level of the surface of the earth, and it measured 3 feet long, 2 feet broad, and 1 foot 10 deep. The part of the urn that bore to be lifted up measured 1 foot in diameter at its mouth, 5 inches inside and outside of bottom, and 9 inches high; the bottom 1 inch thick, and the sides barely ¾.

† It measured 5 feet long, 4 feet 2 inches broad, and 3 inches thick.

‡ The first grave was 1 foot 8 inches square inside, the outside flags were 6 inches higher than the inside ones, and those on the west and east sides very thick. Outside they were supported by some lumpy stones and the clay.

§ Spencer's Travels in Circassia, Vol. ii. p. 299, third edition.

|| This was 1 foot 10 inches, by 1 foot 3 inches across the middle, but far from square, and 2 feet deep.

bones, similar to those in the first. The third was at the south side, close by the west corner of the second, and was very simple, being merely a cavity in the earth, covered by a stone on which we were treading, and being so low, without any upright flags about it, it escaped observation till we were about to leave the tumulus. It contained pieces of bone of a larger size than the former two, and a few pieces of a vitrified substance, like a parcel of peas, with a vesicular internal structure, and of a whitish appearance, as if it were vitrified bone. The other three resembled the more common graves that are generally found in the lesser tumuli, differing from each other in size and structure, but all more or less filled with ashes, of a reddish colour, apparently of peat, interspersed with very small bits of bone.\*

All of these graves lay with one end north north-east, except the sixth, which was directed north-east. This resemblance between the fourth and first is worthy of notice,—that it also consisted of a double row of flags on all sides except the south, next to the fifth, where it was single.

I do not think that it would be either interesting or useful to describe minutely the graves in all the tumuli that I have seen opened during the last year, or heard of being opened previously; for though they vary a little in size, shape, and direction, there is a strong similarity between them, the largest being 2 feet 9 inches by 2 feet, and the smallest 1 foot 2 inches by 10½ inches; and the direction of those that I have had an opportunity of observing, varies only two points of the compass from north by east, to north-east by north, and they all contained peat ashes mixed with bits of bone. I leave it to those more competent to the task, to speculate on these facts. One thing, however, seems evident, that these tumuli are the burying-places of a people who burned their dead, and it seems probable that the rich were buried in the larger and more costly tumuli, and that their bodies were burnt in such a way as to prevent their remains from being mingled with peat ashes: and the bits of charcoal found in one of the graves seem to indicate that this was used as the fuel, at least on some occasions,

\* The fourth grave lay on the east side of the first, with a space of three feet between; internally, it was 2 feet 10 inches long, by 2 feet 3 inches broad, the inner row 6 inches below the level of the outer; 9 inches below that, was a small coverstone, and at the bottom, 6 inches of peat ashes, with bits of bone. The fifth lay two feet south of the last, and was about 3 feet 5 inches, by 2 feet 3 inches. It was formed by a single row of flags without any cover. On the top was 6 inches of clay, and below that, about 9 inches of ashes and bone. The sixth lay three feet from the north-west corner of the first, and was the rudest of all. It measured 2 feet by 1 foot 2 inches.

while the poor were interred in the smaller tumuli, along with the ashes of the peats, which consumed their remains.

An ancient and interesting grave was also found last year, on the farm of Downby, by the proprietor, from the plough accidentally coming in contact with its cover stone. It contained a human skeleton, which could not be got out entire, but which seemed to have been buried in a sitting posture, and at the right hand lay a mallet head of gneiss, finely marked with dark and light layers, and beautifully polished, now in the museum in Stromness. The head lay north-west by north.\*

### III.—POPULATION.

The amount of the population at each census, taken at the four last periods, was 970, 922, 930, and 973, or, including 46 seamen, 1019; but when I took an account of my parishioners in 1833, visiting every cottage, I found it amounted to 1088, and, according to the present return for this Account, it is 1056.

The yearly average number of births for the last seven years is,	-	31½
deaths,	-	18
marriages,†	-	7½
The number of persons under 15 years of age,	-	413
between 15 and 30,	-	292
30 and 50,	-	245
50 and 70,	-	119
upwards of 70,	-	17
Number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards, including the Crown,	-	2
Number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50 years of age,	-	20
Number of unmarried women upwards of 45,	-	36
Average number of children in each family having them,	-	4½

The number of insane, 2; fatuous, 5; blind, 2; deaf and dumb, 2; total 11.

The number of families with children, 164, without them, 38,† total, 202.

Gaelic has never been spoken here; and I know of no customs, games, or amusements, peculiar to this people.

If the work of cleanliness has begun, it is yet far from perfected. In their persons and dress, I believe there has been some improve-

\* This grave was 4 feet 2½ inches, by 2 feet 11 inches, and 2 feet 9 inches deep, formed of flag only about an inch thick. The cover was 6½ feet long, 4 feet 2 inches broad, and 6½ inches thick. The mallet is 3 inches long, about 6 in circumference at the thickest end, and has a hole quite through, apparently for a handle, about seven-tenths of an inch in diameter.

† The marriages registered last seven years are 56, but 18 females and 4 males belonged to other parishes: deducting the latter, who would probably take their wives to their own homes with them, we obtain the above number.

‡ In many cases, there are females living in cots by themselves, which makes the number of families appear greater.

ment in this respect, but it must be very limited, till they have houses that are clean, in which it would be possible to keep their persons so. At present, most of them are wretched hovels, with holes in the roof instead of chimneys, which permit that part of the smoke to escape, that is knowing enough to find it; but most of the soot attaches itself to the roof and rafters, whence it descends again on the inmates.

Another hole in the roof, about six inches square, and often without glass, is the substitute for a window; and cows, calves, pigs, geese, and fowls, share the benefit of the peat fire, placed on the middle of the floor for the accommodation of all. Their food is as simple as can be imagined. Oat and bear-meal, with milk in various forms, potatoes, cabbage, and sometimes fish, is their ordinary diet; and most indulge in a little flesh and ale at Christmas, or other holidays. Of their poor cots, many are only tenants at will, and on this account, as well as others connected with their state of vassalage, though many have peace and plenty, I cannot say that all enjoy, in a reasonable degree, the comforts of society and civilization, as so much depends on their landlord.

The general character of the people, intellectual, moral, and religious, is, I believe, much like that of their neighbours, who have been placed in the same unfavourable circumstances, living in a parish united to another, with public worship only once a fortnight, and no resident clergyman. I have the gratification of noticing in the sequel their late improvement, in these respects.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—Much of the information required under this branch of inquiry, I expected to have procured from the tenants; but it is proper to explain, that many of them having been prohibited from divulging the secret of their real rent, and quantity of land, I have been under the necessity of extracting the truth from other sources. More than half of this parish has lately been divided under a process of division of run-rig, and of this part, the number of acres of arable and pasture land, with the comparative value of each, has been exactly ascertained; and knowing the proportion between the valued rent of this part, and that which remains undivided, I am furnished with materials from which to calculate the number of acres of arable and pasture land in the whole parish, with more precision than formerly; and the knowledge of the real rent of a part, amounting to more than L. 600, gives me also materials for calculating the real rent of the whole,



which I believe to be nearly L. 1600, but which I shall at present calculate at L. 1500; and I have pleasure in acknowledging the politeness of Mr Graham, the Crown Chamberlain, and the surveyor, in procuring most of the documents. The valuation of the parish, more than twenty years ago, is far below the present value, some tenants paying more than double of the rent then stated.

No. of imperial acres cultivated, or occasionally in tillage,	2294
which never have been cultivated, and which remain constantly waste, or in pasture, is	3224
in a state of undivided common, or water,	5202
under planted wood, about	1

What portion of this might, with a profitable application of capital, be added to the cultivated land, is a matter on which there must be a great variety of opinions; but the practicability of doing so is yearly proved, by the cultivation of some part of it.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land per acre is 10s., and the average rent of pasture land about 2s. per acre.

*Rate of Wages.*—The following is the rate of wages. A ploughman per year, L. 7, or more if he acts as grieve, with board, or equivalent in meal, &c.; a male day labourer gets 1s. and a female 6d. without fare; female servants in gentlemen's families have L. 3 a-year. For harvest, men get L. 1, 10s. and females L. 1. Masons may be got to build dikes at 1s. 3d. a-day, and 1ld. a fathom for building and quarrying a dry stone dike, 3½ feet high, with coping. More perfect masons obtain 2s. a-day for the best kind of work; carpenters get 2s. a-day and food.

*Prices.*—The prices of different articles of raw produce, or country manufacture, are, fowls, 8d. each; eggs, 3d. per dozen; beef and mutton, about Martinmas, 2d. per lb., but dearer at other seasons; butter, 6d. per lb.; potatoes, the dearest, 3s. per barrel; an iron plough, L. 2; a wooden one, L. 1, 10s.; a cart, L. 4, 4s.; a pair of harrows, 14s. or 15s. The common breeds of cattle are the small ones of the county, and little attention has been paid to their improvement. The general character of the husbandry is still exceedingly defective, most of the ground having been alternately in oats and bear for generations, without the benefit of green crop, grass, or fallow, except a rig or two on each farm, for the potatoes. The soil is, in consequence, full of a great variety of weeds, and exhausted; and I deem it of the utmost importance, that a regular rotation of crops should be introduced, suiting the course and kind of crop, to the soil and climate; but

hitherto there has been a greater desire to increase the quantity of arable ground, by reclaiming waste land, than to increase the productive power of that which is already arable, by rotation and draining. In general there are no leases, and in the few cases where they exist, their duration is only about seven years, so that they afford no adequate encouragement for improvements by the tenants. The state of the farm-buildings is as bad as that of the dwelling-house which I mentioned before, and there are no inclosures among the peasantry, except those of their "kale yards."

The principal improvements which have recently been introduced among the tenants, are better horses, and implements of agriculture, and those in my neighbourhood are also trying turnips on a small scale.

The single-stilted plough, used here at the beginning of this century, is now completely abolished, with all its cumbrous machinery, and the common two-stilted mould-board one substituted in its place, and a pair of good small horses, instead of three or four with their leaders. Harrows with teeth of iron instead of wood, and carts are now universally used. The public road from Stromness is made as far as the Loch of Aith, and in tolerable repair.

Mr Watt is by far the most extensive farmer in the parish, and has for many years carried on an improved system of husbandry; enclosing and reclaiming waste land on a large scale,—his last inclosure off the common, a few years since, including about 100 acres. Mr Robertson in Lyking deserves next to be noticed with approbation, for his success in raising the best crops, and acting on an improved system. Mr Heddle of Clumly, who purchased that property about five years ago, has already inclosed the whole of it, and brought most of its waste land into cultivation.

The glebe has also, during the last four years, been inclosed and drained; and this is the only farm in the parish, or, in a much wider district, that is under a regular rotation of crops. The course adopted is that of six years, viz. green crop, bear, two years grass, and two years oats; but it would be premature to affirm that this is the rotation best adapted to the county, or most worthy of general imitation. This experiment, however, has shown that the crops are vastly improved by the rotation, and that the first years are attended with more expense than profit.

All the obstacles to improvement, noticed in the "heads of inquiry," operate here in their full force, viz. want of capital, the want of encouragement by proprietors, erroneous management of

land, defective leases, and insufficient accommodation in building and inclosing.

The only quarries are those of the common clay stone, which are found in most places fit for building, and in a few places adapted for paving and roofing; and the mill-stone quarry noticed under Geology.

We have no mines, and no fisheries of any importance, though when the sea is smooth, those near the bay catch some fish for their own use, and a few lobsters for the London market.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce cannot be stated with precision, as the people could not tell it; but the principle on which valuers generally calculate, is, that the produce should be three times the value of the rent, which makes the total amount of the raw produce raised in this parish L. 4500, and this is almost exclusively in grain, and a few potatoes for their own use. The only crop cultivated for the arts is rye, for making bonnets, nine acres of which are raised by Mr Watt, at what appears a liberal rent of L. 6, 10s. per acre, but he has to manure and work the land, and furnish carts whenever they are required, for carrying the produce to the boiler, thence to the bleaching-field, and thence to Kirkwall, or Stromness.

*Manufactures.*—The principal branch of manufacture carried on here, is straw plaiting, which occupies almost all our younger females; or, in summer, reaping and preparing the nine acres of rye that furnish the materials. The seeds are sown thick, that the straw may be long and fine. The stems are cut down before the grain ripens, tied near the lower end into very small bundles, steeped in boiling water for an hour, spread on the ground to bleach, and carted to the manufacturer's house, where the upper part between the highest joint and the grain, which only in general is used, is pulled out; cut to a proper length, sifted or sorted to different degrees of fineness, and made up into small bundles, which are distributed to the girls who take them to their own houses to be plaited; they are paid according to the fineness of the straw, and excellence of the work. The plaiters can earn 6d. a day at the present rate of wages. The plaits are next washed, smoked, milled, and, lastly, put into the hands of other girls, who sew them together into bonnets. At one time, this manufacture was conducted in a very objectionable manner, by collecting numbers of young people in confined apartments, where, as "evil communications corrupt good manners," and "one sinner

destroyeth much good," it is to be feared the contaminated atmosphere was not only destructive to their bodily health, but to their moral purity. The same objections, however, do not apply to it as conducted at present in their own houses, where it has a tendency to introduce neatness and cleanliness; but it is a serious objection, that the whim of a London lady may render it unfashionable to appear under a thatch of straw, and thus at once throw destitute 3000 Orcadian damsels.

The manufacture of kelp is not of great importance here now, only about eight tons are made,—and it neither affords much employment nor profit.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no town or village in the parish, but the centre is only about five miles from Stromness, and about fifteen from Kirkwall.

Our letters pass through the Stromness post-office; and the length of made-road from the centre of this, to join that in Stromness parish, is two miles.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is placed about 100 yards from the bay at the west side, and about five miles from the other extremity,—a situation which is most inconvenient for all the population, except the few in that neighbourhood, the nearest cottage being nearly a mile distant. As this church was built so lately as 1836, partly on the foundation of the former one—it is my duty to relieve the presbytery of the bounds, and the minister of the awful responsibility of approving of such a site: for after the principal heritors had petitioned the presbytery for a removal of the church to a central situation, and that court had cordially approved of a measure so eminently calculated to promote the glory of God, and salvation of souls, the opposition of the very person who had written, and been most prominent in promoting that petition, effectually defeated the arrangement.

From this it is evident that presbyteries should be vested with authority to fix on the proper sites for churches.

Though so recently built, I cannot say that its present state of repair is good, for being founded partly on the foundation of the old church, and partly on soft sand, the wall cracked so far, that the arch of a window came down, and that being rebuilt, it has again cracked in such a manner, that it gives little prospect of durability. It contains 564 sittings, which are not yet divided. The manse was built in 1833. The glebe consists of 43½ acres, nearly half of which used to be arable ground, and the rest poor pasture, or waste land, which was let altogether for about L. 12.

The stipend is the minimum of L. 150, with L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements,—L. 6, 5s. 6d. of the stipend being paid from Exchequer.

There are two Dissenting chapels in the parish, one belonging to the United Secession church, and the other to the Independents. The former was erected in 1828, and the minister\* is provided with a house, a piece of land, and fuel, and receives L. 76 of stipend, the whole of which is derived to him from the congregation; but, according to the usual practice of the Secession Church, so long as the congregation are unable, by their own efforts, to support the regular dispensation of religious ordinances, they annually receive pecuniary aid from the United Associate Synod, and also from the two neighbouring congregations of Kirkwall and Stromness. The number of communicants on the roll of that congregation is 105, but only 68 of them belong to this parish. The whole population attending the chapel, including members, their children, and others, is about 290, and if the above proportion holds good, about 150 of them belong to this parish. The Independent chapel was built about 1824, but is not occupied every Sabbath, as the preacher resides in Harray. I cannot state his income, and perhaps I should not, as he is not resident here, but what he derives from this parish must be extremely little. I am told there are seven members connected with this chapel, and not so many additional hearers, resident in Sandwick. Making these deductions from the population, there remain 900 belonging to the Established Church, where worship is generally well attended, considering its distance from the east extremity of the parish, for the people of that district are five miles from the church of their own parish, and only one from that of Harray, where, it is to be supposed, they will frequently attend. The average number of communicants for the last six years, counting those who used tokens, is 496, and counting the official persons also, who used none, I may state it to be about 500. We yearly take a collection in church for one of the General Assembly's schemes; but we cannot raise above L. 1 in this way; for though we sent above L. 7 to one of them, and above L. 3 to another during the last two years, the greater part of these sums was raised by subscription.

*Education.*—The total number of schools is nine; but some of these are kept only for a short period, by persons who happen to

\* This gentleman has politely furnished the information concerning his own chapel, which is given, as far as consistent with the heads of inquiry, in his own words.

have leisure. One of these is the parochial school, and all the rest are unendowed. The branches of education taught at the best of these, are, Latin, French, grammar, writing, arithmetic, music, outlines of civil and natural history, geography, geometry, and a little astronomy; but several taught by females, are limited to reading and sewing. The salary of the parochial teacher is L. 34, 4s. 4½d., but both at this, and the other schools, the school fees do not amount to much. The parochial teacher has the legal accommodation. The expense of education per quarter at it, is 1s. for reading, with grammar, writing and arithmetic, and 6d. for each important branch in addition, but 9d. and even 6d. per quarter are the fees at some of the female schools. I believe all between six and fifteen years of age can read, and a great part of them write. I do not know of more than two or three old people who cannot read. The people, in general, are alive to the benefits of education. Notwithstanding the great number of our schools, another endowed and permanent one is much wanted at the north side of the parish, where there is a population of about 500, most of whom are three miles from the parochial school, which in this climate is sufficient to prevent attendance in the winter season, when they have most time.

There is a visible improvement in the conduct of the people since the facilities of education have increased. In a printed letter of the principal resident heritor, dated 1821, he says, "This parish has been, time out of mind, so ill supplied in regard to church and school, owing, in a great measure, to the residence of the clergyman being placed at the farthest extremity of the other parish, it is wonderful to me that they are not more savage and unprincipled than they are. They are a half century behind most of the other parishes on the mainland, in civilization."

Supposing this to be a correct description of their condition at the time, as he had the best opportunities of knowing, I can now testify from my own observation, as well as that of others, that they have already made up their half century of lee-way, in less than twenty years, and have made such strides in the march of improvement, that they are now equal to their neighbours, even with their twenty years additional advantages. The uncivilized state of this parish, noticed above, is ascribed to its junction with Stromness, and wanting a resident clergyman. By a decret of the Court of Teinds, however, they were disjoined at the death of the incumbent in 1832, and since then it has formed a separate

charge, with a resident pastor, &c. The careless observance of the Sabbath is often remarked in double charges, where the people are deprived of the public ordinances of religion every alternate Sabbath, and I lament that some of this carelessness still adheres to a few of the old: yet I have cause to rejoice in the evident improvement of the young, who are generally regular in attending public worship, and a Sabbath school,—the more advanced being taught in church, immediately after public worship, and the very young in district schools. A portion of these meet in the Secession chapel.

In short, the improvement effected here affords every encouragement for disjoining the other united parishes.

*Library.*—A parochial library was instituted immediately after I came to reside here, for the use of which each family pays 6d. a year. It now contains 164 works, chiefly on religious subjects, besides religious periodicals. There are 74 subscribers.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number on the poor's roll for three years is 20, and the average sum allotted to each, 9s. 4d. a year. The average amount of annual contributions for their relief during the same period, is L.11, 9s. 7d., which is all derived from church collections, and marriage dues, except 8s., which is the rent of a bit of ground devoted to the poor. Out of this sum, however, there are several salaries to be paid. I have never observed any reluctance to accept of parochial relief.

*Fairs, Inns, and Fuel.*—There is one cattle fair held near the east boundary in June. There are four alehouses, which are too many, and have very bad effects on the morals of the people, inducing habits of intemperance. Sandwick is worse provided with fuel, than any other parish in this neighbourhood, having no good moss from which coal-peats can be procured. By use and wont, however, the people have access to extensive mosses in Harray; but as these are six miles from the centre of this parish, the labour and expense of carting them home are very great.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the time of the last Statistical Account, the greatest improvements that have been introduced in agriculture are, better horses, the common plough instead of the single-stilted, the general introduction of carts, a good made road to Stromness, the commencement of green crop among the cottagers, and of a regular rotation on the glebe. The late plankings have shown the quantity of arable and pasture land to be much more than formerly, and the real rents are exceedingly increased. Servants' wages are

trebled, but those of tradesmen and labourers are scarcely heightened. The price of malt and eggs is doubled, while that of other provisions is not raised so much; but a good cow, that formerly sold for L.2, now costs L.4 or more. The disjunction of this parish from Stromness, and the building of two Dissenting chapels, are the most important changes in ecclesiastical affairs. The improvements of which the parish is susceptible, must be evident from the previous observations; but, again, I briefly state, that proper leases, better houses, a rotation of crops, and encouragement by proprietors, seem calculated to promote the progress of industry, and the happiness and comfort of the labouring classes, as well as the interests of the landlords.

*Drawn up May 1839—Revised July 1841.*

## PARISH OF FIRTH AND STENNESS.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. WILLIAM MALCOLM, MINISTER.\*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent, &c.*—THESE united parishes are situated in the mainland of Orkney, having Kirkwall on the east; Orphir on the south; Stromness and Sandwick on the west; Harra and Rendal on the north. The extreme length is about 9 miles; the breadth various. The face of the parishes, in general, is not very agreeable, owing to the many moors and hilly ridges covered with heath and peat moss to the summit. The whole extent of coast, in both parishes, including the small islands of Damsay, and the holm of Grimbister in the bay of Firth, is about 10 miles. The shores are low and flat.

### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Register.*—A register of baptisms and marriages has been regularly kept for a long time.

*Land-owners.*—The chief of these are,—Mrs Stewart, Burness, (liferentrix,) valuation, L. 140, 19s. 6d.; Earl of Zetland, L. 37, 18s. 6d.; James Baikie, Esq. of Tankerness, L. 27, 10s.; and between fifty and sixty smaller proprietors.

\* Drawn up by Mr G. Horne, schoolmaster.



*Mansion-House.*—The only one in the parish is the house of Burness, belonging to Mrs Stewart.

*Antiquities.\**—In the parish of Stenness, are several large erect stones, some standing single, but the greater number arranged in a circular form and surrounded with a pretty wide and deep ditch, of considerable circumference.

Close by a circle of stones, are several tumuli, evidently artificial, some of them raised pretty high, of a conical form, and somewhat hollow upon the top. About half a mile from the semi-circular range of stones, is another beautiful tumulus, considerably larger than the former, around which has been a large ditch. This last is distinguished by the name of Mesow or Mese-howe.†

“ In the neighbourhood of Garmiston, in the parish of Stenness, in the side of a peat moss, are several heaps of earth, said to be the graves of those who fell in a skirmish, at what is called the battle of Summersdale, or Bigswell. The following is reported to have been the occasion of this action. Upon the 18th of May 1529, in the reign of James V. John Earl of Caithness, pretending some right to Orkney, came over with troops to seize it, landed at Howton, and proceeded to Summersdale in Stenness, where they were beat back by the Orkney and Shetland people into a place called the Moss of Bigswald, where the Earl and most of the people were killed, and the rest taken prisoners. Numbers of their bones, and part of their clothing have been dug up, which was black when first got, but soon fell into dust. The Orkney men were commanded by a Sir James Sinclair, natural son to Robert, Earl of Orkney.”‡

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of Firth amounts to 584; and that of Stenness to 583.

During the last three years, there have been two illegitimate births in the parish.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The average rent of land per acre is L. 1, 10s.

The real rental of the parish is L. 1305. With the exception of the glebe and farm, in Firth, called Scarth, the improvements in this parish, for many years, have been very trifling.

*Manufactures.*—Straw-plaiting is performed by young girls, in

\* Vide Old Statistical Account.

† In this country, *howe* is of the same import with *knoll*, or *knowe*, in other parts of Scotland, and is applied to elevated hillocks, whether artificial or natural.

‡ Vide Old Statistical Account.

their father's houses. They are employed by Mr Ramsay in Kirkwall and Mr Heddle, Stromness. Kelp-burning is carried on, on a small scale, by farmers employed by their proprietors.

*Fishings.*—Oyster-fishing is prosecuted, to a limited extent, in Firth.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The number of families in the parish belonging to the Established Church, is 138 in Firth, and 94 in Stenness.

The number of Dissenting or Seceding families in Firth is 6; in Stenness, 17.

The amount of stipend is L. 150; L. 115, 4s. 2d. being derived from the parishes, and L. 34, 15s. 10d. paid by the Exchequer. The glebe in Stenness contains 5 acres, that of Firth about 16 or 17 acres. The value of that of Stenness would be L. 3, and that of Firth, L. 20, if let. The manse was built in 1811, and is in good repair.

*Education.*—There is one parochial school for both parishes, and one in each parish, supported by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The teacher's salary is L. 26. He receives no fees. But his emoluments from other sources may amount to L. 4, 10s. per annum.

*Poor.*—The average yearly amount of church collections for the poor is about L. 9; and the average number of poor of all classes receiving relief is 19 or 20.

*July 1841.*

UNITED PARISHES OF  
WALLS AND FLOTTA.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. WALTER WEIR, MINISTER.

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L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, &c.*—THESE parishes consist of three, or more properly speaking, of four inhabited islands. Walls comprehends the greater part of the island of Hoy, which, in the group of the Orkneys, is considered to rank next to Pomona, or the Mainland, in point of extent. It is probable that Walls derives its name from “Voes,” which signifies a bay or inlet of the sea. It was anciently called “Valis,” “Waes,” or “Waas.” The last mentioned is still retained in pronunciation, although Walls is the name by which it is designated in all written documents.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish is about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length from north to south, and about 6 miles in breadth from east to west. It is bounded on the north, by the parish of Hoy; on the east, by Scalpa Flow; and on the south and west, by the Pentland Frith. The parish is nearly divided into two portions by the bay of Longhope, which extends about five miles from east to west. At one part, on the south side of the bay, the waters of Longhope almost meet those of the Pentland Frith, which at that place extend through a bay, and are only separated by a very narrow strip of land, generally not exceeding 200 feet, even at low water, while at spring tides it is for several days overflowed at high water, so as often to be impassable except by a boat. Hence Walls is sometimes spoken of as a separate island from Hoy; and certainly, so far as regards the convenience of the inhabitants, the facilities of communication are not greater than if they formed two distinct islands. This narrow strip of land, which is covered with stones, and constantly exposed to the waves of the Pentland Frith, seems to retain the same form which it did nearly three centuries ago, as Buchanan, in his History of Scotland, describes these islands

thus:—"Hoy and Valis, or Waes, which some make two and others but one island, because about both equinoxes, at which time the sea doth most tempestuously foam and rage, the tide falling back, and the lands being bared, they stick together, and are joined by a very narrow neck of land, and so make one island; but upon the return of the tide, and the sea coming afresh between them, they again represent the form of two."

Hoy may be termed the highlands of Orkney; and although the south part, where this parish is situated, does not contain hills of equal height with those in the parish of Hoy, a great proportion of the island may be considered as mountainous. The headland of the Berry rock is a magnificent promontory, corresponding in some respects to that of Dunnet-head, on the Caithness coast; and these rocks appear like two vast pillars forming the mouth of the Pentland Frith, through which the waters of the Atlantic rush with awful impetuosity. It is not improbable that, at some distant period, these islands were torn from Scotland by some convulsion of nature, and that the hills which bound the western coast of Scotland, and those of Hoy, formed one range. In proof of this supposition, it may be mentioned, that Dunnet-head and the Berry nearly correspond in their geological properties; and that the same position of the western hills is carried forward from the Berry head along the west coast of Hoy, and from thence in the same position through Pomona. Besides the Berry, there are other headlands which present their bold fronts to the waves of the Pentland Frith. The extent of coast bounded by the frith is about twelve miles, nearly the whole of which is precipitous, and in which have been formed several caverns by the action of the waters.

*Hydrography.*—There is a great extent of excellent anchorage-ground in the various bays or harbours of this island, all of which afford a safe retreat to shipping of almost any size. The principal of these is the harbour of Longhope, which has been already mentioned as being about five miles long, and which is, in some places, one and a half broad. This harbour is land-locked by the Island of Flotta; and perhaps, there is not in the kingdom a better place of safety for shipping. During the last war, it was a rendezvous for vessels waiting for convoy. At that time 40, 50, or even 100 sail might be seen in the bay. In the spring of 1840, there were congregated between 60 and 70 vessels, the greater number of which were of a large description, bound for various parts of the world.

The Pentland Frith, to which allusion has been made as bounding the south and west of the parish, yields to none in the rapidity and strength of its stream. At spring tides, it runs at the rate of nine miles an hour; and has been known even to exceed that rate. On these occasions, it is impossible for ordinary vessels to withstand the force of the current. The depth is generally from 50 to 65 fathoms, and the waters flow from north-west to south-east. The navigation of the frith is not so dangerous as is generally supposed. There are three islands, viz. Stroma, Swona, and the Pentland Skerries, and these contribute to lessen the danger, as the tide, impetuously rushing against the islands, rebounds, and thus produces eddies, and causes the stream to run in different directions at the same time. The pilots, being well acquainted with this circumstance, are thus enabled to guide their charge in safety. In fact, the very danger to be apprehended in so formidable a sea, constitutes its safety, as the seamen, aware of the hazard they would run if overtaken by improper tides, study their time so well that accidents rarely happen. As an instance of this, it may be mentioned, that, although the post-boat has crossed between Huna and South Ronaldshaw three times a week, and now daily, I believe that only one boat has been lost during a century. Were it not that the pilots are excellent judges of the weather, and attend to the circumstance which we have stated, the accidents would be numerous, as the sea is frequently so tremendous, especially when the wind blows against the tide, that no boat can live.

The parish is plentifully supplied with water, which is obtained from springs, and from the quantity of rain water which descends in streamlets from the rising grounds. There are two small lakes beautifully situated among the hills.

*Climate.*—The cold in winter and the heat in summer are more moderate here than at three degrees further south. The frost does not continue long, and the snow remains but a short time on the ground. This equability of climate may be accounted for by the proximity to the sea. The easterly wind is the coldest, the south and west winds, particularly the latter, the most boisterous, and the north wind generally brings dry weather. To the state of the atmosphere, so purified by strong winds, may in some degree be attributed the absence of epidemic diseases, which seldom prevail to any extent, the good health generally enjoyed, and also the longevity of the inhabitants.

*Geology.*—Allusion has already been made to the magnificent

rock-scenery with which this parish abounds. Some of the precipices on the west side are of sandstone, intersected by amygdaloid, and these again are in one place intersected by a whin dike almost straight and perpendicular. Sandstone succeeds, with argillaceous schist, together with strata containing lime. Round the west and part of the north banks of the Longhope, the shore is composed of the schist and sandstone; when, after two or three miles, the former recommences, and is supposed to extend almost to the north-east extremity of the parish. Lime is to be found; but it is not thought that its manufacture would be profitable; and there are distinct traces of iron and lead. The article of most value to the inhabitants is the inexhaustible store of excellent peat fuel on the north side of the Longhope, which all are allowed to cut and convey to their homes without cost, excepting their labour, and the expense of carriage.

*Zoology.*—There are no animals of prey in this parish, nor are there any poisonous reptiles. There is a considerable number of sheep reared on the island. They are allowed to roam at large over the hill pasture, and each proprietor has a particular mark by which his property is known. The black-cattle are also numerous. They are generally of a small size,—both they and the sheep being of the Highland breed. The horses are numerous; and, though larger than those of Shetland, they are smaller than those of the south.

*Ornithology.*—There is a very great variety in the feathered tribe. The domestic fowls are the same as on the mainland of Scotland. Grouse are abundant; and the birds of song are somewhat similar to those further south. Hawks are common; and a beautiful species of falcon is found, bold and fierce in the extreme, and of a large size. There are several kinds of eagles, which frequent the lofty rocks towards the west. These commit great depredations upon the grouse, which would be much more numerous but for such formidable enemies. It is alleged that the number of the eagles has never been known to increase or diminish.

The sea-fowl are very numerous. The ember-goose is often found in winter, and the shear-water abounds, to which might be added a numerous list of others, which derive their subsistence principally from the sea. When the winter is severe, white swans are occasional visitors.

*Ichthyology.*—In nothing does the kindness of Divine Providence towards the inhabitants appear more than in the great sup-

ply of the finest fish with which the waters around the parish abound. The cod-fish taken in the Pentland Frith are not surpassed by any found elsewhere in Britain, and are so much prized, that a number of Well-smacks are sometimes here fishing for the London market. Lobsters are also taken and sent to the same mart. Cockles and spout-fish are abundant.

The herring-fishery is carried on to a considerable extent. The fish are not cured on the island; but the fishermen, at the proper season, proceed to the different stations, where they are always sure to find purchasers. This fishery now promises to be more lucrative, as some time ago the fish came almost to the edge of the shore at the east point.

The cuthes or sillocks are abundant at all seasons, and afford excellent food, besides yielding oil from the livers; and thus may the people generally procure a plentiful supply of what furnishes both food and light.

*Botany.*—There are no large trees in the parish, though, among the hills, shrubs and plants abound, which afford much scope for the researches of the botanist. In others of the Orkney Islands, there are found the remains of large trees, which would lead to the conclusion, that, if proper care were taken in selecting those trees best fitted for the soil, and planting them in sufficient numbers, the Orkney scenery would, ere long, be greatly improved.

The garden fruits are various, viz. apples, pears, and plums, also gooseberries, currants, and strawberries.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Considering the warlike transactions which took place in Orkney during many centuries, when these islands were governed by earls, and subject to the kings of Denmark, we are surprised to find in this island so few remains of fortification, especially when we consider its proximity to Caithness, and the continued hostilities which were maintained between the inhabitants of that part of Scotland and the Orcadians. There are, however, remains of several ancient buildings. Near Snelsetter House, formerly called the House of Walls, is a very large rock, separated from those on the land which bound the Pentland Frith, there are several traces of ancient fortifications. There are also the remains of what appear to have been chapels. One of these is curiously situated on a peninsular rock. There are a few tumuli; but I am not aware that any of them have been explored.

*Mansion-Houses.*—The House of Snelsetter, before-mentioned,

was, for several centuries, the seat of the family of Moodie, and bears the marks of strength and antiquity. The mansion-house of Melsetter, formerly occupied by the late Major Moodie, the last proprietor of the name, and now by his son-in-law, Robert Heddle, Esq. of Melsetter, is beautifully situated at the farther extremity of Longhope Bay, and commands a view of the entrances of the Pentland Frith, the coast of Caithness, and the high lands of the west coast of Sutherland.

*Land-owners.*—The whole parish of Walls, with a small exception, belongs to the Crown and Mr Heddle,—the latter being the proprietor of fully two-thirds of the property.

*Parochial Registers.*—Unfortunately, there are few records in the parish, and these do not extend to a remote date. It appears that there have been five incumbents of Walls and Flotta, besides the present minister, since 1688. The dates of the two first inductions previous to 1707 are not given; their names, however, are mentioned,—Mr Dalgarnock and Mr Andrew Kerr. Mr John Keith was inducted in April 1707, Mr Edward Irving in August 1747, Mr James Bremner in March 1772, and the present minister in July 1837.

### III.—POPULATION.

	South Walls.	North Walls.	Total.	Flotta and Pharay.	Total.
In 1788,	451	293	684	236	920
1794,	449	302	751	240	991
1831,	.	.	1067.	There appears to have been no other census.	
1838,	683	443	1126	400	1526
1841,	714	438	1152	448	1600

Increase since 1788, being 53 years, 680.

The births registered during seven years are,

In Walls,	221
Flotta,	68
	— 289
Marriages registered in Walls, are	56
Flotta,	15
	— 71
Deaths registered in Walls,	88
Flotta,	33
	— 121

I have not been able to ascertain with satisfaction to myself the number of deaths, nor do I know whether those in Pharay are included, nor if all those who have died or been lost at sea are registered.

With few exceptions, the employments of the people consist of farming and fishing, the same individuals generally pursuing both occupations. Straw-plaiting is also carried on to a considerable extent by the women.



The farms are almost all small, and the farmers tenants at will. The people are shrewd and intelligent, but strangers cannot fail to remark a want of in-door comforts, which might be attained by better habits of domestic economy.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—It is impossible to state, with any degree of correctness, the number of acres contained in the parish of Walls. Almost none of the farms are let by the acre, but are taken at so much for the whole steading and ground. There may be about 700 acres of arable and 1000 of pasture, besides a great extent of undivided common. How much of this land might be redeemed from waste, we cannot say; but that it is practicable, may be inferred from what has been already accomplished by the spirited exertion of Mr Heddle, who is carrying on improvements on a large scale and at great expense, in the immediate vicinity of his farm of Melsetter.

*Wages.*—The value of labour may be stated as 1s. 6d. per diem in summer, and 1s. in winter, without food.

The grain produced in this parish is bear and oats. In quality it is equal to any, and superior to most, in Orkney. We cannot state the quantity raised, as the small farmers generally consume the most of what they grow, and no account is kept of it. The crop of potatoes is sufficient for the consumpt of the inhabitants.

There is no village, properly so called, in this parish, although the different farms go by the name of towns, and may consist of two or three steadings at a little distance from each other.

The post is conveyed by a boat, which crosses from St Margaret's Hope, in South Ronaldshay, once a week. This conveyance was established, some years ago, for the convenience of the numerous shipping resorting to the well-known harbour of Longhope.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church of Walls is a neat and comfortable building, erected in 1832, and capable of containing upwards of 500 people. The church of Flotta is a much older building, and tolerably comfortable, but too small for the population, containing only about 180. The people of both parishes attend the church well.

There is an excellent manse. It is situated in the south of Walls, about a quarter of a mile from the church.

The stipend is paid partly in grain, butter, and oil, which is

commuted into money at the fair prices, and partly in money by the heritors of Walls. Flotta is held *cum decimis inclusis*. The deficiency is made up by the Exchequer to L.158, 6s. 8d.

The glebe consists of 8 acres of arable, besides pasture land, and is furnished with a complete steading for a farm of that size.

*Education.*—There are two parochial schoolmasters, in Walls, who are entitled to the legal salary due to schoolmasters in a parish divided by an arm of the sea. There is also a subscription school, supported by the inhabitants in a district of the parish remote from any of the other schools; but the advantages enjoyed by the people, notwithstanding the number of schools, are limited, owing to the distances at which they are situated, and their being often separated by morasses or water. Notwithstanding these difficulties, there are few to be met with who cannot both read and write.

Flotta being more compact is more advantageously situated. The teacher in this parish is supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The school fees in both parishes are moderate. Pharay has no school.

#### PARISH OF FLOTTA

Is bounded on the north and east, by Scalpa Flow; on the west, by Longhope; and on the south, by the Pentland Frith. It is similar, in situation and climate, to Walls. The land, however, is much more level. The soil is considered good. It is between two and three miles long, and in some places nearly two broad. The rocks are chiefly composed of sandstone, but are not so precipitous as those in Walls. There is an excellent harbour, called the Panhope, from a salt-pan which was at one time worked at this place.

It is said, that there was formerly a long house or church on the island, where the surrounding clergy were wont to assemble.

What has been said of Walls, in regard to the variety and plentiful supply of fish to be procured at all seasons, and the abundance of peat fuel, applies to Flotta. This island is particularly well situated for fishing; and the inhabitants, who are very enterprising, have excellent boats, and yield to no seamen in managing them. They are industrious, and when not detained at home by their farming operations, they are engaged in fishing, which is to them a more pleasing and profitable employment. The herring-fishery has of late years been vigorously prosecuted by the people of Flotta, as well as the fishing of cod, of which they cure

a considerable quantity. On the success of their fishing, both here and in Walls, the people depend in a great measure for their ability to discharge their engagements for the year.

The number of inhabitants by a census in 1838 was 351. In 1841, there were 493 persons; forming 81 families. The Earl of Zetland is the sole proprietor of this parish.

Pharay is an island to the north of Flotta, about two miles long, and nearly one broad; regarding it there are no peculiarities to be noticed. The population in 1838 was 49. In 1841, there were 55 persons, forming ten families. The island is the property of Robert Heddle, Esq. of Melsetter. These are the inhabited islands, besides which there are three which belong to the parish, and which are uninhabited, but afford pasture for cattle and sheep; these are Rysay Little, to the north of Pharay, and Switha, to the south, and Flotta Calf, to the east of Flotta. The first of these also belongs to Mr Heddle, the other two are the property of the Earl of Zetland.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

There was formerly Divine service in Walls two successive Sabbaths, and in Flotta every third Sabbath. It is almost unnecessary to remark that in a double parish, where there is a distance of nearly five miles between the two churches, and that space intersected by rapid tides, and the passage often dangerous, this order of things must be frequently broken in upon; and no minister but one who has been actually so circumstanced, can imagine the distressing state of affairs caused by this arrangement, by which, of necessity, one church is left vacant every Sabbath; besides, the minister cannot possibly maintain pastoral superintendence over a people removed at such a distance, and that by water. So convinced was the present incumbent of this, that, after his induction four years ago, his first attention was directed to remedy an evil which had been the cause of much demoralization in these parishes. After considerable exertion, he succeeded in obtaining an ordained missionary, under the auspices of the venerable Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, who, along with the Right Honourable the Earl of Zetland and ourselves, contribute to his support.

An invaluable blessing is thus conferred, not only upon the people of Flotta and Pharay, but upon the 1150 inhabitants of Walls, who now enjoy Divine service every Sabbath. All the ordinances of religion are now regularly maintained in Flotta; and we have

had much gratification in witnessing the Lord's Supper dispensed on two successive summers in a place where it was never before known to be within the memory of man.

Mr Macintosh, who is ordained as the minister, has done much for the religious instruction of the young, and promoting a desire for reading amongst the people. The happy termination of these efforts calls for much gratitude, as the effects are already visible in inducing a much more regular attendance upon ordinances in both the parishes than when Divine service was so much interrupted as under the former system. There are five licensed public-houses in Walls, principally intended for the use of the shipping which frequent the Longhope ; but I am happy to say, that the sin of drunkenness, as well as of swearing, is now greatly reduced, and we have good reasons for hoping, that there are indications of a very considerable improvement not only in morals, but in religious feeling.

July 1841.

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## PARISH OF SHAPINSHAY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JOHN BARRY, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation, Extent, &c.*—To the north of the east part of the mainland, from which it is distant about one mile, this island extends almost in the form of a cross, from Stromberry to Ness, near 7 miles, and from the Galt to the foot of Shapinshay, more than 5. The body of the cross stretches from south-west to north-east, and the arms from south-east to north-west. Almost around the whole island, the shores are low, pretty level, and, to a considerable distance inland, covered with rich fields of grass and corn. Towards the middle, the land rises considerably higher ; and as the hand of industry has never disturbed its repose since the creation, it exhibits the appearance of a barren waste, fit only for sheep pasture.

*Harbour.*—The harbour of Elswick, the only one in the island, is as capacious almost as any in this country. There, it is high

water at three-quarters of an hour after nine o'clock, when the moon is new and full. It has from four to six fathom water, over a bottom of hard clay covered with sand. On the west side of it, is a fine beach, with abundance of excellent fresh water; and as it opens to the south-west, it is extremely convenient for ships bound to the southward. In ancient times, it seems to have been called Elidarwick; for we are informed by an Icelandic manuscript, that Haco, King of Norway, 1263, lay with his fleet in a harbour of that name, near Kirkwall, in his way to the Hebrides or west of Scotland. He had planned an expedition against Alexander III., King of Scotland, and after he had lain in this harbour till St Olave's Wake, he sailed south before the Mull of Ronaldsha, with all his navy.\*

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—These are the following: No. 1 of marriages and baptisms; marriages from 13th November 1632, to 21st July 1702; baptisms from 3d November 1632, to 19th November 1669. No. 2, of marriages and baptisms; marriages from 1st November 1758, to 6th August 1793; baptisms from 1st November 1758, to 12th August 1793. No. 3, of marriages, baptisms, and deaths, from 12th September 1793, to the present period. All regularly kept.

*Land-owners.*—These are, Captain William Balfour of Elwick; valuation, L. 325, 7s. 10d.; Samuel Laing, Esq. of Papdale; valuation, L. 217, 5s. 9½d. Crown, (part of the Bishoprick of Orkney), valuation, L. 1594, 6s. 1d.

*Mansion-Houses.*—Cliffdale, the property of Captain Balfour of Elwick; How, an old ruinous building, the property of S. Laing, Esq. of Papdale.

*Antiquities.*—In Elhardholm, a place belonging to this parish, there are the remains of a small chapel, which does not call for any particular notice. On the highest ground, and near the centre of the parish, there is, as in most of the other islands, a wart or ward-hill, which commands an accurate and extensive view, not only of this, but of fifteen surrounding parishes. To me this appears plainly to be artificial, and though one of the largest, it is certainly one of those tumuli which are so frequently to be met with in these islands. To the eastward of this little wart or ward-hillock, about an English mile, is a high stone, called the *Standing Stone of Shapinshay*. Above the level of the ground it is 12 feet high, and perhaps 5 or 6 below it; its breadth is between

\* Old Statistical Account.

4 and 5 feet ; its thickness a foot and a half ; and from its being clothed in moss or scurf, it has a very venerable majestic aspect, and seems to have weathered many ages. In form and dimensions, it very much resembles stones that are found standing in many of the other islands, particularly, the circle and semicircle in the parish of Stenness ; and it has perhaps been erected either as a place of worship, or sacrifice, or to be a monument of some signal battle or victory, or to preserve the memory of some celebrated hero who had fallen in the field of battle. Towards the north side of the island, and by the sea side, is another large stone, called the Black Stone of *Odin*. Instead of standing erect, like the one above mentioned, it rests its huge side on the sand, and raises its back high above the surrounding stones, from which it seems to be altogether different in quality. How it has come thither, for what purpose, and what relation it has borne to the Scandinavian god with whose name it has been honoured, not only history, but tradition is silent. On the west shore, opposite nearly to the rock or skerry of *Vasa*, where the tides are rapid and the sea is shallow, we meet with a place known by the name of *Grucula* or *Agricola*. Thither, tradition reports, one of *Agricola's* ships, in his celebrated voyage round the island of Britain, was driven by violence of weather, and stranded. But the most remarkable pieces of antiquity in this, and indeed in the other islands, are those large ruins denominated *Picts houses*. Here, they are frequently met with along the sea-shore, two or three of them at no great distance from, and in general raising their conical heads in view of, each other. They are situated for the most part, on the most pleasant spots ; covered with green, and ornamented with flowers and herbs of various sorts ; and such of them as have been examined by the eye of curiosity, have discovered considerable variety in both their form and dimensions.\*

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	.	744
1811,	.	726
1821,	.	779
1831,	.	809

\* Near *Cliffdale*, it is noticed in the *Old Account*, a subterraneous building was discovered, of a singular nature. It had been formed by digging the earth about three feet deep, and erecting pillars of stones built one upon another to the height of four feet, to support a flat roof of broad stones or flags that covered the whole building, which was composed of two hexagons contiguous to one another, and their diameter about eight feet, and of a rectangle as large as both. There was found in it a gold ring of uncommon construction. The outside was broad and large, composed as it were of three cords twisted or plaited together ; the inside was much narrower, and pretty well fitted for the use of the finger.

The amount at the present time is supposed to be 830.

During the last three years, there has been one illegitimate birth.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Number of acres, standard imperial measure, in the parish, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	748
Number of acres which never have been cultivated, and which remain constantly in waste, or pasture,	2386
Number of acres in a state of undivided common,	3134
There is no wood, either natural or planted.	

The average rent of land per acre, is 10s. Real rental of the parish, about L. 611.

*Manufactures.*—Plaiting of straw for bonnets is universally practised by females; and about 100 herring-nets are made yearly at 16s. each.

*Fishings.*—Herring fishing is carried on with 50 boats; 11 of which are employed in the cod-fishery during the season. The average quantity of herring caught yearly by each boat, is 60 cranes, sold at 10s. per crane. The quantity of cod caught yearly, at an average, is 2½ tons per boat; sold at an average of L.10 per ton.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The number of families belonging to the Established Church is 100; of Dissenting or Seceding families, supposed to be between 60 and 70. Stipend, L.150. The value of the glebe is about L.27. The manse was built in the year 1831; and is at present in good condition.

*Education.*—Besides the parochial school, there is one under the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; and no other schools are required. The salary of the parochial teacher is L.25, 13s. 3d.; his fees may amount to L.10, and he has no other emoluments.

*Poor.*—Average number of persons receiving aid, 20: the average sum allotted to each per annum is 5s. The church collections amount to L.7 or L.8 per annum,—and these are the only source of contribution for the poor.

July 1841.

# PARISH OF ROUSAY AND EAGLESHAY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. GEORGE RITCHIE, MINISTER.\*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS parish consists of the four islands, Rousay, Eagleshay, Weir, and Enhallow, besides two small holms or uninhabited islands. These islands are situate about nine miles north-west of Kirkwall.

*Rousay*, the largest, is one of a range of hills. It abounds with game, and contains many springs of excellent water. The soil is good. There are the remains of a small church about five miles from the manse.

*Eagleshay*.—This is a pleasant, low-lying island, with a small Gothic church in the west part of it, which was dedicated to St Magnus, the tutelar saint of Orkney. It has a pyramidal steeple at the west end, and a vaulted choir at the east end, which joins to the body of the church. In Eagleshay, there is a small lake of fresh water; and the soil is very good, and fit for culture; but it is poorly cultivated. There is a small bay of shell sand, of the best kind, on the west side of this island, and a large track of sand on the north side, with much bent, and many rabbits.

*Weir*.—Weir Island is a small low-lying island, not so large as Eagleshay. The soil is the same, and the culture very poor. There are the ruins of a church here, and a choir, but no steeple; and the vestiges of a fortification on a rising ground, a little from the place where the church stands.

*Enhallow*.—Enhallow Island is very small, but very pleasantly situated, being overlooked by the hills and headlands of mainland on the south, and of Rousay on the north. The soil is good, but not skilfully managed.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners*.—These are 13 in number,—and the chief of

\* Drawn up by Mr William Smeaton, Session-Clerk.



them are, Lord Dundas; William Traill, Esq. of Woodwick; James Baikie, Esq. of Tankerness; Robert Heddle, Esq. of Melsetter; Robert Patten, Esq. of Saviskael.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest register commences 16th September 1733, and ends 11th January 1747. The next commences 13th May 1758, and is continued to this date. Both have been tolerably well kept.

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of the population in 1821,	1151
1831,	1253
at present,	1262

Illegitimate births in the parish in the course of the last three years, 1.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

#### *Agriculture.*—

Number of acres, standard imperial measure, in the parish, which are either cultivated or occasionally in tillage,	2200
which never have been cultivated, and which remain constantly waste or in pasture,	10440
in a state of undivided common,	7500

There is no wood, either natural or planted, in the parish.

#### *Produce.*—

Produce of grain of all kinds, whether cultivated for food of man or the domestic animals,	L 3550 0 0
potatoes, turnips, cabbages, beet, and other plants, cultivated in the fields for food,	665 0 0
of hay, whether meadow or cultivated,	80 0 0
of fisheries, whether sea, river, or lake,	750 0 0

Total yearly value of raw produce raised, L.5045 0 0

It may be added, that there are belonging to the parish, 18 herring boats, carrying 90 tons.

Real rent of the parish, L.1530.

### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Number of families belonging to the Established Church, 183; of families, Dissenting or Seceding, 87. Amount of stipend, L.150.

*Education.*—There are four schools in the parish, and one more is required, as it is calculated there are 41 persons in the parish betwixt six and fifteen years of age unable to read, and about 21 above fifteen years of age in the same situation. The parochial teacher's salary amounts to L.26, and his fees to L.6.

*Poor.*—The number of persons receiving parochial aid is 28. The only fund for their relief is from church collections, which amount, on an average, to L.4, 15s. per annum.

July 1841.

# UNITED PARISHES OF CROSS AND BURNES.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. WILLIAM GRANT, MINISTER.\*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation and Extent.*—THE united parishes of Cross and Burness include about one-half of the extent of the Island of Sanday, —forming the one the south-west and the other the north-west limbs of that island, which is very much cut up by indentations of the sea. The extreme length of the two parishes from Spurness, in Cross, to Whitemill Point, in Burness, is  $9\frac{1}{2}$  statute miles; but the breadth varies from half a mile to three miles. Cross parish is considerably diversified by rising ground; but Burness, like Lady parish, composing the rest of the island, is almost a dead flat, very little raised above the level of the sea. Burness, anciently called St Colm's, extends to about 2500 imperial acres, and, being almost surrounded by the sea, it has, on all its shores, a most plentiful supply of sea-weed, both for manure and for the manufacture of kelp. It is bounded on its west and north sides by the Atlantic Ocean and the dangerous frith, here about seven miles wide, which divides it from the Island of North Ronaldshay; but it is sheltered from the full force of the Atlantic surge by the holms of Ire and the half-tide rocks or skerries of Rive; east and south, it stretches along, and forms one side of, the Bay of Otterswick, anciently called Odinswick, in which is safe anchorage for vessels of any size, while, at the top of this bay on the Burness side, a sort of inner harbour is formed by the point of Lambiness, on the soft sand of which small vessels may be beached at any time with perfect safety. The shores of Burness are generally flat, and the appearance of the parish is green, fertile, and lively, excepting near its junction with Cross parish, where there is a moor of about 200 acres of a most barren and forbidding appearance. There

\* Drawn up by Robert Scarth, Esq. Scar House, Sanday.

are several ponds, and one fresh-water loch of considerable extent and depth,—a favourite resort of ducks and other aquatic fowl during the winter and spring; and both this loch and the more extensive one of Bea, in Cross parish, are occasionally visited by flocks of wild swans, as they pass north or south in their vernal and autumnal migrations. The mansion-houses of Scar and Saville are situated about a mile apart,—the former on the west and the latter on the east shores of the parish, surrounded by rich corn fields and pleasant grassy links; and, in the garden at Saville, apples and small fruit are produced.

The parish of Cross extends to about 4600 acres, of which fully a fourth part is moorland, and another fourth part sandy downs and links. The general appearance of this parish (with all deference to the recorded opinion of a fair traveller who lately, from a midnight view on the deck of a steamer, at the distance of sixteen or eighteen miles, condemned the whole island to hopeless ugliness), we must be allowed to say is very beautiful. It is well sheltered from the west and north by the Island of Eday, separated from it by a narrow sound varying from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles wide, through which the tides are constantly pouring with a velocity of not less than eight miles an hour. This sound has much the appearance of a noble river, and the resemblance is increased during the ebb-tide by the foaming rapids, as they may be called, of Lashy-Roost running nearly across the channel from side to side; and it is curious to observe with what dexterity the islanders guide their handsome-looking and neatly-rigged yawls through the breakers of the Roost. On the east of Cross parish, Sanday Sound, dividing Sanday from Stronsay and the adjacent holms, runs along, until it leads into the Bay of Kettletoft, at the head of which Cross and Lady parishes march.

The land in Cross rises at two points to more than 300 feet above the sea, and the surrounding islands, sounds, friths, and bays, with the green and generally fertile plains of Sanday itself, present, from these points, one of the most delightful views the eye can rest upon. One of these heights, called the Brae of Feá, falls only a very little distance towards the west, when it terminates in a precipice washed at bottom by the sea, and perforated by curious caverns; while on the east side the slope is gentle, and covered with rich pasture grass, enamelled with the field-gentian, the bird's-eye primrose, the squill, and other flowers, until it reaches the reedy edge of Bea Loch on the property of How.

*Geology.*—The whole island of Sanday is composed of secondary rocks, sandstone, sandstone flag, and a little limestone. Near the house of Saville, in Burness, there is an isolated mass of primary rock, supposed gneiss, about fourteen tons weight, resting on the surface of the ground, and considered by Dr Neill to be “one of the most uncommon mineralogical appearances in Orkney, the nearest primary rocks being at Stromness, which is above thirty miles distant, and several rapid friths intervening.” Opposite to Eday, on the west shore of the farm of Stove, in Cross parish, there is a curious rock called Heclabir, which Dr Neill says is a breccia, “most of the component parts of which are rounded and water-worn nodules of sandstone. The pieces are of different sizes, from balls of three, five, and ten pounds weight, to such as are of the size of sparrow eggs. A few quartz and calcareous nodules are interspersed.”

The bays of Stove, Backaskail, and Otterswick produce enormous quantities of shell-fish, principally cockles and the spout or razor fish. The accumulated shells of these fish ground to powder, and heaped up upon the beaches by the action of the sea, and blown inland by the wind, seem to form a very considerable portion of the soil in Cross and Burness; and in some districts it is evident that the dry sandy downs, now inhabited by numerous colonies of rabbits, have at one time been fresh water lochs, or lagoons communicating with the sea. The writer of this article, in draining lands of the description referred to, has found, at a depth in some places of six or seven feet, but always on reaching a certain level, a bottom of mud and gravel containing many remnants of reeds and other aquatic plants; and throughout the depth of the ditch, it was easy to mark the different layers of sand which had been blown over the ground at different periods, by the black line of mossy earth or decayed vegetable matter running along, where each successive surface had been. In immediate connection, however, with such sandy downs throughout both parishes, there are large tracks of strong clay, of gravelly, or of deep loamy land, admirably fitted for raising the ordinary green and grain crops. The natural pastures of Sanday, where they are protected from those most destructive vermin, the rabbits, are exceedingly rich and feeding. They are composed of a variety of grasses, among which cocksfoot, the different fescues, plantains, and the red and white clovers, known here by the names of red and white curl-doddies, are the most conspicuous. Sea-rockets, bent-grass,

and the sea-reed are plentiful near the sandy beaches; and the sea banks themselves are often ornamented by the cowslip, thrift, and sea-pink, epilobium and cranesbill.

*Zoology.*—Few places present more encouragement to the sportsman than the parishes of Cross and Burness, for though there are no grouse or hares, as on Eday or on the mainland of Orkney, there are great numbers of lapwing, snipe, and landrail; while rabbits are not counted by hundreds, but by thousands. On more than one farm 3000 rabbits are taken yearly! The rocks are tenanted by large flocks of the wild pigeon; and the lakes, sounds, and bays are filled with almost every variety of water-fowl. About the 20th of June, or later, as the season has been favourable or otherwise, literally clouds of the golden plover arrive from the north; and with vast numbers of the sandpiper tribe, of the curlews, herons, and whimbrels, they are to be found on the moors and flat shores of the island, until early spring calls them off to their breeding places in less populous regions. Very many varieties both of water and land birds remain on the island, all the season, and breed there. Of these the oyster-catcher, the redshank, the dunlin, the dotterel, the turnstone, the tern, and several varieties of the gull tribe,—the eider-duck, the common wild duck, the teal, the shield drake, and others of the duck tribe, with larks, buntings, and starlings, are the most numerous. Of the last named birds, the starlings, the writer took from his dovecot in one morning no less than twenty-two dozen.

The fish caught round the island are, cod, ling, skate, holibut, flounder, and the young of the coal-fish, here called sillocks and cuiths. These last are caught on the fly, either from the rocks, or from the stern of a small boat; and in addition to the supply of food which they form at all seasons of the year, and the quantity of oil for household use produced from their livers, the catching of them is no despicable sport, and would be preferred to the finest river fishing by those who would rather fill their basket in one hour, than exercise their patience by waiting all day for even “a glorious nibble.” Lobsters are caught in great numbers by boats from the shore, and bought up and conveyed to the London market, direct from Sanday, by smacks. Seals are pretty numerous; but, as there are no resident sportsmen, they are not often shot. The otter frequents the rocks and caverns on the west side, and is occasionally seen stealing his way to Bea  
h. But the most exciting of all fishings, if fishing it can

be called, is that of the bottle-nosed or ca'-ing whales, the *Delphinus deductor* of zoologists. Large shoals of these animals, varying from 50 to 500 in number, and from 5 to 25 feet each in length, get occasionally embayed; and upon this happening, all boats are launched, all hands active, every tool which can be converted into a weapon of offence to the strangers, from the roasting spit of the principal tenant, to the ware-fork of the cottar, is put into requisition. The shoal is surrounded, driven like a flock of timid sheep to shallow water ou a sandy shore, and then the attack is made in earnest. The boats push in, stabbing and wounding in all directions. The tails of the wounded fish lash the sea, which is dyed red with their blood, sometimes dashing a boat to pieces. The whales in dying emit shrill and plaintive cries, accompanied with loud snorting, and a humming noise easily mistaken at a distance for fifes and drums; so that the whole scene has been not inapty compared to a battle-field.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—There are or rather were two parochial registers,—a register of births and baptisms, and a register of marriages commencing in 1711, and kept, apparently with great regularity, until 1793, since which time a great majority of the births have not been registered, and no register of marriages has been kept. There have been no illegitimate births in either of the parishes, during the last three years.

*Rents of Land and Proprietors.*—It may be curious to observe the difference in the yearly value of the lands in Orkney, since the valuation made for assessing the land tax in 1653. The names of the then proprietors of Cross and Burness were, Magnus Fea of Grindilla; James Fea of Stove; John Scollay of Leta; John Smith of Seater; John Elphinstone; John Miller of Skelbuster; John Irvine of Isgairth; John Henryson; James Traill of Houbister; John Groat of Elsness; Malcolm Sinclair of Pappess; James Cock of Westove; Thomas Abercrombie; Richard Fotheringham; Brandy Thurland; Walter Thomson; John Above-the-Riggs; John Scott of Langskeal; Edward Cock; Robert Stewart of Brough and the Earl of Morton; and the whole lands are rated in the same valuation at L. 1690, 0s. 5d. Scots, or L. 140, 16s. 8d. Sterling; to which add feu and scat and teind-duties payable to the Earl of Morton as Donatory of the Crown, viz. 1 barrel butter at L. 20; 76 lispunds butter at L. 2; 650 meils, 1 setting, and 6 marks of bear at L. 1, 13s. 4d.; 13 meils, 5 settings, 20½ marks of meal at L. 4; and L. 127, 10s. 6d. Scots money, gives

L.1441, 1s. 11d. Scots, or L.120, 1s. 9d. Sterling,—making the gross land-rent of both parishes, at that remote period, L. 260, 18s. 5d. Sterling.

In the last Statistical Account of Sanday and North Ronaldshay, 1793, prepared with great intelligence, care, and accuracy, by the late Rev. William Clouston, then minister of Cross and Burness, the gross rent of the two islands is stated at L.1064, 3s. 0½d. Sterling, and calculating at his conversion of rents in kind, which would now be just about half-price, the then gross land rent of the parishes of Cross and Burness alone amounted to only L. 413, 11s. 1d. Sterling.

**Cross parish now belongs in property to**

1. Samuel Laing of Papdale, whose lands of Stove, Grindilla and Whippa Land, form the south promontory, and are let in one large and five small farms, including the grazings of the Spurness holms for a land rent, wholly exclusive of kelp, of	L.244	9	0
Public burdens,—the superior duties and land tax being redeemed, are		21	16 0
		<u>Net,</u>	L.222 13 0
2. John Balfour of Trenahy, whose lands of Warsetter and Westbrough, with several small farms, two wind-mills, and two water-mills, are let for a land rent, exclusive of kelp, of	L.390	5	0
Public burdens,—including superior duties payable to the Earl of Zetland, are		94	14 3
		<u>Net,</u>	245 10 9
3. The Earl of Zetland, whose lands of Backaskail, Leyland, and part of Nibister, are let for	L.63	14	0
Public burdens are,		12	8 5
		<u>Net,</u>	L.51 5 7
To which add, average value of superior duties drawn by him out of the parish, and for which he pays no proportion of public burdens,		64	1 7½
		<u>Net,</u>	115 7 2½
4. Thomas Traill of Westove, whose lands of How, Howsgarth, and Beans, with 14 cottages, are let to one tenant for a land rent, exclusive of kelp, of	L.134	0	0
Also some inclosures connected with the principal inn of the island, let together on an improving lease, for a nominal rent of		0	2 6
		<u>Net,</u>	L.134 2 6
Public burdens,—the superior duties being redeemed, are		22	15 1½
		<u>Net,</u>	111 7 4½
5. The representatives of the late J. T. Urquhart of Elsness, for the water-mill of Bea, and pendicles of Isgarth and Hettal, a land rent of	L.47	0	0
Public burdens, land-tax, and superior duties being redeemed,		1	1 8
		<u>Net,</u>	45 11 4
Carry forward,		<u>Net,</u>	L.740 9 8

	Brought over,	L. 740 9 8
6. Three small farms in the occupation of the proprietors, viz. Fea of Bollaquoy and Seater, Mr Dennison of Myres, and Sclater of Skelbuster, in all worth of land rent, about	L. 40 0 0	
Public burdens of the three, including superior duties, payable to the Earl of Zetland,	9 15 7	
	Net,	30 4 5
Net land rent of Cross parish in 1840,		L. 770 14 1

Burness parish, with the exception of three acres in Hettal, and 18 acres, the minister's glebe lands, is the property of

Thomas Traill of Westove, and is, including wind-mill and water-mill, occupied by sixty tenants, paying rents varying from L. 4 to L. 40 each, making a land-rent, exclusive of kelp, of	L. 510 19 10
The mansion house of Scar, with a farm of near 80 acres, is occupied by the factor, and the other mansion-house of Saville, with lands around, is occupied by the Rev. Walter Traill of Westove, together worth about	130 0 0
	L. 640 19 10
The superior duties having been purchased from the Earl of Zetland, the present public burdens of stipend, school salary, &c. amount to	69 19 7
Net land rent of Burness in 1840,	L. 571 0 3

The gross rents stated above being L. 1564, 11s. 11½d. Sterling, (after making allowance for lands farmed by proprietors themselves, which it is probable Mr Clouston did not include in his rental, as also for the difference in the relative value of money and farm produce, the rents being then mostly paid in kind,) it will be seen that the gross rents of these two parishes have been more than doubled since 1793; and this, notwithstanding that not only kelp but rabbit skins, upon which he counts for part of the farmer's profit, have become unsaleable. But the most casual observer will see at a glance, that, from whatever cause the value of grain and cattle now yearly exported, is proportionally increased.

When the manufacture of kelp was a source of profit to the proprietors, and when almost everything else was neglected in order to increase its quantity, the produce of the manufacture from Cross and Burness was as follows:

Mr Laing from Stove and the Spurness holms,	47 tons.
Mr Balfour,	175
Note.—The tenants of Westbrough and Warsetter yet pay a considerable rent for the kelp of their properties; but this kelp rent has been deducted before stating the land rent as above.	
The Earl of Zetland,	10
Note.—The same remark applies as to Westbrough and Warsetter.	
Carry over,	232



	Brought over,	232 tons.
Thomas Traill,—In Cross,	18	
In Burness,	220	
		—238
Bollaguoy and Skelbuster, with the minister's glebe in Cross, made about		10
	Total,	480 tons.

Say 480 tons of marketable kelp, which, from its very superior quality, always met with a ready sale at Dumbarton and Newcastle, and so lately as the years 1825–26, and 27, (it having been much higher priced previous to that time,) left a clear average return to the proprietor of L.9 per ton, making L.4320. This source of revenue is now almost wholly cut off. The use of kelp in the manufacture of glass has been superseded by Spanish barilla, brought in at a low duty, and still more, it is said, by new chemical discoveries in the art of glass making. The only demand now for kelp comes from chemical works on the Frith of Forth, and Lord Normanby's alun works near Whitby; but the prices offered are such as will do little more than cover the expense of manufacture and the freight.

It may be easily supposed that the abstraction of so large an amount of revenue from the proprietors of these parishes, in common with the other proprietors of Orkney, must have been severely felt, not only by themselves, but also by the farmers, peasantry, and trades-people dependent upon them; and this the more, that formerly in Orkney every consideration was sacrificed to kelp. Agriculture was much neglected, and even the fisheries, for which the county is so well adapted, were unattended to. So long ago as 1804 Dr Patrick Neill of Edinburgh warned the proprietors, of what has actually happened, in these words: "Should a cheap process for extracting the soda from sea water happen to be discovered, or should the market for kelp on any other account unexpectedly fail, the landholders of Orkney will find, when too late, the great imprudence of thus neglecting the cultivation and improvement of their lands."\* The consequence has been, that several extensive properties have been forced into the market, and partly from an absurd notion that the failure in the manufacture of kelp would have the effect of lowering the land rents, and making their recovery uncertain,—partly from the want of tenants of sufficient skill and capital to take the manor farms, and follow out the very extensive and, in many cases, highly judicious improvements which had been begun by the proprietors; but, above all, from the entire

\* Tour through Orkney and Shetland, by Patrick Neill. Edinburgh, 1806.

and inexcusable ignorance of south country capitalists, as to everything connected with this remote but highly interesting and valuable county, no sales could be effected, and these properties have been left not in the best possible situation for the comfort of the people, nor for their own improvement, viz. under trust for the payment of creditors. With every disadvantage, however, the peasantry of the country have done wonders for themselves.

Most fortunately, before the entire fall of kelp, Mr Laing of Papdale and others, had, by liberal encouragement and large advances, induced their small tenants and cottars to fit out boats, nets, and lines, and to attempt the prosecuting of the herring and cod fisheries. Taking warning from the bad effects of compulsory labour on the kelp manufacture, these gentlemen did not enthrall their tenants, by any interference with the produce of their fisheries, but left them at liberty to dispose of their fish to the highest bidder, and to lay out their gains as they thought fit. The inhabitants of the parishes of Cross and Burness, as, indeed, of the whole Island of Sanday, were rather behind their neighbours in starting to this new scene of industry; but they can now boast of many crews of excellent fishermen and of well-rigged and powerful boats, to whose numbers every year is adding; while the rising spirit of independence, which successful exertion and unfettered industry is sure to produce in any people, leads them yearly to pay more and more attention to improving the management of their small farms, of their stock of cattle and horses, and to raising the scale of their personal comforts in clothing and lodging; so that, considering the enormous quantity of land in those parishes, lying comparatively waste and unproductive, the proprietors, with a little well-timed direction and encouragement, may not only secure their present land rents, but look forward to making up, from the same source, great part, if not all, of their heavy loss by kelp.

### III.—POPULATION.

By the census taken in 1831, there were in Cross parish 91 inhabited houses, 82 families said to be employed in agriculture, 16 in trade, and of other families, 3—total 101 families.

Males, . . . . .	250
Females, . . . . .	291
Total,	<u>541</u>

There were in Burness parish 76 inhabited houses, 69 families employed in agriculture, 11 in trade, and 1 other family—total 81 families.

Males, . . . . .	203
Females, . . . . .	237
Total,	<u>440</u>

Total population in both parishes in 1831, . . . . . 981

The total population of Cross parish is now	560
The population of Burness parish is	432
	992
Total of both parishes now	
The number of children below 15 years of age in both parishes is 190.	

The cottar system, which formerly prevailed universally, and still does prevail to a small extent, is perhaps the most degrading to the labouring class, the most discouraging to industry and exertion, and consequently the most injurious to morals, which can be conceived. A youngster, when he has hardly attained to manhood, and before he can have saved as much as will purchase a bed and blankets, makes an improvident marriage, and only then thinks of looking for a hut to shelter him and his fast-increasing family. Having got the hut and a small piece of land, he has to go in debt for the purchase of a wretched cow and a still more wretched pony, and, paying his rent in small but never-ending and ill-defined personal services, or, as it is expressively called in the country language, "on-ca-work," he becomes the slave of the principal tenant, who is so blind to his own interests, as to prefer the slovenly half-executed work of this hopeless, ill-fed, and inert being to the willing and active services of a well-paid and well-fed farm-servant. The tenants of Sanday are, in general, very kind to their cottars, and seldom a day passes without their having to grant some little entreated favour or other, which the circumstances of the cottar makes necessary for his support; but they do not seem to calculate the value in money of the property thus given away. Often, in the course of the year, it will amount to as much as the wages of a good ploughman; but then, being an uncertain bounty, and, moreover, the product of beggary, it does the receiver little good beyond the immediate relief to his family, and destroys in him all habits of self-dependence and of foresight.

The tenants complain that, from the inducement held out to young men by the fisheries, it is nearly impossible to get farm-servants. While the tenant was paid a high price for the manufacture of kelp, he kept his farm-servants all the year round, employing them profitably during the summer season in the kelp; but, not having yet gone into the system of raising extensive green crops, he does not conceive that he needs servants during the four months betwixt plough-casting and harvest; consequently, he pays off his servants at the former period, and they are thus forced to become fishermen. He cannot, therefore, expect that they will return to him exactly at the time which suits his convenience, nor that a man, who may be making L.1 a-week, with the chance sometimes

of as much in a day and night, will leave this exciting employment for farm work at as much per month. The remedy of all this is evident. Let the cottar's house and land be rented in money, which rent let him make out in any line his genius may lead him to. If the tenant requires his services, he ought to be hired by the day or hour at fair money wages, and if he requires any farm produce he ought to pay for it in cash. In regard to farm-servants, the tenant would find his interest in employing only those who have nothing to do with boating or fishing,—managing his farm so as to give them work all the year round, and paying them such wages as shall give him a right to insist for close, constant, and active service.

The most approved make of carts, ploughs, rollers, and other farming implements are in general use; and some of the ploughmen would obtain prizes at a competition even in the south country.

The society of Sanday is equal to that of any of the islands, and the clergy and principal farmers are exceedingly hospitable and obliging to each other, as well as to strangers. There are few or no games, or public amusements of any kind: The common people used to be fond of dancing and foot-ball playing, but of late years, it is to be regretted, that, while there is less hilarity and social enjoyment among the young, there is more of quiet tipping in the public-house. Relaxation and amusement are necessary; and when the innocent recreations of music and dancing are discouraged, there is a risk that something worse may be had recourse to.

The language spoken, as through all the islands, is English. Among the peasantry a good many words are peculiar to the north isles, and some of them are evidently of Scandinavian origin. A few are given in alphabetical order. Anything like a complete list would encroach too much on our space.\*

\* *Abin*, (v.) to thrash half a sheaf for giving horses.—*Abir*, (n.) a sheaf so thrashed.—*Acamy*, (adj.) diminutive.

*Bal*, (v.) to throw at—*Been-hook*, (n.) part of the rent paid by a cottar for his land is work all harvest; but besides his own labour, he must bring out his wife three days, for which she receives nothing but her food. All the women on a farm are called out at the same time; they work together, and are called been hooks, and the days on which they work been-hook days—*Buil*, (n.) one of the divisions or stalls of a stable—*Buily*, (n.) a feast—*Buist*, (n.) a small box—*Buitic*, or *Buito*, (n.) a piece of flannel or home-made cloth, worn by women over the head and shoulders—*Brammo*, (n.) a mess of oatmeal and water—*Bret*, (v.) to strut—*Brodend*, (adj.) habituated to—*Burstin*, (n.) meal made of corn parched in a pot or "hellio."

*Cruc*, (n.) a small inclosure for raising cabbage plants—*Cummal*, (n.) a small rising ground—*Cnppo*, (n.) a hollow place—*Cheesing meat*, (n.) It was formerly

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—Strangers still find much to condemn in the management of the land in these parishes; but to those who recollect what it was forty years ago, a very great improvement, indeed, is perceptible; and now that the slavery of the kelp manufacture has been removed, and the free and unfettered energies of the farmers begin to be applied to their proper business, it may be hoped that twenty years hence, they will in this respect stand exposed to less objection on the part of their more fortunate southern neighbours.

Great part of the lands have been placed in a state of severalty, and the marches betwixt different farms, as well as betwixt estates ascertained; and, in many cases, good division-fences erected. The purchase or redemption by some of the proprietors, of the

the custom that the women who had attended an accouchement brought a present of meat next day to the lady in the straw;—it generally consisted of a stoup full of "Eggalourie," and a "cubbie" of bannocks, and was conveyed by stealth into the bed of the invalid—*Calzee*, (n.) a large straw basket—*Cubbie*, (n.) a small caisie.

*Dair*, (v.) to make an impression—*Dello*, (n.) a small patch of cultivated ground—*Domalus*, (adj.) impotent—*Doring*, (part.) confusion, noise—*Dovend*, (adj.) benumbed.

*Eri-oy*, a great grandson—*Eak*, (v) to rain a little—*Erc*, (n.) a small quantity—*Eggalourie*, (n.) a dish of eggs and milk boiled together.

*Falifu*, (adj.) affectionate—*Fole*, (n.) a small bannock—*Foudal*, (adj.) procrastinating—*Forsal*, (v) to harness—*Frootery*, (n.) superstitious observances—*Furkin*, (adj.) melting—*Fur-scarn*, (n.) of the four horses formerly used abreast in the old Orkney plough, the first or right hand one was called the fur horse, the second the fur-scarn, the third the volar-scarn, and the fourth the outend horse.

*Goe* or *Glo*, (n.) a cave or creek into which the sea flows—*Geyar-carl*, (n.) a supernatural being like the kelpie—*Glet*, (n.) an intermission of rain—*Gloggo*, (n.) a mixture of burstin and milk—*Grummal*, crumbs, fragments—*Gul*, Sir, by the way of address—*Gully*, (adj.) good, agreeable.

*Harakit*, (n.) heartburn—*Hellio*, (n.) a stone with a rim of clay about it, used in parching corn for burstin.

*Ilty*, (n.) anger—*Itifu*, (adj.) angry.

*Ket*, (adj.) dwarfish—*Klepie*, (n.) a blow.

*Lubbo*, (n.) a meal measure, very neatly made of bent.

*Main*, patience—*Maisk*, hashful—*Mullio*,—a bundle of gleanings.

*Nouet*, a dock for a boat—*Nouster*, a landing place.

*Oddle*, a sewer—*Orafu*, glutton, greedy.

*Peerie*, little—*Pooty*, a small cod—*Pousted*, bewitched, infatuated.

*Quoy*, a small enclosure.

*Rawley*, ugly—*Renzie*, to writhe with pain—*Ruist*, *Rug*, or *Mur*, synonymes for small rain—*Ruggie*, an old cod—*Rugfus*, rude.

*Scatfu*, inclined to steal—*Scranel*, a morsel—*Scrimc*, to see an object dimly—*Skio*, a drying-house—*Smooin*, sly—*Snuuin*, a sea-weed—*Suck*, loose straw rubbish—*Sucky*, untidy.

*Tirran*, ill-natured—*Tirry*, angry—*Toy*, a woman's cap—*Tray*, stiff, stubborn—*Tray-sitten*, lazy, stupefied—*Trow*, a boggle—*Tumail*, piece of arable land next the steading.

*Uim*, mad, furious—*Unfardy*, unwieldy, overgrown.

*Vair*, having no appetite—*Vidment*, insignificant—*Vista*, a short journey—*Vohr*, the spring season.

*Waaf*, a signal—*Wain*, hope—*Wallowa*, the devil.

*Yammel*, born in the same year.

feu-duties formerly payable in grain, and butter, and meal, to the Earl of Zetland, (though made at far too high a price,) has set them at liberty to occupy their lands in the raising of cattle and sheep, to which, in this mild but variable climate, with a low mean temperature, they are more suited than to the production of grain. And farther, by the landlords fixing a money rent with the tenants, neither are exposed to the uncertainty and fluctuation of grain fiars, and the postponement of regular termly settlements. It is not the fault of the soil nor of the climate, however unfavourable, nor of the industry, intelligence, or enterprise of the inhabitants, that this country is so far behind the rest of Scotland. The excessive feu-duties, most grossly unjust in their origin, which were payable in kind to the donatory of the Crown, cramped the energies of both landlord and tenant. These duties went out of the country like a tax making no return, and from their nature, could not even induce the great man, who received them, to take a patrimonial interest in it. It has often been a matter of wonder how little of favour or encouragement these islands have received at any time from the Government, when it is considered that the population of Orkney and Zetland exceeds that of Berwickshire, East Lothian, Roxburghshire, Dumfries-shire, and other counties of note and consideration; and that there are only thirteen counties in Scotland which exceed these islands in population, and only eight which exceed them in extent of surface. But to return to rents in kind, they keep back improvement, and yet well-informed landlords are still found giving in to them, just to meet the scruples and prejudices of tenants. Under this system, the tenant will hardly ever progress; he must remain stationary, and can derive nothing from his farm, beyond a subsistence. In good years, his surplus payments in kind, inferior in quality, because he forces all his land to carry grain, do not leave him a remunerating price for his labour, and in bad years he is charged a high price for what the overwrought soil did not produce to him.

The middleman system of letting farms, with a multitude of cottars or small tenants placed at the mercy of the principal tenant, is fast breaking up. Mr Laing of Papdale gave the first blow to this cottar system on his farm of Stove. When he began the improvement of this farm, he allotted to the cottars, in a district by themselves, three Scotch acres of arable land each, with about an equal quantity of grass ground;—for this possession, with

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their house and yard, they paid a rent of L. 5, 5s., and were left wholly at liberty, the only condition of their holding being the regular payment of the rent. At same time, he offered, if they chose to work kelp, to give them the same price for their labour, L.3 to L.4 per ton, which had been formerly paid to the principal tenant; and such was the effect of this free system, that men considered notoriously slothful were converted into willing and industrious labourers, and not only was the quantity of kelp greatly increased, but he never wanted good and efficient workmen to hire at fair wages for his farming improvements. Mr Laing's example has been followed with success in the parish of Burness, where, by doing away with all services, by a moderate allowance for improvements, a little nursing, and care in helping the small tenants to dispose of their produce to advantage, an addition to the land rents, and a most evident improvement in the condition and habits of the occupiers, has been effected.

*Crops.*—By far the greater part of the arable lands in these parishes are still cropped alternately with bear and oats, the enormous supply of sea-weed for manure keeping up the fertility of the land under this scourging system. Potatoes are, however, more extensively cultivated than formerly, and on some farms, turnips and sown grasses are introduced into the rotation. The bear is thin-coated, and meals well, being white in the flour. The weight does not average more than 42 lbs. per bushel, unless where compost has been applied, when it has reached 48 lbs. per bushel. Turnip and rye-grass seeds are raised, and are found to give great satisfaction, when sown in the southern counties. The soil is admirably adapted to turnip husbandry, and most splendid crops of this valuable esculent may now be seen growing, where a short time since, rabbits alone had possession of the soil. In many places throughout the island, where steadings have been of old, large heaps of rich mould are to be found. These seem to have been the accumulations of the farm manure of many a year, during times when the people were too indolent or too prejudiced to apply it to the soil; and it is even in the recollection of the writer, that a tenant of a large farm held his cottars bound, as a service once a year, to clean his dung court, and convey the manure as a nuisance, to the sea-beach, and he has witnessed the wilful burning of the straw, from which forty bolls of grain had been thrashed.

In improving the sand links or rabbit warrens, these accumulations become a most important auxiliary, for, being trenched and

exposed to the frost and the vivifying effects of the air, and afterwards mixed with small kelp and a sufficient quantity of fresh seaweed to melt it, they form compost, by means of which a great extent of the most unpromising rabbit links is converted into a flourishing turnip-field, where properly selected grass seeds are sure to thrive with the next crop. The grass seeds found to suit best for such land, are two bushels of perennial ryegrass; one bushel of mixed timothy and cocksfoot; six pounds of ribgrass; and six pounds of white clover per acre. The Rev. Walter Trail of Westove, has cultivated lucerne in such land with success. Cabbages manured with the sea-weed are also raised to great size; the common Scotch grey reaching a weight of fourteen pounds each plant.

*Stock.*—The horses used for carriage and draught are good hardy ponies of from 14 to 15 hands high; many oxen are employed in carting sea-weed; and the cattle generally are improving in weight and quality. The Neapolitan, the Berkshire, and other improved breeds of swine have been introduced, and considerable numbers are yearly exported alive to Aberdeen and Peterhead. The native breed of sheep, which are kept on tether during the summer, and roam at large over the fields and round the shores, where they eat sea-weed in winter, are not yet extinct, but their numbers are much thinned. They are the short-tailed sheep of Iceland, Shetland, and the Hebrides. In 1808, Malcolm Laing of Papdale introduced the Merino breed on his property of Stove, and purchased rams at high prices from some of the best flocks in the kingdom. They were crossed with Cheviots, and they succeeded most satisfactorily. Mr Laing, one year, it is said, received 7s. 6d. per pound for some of his wool. The wool of clip 1811 of the lambs of some Orkney ewes by a Merino ram, was considered by a wool stapler from Yorkshire, better worth 2s. 8d. per pound, than the wool of the Orkney dams of these lambs was worth 8d.; and the quantity being about double, made a difference of 9s. 4d. between the fleece of our Orkney ewe and that of her lamb by a Merino tup at shearing time; a sum equal to the value of the ewe fleece and carcass altogether. Mr Laing found the Orkney cross assimilated faster in fleece than the Cheviot did; but the cross with the Orkney was inferior in carcass to that with the Cheviot.\*

Poultry of all kinds thrive well, and are numerous and cheap.

\* Agricultural Report of the Orkney Islands, by John Shirreff, 1814.



*Wages.*—The wages of a good ploughman are L. 7, 7s. of money, with six bolls of meal, and milk and rabbits. But the greater number of farm-servants are employed on the farms for the winter half-year only, for which their wages are from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3, and they are fed and lodged in the family. Women-servants receive from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3 per annum; but as they are much engaged at home in the plaiting of rye-straw for bonnets, they are unwilling to work in the field, and are generally employed only in the care of cattle or as house-servants. Day-labourers are paid from 1s. to 1s. 3d. per day, but, as already observed, very few are thus engaged for money wages, and, as a labourer cannot obtain employment on day's wages throughout the year, there is found to be a scarcity of them when a job occurs for which they are required.

*Fisheries.*—There are in Cross and Burness fourteen boats engaged in fishing lobsters; and fifteen boats and sloops fishing cod and herrings, besides numerous small boats. It has been observed that the inhabitants of Sanday are only beginning to devote attention to the fisheries; but it may not be out of place here to state the quantity of cod caught, cured, and dried in the north isles of Orkney, during the present season, 1840.

In the island of Westray,	- - - - -	120 tons.
Eday,	- - - - -	109
Stronsay,	- - - - -	30
Shapinsay,	- - - - -	65
North Ronaldshay,	- - - - -	10
Cross and Burness, Sanday,	- - - - -	14
Lady parish, do,	- - - - -	6
Rousay and adjacent Isles, including sundry small parcels from some of the islands already named, which were separately sold and shipped,	- - - - -	90
In all,	- - - - -	444 tons.

Which were sold by the fishermen themselves for about - L. 5400 0 0

When to this is added the value of herrings caught and delivered to curers at Stronsay by North Isles boats, which the writer of this article has no means at hand of correctly ascertaining, but which could hardly be less than an equal sum, he thinks that it will be allowed that the inhabitants of these islands bid fair to do away with the character for supineness and indolence in regard to fishing, which has been liberally bestowed upon them by those who were either unacquainted with them, or made no sufficient allowance for their peculiar circumstances. As the cure of cod was almost unknown in Orkney previous to the appointment of fishery-officers to oversee and direct it, the Orkney men had no bad habits, in

this respect, to get rid of, and they have so closely followed the excellent directions which have been given them, that their fish are acknowledged equal, if not superior, to any that come to market.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Of the population, there are adherents of the Established church, of all ages, in both parishes, 810. Of these 447 are communicants.

The adherents of Dissenters of all ages are 181; of these, 96 communicate with the United Associate Seceders, who have their meeting-house in Lady parish, and 3 are Anabaptists. There is one parish church in Cross and another in Burness, and divine service is performed in each on the alternate Sundays. This is a source of great inconvenience both to minister and people. There are in both parishes 102 families further than two miles; 64 families further than four miles; and 28 families further than six miles distant from one of the churches; and this tends much to prevent, on the part of the people, a regular Sabbatical attendance at either place of worship. But supposing the people were in general able, as they are very willing, to give a regular weekly attendance, there would still be the serious and palpable want of church accommodation, for the church of Cross has only 248 sittings, and that of Burness, including those of the passage, 262. To accommodate, therefore, two-thirds of the church adherents, 292 more sittings are wanting in Cross church, and in Burness, 278. Indeed, neither of the churches can accommodate even the communicants of the establishment. The remedy for this evil would be either the erection of one convenient church for both parishes in a central situation, or dividing the parishes *quoad sacra*, and appointing a pastor to each.

The manse is rather an old house, but kept in good repair by the heritors. It is situated in Cross parish, and there is a glebe of about twenty acres, with garden and offices attached. The other glebe in Burness parish, which is rented for L.10 or L.12, has been already noticed. The stipend, payable almost entirely in money, including L.66, 7s. 4d. drawn from the Island of North Ronaldshay, formerly united with these parishes, amounts, with allowance for communion elements, to L.210.

*Education.*—There is only one parochial school in the island, situated at the junction of the three parishes, and there is no other school in Cross or Burness, though female schools are much

wanted. The parochial schoolmaster's salary is L.46, 14s. 4½d., and the average yearly amount of school fees received is L.10. The average number of scholars attending the parochial school is 53.

*Poor.*—The number of poor persons receiving aid from the session in Cross is 13, and in Burness, 11; and the sum distributed to each has been 2s. 6d. The amount of collections for the poor at the churches has been L. 5, 10s. yearly, which, with a donation of L. 1, 1s. from Mr Balfour of Trenaby, has formed the amount of the provision for the poor, excepting that there is, on Mr Laing's property of Stove, a mortification by the proprietor of four small cottages or farms, worth now L.5, 5s. each of yearly rent, for supporting four superannuated servants, who spend thirty years in constant service on the principal farms; failing whom, the session are empowered to draw the rent for behoof of the poor upon the farm of Stove in the first instance, and, in lack of them, for the general poor of the parish. The charity has not latterly been well administered, and hardly any one of the persons now in possession of the farms are paupers of the description contemplated by Mr Fea, the benevolent mortgager, nor are they entitled to hold them.

*Fuel.*—There are no peat-mosses in the Island of Sanday, and the inhabitants of Cross and Burness are consequently ill supplied with fuel. Each family endeavours to procure a boat or more of peats from the neighbouring Island of Eday, to which the cottar adds prepared cow and horse dung, and the larger tenants coals from the Frith of Forth or Newcastle.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

It is evident that these parishes are still capable of very great improvement. Steam-navigation, which has now reached Kirkwall, were it also brought through the islands, would do much, by making the transit of grain, cattle, and other produce free from the uncertainty attending sailing-vessels. But perhaps the most hopeful prospect of improvement would be from the sale of some of the estates now in the market to men of capital and enterprise. A few tenants from improved districts are also wanted, not theorising speculative gentlemen farmers, who might cavil and carp at things as they are, without knowing how to mend them; but hard-working sure-going men, with sufficient capital, and with common sense enough to make their plans conform to soil, climate, and circumstances; in fact, just such characters as are usually described to be the most suitable for emigrating to the

colonies; and it has often struck the writer as wonderful, that young farmers, as well as men of capital, should attempt the back woods of Canada, or expose themselves to the privations of dry and scorching seasons in Australia, when such good opportunities for turning their skill to account, and for investing their capital, were to be found so much nearer home, in a comparatively mild climate, and among a people proverbially kind to strangers, and generally as well-informed and as companionable as any in Scotland.

**NORTH RONALDSHA.\*—THE REV. ADAM WHITE, MINISTER.**

*Extent, &c.*—THE island of North Ronaldsha, the most northerly of the Orkney group, is separated from the island of Sanday by a frith of about three miles broad where narrowest; and lies upwards of thirty miles from Kirkwall, nearly in the direction of north-east. In form, the island is very irregular, but never exceeds two miles in breadth, and, in length, measures about five miles from the two extreme points, though there are scarcely four between the two most remote dwelling-houses. It is calculated to contain about four square miles. On the south and east sides of the island, where the beach is for the most part low, shelving and sandy, the shape is probably much altered from what it originally was, as a considerable extent of ground seems to have been gained from the sea by the gradual accumulation of sand, which is every winter drifted up from the beach, and spreads over the grounds above. The west and north-west sides are rocky and abrupt, though not very elevated, and there is often such a heavy surf breaking upon the rocks, that the spray renders the land, to the distance of some hundred yards, quite black and sterile. Towards the north-east, the shores of the island are, in some measure, protected by two reefs of rocks, called the altars of Lina and the Shelky Skerry.

*Topographical Appearance.*—The general surface of the island is rather flat, having only a gentle rise toward the middle. It is much above the average of the other islands in point of dryness, and, with the exception of a small strip about the middle, and an edging round the shore, kept as a lair for sheep, it is all in a state of cultivation. Its superior dryness it owes very much to the large

\* Drawn up by the Rev. Adam White, Minister of the parish.

mixture of shell-sand found in its soil, and partly also to there being proper declivities for the water discharging itself into the sea.

There are but three bays; the South bay, Ness bay (on the south-east side), and Linket bay (on the east.) None of these are safe anchorages, and, excepting in mild weather, no vessel can remain upon the coast. The chief headlands are Twingas, Stromness, Brides-ness, and Dennis-ness.

*Zoology.*—The fish which are found on the shores or in the neighbouring seas, are such as are common to all Orkney. Those which are most frequently caught for home consumption, are siliks and cuthes,—the coal-fish, I believe, in the first and second years of their existence; and those which are caught for the market, are lobsters and cod. The Shelky Skerry mentioned above is much frequented by the great seal or *Phoca major*. There are always some about it; but in winter, great numbers occasionally arrive from the north seas, and sometimes bring forth their young upon the rock. The islanders are on the watch, and often secure the strangers by going out in a midnight expedition with clubs, on which occasions they have been known to kill as many as three score. A successful expedition of this kind is a matter of no small rejoicing, as a good supply of oil is obtained from the seal.

A great variety of birds frequent the island, but none of them are of a rare description, unless perhaps the red-necked phalarope (*Tringa hyperborea*), which visits North Ronaldsha in considerable numbers about the middle of June, and departs early in September. It makes its nest among the reeds about the lochs, and lays four eggs of a dingy olive colour with brown spots. It is pretty tame, and allows its motions, which are very graceful, to be observed at a small distance. After north-east gales of some continuance, many strange birds are occasionally found, such as the goatsucker, the golden-crested wren, the cuckoo, and the snowy owl.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The island is wholly the property of William Traill, Esq. of Woodwick, who, however, does not reside upon it. It appears anciently to have been divided into three nearly equal parts,—the mounds which formed the division, and which are of a considerable height and breadth, being still almost uninjured. The only other things which bear the appearance of antiquity, are the remains (all under ground) of an old castle, called still Burrión Castle, and a large erect flat stone, rising ten or twelve feet perpendicular

above the ground, much the same in size and appearance as those found in other parts of Orkney, especially in the parish of Firth and Stenness. Concerning the one here, there is no tradition either as to its original use or the period of its erection.

### III.—POPULATION.

*Habits of the People.*—The customs of the people are much the same as those prevalent in other parts of Orkney. One only seems to be quite peculiar, and is almost uniformly observed at funerals,—the nearest of kin present being always expected to throw upon the coffin the first spadeful of earth. In the case of near relatives, this comes to be a very painful service; but it is regarded as a sacred duty, and is not declined even by the most afflicted widow. What may have been the origin of the practice, it is perhaps impossible to ascertain; but now, it is evidently considered as a proper mark of tenderness and respect towards the deceased.

It is reported in the former Statistical Account, that the population was then (1791) 420,—211 males and 209 females. By the census taken in 1831, the population was 522,—247 males and 275 females; exhibiting an increase in forty years of 102 inhabitants. The amount in April 1836 did not exceed 480, which is owing to a new division of the lands having been made in 1832, when the number of houses was reduced, and about eighty persons left the island.

The total number of families,	112
inhabited houses,	85
The yearly average of births for the last five years, (not having data to go farther back),	18
The yearly average of marriages,	3
deaths,	6½
Number or unmarried men above 50 years of age,	0
widowers,	3
unmarried women above 45,	5

These facts will be found to speak very highly for the general healthfulness and prosperity of the population of the island. There is not a single person at the age of fifty, who has not felt himself able, or at least thought he was so, to support a wife and family, all who have reached that age being married; and what is perhaps still more extraordinary, out of the whole number, three only are widowers, and these very old men, while there are but five females, who may be said to be without hope of marriage. Then look to the small number of deaths as compared with the number of births, the one being little more than one-third of the other; and what is most extraordinary of all, the small number of deaths in proportion to the whole population. The rate of mortality, judging from the last

five years, is only 1 in 77. The average number of the population in each year has been, as nearly as possible, 495 ; and even taking 7 as the average number of deaths, it makes the rate of mortality 70 $\frac{1}{2}$ . This almost exceeds credibility ; but there is one thing to be mentioned in explanation of it, which is, that there are some persons, almost every year, leaving the island in quest of employment, who seldom return to reside in it, while there are none coming from other places to reside here. Consequently, the number of deaths in the island will scarcely give a correct representation of the deaths of those who belong to it. This, however, could not affect the rate of mortality very much ; and by employing a different method for ascertaining the rate, taking the average age of the persons who have died during the period in question, it is still brought up to 62. The facts will fully substantiate this proportion. The people are uncommonly healthy and robust. Excepting a very few who die in infancy,—and these seldom exceeding one in the twelvemonth,—deaths among the young are exceedingly rare. By far the greatest number of deaths take place on those who have reached sixty-five or upwards ; and yet comparatively few outlive eighty. Occasional instances of very great longevity will be found no test of the general healthfulness of the population, or of the average term of life ; and it is precisely among a population like that of this island, that these attain their maximum, where all are accustomed to laborious occupations and exposure to every kind of weather, which tend, in the first instance, to render the bodily frame hardy and robust, and, at the same time, prevent it from reaching an extreme old age.

There is a great deal of native politeness and much kindness of heart among the people ; but in domestic comforts, they are certainly far behind the general run of peasantry in the southern districts ;—not that they are generally more deficient in the materials of comfort,—for every house almost has two or more cows, a pig, several sheep, and abundance of poultry. But there is a great want of neatness and cleanliness in the management of household matters, so that their condition has nothing of the tidy and comfortable appearance of what is now to be met with in houses of a like description in the south. And for any effectual improvement in this respect, there are two formidable barriers in the way, which are not likely soon to be overcome. The women have much work to do out of doors, a species of work, too, which peculiarly unfits them for the neat management of house-

hold concerns, such as cutting sea-weed for kelp, carrying up ware for manure on their backs, and spreading it on the land; and besides, the construction of their houses is very unfavourable, which are not only not plastered but not even built with lime, and seldom have any semblance of a chimney even upon the roof,—while, for the sake of having each part of the house supplied with an equal share of heat, the fire-place is most commonly planted in the middle of the floor. The smoke consequently finds its way in every direction, and to keep either the walls or the utensils in a state of proper cleanliness, is next to impossible. Yet the present form of houses is much superior to what was possessed by the last generation; and this form may soon perhaps give way to another in a higher state of improvement.

The greatest natural discomfort, however, under which the inhabitants of this island labour, is the scarcity of fuel. There are no peats in it, nor any to be found nearer than the Island of Eday, which is fifteen miles distant. Of course, very few are able to supply themselves with fuel of that description; a considerable number get a partial supply; making up the deficiency with cow-dung converted into what are called *scons*, and the stronger kind of sea-weed. Many can afford nothing but the two last, and in cold weather they are often in a very comfortless condition. This is an evil beyond remedy, as there is not the least chance of the bulk of the population ever being able to lay in a sufficient provision either of coals or of peats.

There are no blind, deaf, or dumb in the island, and but two idiots, and one fatuous person.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The island is altogether of an agricultural character. With the exception of two weavers and one tailor, there are none who do not spend the chief part of their time in the labours of the field. The subdivision of labour is here only in its infancy. Most of the men are able to sew, and at leisure hours make or repair their every-day clothes. The wool, out of which these are made, is all carded and spun on the little wheel by the women, who are for the most part exceedingly industrious. And besides the three regular men of handicraft above-mentioned, there are a good many who work occasionally as smiths, carpenters, and boat-builders; but they have all farms or shares in farms, to which they chiefly look for their subsistence; and even the three who are the most exclusive in their employments, always shear in harvest and go



out to some of the fisheries in summer. This mixture of employments is not favourable either to great skill or to much profit in any particular department; but with such a limited field, and especially surrounded with so many who have both the leisure and the inclination in most things to help themselves, it is scarcely possible for any one to gain a sufficient livelihood by confining himself to any single occupation.

In the last Statistical Account, ninety-four persons were stated to be engaged in agriculture, and nineteen in fishing. This division, however, was formed, not because there was a complete distinction between the two classes of persons, but because their principal support was derived from these respective occupations. Judging by the outlay of time, all of them might be designated as agriculturists,—as, during eight months in the year, their main employment is connected with husbandry. But in this, younger brothers and sometimes other relatives give their work for their food, while for every thing besides they must be indebted to the lobster and herring-fisheries; and these, therefore, may with propriety be named from the occupation which yields them most advantage. There are also about a dozen employed as farm-servants, and two men who are called millers, though a large part of their time is spent otherwise, the one as a smith, the other as a carpenter.

These are the only divisions that subsist among the inhabitants of this island. There is no merchant, no baker, no shoemaker, no innkeeper; and the consolation of being without the last, is almost enough to reconcile one to the inconvenience arising from the absence of the rest. This is an inconvenience felt only by the few, who are in the habit of using things, which the island itself does not furnish, and a little care and experience soon teaches them how to provide against it.

*Agriculture.*—The cultivated part of the island has never been exactly measured; but about a fourth only of the whole surface is waste, the greater part of which is the portion along the west and north-west side, which is rendered sterile by the spray. This portion may therefore be regarded as hopelessly sterile. But the small tract in the interior, which is still unreclaimed, is now divided off, and promises in a few years to be all in a state of cultivation.

*Rental.*—The whole rental of the island is nearly L. 500.

The sort of farms and the style of farming which prevail here, are rather of a primitive nature. With the exception of one farm, which pays a rent of about L. 80, there is none that exceeds L. 25,

and the greater part are much below this. It was the policy of the landlords in this country to subdivide the land, and encourage the increase of population as much as possible, for the purpose of obtaining a sufficient number of labourers to manufacture the kelp; and now when they would fain adopt an opposite policy, and enlarge the size of their farms, the excess of population meets them with an insuperable difficulty. Until a few years ago, indeed, there was no such thing as a separate and distinct farm in this island; it was divided into five townships or districts, each containing a considerable number of houses scattered up and down, amongst which the land, both pasture and arable, was equally divided; and that none might have the advantage of another, not only was every plot of arable ground divided, but an exchange made every year,—so that improvement was impossible, and the industrious had no encouragement for their industry. In 1832, this system was wisely broken up, and the whole island squared off into little farms, lying contiguous to the several houses. A new and higher scale of rents was, at the same time, agreed upon, which rendered the measure unpopular; but considerable allowances were for some years to be made for improvements in drains and enclosures, of which the more industrious have so far availed themselves, as both greatly to improve their farms, and to pay their rent without much difficulty. But excepting on the larger farm, and partially on one or two others, there is no regular rotation kept up. The land is alternately cropped with bear and oats—a mode of cultivation which is not likely to be soon abandoned, as it is much favoured by the large quantities of sea-weed drifted to the shore, and almost rendered necessary by the demand for winter fodder to their cattle. They can consequently grow nothing but the inferior kinds of grain, bear, or bigg, and the small grey or black oat. About 1500 bolls of the former are raised, and 1200 of the latter; and of these quantities nearly one-third is exported. The bear commonly weighs 44 lbs. per bushel; after turnips it has been found to weigh as high as 48 lbs.; and the oats are generally from 25 to 28 lbs.

Although, however, the old system of alternate cropping is still prevalent, great improvements in farming have taken place during the last twelve years, chiefly owing to the good example and judicious management of the gentleman, (Mr Robert Scarth,) who, during that period, has been acting as factor on the property. There was then but one cart in the island, which was never used,

as the horse showed some disinclination to go into it ; only one two-stilted plough, no inclosures, and both horses and cattle were exceedingly small and trifling. The latter have been much improved by crosses from Dunrobin bulls, and are now equal to the average show of cattle in Orkney. The horses are also greatly improved in size and strength. Enclosures are to be seen on every side, completed or in progress. Every house is furnished with a neat and well-made plough, commonly of wood, but sometimes also of iron—a valuable substitute, indeed, for the old one-stilted shapeless thing they used before, which rather broke up the ground than turned it over. And a still greater advantage is derived from the introduction of carts, with one or more of which every house is now supplied. Before, every thing had to be carried on horse-back, either in sacks or in a sort of wooden creels, which they used for bringing up their ware to the land, and such other articles as could not be put into sacks. In this way an immense deal of time was lost, which they can now save and turn to good account. So that, in an agricultural point of view, the island at present stands upon a far better footing, than it did twelve years ago.

The only other thing to be noticed under this head is the condition of the sheep, which is just as bad as can well be conceived. With the exception of a very few kept on the largest farm for killing, they are all shut out by a high dike, which encompasses the whole island to the mere shores, and a little bit of waste ground left for them here and there. Their sole food almost, is the seaweed that happens to be drifted ashore, and as this comes most plentifully during winter, that is their fattening season, especially before the cold weather of the new year sets in. They are chiefly kept for the wool, from which all that is worn in every-day clothing is manufactured ; but every house has a practice of killing one on yule or Christmas eve, which goes by the name of the yule sheep. And on the forenoon of that day, there is a great gathering, at a certain place, of all the men and sheep in the island, for the selection of the several victims.

*Fisheries.*—The only fisheries that are carried on with a view to the market, are those of lobster, herring, and cod. In the first, six boats, each having two men, are engaged every year from about the beginning of May to the middle of June. The fish are sold to a London Company, whose welled smacks call for them regularly once a week, at a place about ten miles distant, in the

adjoining island of Sanday. The price given varies from 3d. to 3½d per fish: and it is reckoned a fair fishing, when each boat catches about 600 fish.

To the herring-fishing fourteen boats are furnished by the island, all above 24 and some of; them 28 feet keel. They have been built by two workmen in the island, who are in a great measure self-taught; and they are considered the strongest and finest boats in Orkney. They are all held in shares, each the property of four men, who man them; and sometimes a young person is hired in as a fifth hand. As boatmen, they are not deficient either in skill or boldness; but they have never been very successful in the fishery, and the last two years have been so unfavourable, that many have not gained as much as is sufficient to cover their outlay. The station they frequent is in Stronsay, the only one for the cure of herrings in the north Isles of Orkney.

Until the summer of the year 1836, the cod-fishing had scarcely ever been tried here; the people having usually been employed in making kelp, during the part of the season most suitable for that.

The greatest drawback the island has to contend with, in carrying on any fishery that requires large boats, is the want of a safe anchorage. The men are obliged to draw up their boats in the prospect of bad weather, or shift them from one side of the island to another,—both of which are the cause of great trouble and inconvenience.

*Manufactures.*—The only kind of manufacture carried on in the island, is kelp. As many as 120 tons have been made in one year, though the average would not exceed 100. To get even that quantity requires considerable pushing on the part of the landlord; and now that he has no inducement to do so, the average will be still less. The kelp from this island had always a high character in the market, and has commanded a sale every year as yet, though latterly at very low prices. But as long as it can be sold without any actual loss, it will still be an object for the landlord to get it made; as nearly one-third of the rental is made up by the allowances given for the manufacture of this article, which, but for this, would remain unpaid. The allowance given is at the rate of L. 2, 2s. per ton. A man with his family will make a ton and a-half in ordinary seasons. It has been lately discovered that the kelp made of drift sea-weed, is valuable for the iodine it contains, and for that purpose is worth L. 4 per ton.

But it is only about a sixth part of the whole kelp of this island, that is made of drift sea-weed.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

This island had always been a separate parish, until lately combined with other two, Cross and Burness, in the neighbouring island of Sanday, under one charge. The clergymen having to travel a distance of not less than four miles by land and six by sea, it was impossible there could be regular ministrations in the island, or any proper pastoral superintendence established. Indeed, as to all the benefits of a regular ministry, the people might be said to be total strangers; and being besides nearly all on a level among themselves, no one, from his superior wealth or station in society, to command an influence over the rest, they afforded an example of a people in the common ranks of life, very much left to their own discretion. There were a few things, however, to temper and modify the natural result of such a state of things. Each district had its elder, who was commonly a person of respectability and worth, and was allowed a considerable weight in the settlement of disputes. Then, proudly elevated above these stood the *bailie*, the acknowledged head of all the natives, and looked up to with no small respect; who was appointed to the honourable distinction by the landlord, and was generally chosen with impartiality. The last one, who died only two years ago, and with whom the office also expired, was a person of great reading for one in his rank of life, and was in the habit pretty regularly of reading a sermon to the people on Sunday, and conducting a Sabbath school. This certainly was productive of some good, though not so much as might be supposed,—the authority being still wanting, which was necessary to enforce, on the part of the people, a proper attention. Besides these authorities, the factor occasionally resided on the island, and an annual visit was paid by the landlord; but their stay was too short and irregular to have much influence in moulding the habits and characters of the people.

In 1829, a manse was erected on the island, under the Commissioners for Planting New Churches in the Islands and Highlands, and in the following year a clergyman was ordained. The island was then virtually erected into a separate parochial charge, though it was not constituted such till the summer of 1833. Great joy was testified by the people at the settlement of a minister among them.

There used to be a good deal of pilfering, when a shipwreck

took place,—which was not looked upon as proper stealing. Many persons thought themselves at liberty to appropriate goods of that description, who were never known to steal an article from their neighbours. A good deal had been done to check the evil by the vigorous measures of Mr Scarth; but the discipline of the church was required to put an effectual stop to it. A very different feeling now prevails upon the subject. Shipwrecked property has come to be regarded as personal property; and people who were once in the habit of taking it without shame or remorse, express openly the change that has taken place in their views. At the last two or three wrecks, scarcely any thing was stolen.

During the winter season, it was customary to carry on a perpetual succession of merry-makings, called balls. Every marriage, was the occasion of two—the bride's friends being at the expense of the wedding-feast, and the best-man feeling himself called upon to give *the back-feast*, which occurred a month or two after the wedding, and in which he was assisted by contributions from some of the other young men in the immediate neighbourhood. Besides these regular meetings, a great many more were added to fill up the void. Their moral effect was decidedly pernicious in various ways; but the kirk-session having interfered, little or no excess of this kind takes place.

By the same interference smuggling may now be said to be almost, if not completely abolished.

In general habits, the people are, now at least, remarkably decent and sober.

*Education.*—There is a school in the island supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.

# PARISH OF WESTRAY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JOHN ARMIT, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—WESTRAY obviously derives its name from the place it holds among the group of islands which lie to the north of the mainland of Orkney, called North Isles. It is situated in the north-west extremity of the country, and is the isle farthest west of the group.

*Extent.*—Its superficial contents may amount to about 25 square miles. But, owing to its very irregular form, its numerous inlets, and projecting points, its precise dimensions cannot be ascertained but by an experienced surveyor. In the centre, and towards the eastern parts, the surface, with few exceptions, is low and flat; but in the Rapness district, which forms the southern extremity, the ground on the north or north-east suddenly rises, which makes the shore in that quarter bold and lofty. The precipices there may be from 140 to 150 feet above the level of the sea.

*Topographical Appearances.*—In the western extremity, there is a range of hills called Skea, Fitty, and Gallo, &c. extending from south to north, to the distance of four miles and upwards. On Fitty, the highest of these, the trigonometrical surveyors, in the autumn of 1821, pitched their tents, and erected a temporary building, which remains nearly entire. The height of this hill, as then ascertained, was, to the best of my recollection, 652 feet above the level of the sea. The island on the western extremity, to the distance of more than four miles, is bounded by a shore of perpendicular rock, washed by the floods of the Atlantic. At its base, from which the sea never recedes, a few places only excepted, the depth is from eight to twenty fathoms. All along the lofty and rugged cliffs of this shore, an immense variety of sea fowl nestle and bring forth their young; and numbers of the young and old birds, during the season of incubation, are taken by the inhabitants, both for food and their feathers, which they turn to good account.

*Caverns.*—Here, besides many curious excavations in the apparently solid rock, are to be seen subterraneous caverns, formed by the influx and reflux of the sea. In some of these, the water at high tide, and in tempestuous weather, is forced up through narrow crevices of the rock to the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile landward, and bursting out at the surface from orifices of its own formation, springs up in the air to a surprizing height.

Among the natural curiosities of the kind here to be met with, that called the Fort, evidently formed by the action of the sea, may not be deemed unworthy of notice. This remarkable place is situated in the northern boundary of that part of the island called Akerness, the property of Dr George Traill of Skail. Here, standing upon a lofty precipice, you see, underneath, an immense caldron in perpetual agitation, from which a hideous and gorging noise ever and anon ascends, stunning the ear. You can walk nearly half-way round this mighty caldron, on high pillars of solid rock, arched over with the same solid material. One or two broken or separated columns, standing out furthest in the circle, from which the arches seem to have been swept away by the agitated element, heightens very much the grandeur of the scene, and gives to it an appearance truly picturesque. It is said to bear a strong resemblance to the Bullers of Buchan, on the Aberdeen coast.

*Bays.*—Besides numerous small creeks and inlets, which indent the shores of Westray, there are at least three or four which come under the description of bays, namely, the Bay of Tookquoy, Pircrowall, Noop, and Rapness. The Bay of Tookquoy is broad and long, the distance between the headlands being between four and five miles,—and long, penetrating about five miles into the bosom of the island, and gradually narrowing as it ascends, until it terminates in a shore of about one mile, or three-quarters of a mile broad. It is all over a sandy bottom, and is esteemed good anchoring ground; but the depth of water is too shallow for admitting, to the safe and proper station, vessels of a large size. It is, moreover, quite unsafe for a road-stead, as it lies exposed to gales from the south and south-west, which cause a heavy sea over the whole bay to its inmost extremity. Only boats and craft of the smallest size can harbour safely here, and that, too, not until they get round at the head of the bay into a small basin, called by the inhabitants the Use, and defended from the sea beach by a bank of sand and stones.



The Bay of Picrowall is quite of a different description.\* It is a remarkably fine basin, not above three-quarters of a mile broad at the entrance, but within wide and spacious, and nearly of a circular form. The bottom is sand, and excellent anchoring ground. The place being completely land-locked, any vessel moored in it is quite safe from every point of wind. But it is also too ebb for admitting vessels of a very large size. It may be deemed safe for all below 200 tons burden, but not above that size.

The Bay of Noop, which faces the north, lies quite open and exposed to the fury of the Atlantic. With a gale blowing on shore, there is no safety for any vessel entering this bay; and not a few have met their sad fate from a reef of rocks that lie quite across the bay, called the Bow of Rackwick.

The Bay of Rapness, at the opposite extremity of the island, looks to the south, and is also an open bay, and therefore far from being a safe one, especially when the wind blows from any point touching the south or south-east.

*Headlands.*—The principal headlands around this isle are the Noop-head, or the stack of Noop, on the north; the flag of Innival on the west; the Knowe of Skae on the south-west; the Neve or Ness of Ackerness on the north-east; the Point of Rapness on the south-east; and Weatherness on the north-east, in the southern extremity of the island. In the Island of Papay, as there are no bays, there may be said to be no headlands of any note.

*Meteorology.*—The temperature of Westray may be said to be much on a par with that of the other islands or the country at large. The medium heat will be found to amount to 45°; the range of the thermometer, between the extremes of cold in winter and heat in summer, from 25° to 75°; and that of the barometer, three inches.

*Hydrography.*—This island is bounded on the south by a frith rapid and broad, which separates it from the Island of Rousay and Eglishay by a distance of about eight miles. It is called Westray Frith, and has its strength of current from the Atlantic rolling into it from the west, and the German Ocean from the east. One part of it is peculiarly dangerous, as, at a certain time of the tide, the last of the ebb, contrary currents meet, and rolling up

\* There being originally a small pier erected at the head of the bay for boats the adjacent district is called Wall,—hence Pier-o'-wall.

into tremendous breakers, render it a fearful gulf. The tideway in this frith is reckoned the same with that of the Pentland, which, in spring-tides, runs at the rate of eight knots an hour. The depth of water is from 20 to 50 fathoms. On the west, this island is bounded by the Atlantic; on the east, by a small portion of sea called a sound, which separates it from the Islands of Ferey and Eday; and on the north and north-east, by another sound, separating it from that portion of the parish called Papa-Westray. The breadth of the proper ferry between the two islands may be reckoned from three to four miles.

*Papay-Westray.*—This island forms another constituent part of the parochial charge. Whence it derives its name can only be matter of conjecture. It is of an oval form, and is exactly one mile broad, and about three and a half long, making its superficial contents three and a half square miles. In the middle, it rises in the form of a ridge, and gently declines on both sides, until it reaches the sea shore. In this shape, it runs nearly the whole length of the island. But, on the north extremity, it terminates in a headland, bold and lofty, called the Mull of Papay. At this headland, is a cave, deemed one of the greatest natural curiosities of the kind to be met with, perhaps, in all the country. Its interior presents the appearance of an immense amphitheatre. The roof, upwards of 70 feet in height, is somewhat like a regular built arch,—the beds of rock on every side rising the one above the other in the form of steps in a stair. The entrance is about 50 feet in width, the breadth of the middle part about 60, and the most interior, 48. The floor has a little inclination outwards, but its surface is smooth and even to the foot of the traveller. It is well worth being seen by strangers visiting the island. It is called the How of Habrahelia. The southern extremity of this island is also somewhat elevated, but not nearly so much as that of its opposite. In this quarter, there is a beautiful fresh-water lake, which extends nearly across the whole island, from the one side of it to the other; and in one part of this lake, there is a kind of islet, and on that a ruin of a chapel, said to have been dedicated to a female saint of the name of Tredwall; and such was the veneration entertained by the inhabitants for this ancient Saint, that it was with difficulty that the first Presbyterian minister of the parish could restrain them, of a Sunday morning, from paying their devotions at this ruin, previous to their attendance on public worship in the

reformed church. Wonders, in the way of cure of bodily disease, are said to have been wrought by this Saint, whose fame is now passed away, and name almost forgotten.

A small glebe excepted, this island belongs exclusively to one proprietor, who, with his family, constantly resides in it; and, for a length of time, was the only residing heritor in the parish, and Justice of the Peace. A large proportion of this island is under culture, and enclosed with stone dikes. It is deemed among the most fertile of the islands in Orkney, both for pasture and arable land. Here clover, white and red, grows spontaneously, and of a rich quality. Here turnips are raised, of a more extraordinary size and weight than in warmer climes and apparently richer soils. The proprietor of Papa Westray has, within these eight or ten years, erected a garden, which promises to do very well as a kitchen garden. Though currant and gooseberry have not succeeded to expectation, yet apple-trees supported on the wall have been wonderfully productive.\*

*Lakes.*—In Westray there are four considerable lakes, viz. the Loch of Swartmill, in the Skailwick district; the Loch of Tookquay, in the south-west district; and the Lochs of Saintear and Burness, in the north part of the parish. All these lakes are much about one size, measuring nearly half a mile in length to a quarter in breadth,—Burness excepted, which is not so large. The water in the lake of Swartmill is peculiarly dark and muddy, owing to its lying in the centre of a large peat-moss. There are no fishes in this lake, except common eel. The water in the lake of Tookquay is soft and clear, and answers well all the purposes of washing and bleaching; but there are no fish in it, owing to its want of communication with the sea. The water in the lakes of Saintear and Burness are also transparent, and answer equally well the purposes above-mentioned. Burness, the upper lake, empties

\* It may not, perhaps, be out of place here to mention, that Papa Westray is notable in history for being the scene of a cruel murder. Ronald, one of the Earls of Orkney, who is represented as an amiable and accomplished nobleman, and much beloved by his subjects, happening to come to this island direct from his palace at Kirkwall, attended by a small retinue, on a domestic concern, and, towards the approach of the Christmas season, was, in the course of the night or late in the evening, while sitting by the fireside indulging himself in mirth and conversation with his companions, suddenly surprised by Thorsin Earl of Caithness, and his armed followers investing the house and setting fire to it; and though, by superior strength and agility, he escaped the conflagration, yet his place of retreat was soon afterwards discovered by the barking of his own dog, whence he was taken, and, together with his companions, inhumanly butchered. His remains are said to have been carried over to Westray, and interred amidst the lamentations of the people.

itself into Saintear, the lower, and that again in the Bay of Picro-wall. There are trout in both these lakes, and their season of spawning is in September and October. In these months, they are often caught in their way up the stream from the sea.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The strata of rock round this and the other island consist of limestone of the mixed and impure kind, and of the trap formation, twisted and scattered in all directions on the coast. There are also here two kinds of flagstone, distinguished by the colour, blue and grey. The blue, like the rock of that colour, is hard, and accounted the most durable of the two. It is chiefly found by the sea shore, and considerably down from the high-water mark. The greystone flag is found in abundance, all over the Island of Westray, and of various thickness, from half an inch to three or four inches. Several quarries of it have, within these six or eight years, been opened for the purpose of making slate for houses. But the common people roof their houses with both kinds, just as they happen to be within their reach, and put them on in the same state in which they raise them, measuring sometimes from eight to ten feet square. This makes roofing here as easy as building. Pure limestone is also found in Westray. About thirty-eight years ago, a good deal was quarried on one estate, the estate of Cleat, and, being burnt, was found of good quality.

In this island, organic remains are found imbedded in peat-moss, belonging both to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. In one large moss, great quantities of birch and birch-bark are annually dug up, in the operation of cutting peats; and report says, that horns of deer have frequently been discovered in different parts of the moss. These fossils would indicate that forest wood, at some early period, existed in the island, and that deer had then been an inhabitant of the place. The wonder is, that no forest or growing wood of any extent is now to be seen either in this or in any other island in the country, though similar fossils abound. And it is a matter no less surprising, that every attempt to raise forest wood in the open fields, even in the most sheltered spots, has hitherto proved abortive.

The only ore discovered in this island is manganese. The dark-brown colour on the scum of water springs, in many places, plainly shows its plentiful existence.

The alluvial deposits which cover sandstone and limestone consist,

for the most part, of sand, peat, gravel, clay, marl, and sometimes loam. Rolled blocks are not unfrequently found in valleys and meadows, where, in all probability, some mighty flood has swept them down from the higher grounds in their vicinity, to their present state of imbedment. No remains of animals, except of the marine kind, are found here in the alluvial deposits, and of these only cockle and mussel, and shell of the razor-fish, are seen and in great plenty imbedded in sandy soil, at considerable distance from and above the level of the sea.

There is almost every species of soil in Westray. In the north part of the island, the soil most prevalent is sand; but there are also to be seen in different parts of the same district, clay, gravel, and loam. The last-mentioned chiefly consists of small spots of ground, which have been long under culture, and improved too by the transportation of earths in a composite state. This, I think, will be found invariably the case where loam in any quarter of the island is seen. In the south-west district, which comprehends Frebbay, Midbay, and Outo'-town, the soil in general is sandy, in some places gravelly, especially on the farm of Tookquoy; and small spots of loam occur in most of the little farms in that neighbourhood. In the east and south-east districts, comprehending Cleat, Skailwick, and Rapness, the soil is alternate clay and peat-moss, with partial exceptions of gravel. The clay in all these quarters is, for the most part, of a very cold and wet nature, by reason of its proximity to the rock. Hitherto, we have taken notice of such soils only as are under culture, and it may be said with truth, that these in any quarter scarcely go beyond the skirts of the island, and do not constitute above one-tenth of its superficial contents. The interior consists of an immense tract of common hill and dale lying in a state of nature, and separated everywhere from the cultivated lands by a turf dike, within which all the flocks and most of the bestial of the island, milk cows only excepted, are shut, during the summer and autumn, until the crops are removed from the ground and lodged in the barn-yards, when the styles are again laid open and the flocks left to range at pleasure. In many places of this extensive common, the soil is excellent, being in general of a rich whitish clay, and capable of being cultivated to advantage. But there are also large tracks, where the soil is extremely poor and wet, upon which little improvement could be made, to repay the trouble and expense of the cultivator.

The soil in Papa-Westray is generally of a deep loam, where it has been long cultivated. In some parts, it is gravelly, in others clayey, and in some places a poor and insipid sand.

*Zoology.*—There is not, to my knowledge, in this island, any animal that can properly be called rare, if we except a mouse of large size, nearly twice that of the common black mouse, and of light-brown colour. It is called by the inhabitants the vole-mouse. It is seldom or ever seen in a barn-yard or about houses. It commonly keeps by the sea shore, and burrows in the ground, especially in old seal dikes and among stones. There is a peculiarity in regard to this island, which may be mentioned, and which, I understand, holds in regard to some other islands in this county, namely, that no rat can live in it. It is asserted that, though this quadruped has often been imported by ships, it never survives for any length of time; whereas, in the other and less frequented isle, it abounds, and is extremely destructive. There it was imported by a wrecked vessel.

It is well known that the grey eagle, which now visits the island only occasionally, was wont to nestle in the lofty precipices of the shores on the north, but that the bird-catchers, year after year, seizing upon their brood, drove them away to seek a safer retreat from the hand of the spoiler. Hence, they are seldom seen here, except when hovering about in quest of their prey, or on their passage to the other and more inaccessible parts of the country, such as the Hoy hills and Heads of Eday.

It is only the smallest kind of sheep that thrives in Westray, and the same observation holds in regard to cows. The larger cows do not take well with the bare pastures of Westray. In a few years, they degenerate into little more than the common breed of the place. This is no doubt owing, in a great measure, to the backward state of agriculture; the want of green crops, or the requisite pasture for their feeding. In Papay, where the pastures are better, the larger breed of cattle and horses do pretty well.

The haddock taken here is of the largest size, and very black on the back parts. Turbot is seldom got in our seas. The dog-fish is eagerly sought after, both for oil and family use. It is often got in great plenty towards the end of July, and during August and September, following the shoals of herrings which in these months frequent our shores. But among all the marine tribes, the most serviceable for food to the common people, and for light, from

the oil they produce, is the fry of the coal-fish, which is taken here in immense quantities by the people, standing upon the rocks by the water's edge, with nets made in the form of a parachute or umbrella suspended from the top of a long pole, and thereby let down into the sea.

*Botany.*—There is, at least, one rare plant of the floral kind that grows here. It is the bird's-eye primrose. It shoots up its gentle form in the most barren and naked spots. Indeed, it is never seen here in any other soil but the barren and the waste. The common primrose is also seen plentiful in its season, growing by the mountain side or by the brink of the streamlet. On our shores, the sea-pink abounds, and the cowslip covers as with a mantle of yellow the declivities of the elevated and rocky grounds, in almost every quarter of the island. The queen-of-the-meadow, too, appears in our fens, and copiously impregnates the surrounding air with its delicious odour; and the daisy enamels our plains and pasture grounds as richly, perhaps, as in any other part of the world. In this brief catalogue, the craw-flower and blue violet also merit a place, being seen plentifully here, interspersed among numerous other indigenous plants. The following are a few that are deemed medical, viz. tussilago, marsh-mallow, poppy, scurvy-grass, foxglove, nightshade, with a great variety of the wort kind.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Only one ancient author, Jo Ben, touches a little on this island. As his account is succinct and interesting, it may not, perhaps, be improper to give it a place here. “Of all the islands in Orkney, Westray is the most fertile. Here the better sort of people (*genera nobilium*) make their residence. Here is an excellent fort, (meaning Noltland Castle,) not yet finished. Here the peasants or country people, (*agricolæ*,) had of old a terrible battle with the Hybernians or Lewismen, which being routed, were all put to the sword. One individual, however, more gallant and robust, eminently distinguished himself, fighting after the rest of his companions were destroyed. Having had both his legs cut off below the hams, he was seen in the affray, upon his stumps, bravely defending himself.” And tradition adds, that in this posture, with his back supported by a huge rock, to this day called the Highlandman's hammer, he did no little execution about him, until, overpowered by numbers, he was forced with violence against the rock and slain.

*Memorable Occurrences.*—The only occurrences of note or interest that have taken place in this and the other isle within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, consist chiefly of dismal shipwrecks. About nine or ten in number have happened within these thirty years, in which five of the crews perished; and as many more perhaps during the same period, may have met their fate on the lofty precipices of our northern shore, under the cloud of night, and in the wintry tempest, when no eye witnessed the disasters. For the detached pieces of broken ships and their contents, occasionally scattered upon our shores, we cannot well account, but from this cause.

*Eminent Men.*—As connected with this parish by birth or residence in his early life, we have to mention one respectable character, namely, John Balfour, Esq. of Trenaby, late Member of Parliament for the county of Orkney and Zetland, and who has in this island a property of considerable extent, from whence he takes his title. From history, it appears that Papa Westray was the residence of one Kolus, who married the daughter of Erlend, one of the Orkney Earls, and who had that island and other lands conferred upon him for merited services.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners in the parish are,—the Right Honourable Lord Dundas; George Traill, Esq. of Holland; John Balfour, Esq. of Trenaby; James Stewart, Esq. of Brugh; Dr Thomas Stewart Traill of Tirllet; Dr George Traill of Skail; Thomas Mackenzie, Esq. of Ground Water; and Messrs Smith of Breckowall.

*Parochial Registers.*—There are only two parochial registers kept in this parish, viz. a register of baptisms and another of marriages. The baptism register commences with the year 1733, and the marriage register reaches no farther back than the year 1784; and both have been brought down, with very few omissions, to the present time.

*Antiquities.*—The castle of Noltland, in this island, forms a venerable monument of antiquity. It is both an ancient and noble structure, and bears every mark of an intended place of defence similar to many of the kind throughout the kingdom, erected in feudal times. Its walls are of great thickness, and it is surrounded at all points with loop-holes, so that no enemy could approach without being exposed to a shower of deadly missiles. Its plan is rather that of an oblong than a square, and a court within. The entry to it still



remaining is an arched portal of ornamented hewn work. Within the court, the entry to the main building is also of ornamented hewn work, and on the top part a coat of arms, which an ignorant rustic had the presumption to take down and destroy. A broad and elegant staircase presents itself as you enter, leading to the apartments above. But, before you reach the stair to ascend, a door on the right hand attracts your eye, conducting into an immense apartment on the ground flat, and nearly in the centre of the main building. Its dimensions are 62 feet long by 24 broad, and covered overhead by a strong stone arch 20 feet in height. An arch-built fire-place of great dimension, from 9 to 10 feet wide, is seen in one end, and a spring well at the other, nearly filled with stones. In one of the side walls is a narrow stone stair, leading, by a flight of steep steps, up through the vaulted roof, evidently to serve as a private communication to the upper flat and its several divisions. The whole fabric demonstrates the original design: the great hall below for the accommodation of military or fighting men, and the upper apartments for family accommodation. Had the intended structure been finished, in pursuance of the plan, it would have been not only a superb dwelling, but an impregnable fortress for the time of its erection. With the adjoining lands, which are of considerable extent, it belongs to John Balfour, Esq. of Trenaby; and the coat of arms alluded to as removed, but which have been replaced anew, are those of the family, put up at first by one Gilbert, who in Queen Mary's time, and that of her unfortunate husband, Lord Darnley, was master of the royal household, afterwards Sheriff of Orkney and Governor of the castle at Kirkwall, and for his services had the above lands granted by his royal master. Hence the conjecture, that Noltland Castle had been built under the superintendance of that gentleman, to serve as a safe retreat for the profligate Bothwell and Mary, after their disgraceful espousals,—but which had been left unfinished, upon the sad reverses which speedily overtook that unhappy pair. From whatever cause the work was laid aside, the symptoms of its speedy abandonment are visible to this day in the plentiful material for building lying in different spots around the walls of the edifice, ready prepared for the hands of the workmen. But that the above conjecture must be erroneous, is evident from the very poor reception which Bothwell met with from that gentleman who refused him admittance into the castle of Kirkwall in the day of his adversity, when, to

escape merited punishment for a crime in which he certainly was a principal accomplice, he was forced to take shipping and fly to this remote part of the kingdom. Should this circumstance fail to convince some who may still feel disposed to give credence to the above opinion but too hastily adopted, what Ben, the early historian has said, who wrote forty years prior to these occurrences, in the Scottish annals, should serve to set the question, in as far as relates to these two individuals, for ever at rest. His language is, "In Westray there is an excellent castle, but not yet completed;" so that, in his day, it was still an unfinished building. The most probable thing is, that it was the undertaking of some Scandinavian prince or nobleman, who, either from misfortune had not been able to finish the work, or who had died during its progress, and whose death had put a stop to its completion. We would merely say, that it is a pity the proprietors, in after times, should have ever allowed one stone of so venerable a fabric to be taken down, or any part of it to be demolished.

As there are, in many parts of the country, obelisks or standing-stones, so is there in nearly the centre of this island, one square stone, standing not quite upright, but in an inclined posture towards the south, with the lower part deeply fixed in the ground. The part above ground is eleven feet in height. On what occasion, or for what purpose it was erected, tradition is almost silent.

There is on the south-west side of this island, close by the sea shore, and about a mile from the manse, a ruin of a chapel named Cross Kirk, originally a place of Roman Catholic worship, but latterly of Presbyterian, until, about sixty-five years ago, it became ruinous, and a new church was erected on the other side of the island, in a more convenient situation for the people, especially for those in the remote district of Rapness. However, the burying-ground at the old ruin still remains to be the cemetery of the east parish, there being nothing of that kind at the new and more recently erected place of worship.

In the island of Papay, besides the chapel of St Tradewell already mentioned, there is a ruin of a religious house, distant about a quarter of a mile from the one now in use. It is called the Kirk of How, and was also a place of Roman Catholic worship. It is situated on a beautiful rising-ground, and the small cemetery, enclosed by a low stone dike, and covered over with a green sward, seems still to be considered as sacred ground, being allowed to re-

main in its natural state. The parish cemetery is not here, but lies around the present place of worship.

To the above antiquities is to be added the number of graves found in two extensive fields, one in the north and the other in the south side of Westray. It is ascertained that these graves were not known to the inhabitants, until high gales of wind carried away the surface,—which, in both places being light and sandy, and easily transported, exhibited to view the deposits which had been hid from the eye of many generations. Most of these graves are marked with a stone planted at the head and another at the foot of the place of interment: others, again, by flag-stones set on edge, arranged in the form of a chest for holding the body together, with such articles as the custom of the time, or the reigning superstition, deemed expedient to be interred along with it. When opened, they were found to contain not only human bones, but warlike implements, especially swords in a most decayed state, also articles of dress, with some of a domestic description. Were more of them opened, there is little doubt that discoveries might be made, highly interesting to the antiquarian. That the fields on which these graves are seen, were at some distant period the scene of hostile combat, cannot be doubted. The scattered state of the graves over these fields, which are of considerable extent, and their contents may be said to vouch for the truth of this opinion. But, besides these two fields, there is another place unnoticed by any author, which also bears evident marks of hostility. The place to which we allude, lies in a valley between two of the highest hills, namely, Fitty and Gallow, far distant from any inhabited spot, and hard by what is called the Highlandman's hammer, already alluded to, as the scene of bloody strife and of individual bravery. Here the slain seem to have been collected into two spots, the one separated from the other by a distance of 30 or 40 yards, where the graves in each spot are seen huddled close together, and covered over with earth and stone. These spots are, to this day, known by the name of the bloody Tuacks, and it is not improbable that the one contains the ashes of the brave who fell in the common cause, and the other those of the vanquished foe.

Tumuli, or Pict's houses, as they are called, are numerous in this parish. They are seen in both islands, and chiefly on the sea shores. Some of them are large, and almost every one has an original or an appropriate name, transmitted, we may believe,

from the period when that race of people were the possessors of the country. Similar to the ancient graves here scattered over the sandy plains, they are naturally a subject of curiosity. But I have never heard of any of them having been opened, but one which was opened at the request of two strangers, who visited the island many years ago. An urn, with one or two domestic utensils, —a drinking cup and quern, were discovered.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1755, the population of this parish, according to Dr Webster, was,	1290
1793, according to the last Statistical Account,	1629
1811,	1626
1821,	1947
1881, the number of males was 940, of females 1092, in all,	2032

The decrease of population between 1793 and 1811 was owing to the number of young men impressed, or that volunteered into the service of the navy, during the late French revolutionary war.

There are only two families of independent fortunes residing in this parish, namely, Mr Traill of Holland, and Mr Stewart of Brugh.

The number of landed proprietors of the yearly value of L.50, is	8
widows upwards of 50 years,	12
unmarried men upwards of 50,	43
unmarried women upwards of 45,	44
families in the parish,	425
Average number of children in each family,	3
The number of inhabited houses in the parish,	273
uninhabited houses,	4

The number of insane persons, 5; of dumb, 2; of deaf, 4; of blind, 3; and of fatuous description, 3.

One custom in this parish, and common to Orkney at large, is that of allowing the servants four or five days liberty at Christmas, to enjoy themselves. Only the most necessary part of domestic work, with due attention to the bestial on the farm, is done on these days. The master of the house has, also, to keep up a well-furnished table for all his servants at that season.

Another practice peculiar to this place is, that of observing punctually those days in the Roman calendar, on which eating and drinking are practised with more liberality than usual.

Enjoying in a moderate degree the necessary comforts of life, the people appear, in general, contented with their situation and circumstances; and the little emigration that takes place may be deemed a proof of this. They are naturally shrewd, and many of them of quick parts; and in general, they are very desirous of knowledge.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

The number of cultivated Scotch acres in Westray is about	2870
Papa Westray,	960
The number of acres which have never been cultivated, including the different holms or uninhabited isles connected with Westray, may amount in all to about	3400
In Papa, including the holm,	965
The number of acres that with advantage might be added to the cultivated lands in Westray may amount to about	700
In Papa,	350
The undivided common in Westray may amount to	11650

Mr Traill every year adds to his cultivated property in Papa, by allowing his people to enclose what they can, of the waste or uncultivated, and to enjoy what is thus gained rent free, for the space of seven years, upon payment of 6d. annually in the way of an acknowledgement; after which period, he exacts a small rent.

Garden-ground excepted, there are no lands under wood in the parish; and no shrubbery or tree can rise higher than the wall that shelters it.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of arable land in the parish may be reckoned at 10s. per acre. The rate of grazing an ox or cow during summer is 8s., and much about the same for a horse, —horses here being in general of the small size. There is no fixed rate for the grazing of a sheep, because every one's flock is grazed in one great common, in which all claim an equal right.

Wool per stone costs 7s. 6d., and manufactured into cloth, sold at 2s. per yard. Mason-work in house building is L. 1, 1s. per rood, and in dike building, 6d. per fathom of four feet high. Carpenter's work is 1s. 6d. per day with meat.

*Live-Stock, &c.*—The breeds of sheep and cattle, in these two islands, are almost all of the small kind; the larger breeds of either not answering well. Both have been frequently tried; but, from want of proper pasture, and perhaps climate, they always degenerate. Owing also to the climate, the husbandry is confined almost entirely to the cultivation of oats and bear or big, the one after the other in constant rotation, with the alternation only of a small potato field in each farm. In some of the principal farms which have enclosures, turnip is beginning to have a place in the system; but scarcely any artificial grass is raised, except on such farms as happen to be in the hands of proprietors.

Very little has been done here towards the cultivation of waste lands,—though certainly much might be done in this way,—especially by draining.

The great obstacle to improvement is either the want of leases

of sufficient duration to encourage the occupiers of land, or want of capital to carry on improvements. Till of late years, no leases were given; and now that they are, their duration, except in one or two cases, does not exceed eight or ten years.

The farm-houses, in general, are miserable hovels, being originally built by the poor tenants themselves, in which you may see cattle in one apartment, and the family or domestics in the other, mingled without any apparent distinction. The farmer is obliged to leave his tenement as he found it, so that in this way it is transmitted from one occupier to another, with little or no improvement. But, we add with pleasure, that the proprietors have begun to act upon a more liberal system, as they are giving better steadings and dwelling-houses to their tenants.

*Quarries.*—There is, in this island and in the island of Papay, plenty of gray and flag-stone quarries.

*Fisheries.*—The fisheries prosecuted in this island are, cod, herring, lobster, dog-fish, and the fry of the coal-fish. The aggregate proceeds of the herring, cod, and lobster fisheries, on an average of four or five years, may amount to L.950 or L.1000.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of the produce of the two islands, comprehending the different holms therewith connected, may be fairly estimated at about L. 2500.

*Manufactures.*—Straw-plaiting was, for some years, among the females in this parish, a very general manufacture; but the very little encouragement now held out has nearly put a stop to this work. The same thing may be said of what was the principal manufacture and grand staple of the country at large, namely, kelp. The very low price it now brings will scarcely remunerate the cost of making and sending it to market. The people here, as in all the other parishes of Orkney, still persevere in making cloth from the wool of their sheep. What they use of it for body clothes, they commonly dye. But woollen cloth is chiefly made for blankets.

*Navigation.*—There are seven or eight small craft belonging to this island, each from 12 to 35 tons burden, employed in the cod-fishing during summer, that is, from the beginning of May to the end of July, or so: after which, the hands employed betake themselves to the herring-fishery. There are about thirty large herring-boats belonging to this parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The nearest market-town is Kirkwall, twenty miles distant.

The only semblance to a village in this parish is Picrowall, consisting of ten or twelve houses situated along the sea shore.

*Means of Communication.*—The means of communication enjoyed by the parish are very defective, by reason of there being as yet no stated or regular conveyance between this and the post-town. There are as yet no highways in the parish; and no harbours, though one is much wanted at the bay of Tookquoy.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The two churches in Westray are tolerably well situate for the different populations of the island, south and north. The church in the south part of the parish was built about sixty-five years ago. When the north church was erected, is not known; but both of them are in tolerable repair. The church in Papay is also convenient enough for the population,—but only in an imperfect state of repair.

Except Mr Balfour's annual donation to the poor of the north parish of Westray, there is no other benefaction on record.

The church in the north parish of Westray may hold about 900 persons; that in the east between 600 and 700. The church in Papay may accommodate about 220. There are no free sittings in any of the churches; and there is rather a want of accommodation upon a full attendance of the parishioners.

The manse and offices were rebuilt in the summer of 1813, and completed early in the spring of 1814. The extent of the glebe may be computed at 28 or 30 Scotch acres, arable and unarable, and the rent, if let to a tenant, might be about L. 10 or L. 12; but is of double that value to the possessor. The amount of stipend is L. 193, 16s., with allowance for communion elements. The teinds are exhausted, except a trifle on one small property, not judicially valued when those of other properties in the parish were.

There are two Dissenting chapels, an Anabaptist and Secession. The Secession minister's stipend is L. 80, paid partly from seat rents, partly from Sabbath days' collection, especially by the members of his congregation. The Anabaptist minister has no fixed salary, except L. 20 from Mr Haldane, for itinerating as a missionary among the different islands.

The number of persons in the two islands in attendance upon the Established church may amount to about 750. The number in attendance on the two Dissenting meetings, 600.

Public worship is, upon the whole, well attended, both in the churches belonging to the Establishment, and in the Dissenting chapels.

The average number of communicants belonging to the Establishment is about 320; to the Secession, 200; the Anabaptist, 120.

The average annual amount of the three church collections in the parish is L. 13 Sterling.

*Education.*—The number of schools in the parish is five;—one parochial school in Westray; one subscription, belonging to the Establishment; two Secession schools; and one Society school in the Island of Papa Westray.

The parochial schoolmaster's salary is L. 28; that of the Society teacher's is L. 15; of the subscription schoolmaster's, L. 12. The Secession teacher's salary is from L. 3 to L. 5.

There are no young people in this parish between six and fifteen years of age who cannot read a little, and very few between seven and eight who cannot also write. The number of persons upwards of fifteen years of age, who can neither read nor write, is 52; but these are for the most part aged people. The people in general, are most anxious to give education to their children, but averse to be at much expense; nor can the circumstances of by far the greater part of them afford it.

The district of Rapness is at least five miles from the parochial school, and, for the greater part of the year, the road in that quarter is almost impassable, by reason of an immense tract of peat moss intervening. The south-west part of the island is distant from the parochial school three miles, and the road in winter very bad. The north extremity is also distant from it about three miles. A school is needed in the Rapness district, in Skailwick, and in the south-west district.

*Library.*—There is connected with this parish an itinerating library, on a small scale, instituted gratuitously by Thomas Balfour, Esq., relative of Mr John Balfour of Trenaby, and oldest son of Captain William Balfour, R. N. Cliffdale. Its object is the benefit of the poorer classes of the people who are unable to purchase books, or get them from any other source. It is allowed to go the round of all the North Isles, and is stationary in each only for one year.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of persons receiving parochial aid, amounts to about 70 annually, and the average sum allotted to each is about 2s. 6d. The rest of the fund goes to paying precentor's and kirk officers' fees, and for coffins to the poor.

There are no annual contributions in this parish to the poor,



exclusive of the weekly church collections. But there is an annual donation or bequest to the poor of the North Parish of Westray, amounting to L. 4, 12s., by the Balfours of Trenaby. It has been paid to that part of the parish, for about forty years.

*Fuel.*—Peat is the only fuel used in the parish by the poorer classes. This island was wont to supply itself and the other island with this most necessary domestic comfort. But since the mosses in this island have failed, the inhabitants have been necessitated to go to the Island of Eday, where peat moss abounds. There they are supplied at considerable expense, the ground being, per square fathom, 2s. 6d.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Besides the changes noticed in the course of this article, an important change, since the date of the old Account, has taken place in the new and improved method of fishing cod, that is, by using small sloops of twenty-five to thirty tons burden, instead of open boats or yauls, which could not venture far to sea. This great improvement has given rise to thirty large herring-boats, belonging to the parish, averaging, in value, L. 80 each, including all necessary outfit, viz. nets and cordage. Hence a degree of wealth in the parish, which formerly did not exist.

In order to a better system of agriculture in this parish, the first thing to be recommended, is the abolition of the practice of allowing sheep, for nearly eight months in the year, to go at large over the whole island. Another essential thing would be, the division of an immense track of common, which constitutes by far the largest proportion of the island of Westray. In this respect, Westray is behind most of the other islands in Orkney, which, in general, have made a division of their respective commonities, or, what is much the same thing, have enforced winter-herding. And the last requisite we shall mention, is the granting of leases for such a length of time, as might encourage the expenditure of capital on improvements.

*Revised, August 1841.*

## PARISH OF LADY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. WALTER TRAILL, *Minister*.\*

THE REV. GEORGE SMELLIE, *Assistant and Successor*.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation, &c.*—LADY parish is situate on the east side of the Island of Sanday, and is about nine miles long by one mile broad. It is bounded on the north, east, and south, by the sea; and on the west, partly by Cross parish, and partly by the sea, forming the large bay and harbour of Otterswick. The parish takes its name from the church called Lady Kirk, or the Kirk of our Lady, evidently dedicated in Catholic times to the Virgin Mary. It consists of several districts or subdivisions, as follows: Elsness, Overbister, Coligarth, Tressness, Neivark, Selibister, Northwall. Each of these districts was probably, in ancient times, a separate distinct parish.

*Meteorology.*—I subjoin a statement of the average heat of the weather for the greater part of two years.

1824.		1825.	
Average heat of January	41° Fahr.	Average heat of January	40° Fahr.
February,	39	February,	41
March,	38	March,	42
April,	52	April,	40
May,	47	May,	49
June,	54	June,	52
July,	56	July,	57
August,	57	August,	56
September,	53	September,	54
October,	46	October,	46
November,	40		
December,	37		

On the estate of Elsness, there is an oyce or inlet of the sea, from which the water wholly retreats, during the ebb tide—containing 100 Scotch acres. The entry is narrow, but of sufficient depth of water for sloops of any size; and the whole oyce might easily be converted into a harbour. At present, there is a rock or bar near the mouth, which, with ordinary floods, renders

\* Drawn up by the Rev. Walter Traill.

the passage impossible, excepting to very small vessels. But were this obstruction removed, which could be done without any great expense of time or labour, the passage would be easy to sloops of any size. There is a similar oyce or inlet of the sea at Tressness, of at least twice the extent, and without any obstruction in the entry. Perhaps, both of these places might form proper stations for herring or cod fisheries. But should this notion be erroneous, there can be no doubt that the extensive bay of Otterswick, common to Lady parish and Burness, would afford stations along its winding shores for one or more fishing-villages. This bay may be divided into the outward and inner harbours, the former eight, the other two miles in length. As, in storms from the north-east, it is difficult for vessels to ride in safety in the outer harbour, on account of the violence of the sea, they usually (in this case) retreat to the inner harbour, where no gale, however strong, can do them any injury. In some parts of the outward harbour, the water is 12 fathoms deep, with a stiff clay bottom; in other parts, from 5 to 10 fathoms deep, bottom clay, with a covering of several feet of sand.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Antiquities.*—There are in the parish several of those buildings called Picts' houses.

I have received the following communication from Dr Wood, an ingenious medical gentleman, who practised several years in Sanday:—"The island of Sanday is first mentioned in the Orkneyinga Saga, during the reign of Earl Paul, who having, in 1136, defeated Earl Ronald in a sea-fight, and having captured most of his fleet, returned in triumph to Orkney, and invited to a splendid banquet all the aristocracy of the islands, with their friends. He then resolved that a watch-tower should be erected in Fair Isle, on which a fire should be kindled, should an army be observed approaching from Shetland. There was another watch-tower erected in Ronaldsay, and similar ones in most of the other islands, so that the signal might be seen over the whole. He appointed Thorstein, the son of Havard, the son of Gunna, to take charge of Ronaldsay; and Magnus, his brother, to take charge of Sanday."\*

"Sanday is again mentioned in the year 1137, after Earl Ronald had returned to the islands. 'Ronald sends ambassadors to the Bishop, begging he would intercede for him. He afterwards

\* Vide Orkneyinga Saga, pp. 186, 187.

adds to the embassy Thorstein, the son of Rangnu, and Thorstein, the son of Havard of Sanday.\* Again,—Sanday is mentioned as a fit place for a conference to be held between Swein, son of Asleif, and Anakol, a follower of Earl Erlend. ‘When Gauti met Swein, he sent a messenger to Anakol, and requested Swein to betake himself to Sanday, with his followers, that they might hold a conference there. He therefore promised, he should go thither.’†

“In the year 1157, Earl Erlend and Swein left Shetland for Orkney; but, ‘encountering a severe storm, and a variety of whirlpools, in Dennis roost, it happened that Swein was separated from the Earl, and driven to Fair Isle, with twelve of their ships. He concluded that the Earl had perished. From thence he sailed south to Sanday, where he found Erlend with three ships. There was great joy on both sides at this meeting.’‡

“In the year 1158, Swein fled to Sanday to escape the wrath of Earl Haralld, whose house in Gairsay he had forcibly entered, with intent to murder him; but Haralld then happened to be in a neighbouring island, hunting hares. When Haralld was informed, by his domestics, of this outrage of Swein, he immediately set out in search of him to Enhallow, whither Swein had fled; however, he contrived to conceal his vessel in a large cavern in one of the cliffs of that island, and so eluded the search of his pursuers, although they were at one time so close to the mouth of the cavern, that he overheard their conversation.” “He leaves his ship in the cavern, and seizes a merchant vessel which belonged to the monks, sails to Sanday, and there lards and sets fire to the ship. Upon landing, he repairs to a farm called Völunes, occupied by a man named Bardr; he was a kinsman of Swein; having privately begged of him to come out, he made known to him his wish to remain there.”§

“The remains of the Scandinavian buildings of Sanday are numerous in Lady parish; but it is to be regretted, that all of them are now in so ruinous a state, as to render an accurate description of them impossible. They mostly abound on the nesses or headlands, which situations appear to have been first settled, both from their proximity to the sea, from which the inhabitants would procure their chief sustenance, when agriculture was unknown or little attended to, and from such situations being most easily defended against the attacks of neighbouring tribes.

\* Vide Orkneyinga Saga, pp. 214, 215.  
† Ibid. 348, 349.

‡ Ibid. p. 392.  
§ Ibid. pp. 370, 371.

“ Toftsness, the northermost point of Sanday, appears to have been a well-peopled settlement, from the numerous ruins which are still to be seen. The greater part of the Ness has been enclosed with a chain of forts, which were connected by a stone-wall. Within this wall, the ground has been covered with buildings of various sizes:—circles of stones set on edge, with, frequently, an upright central stone, are still to be seen,—and numerous graves lined with flat stones, and also surrounded by small circles of stones. Several of these graves have been opened; some of them contain human bones,—others contain only ashes; in many of them, deers’ horns have been found. One of the forts, on the wall, was examined a few years ago. It measured, inside, 16 feet in length, and 6 in width; the walls were 8 feet in height, and from 4 to 5 feet in thickness; at the height of 6 feet from the foundation, the stones, inside, were laid so as the upper stone overlapped the one immediately beneath, thus contracting the opening above, which was roofed over with large flat stones. All the stones in this building were large flat stones from the beach. The wall was regular and firmly built. There was no clay nor cement of any kind. A deer’s horn was found in this building, and several fragments of bones.

“ From the quantity of sand blown over these remains, it is almost, indeed altogether, impossible to give any accurate description of them; but, from their extent, it is evident that many people, and a great deal of time, must have been occupied in their erection. Some account of this place appeared in an Edinburgh newspaper, several years ago.

“ Tressness, on the east-side of the island, contains several tumuli, which have never been examined. They are situated close by the sea, at convenient landing-places. The largest of them, called Wassa, is built of large flat stones; it is about 15 feet in height, and upwards of 180 feet in circumference at the base.

“ Elsness appears to have been an extensive settlement. On the northern extremity of this cape, there is a burgh or fort called Augmund’s Howe. It is now in ruins, and overgrown with grass and weeds. It is situated close by the beach, and has been surrounded to landward, by a circle of upright stones. On the east side, where the ground is low, there is a semicircular terrace, the outer edge of which is formed also by stones set upright. The height of the fort is about 18 feet.

“ From Augmund’s Howe, there may be traced the remains of

a wall thickly studded with circular forts, running to the north-west across the Ness, and thus enclosing fully a third of the whole Ness. These small forts on the wall are, now, only ruinous cairns. They are all, or most of them, placed on the inside of the wall. The few on the outside seem to have been so placed for security's sake, as they are uniformly on gentle risings. The wall does not run in a straight line, but has several curves, to avoid low spots of ground which are, in winter, covered with water. The enclosed space is literally covered with tumuli and heaps of ruins. None of those now remaining are of great size. The largest have been levelled and ploughed over. The peaceful husbandman has now succeeded the restless and daring sea-king. The sickle and the scythe have succeeded the sword and the battle-axe.

“ Most of these tumuli which have been opened, contained burned stones, ashes, bones, and sea shells. In some of them, were graves lined with flat stones. An axe, said to be of bone, was found some years ago, but was destroyed by the ignorant people who found it. An arrow or spear-head was also found at the same time. It is of stone, three inches long, and lozenge-shaped. The point is broken off. Many such articles might have been discovered, had proper persons superintended the removal of the tumuli.

“ A number of the smaller heaps within the walls are formed of what the country people call *cramp*, and are said by them to have been used as places of sacrifice. For whatever purpose they were used, it is plain they must have been the sites of strong and long-continued fires. The *cramp* resembles the refuse from a glass-blower's furnace. It is of a reddish colour, and contains portions of a coarse glass, stones, and sometimes fragments of earthen vessels. The sea-weed, with which the shores abound, must have furnished the fuel. This, by long heat, would be reduced to kelp, and, by a continuance of the heat, and the admixture of sand and stones, would, in process of time, produce the *cramp*.

“ There is another burgh, a little to the westward of Augmund's Howe, also built close by the beach, but considerably less than the former. On the north-west side, there is a circular enclosure of about an acre, which has, at one time, been under cultivation, and has given the name of Quoyness to this building.

“ Throughout the Ness, there are several circles of stones, with, for the most part, a central stone also set on edge. None of these stones are more than two feet above ground, and perhaps about as much under. All the circles measured nearly the same in cir-

cumference, about 36 feet. None of them are to be found above a few yards from the beach. The finest specimens are at a creek, which forms an excellent harbour called Kettletoft. On each side of this creek, are two circles; the first two are close by the beach, the other two at the upper extremity of the creek. The only tumuli outside the line of forts are three or four, at a short distance from Augmund's Howe. All the rest, burghs, tumuli, and circles, are on the west side, that is, within the fortified wall.

“ The ruins here differ in several particulars from those at Toftsness. At that place, the forts or watch-towers are of an oblong shape; here, they appear to have been circular. At Toftsness I never heard of any cramp having been seen; here, it abounds. Fewer graves have appeared here than at Toftsness, and none within circles of stones. Notwithstanding these circumstances, they both appear to be the work of the same race of people. The apparent differences, for they are not real, may be easily accounted for. May not the taste or style of one architect (builder, at least,) have differed from that of another in the formation of the watch-towers? Or may not the forts or watch-towers at Elsness have originally been of the same shape with those of Toftsness, and may they not have attained their present circular form, from being reduced to ruins and overgrown with grass? The sand blowing off Toftsness, which has buried most of the ruins there, has preserved the watch-towers in a comparatively perfect state. The absence of cramp at Toftsness may be accounted for by the different kind of fuel which may have been used. In that place, there is a thin layer of turf or peat under the sand, which, no doubt, would be preferred to the sea-weed; and we are informed, that one of the Earls, Torf Einar, taught the inhabitants the use of turf or peat some centuries before Christianity was introduced into Orkney. (Vide Torfæus and Ork. Saga). There is no peat at Elsness, nor, indeed, in any part of Sanday, but Toftsness.

“ None of the circles at Elsness have been opened, or graves might have been found in them, as well as within the circles at Toftsness.

“ At Newark, in the centre of Lady parish, there were lately discovered under land, which had been cultivated for generations, the ruins of a large circular building. It was built of large flat stones, admirably fitted together, but without cement of any kind. The wall curved slightly inwards, from the foundation to the height of 8 or 9 feet, and then outward, as it rose in height, for about 4

feet, where it had the appearance of having been thrown down. It was about 12 feet wide at the bottom inside. The wall was fully 6 feet in thickness, and, in some parts, a double wall was perceptible, with an intermediate space of about 3 feet. This double wall went all round; but, from the great quantity of rubbish, it was found impossible to trace it. There was no appearance of door nor window, unless in the south and east sides, where two small openings communicated with the space between the walls. In one of those openings, was found a bone pin, three inches long, smoothly polished; in the other opening, part of a very coarsely-formed comb, made of the bone of the whale.

“The interior of the building was fitted up with rubbish, stones, and gravel, and above all was a deep layer of red ashes, thickly interspersed with the bones of cattle, sheep, swine, rabbits, and geese, and with limpets and other shell-fish. The whole of the building is now under ground, and must have been so for many generations. It has been built on a rising ground. The sea, on either side of it, may be distant about half a mile. From the top of it, which, in its original state, would have been a few feet higher than the ground which now covers it, both sides of the island would have been seen,—a great portion of what lies to the southward and westward, and all that part of the island lying north-east of it. This tower, in all probability, belonged to that description of them of which the Castle of Mousa in Shetland is said to be the most perfect specimen. (See *Ivanhoe*, last edition, Vol. ii. p. 335,) where, in a note, the learned author gives a very interesting account of such towers, and particularly of that of Mousa.

“About a quarter of a mile northward of the Newark tower is a tumulus, which has never been opened. It is covered with a rich sward. It is called by the country people “Ivar’s Knowe.” The ground slopes gently from this knowe to the beach, which forms the south-east side of the Bay of Otterswick or Odenswick. Along this beach are the remains of two or three more buildings. About a mile south-west of these, in the centre of a marsh on the farm of Cleatt, is another small tumulus; and about half a mile farther south, on the same farm, is another, situated on the edge of marshy ground, which is covered by the sea in spring-tides. A considerable extent of barren uncultivated ground stretches to the south-west, along the banks of Otterswick, and is terminated by the farm of Coligarth. Many small circular mounds may be seen on this moor, all, or most of which, contain masses of cramp.



“ The Ness of Coligarth or Coliness extends a good way across the Bay of Otterswick to the north-west. In this ness there is a very large artificial mound, which, if examined, would be found to contain the largest burgh in Lady Parish, if not in Sanday. The surface of this mound has been broken in several places for the purpose of taking away large stones, which are found in every part of it. About three years ago, while removing some of these stones, a spear head was found; it is of iron, seven inches long, rounded and pointed at one extremity, and flattened at the other.

“ On the south-west side of Coligarth, another barren moor commences, and runs along the banks of Otterswick almost to the bottom of the bay, where this parish is joined by Burness. Along this moor, too, are scattered a number of small circular heaps; but the largest and most remarkable are in the immediate vicinity of Coligarth. They consist of three pretty large tumuli, partly surrounded by a square enclosure. There is also within the enclosure an excellent spring well, which has been carefully built about with large stones. The remains of a wall may be traced, running in a southerly direction from these tumuli, a good way across the moor. These three tumuli are called by the country people Myrtis's Knowes, or the Knowes of Myrtis.

“ The principal Scandinavian antiquities in this parish have now been enumerated. Many more, no doubt, are buried underground, some of which may yet be discovered. What we now have, is sufficient proof of the rude state of society in these islands at one period.

“ Religious buildings were formerly pretty numerous in this parish; in general, they were only small chapels; at least we have not now the remains of any large religious edifice. Nothing now is left of them, save their foundations overgrown with grass and weeds. They are all surrounded by, or in the immediate vicinity of, good land, and generally near a well or fresh water loch. None of them are to be found on the moor or hill ground. Several of them have been built close by the ruins of other buildings; such situations may have been chosen, from the ready access to stones which they afforded; or the devout men engaged in the conversion of the Orcadian heathens, to show their utter abhorrence of the ancient superstition, may have erected their chapels on the very ruins of the temples of Odin.

“ None of these chapels have exceeded twelve feet in length, and from eight to ten feet in breadth. Foundations of them may

be seen at Northwall, Newark, Cleatt, Tressness, Overbister, Coliness, and other places. It is likely they would all have been dedicated to some saint or other holy person; but tradition, which is very scanty here, has only preserved the names of three of them; Peter Kirk, or St Peter's Chapel, (which has been of rather larger dimensions than the others), on the banks of Otterswick, near Newark; the Chapel of Arstas; close by the round tower lately discovered at Newark; and St Magdalen's Chapel in Overbister.

“ Founts, or holy water basins, have been found at several of them. These founts are all formed alike, from rounded pieces of red sandstone, roughly hollowed out on one side.

“ On examining the small portions left of the walls of the chapels, they are found to be cemented with clay; some of them have been plastered inside with lime.

“ In the spring of 1826, while removing some large stones which impeded the operations of the plough, near the foundations of a chapel in Overbister, a long subterraneous passage was discovered, which terminated in a circular cavity. The bottom and sides of this passage were formed of the solid rock, as well as the cavity at its extremity, which has likely been intended for a well; the top or roof of the passage was carefully covered with flagstones, and above was the natural soil. The entrance to the passage was by two steps cut in the rock. The length of the passage was  $19\frac{1}{2}$  feet; height, 3 feet; width, about 1 foot 9 inches; diameter of the well, 3 feet; from the roof to the bottom of the well, 3 feet 6 inches. Several small pieces of decayed oak were found in the passage. The well contained a very little water and mud.

“ At a few feet distance from the entrance to this passage, a causeway was discovered, formed of rounded stones from the beach, and laid with great care, the stones in the centre being set upright, those on each side sloping towards the centre. The causeway was 4 feet broad; it commenced at the chapel, and run in a straight line to the westward for 30 or 40 yards; it then turned to the south, and was traced in that direction for about 60 yards. It most probably, at one time, led to a small loch, which is about 200 yards distant from the site of the chapel.

“ Tradition gives no name to this chapel. The small hillock was known to the old people by the name of the Carse of Henzie Hunt. St Magdalen's Chapel stood about 200 yards north of this.

“ No graves are to be found near any of these chapels, unless

at one built on the ruins of the burgh of Coliness. This chapel has been built at the south-east corner of the ruins of the burgh. Its length was 12 feet; breadth little more than 8. A stone, 2 feet long, 10 inches in thickness, and as many in breadth, was found in this chapel. One side of this stone was covered with small circular holes, about one inch in depth, and straight lines were cut from one hole to another; the holes were not arranged in any regular order. The use of this stone must remain unknown.

“ At a very short distance from the west end of the chapel, a number of graves were discovered; all were lined with flagstones. None of them were above two feet under the surface of the ground. They were close together in rows, forming the divisions between the graves. Many of the skeletons were pretty entire; they were lying with their heads to the west. All were on their right sides, with the knees a good deal bent. One of the skulls had a long wound on the upper part of it. A gold ring, rather larger than a finger ring, was found in one of the graves; but the boy who found it, broke it, to ascertain its composition. I saw only a small fragment of it. On the flag which formed the south or right side of one of these graves, there was a very rude attempt at carving a cross Calvary. The upright portion was 13 inches long; the cross beam, 9 inches. More curious discoveries might have been made here; but the search was discontinued.”

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	-	690
1811,	-	862
1821,	-	890
1831,	-	858

*Customs.*—Formerly, it was customary for companies of men, on new year’s morning, to go to the houses of the rich, and awake the family, by singing the New Year’s song, in full chorus. When the song was concluded, the family entertained the musicians with ale and bread, and gave them a smoked goose or a piece of beef.\*

*Language.*—Our language is rather a dialect of the English than the Scotch, and the pronunciation also resembles the English. But several words are evidently borrowed from the French, for example, *vilipend*, to abuse by opprobrious or railing language. This word is frequently used by Brantome, who wrote in the age of Mary Queen of Scots. The country people term the black

\* A copy of this song, set to music, is inserted in the MS.

window fly, *matilot*, the French term for a sailor. The term has been suggested by this insect creeping or climbing on glass.

There are various customs evidently superstitious. Thus, the people never marry, but when the moon is growing. Were they to do so, when it is waning, the marriage bed would be barren. They observe the same rule in killing cows, firmly believing that, if they did otherwise, the beef would dwindle in the pot. Thursday is the day generally fixed for marriage. In going to sea, they turn the boat in the direction of the sun's course. To move in the opposite way, would be considered improper, if not dangerous. When the first lamb seen for the season is white, the omen is fortunate: and the appearance of a black lamb is unlucky.

The people, in general, are peaceful, temperate, and industrious. The poverty of the cottage is cheered by the domestic charities and social affections. In the faithful discharge of their duties, as husbands, wives, parents, and children, they are unrivalled. To the indigent poor, the sick, the lame, the blind, the infirm, they cheerfully give what they can spare. Any individual deficient in those respects, would be viewed by his neighbour with hatred and contempt: consequently, cases of this nature seldom or never occur.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—Though there is almost every variety of soil in Lady Parish, what generally prevails is sand, or a mixture of earth and sand. The soil is productive, and, in favoured seasons, considerable quantities of bear and meal are exported. The precise quantity cannot be ascertained, because no farmer will give explicit information on this subject, from an apprehension that, if the truth were fully known, his rent might be raised. But an approximation to the truth may be obtained. Several years ago I procured from the custom-house an account of the quantities of bear, meal, and malt exported coastwise from Orkney for a course of years. This account it may not be improper here to insert.

Account of grain and meal carried coastwise from Orkney in the following years:—

Years.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1790,	2880	315
1795,	4970	1532
1800,	2430	667
1805,	2994	80
1810,	272	
1815,	4399	952

Years.	Oats. Qrs.	Malt. Bush.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1820,	160 197	144	4710	2219

Taking the population of Lady Parish, as a thirty-fifth part of that of Orkney, we have the following results of grain and malt carried coastwise from this parish in the years specified.

Years.	Oats. Qrs.	Malt. Bush.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1790,			82 $\frac{1}{2}$	9
1795,			142	41 $\frac{1}{2}$
1800,			69 $\frac{1}{2}$	19 $\frac{1}{2}$
1805,			83 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
1810,			78 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1815,			125 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 $\frac{1}{2}$
Years.	Oats. Qrs.	Malt. Bush.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1820,	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ 54 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	134 $\frac{1}{2}$	63 $\frac{1}{2}$

It is supposed that about two-thirds of the parish are in arable land and good natural pasture, and the other third waste and covered with heath.

For at least thirty or forty years past, there has been an inclination in every farmer who had the opportunity, to reclaim land from the waste. Before that period, it was considered as impracticable; but the example of a few individuals who had the fortitude to depart from established custom, showed that the innovation not only was safe, but might even be attempted with advantage. In all probability, after a few years, there will be no waste ground in the parish; and in the course of time, every acre may be brought into a state of garden cultivation.

There are two modes of reclaiming the waste,—*First*, about or after Martinmas, when the ground is socked with rain, it is ploughed and exposed to the frosts of winter, and the heat of the succeeding summer. In spring of the next year, ware, dung, or other manure is laid on; the ground is broken and made smooth with the harrow and roller; and in the last place, cross-ploughed and sown with oats. In the *second* plan, or lazy bed, the ground, after being spread with horse or cow dung, is planted with potatoes. The lazy bed now mentioned is perhaps the most effectual way of bringing waste ground to a state of cultivation; for in the season succeeding the crop of potatoes, oats or bear may be sown with or without manure, as suits the convenience of the farmer.

I shall now describe the rural policy of the parish; and the description will, in general, apply to the whole island of Sanday, or

more properly speaking, to the portion of Orkney termed the North Isles. One very large farm, the people are divided into three classes ; *first*, house-servants dwelling with the farmer, and having a monied fee ; *second*, boll-men ; *third*, cottagers or cottars. Both the second and third classes are scattered through the farm, in situations most convenient for the farmer. In winter and spring, the boll-man has a monthly allowance of grain and oatmeal, both for wages and food. He is a daily servant till the end of May, when he works in the kelp at a stipulated price per ton, the profit depending on his own industry. Both cottagers and boll-men shear in harvest, and are paid by a portion of land termed a harvest fee. Through the whole parish, each cottager and boll-man can maintain, summer and winter, a milking cow and a horse ; and there are instances of several keeping four cows and two horses.

The one-stilted plough was in general use, in my recollection ; and, though a fertile subject of ridicule, was the ancient plough of Rome, Egypt, and even England. Though it did the work with sufficient accuracy, still it was an inconvenient instrument, as it required four horses and a driver. The rise of fees, and the horse-tax in the Revolutionary war with France, rendered economy an object of imperious necessity with every farmer ; and, therefore, the improved mode of ploughing with two horses, without a driver, was introduced in an early period of the war, and soon became general.

Sea-ware or weed, from its abundance, and the ease with which it can be carried to the land, is used as manure, in preference to compost dung hills. No manure acts more speedily on the soil, or gives a cleaner and more abundant crop. It has been said, that compost dung-hills would give bear of a superior quality,—but if the quantity was not also greater, we would gain no compensation for the additional expense of time and labour. Our crops of bear are as clean as those in any county of Scotland. The wild mustard prevails in our oats, for it seems to be a hardy weed, which has hitherto set the skill of the farmer at defiance, and abounds in every county of Scotland and England, and in every province of France. Careful cleaning of the seed, and extending the drill husbandry to bear and oats, might probably extirpate this and other noxious weeds.

The drill husbandry in potatoes and turnips, prevails in every soil adapted to these useful vegetables. The manure generally used for both, is horse or cow dung ; but in light sandy soils, rot-

ten ware has been found an excellent manure for turnip. Since the general use of turnip, our black-cattle have improved in quality; and farmers have also discovered, that it is better to have an under than an over stock, formerly the great error in this country.

The sea-ware was usually carried to the land in baskets, (termed creels) on the backs of horses, to the great injury of the health of this noble animal. These creels, pressing on the ribs of the horse, created internal and incurable disorders. It was liable also to objection in point of economy, as a great number of small horses was required; but the general use of carts has nearly abolished the practice.

Until very lately the longest period for which even large farms were let, was nineteen years; but the greater number of farmers in our parish are, at this moment, tenants at will. While this narrow policy prevails, there can be no lasting substantial improvement. For what individual, removed a single step from insanity, will risk his capital on improvements from which he has no certainty of profit? It is pleasing, however, to reflect that one heritor has lately granted several leases of nineteen years; and there is every reason to hope, that the practice will become general.

What is termed steelbow once existed; but the practice is fast wearing out. It may be thus described: A certain value in horses, ploughs, carts, harrows, and other farming utensils is delivered to the tenant, who must, at the end of his lease, leave on the farm the same value. The dwelling-houses, cottages, and parks, are also valued by men mutually chosen;—the tenant is paid for all ameliorations, and is charged for all deteriorations. The term of entry is Martinmas, and the whole crop, (fodder, seed, and servant's bolls excepted,) is the property of the outgoing tenant. The incoming tenant is bound, not only to thrash the whole crop, with the exceptions already stated, to the outgoing tenant, but also to dry his oats, and convert them into meal. This practice, founded on wisdom and justice, is beneficial to both parties. Were it abolished, the incoming tenant could not lay down the crop for want of fodder, nor could the outgoing tenant convert his crop into meal, without barn, kiln, and other conveniences in the possession of the incoming tenant.

It has been supposed that steelbow is pernicious, by inducing men of no capital to take farms. In an early period, steelbow might have been equal, or nearly equal to the value of stocking required for the farm. But money has been so much depreciat-

ed, that the value of house and farming utensils required in steel-bow, is so mere a trifle in comparison of the value of the whole stocking actually necessary, that it can afford no temptation to any farmer to compete. The practice, therefore, does neither good nor harm.

On the mode of farming I have only further to add, that it is the practice of our farmers to begin sowing as early as possible on sandy soils. Accordingly, oat-seed commences about the 1st of February, old style, that is the 12th of February, new style. Oats are therefore sown from the 1st of February to the middle or end of March,—as our farmers are of opinion that it cannot be sown too early, especially in dry and sandy soils. In such soils, they generally sow in furrow, or, in other words, sow first, and plough down the seed, to protect it from sand blowing.

The gross rent of Lady parish is as follows :

Rent in bear, 1336 meils, at 6s. 8d. per meil,	L.446	0	0
Do. in oatmeal, 28 bolls, at 16s. per boll,	22	8	0
Do. in kelp, 130 tons, at L.4 per ton,	520	0	0
Do. paid in cash,	1214	12	0
	<u>L. 2203</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Harvest generally begins in the first or second week of September, and ends about the middle of October, when the crop is carried to the barn-yard. We do not put the sheaves in stooks, as in the south country, but in miniature stacks, termed here skrews. When the sheaves are large, a threave is generally put in each skrew; but if they are of a moderate size, a threave and a half. Our farmers are of opinion that this mode is preferable to stooking, by protecting the grain from rain, and exposing it to the wind, so that it is thoroughly dried, before it is conveyed to the corn-yard.

The number of carts in Lady parish is 118. It is a remarkable fact, that, at the date of the old Statistical Account of Sanday, the whole island contained only 36 carts; there are now, therefore, 82 more carts in Lady parish than were, at that period, in all the three parishes which composed our island.

The number of ploughs is 83. For each of these, three horses may be allowed, two to till, and one to harrow,—making a total of 249,—an amount rather under, than above the truth.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

This parish, as already mentioned, contains a church termed Lady Kirk. Some years ago, it was rebuilt, and is now large, and



in every respect well adapted for the accommodation of a numerous congregation.

*Poor.*—The parish funds for the poor proceed from the following sources: *1st*, L.5, a yearly donation, from Mr Traill of Hobbister; *2dly*, Marriage money, 2s. 6d. for each marriage, of which 10d. goes to the clerk and officer, and 1s. 8d. to the poor; *3dly*, 1s. 2d. for the use of the mortcloth in burying; *4thly* and *lastly*, the collections on Sabbath. On an average of three years, the total amount does not exceed L.9, 17s. yearly. From this deduct fees to the clerk and officer, and there remains for distribution, L.7, 3s. The precentor, or reader, as he is generally termed, receives and has received, from time immemorial, nine meils of bear on the bear pundlar, four settings oatmeal, and twelve merks of butter.

*Education.*—There is in Sellibister, one of the districts of this parish, a school under the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; salary, L. 15 Sterling; reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping are taught. There is also a parochial school common to all the three parishes of Sanday, with a commodious house, and a salary of L. 46, 10s. The school-house is large, well-aired, and well-lighted. Besides reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping, the elements of mathematics, land-measuring, and Latin, are taught. The situation has hitherto been occupied by able and well-qualified teachers.

*Light-house.*—A light-house was erected on the Start, in the year 1802, and lighted in 1806. It is 100 feet in height, and revolves once in two minutes.

Since its erection, very few vessels have been either wrecked or stranded on our coast. Formerly, three or four vessels were yearly wrecked. Our coast is so low, that mariners are entangled, before aware of the danger. But the same circumstance which is fatal to the vessel, proves, in general, the safety of the crew.

*July 1841.*

# UNITED PARISHES OF BIRSAY AND HARRAY.

PRESBYTERY OF CAIRSTON, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. THOMAS BLYTH, MINISTER.

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## PARISH OF BIRSAY.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Boundaries, &c.*—THE modern name of this parish is Birsay, a corruption of the ancient one, which, according to Tor-fæus the historian, was somewhat different. Birsay, as united with the parish of Harray, was anciently known by the name of the Province of Bergisherad, which, according to Icelandic historians, means a hunting territory,—*Birgis* or *Birsay* signifying hunting, and *Harad*, now *Harray*, a territory. If these derivations be just, it is probable that these parishes of old composed a district principally, if not solely, destined to the amusements of hunting; for before Kirkwall was a place of any great note, the Princes, perhaps, and certainly the Nobles and Bishops, had their chief residence in Birsay. The western extremity of the united parishes is a flat, fertile, and rather narrow track of land, which opens gradually towards the east, till it swells at length to an immense amphitheatre, bounded by the hills of Sandwick, Orphir, and Rendal. Several beautiful lakes, of different sizes, are dispersed throughout this district, and some pretty large rivulets intersect it in various directions; the former of these contain plenty of swans, ducks, and other water-fowl; and both of them abound in those kinds of fish that generally frequent fresh water.

The greatest length of the parish, from south-west to north-east, is about 8 miles; its greatest breadth about 5 miles; and it is computed to contain about 38 square miles. The form of the parish is irregular. It is bounded, on the west and north sides by the sea, and part of the parish of Evie; and on the south and east, by the parishes of Sandwick and Harray.

*Topographical Appearances and Soil.*—This parish presents great inequalities of soil, as well as of surface. The coast, which, in general, is bold and rocky, extends about eight miles, and, in some places, rises with a gradual ascent from the sea, about a mile eastward. The soil is very various. The lands forming what is called the barony of Birsay, are considered by far the richest and most fertile in the parish, or perhaps in Orkney; the soil, in general, is a mixture of clay and sand, and yields most luxuriant crops of oats and barley, “without intermission.”

As to the quality of the ground in other parts of the parish, it is, in general, a kind of deep black loam, which also yields an abundant return of oats and barley; it is well adapted to turnips and potatoes.

*Hydrography.*—There are six lakes in the parish. The most of them are about a mile in breadth, and upwards of four miles in circumference. The streams or rivulets that run through the parish are inconsiderable, though they impel the machinery of four meal-mills. There is no harbour for vessels on the coast. The only harbours we have, are for small boats. The two principal ones are called Skibbagoe and Castragoe.

*Mineralogy.*—The minerals of the parish consist of limestone, and a sort of claystone, which is in great request in the parish, and is generally used for pavement and for covering farm and other houses. There is, also, great abundance of other kinds of building stones; freestone excepted. Marble and alabaster are said to have been discovered in the parish.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

From the want of well authenticated information, little can be said of the ancient state of Birsay. Indeed, there are no traces of its history prior to the period when it was in the possession of the Earls of Orkney; and even subsequent to that time, little that can be depended upon, is known. There can be no doubt, however, of the fact, that the first seat of the Earls and Bishops of Orkney was in Birsay. The ancient inhabitants of the parish were Norwegians; and the names of many of the places are evidently of Norwegian extraction.

*Land-owners.*—The number of land-owners in the parish, resident and non-resident, is 39; of whom 10 are non-resident. The principal land-owner is the Earl of Zetland, who is also patron of the parish.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers go so far back as

1631. They consist of five volumes, and are, upon the whole, in tolerably good condition. The register of baptisms and marriages commenced under the ministry of the Rev. James Aitken in 1645, and has been continued to the present time.

*Antiquities.*—Among the antiquities connected with Birsay, may be noticed the remains of the sacerdotal palace. It stands on a beautiful green near the sea. It was the residence of the Earls and Bishops of Orkney. The time of its erection is not known with certainty. It is said, that additions have been made to it at different times, by the Sinclairs, commonly styled Princes and Counts of Orkney. Robert Stuart, natural brother to Queen Mary, as also his son, Patrick, made great additions; but now, only the bare walls remain. It was built upon the model of Holyrood-house. Above the gate was the famous inscription, “*Dominus Robertus Stuartus, filius Jacobi quinti Rex Scotorum, hoc opus instruxit,*” and above the coat of arms, was the following motto,—“*Sic fuit, est, et erit.*” The stone, it is said, is still in the possession of the Earl of Morton, to whom the lands were sold: by him they were sold to Sir Lawrence Dundas, whose grandson, now Earl of Zetland, possesses the greatest part of the parish.

About half a mile to the westward of the palace is the borough of Birsay. It is a small portion of pretty high land, which the force of the ocean has broken off from the mainland, and formed into a separate island, to which there is access by land only at low water. From the remains of a wall yet to be seen on the land-side, and the marks of some huts there is reason to believe, that, as the name imports, the spot must have formed a rock fortification. At a later period, a chapel was erected here, of which only one window and part of the wall remain. It is said to have been dedicated to St Peter.

Pict's Houses are also very frequent in the parish, some of which confer names on places. Single erect monumental stones are, also, not unfrequent in the parish.

### III.—POPULATION.

In the year 1755, according to Dr Webster's report, as quoted in the Old Statistical Account, the number of souls, in Birsay and Harray, was 2200 souls; in 1831, it was upwards of 2387,—the number belonging to Birsay being 1652, and to Harray, 735. Amount in 1841, 1634.

The great body of the people are of industrious habits; and although, from the pressure of the times, they have not had it in

their power to enjoy those comforts which they did a few years ago, it would be injustice to conceal that they have borne their privations with more than ordinary patience; and that, upon the whole, they are contented and happy with their situation and circumstances. There are a considerable number of very intelligent individuals amongst them, and not a few who are distinguished both for religious principle and good moral practice.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

As there has never been any survey taken of this parish, the number of acres, arable and unarable, cannot be accurately stated. The extent of the parish, including hills and lochs, is computed to be about 38 square miles.

*Rent of Land.*—Farm rents are generally paid in money. They average about 8s. or 9s. an acre. The usual rent for grazing an ox or cow for the season is L.1, and for a ewe or full-grown sheep, about 7d. yearly. The valued rent is L.2701, 15s. 5d. Scots money.

*Improvements.*—It is generally admitted, that there is no place in Orkney, where greater improvements in agriculture could be made than in Birsay, because the soil in general is good, and, above all, in the barony of Birsay, where there is great abundance of sea-weed at command for manure. If there was a new system of husbandry introduced, and if leases were granted for a reasonable time, instead of from year to year, as at present, the tenant might have some encouragement to cultivate the soil. The farms at present, with the exception of two or three, are very small, consisting of eight or nine acres each, which pay of yearly rent about L.8 or L.9 Sterling.

*Manufactures.*—At no distant period, the manufacture of linen cloth was carried on, to a considerable extent, in this parish; but now, there are few, if any, looms employed in this way. The chief employment of the females, now, is straw-plaiting; which branch of manufacture was introduced into the parish, in the year 1807, by Mr Robert Borwick, Kirkwall. It still forms the chief employment of the females, though their wages are much lower than they were, when it was first introduced. The number of hands employed in this department may average about 450. Several of the manufacturers have agencies in Stromness and Kirkwall. The quantity manufactured is considerable; but the annual value of it cannot be ascertained. It is sent, when plaited, to Manchester or Liverpool. The earnings of straw-plaiters may amount, at present, to about 1s. 6d. or 2s. weekly.

*Fisheries.*—The great bulk of the people in this parish are fishermen. A considerable number of the young men go yearly to Davis's Straits, and also to Hudson's Bay. There are upwards of twenty fishing-boats belonging to the parish; and, when weather permits, they are in general very successful. The kinds of fish of which they get the greatest numbers, are cod and dog-fish. Lobsters in their season are, also, got in great numbers, and herrings. There are five herring-boats belonging to the parish, which generally go, at the fishing season, to Stronsay or Wick; and in general they are very successful. Birsay would form an excellent herring-fishing station, provided there was a proper harbour.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There are few or no made roads in the parish.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The church, which is very commodious, though far from being a comfortable one, was erected in 1064, and was enlarged in the year 1760. It is at present in a state of bad repair. Neither is it well situated for the convenience of the great bulk of the population. The seats of the church are divided among the heritors according to their valuations. The manse was built in the year 1802, and is in tolerably good repair. The glebe consists of between 18 to 20 acres of arable and unarable ground, and its yearly rent may be stated at L.9, or thereby. The stipend amounts to L.210, exclusive of L.8, 6s. 8d. for furnishing communion elements. The average number of persons that attend church, when the weather is good, may be from 400 to 500. The number of male heads of families on communion roll, 131.

There is only one Dissenting chapel in the parish,—belonging to the Antiburghers or Original Seceders. The stipend of the minister does not exceed L.70 yearly, if so much. He depends for his living upon the seat rents, and the Sabbath days' collection made at the church doors.

*Education.*—There are six schools in the parish, viz. the parochial, and five others, which are conducted by persons (two of them females) entirely on their own adventure. The parochial teacher's salary is L.26. He also holds the office of session-clerk and precentor, the fees of which amount to L.1, 15s. yearly. He has a tolerable dwelling-house and school-room. He has also a garden, but not of the extent required by law; neither is the deficiency supplied by an adequate allowance in money. All the other teachers are supported by school-fees alone, with the exception of

the Assembly's teacher, who enjoys a salary of L.25, besides a free house, school-house, garden, and fuel, together with a piece of ground for a cow. The total number of children attending the above-mentioned schools varies from 180 to 200.

*Library.*—A library, which consists of about 170 volumes, chiefly on religious and moral subjects, was formed in 1841. The readers are pretty numerous.

There are few or none under fifteen years of age in this parish, who cannot read or write. But endowments for the teachers are much required.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons who receive aid from the parish funds, is about 40, and the average allowance to each is 1s. quarterly. In some cases, however, more or less is given, as the members of kirk-session think fit. The fund is made up of collections at the church door, mortcloth dues, and dues for proclamation of banns,—amounting in all to about L.7 or L.8 in the year.

*Inns.*—There are no less than six public-houses in the parish.

*Fairs.*—There are three annual fairs in the parish for the sale of cattle and horses.

*Fuel.*—Peats are in great abundance in this parish, and of the very best quality, and all that they cost the inhabitants, is the digging, drying, and driving home.

#### PARISH OF HARRAY.

*Extent, &c.*—The greatest length of the parish is about 6 miles: its greatest breadth about 4 miles; and it is computed to contain about 22 square miles. The form is irregular. It is bounded on the west and south-west, by part of the parish of Sandwick; on the east, by Stenness and a small part of Firth; and on the north and north-east by the parish of Rendall and Firth.

*Topographical Appearances, &c.*—In general, Harray is flat and rather swampy, and intersected by a great number of burns, which, from want of bridges, interrupt the progress of the traveller. The soil varies very much,—being, in some places, tolerably fertile, and in others, very unproductive. Nevertheless, the crops in general are good.

*Hydrography.*—There are two lakes in the parish, one of which is of considerable size, and contains an immense number of most excellent trout. It is frequented by great numbers of wild ducks, and other aquatic birds.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners of this parish are very numerous. There are about 100 resident and non-resident. Among the number of the non-resident, is the Earl of Zetland, who is patron of the parish.

*Parochial Registers.*—The earliest records of the kirk-session of this parish go so far back as the year 1796. The earliest register of baptisms is dated in the year 1784, and has been continued to the present time.

## III.—POPULATION.

The amount of the population in 1831, as before stated,	785
1841,	770

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

The extent of the parish, including hills and lochs, is computed to be about twenty-two square miles. The valued rent, according to the valuation taken in the year 1826 and 1827, is L. 346, 5s.

## V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The present church of Harray was built in 1836. It is a neat, plain building, and seated for 450 persons. It cost L. 215 or thereby. Its situation is fully as convenient for the parishioners as any that could have been selected. The seats are divided among the heritors, according to their valuations. There are no pews as yet set apart for the poor; but in the meantime they are accommodated by their friends and neighbours.

There is no manse in the parish, the minister's place of residence being at Birsay. The glebe is about 18 acres in extent. Its present rent is about L. 9.

There is only one Dissenting chapel in the parish,—belonging to the Independents. The stipend of the minister must be very small, if it depends entirely upon the seat rents and Sabbath days' collection.

The number usually attending the Established Church, when the weather is good, is not less than 350. The number of male heads of families on the communion roll, is 112.

*Education.*—There are two schools in the parish, viz. the Society School, and another, which is conducted by a person entirely at his own adventure. The total number of children attending these schools may average about 130. There are none in the parish under fifteen years of age, who cannot read or write.



*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons who receive aid from the parochial funds is 12, and the average allowance to each is 2s. 6d. per quarter. In some cases, however, more or less is given, as the kirk-session may think fit. The fund is made up of collections at the church door, mort-cloth dues, and marriage dues,—amounting in all to about L. 5 yearly.

*Fairs.*—There are three fairs held annually in this parish, at which only cattle and horses are sold.

July 1841.

## UNITED PARISHES OF STRONSAY AND EDAY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JOHN SIMPSON, MINISTER. •

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation, Extent, &c.*—STRONSAY is situated in the south-eastern parts of the North Isles of Orkney, having the German Ocean on its east side; the Stronsay Frith, by which it is separated from Shapinshay, on its west side; and Sanday Sound, separating it from the Island of Sanday, on the north side. Its extreme length is 7 British miles, and its extreme breadth 5½. But, as it is of an irregular shape, being greatly indented with bays, it contains, including its adjacent holms, only 14 square miles, or 8960 imperial acres.

*Name.*—Dr Barry, in his History of Orkney, gives the following account of the etymology of Stronsay. “From an inspection of the map, it appears to be not only curiously indented, but almost cut into three distinct islands, which were formerly so many separate parishes, and this intersection has probably given rise to the name conferred on it by the ancients of the Isle of Strands or Stronsay.” More probably, the name is derived from the word *strom*, which signifies a current. And this epithet is not inapplicable, as Stronsay is swept on all sides by peculiarly rapid tides.

• Drawn up by the Rev. David Rintoul, Missionary Minister in Eday.

*Topography.*—Stronsay has eight principal headlands and promontories. These are the following: Towards the north, Linksness and Huipness; towards the east, Griceness, Odness, and Burrowhead; and towards the south, Lambhead, Torness, and Rousholmhead. The principal bays are, Mill Bay, on the east side; Holland's Bay, on the south side; and Evigan Bay, on the west side. All the headlands are low, except Burrowhead and Rousholmhead, which consist of bold and elevated rocks. The three bays terminate in a sandy beach. There are two excellent harbours, each having two entrances, namely, Linga Sound, on the west side, protected by the small island of Lingholm; and Papa Sound, on the north-east side, protected by the small island of Papa Stronsay.

Stronsay is of moderate elevation. There is, however, a ridge, running almost continuous from north to south, considerably higher than the rest.

There are several small islands connected with Stronsay. These are Papa Stronsay and Lingholm, already mentioned, as also the two holms of Huip, near the shore, on the north side, and the Holm of Auskerry, about three miles to the south.

The three last holms contain only pasture grounds, and are uninhabited. Lingholm has one family dwelling on it, and a small portion of it is under cultivation. Papa Stronsay, by far the most valuable of these small islands, is about one mile in length, and one-half mile in breadth. It contains several families, and is very pleasant and fertile.

Eday lies about the middle of the North Isles of Orkney, towards the north-west from Stronsay, and separated from it by the frith called Eday Sound, about four miles broad. It is about seven and a-half miles in length and three in breadth, having an area, including Pharey and the holms, of about eleven square miles.

The name of this island has been derived, by some writers, from the eddies produced by the rapid tides that wash its shores. Others, however, have derived it from the word heath, and in proof of this, they refer to records some centuries back, in which Eday is written Etha. If this latter derivation be correct, it may be observed, that the name is strikingly descriptive of the character of the island, as heath covers the greater proportion of its surface.

The principal headlands in Eday are, Veness, towards the south-east; Warness, towards the south-west; Fersness, towards

the west; and Redhead, a high promontory of red granite, towards the north. There are several bays about Eday, in which vessels can anchor occasionally; and there are two excellent harbours, viz. that of Fersness, on the west, and Calf Sound, on the north, each of which has two entrances.

Eday, though like Stronsay, of moderate elevation, yet it has a ridge considerably higher than Stronsay, running (with the exception of a short interruption towards the middle), from north to south.

There are six small islands connected with Eday. These are, the Island of Pharey, with its holms, which protect the harbour of Fersness, on the west, and contains sixty-five inhabitants; the small red holm, between this island and the Redhead; the Calf of Eday, which protects the harbour of Calf Sound; and the two green holms off the south-west of Eday. All these, with the exception of Pharey, are pasture holms, and uninhabited.

There are several fresh-water lakes in each of these parishes, particularly one in Stronsay, nearly a circle, and somewhat less than a mile in diameter.

*Mineralogy.*—The soil, in general, rests upon a bed of grey slate, dipping towards the west at an angle of about thirty degrees with the horizon. There is some sandstone about the north-west shore of Stronsay. And in various parts of Eday, particularly towards the north-western part of the island, this stone abounds. The stone from this quarry has been much used for building in Kirkwall; and it may be observed, that some of it was sent a few years ago for this purpose to London. In these parishes, the soil which predominates, is that of clay, sand, gravel, loam, and moss, the last particularly in the parish of Eday. In Stronsay, marl has been found, which has been used as manure.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The principal proprietors of these parishes are, Mr Balfour of Trenaby; Mr Urquhart of Elsness; Mr Heddle of Melsetter; Mr M'Kenzie of Groundwater; Mr Stewart of Brugh; and Mr Laing of Papdale, brother and representative of the late Malcolm Laing, Esq. Advocate, the author of the History of Scotland. It may be noticed, that a large part of that work is understood to have been written, while the author was residing in the mansion-house of Carrick, in Eday. Carrick was erected into a burgh of barony during the reign of Charles the First. And it may be remarked, that the House of Carrick was

the residence of Mr Fea of Clestran, who, about a century ago, dexterously captured the pirate Gow, who had come with his vessel to Calf Sound, and was thus the means of arresting him in his wicked career, and giving him over to merited punishment. The late Sir Walter Scott, as is generally believed, has taken this incident as the groundwork of his novel, entitled the Pirate.

*Antiquities.*—There are several monuments of antiquity in these parishes. Towards the north end of Eday, there is a standing-stone in the midst of a lonely heath. It is about 17 feet in height; and although a remarkable object, tradition says nothing as to its origin. There are various remains of ancient places of worship, and likewise places for interment, in these islands. Of the latter there is one deserving of more particular notice, at Housebay, in the south end of Stronsay. In this burying-ground, a number of bodies have been laid along side of each other, and separated from the rest by stones placed on edge at the foot and head, and on each side. It does not appear that wooden coffins had been used; but, by way of substitute, a rude stone box had been formed for the head of the corpse, composed of stones set on edge, and one laid over them as a lid covering the face. The rest of the body, it seems, had been covered only with the bare earth.

There are various Picts' houses of considerable size in the southern parts of Stronsay. One of these is of greater magnitude than the rest, situated on the neck of land connecting Lambhead with Stronsay. It contains several apartments, which, by their smallness and rude construction, show that the inhabitants must have made little progress in the arts of civilized life.

Below this ruin, towards the west, there are the remains of an ancient pier, formed, as is supposed by some, for the protection of vessels. It is now in such a state of dilapidation, that it is impossible to say when it was made. Its appearance is that of a mound of stones, extending to about 90 feet in breadth, and running into the sea in a westerly direction about 800 feet, and then turning southward in a direction towards the extreme point of Lambhead about the same length,—leaving, however, at the extremity, a sufficiently capacious entrance for vessels. And although, at this part, there is no breakwater, it may have been protected in another way, as a strong current runs continually past the head and across the entrance, so that the waves would be broken in passing it. The lower division of the pier (if such it was) has suffered most from the violence of the waves, as it is now covered over at high

tide, while the greater part of the upper division still appears above water.

It may be observed, that this ancient pier has been scarcely, if at all, mentioned by former writers. And tradition says nothing as to which of the ancient proprietors of these islands it is to be referred to.

### III.—POPULATION.

There are no records of an early date, from which to give any account of the ancient population of these parishes. In 1781, they contained 1494; and in 1831, 1827 souls. This increase is to be ascribed to the more extended cultivation of ground formerly lying in a state of nature, and also to the improvements in the fishing of lobsters, cod, and herrings.

The people in these parishes enjoy a competent share of the comforts of life. Besides meal and potatoes, most of them have some butcher-meat during the year. But their principal animal food is fish, such as cod, especially herrings in their season, as well as cooths and sillocks during two-thirds of the year.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—As there is no proper survey of these parishes, it is impossible to specify the relative proportions of ground in different conditions. As to Stronsay, however, it is supposed that about one-third is arable, one-third green pasture attached to the various farms, and one-third heath,—most of which is undivided common. And as to Eday, about 1000 acres are arable, 720 green pasture, and the remainder is heath, but not undivided common.

The kinds of grain commonly raised are bear or bigg, and grey or black oats, the latter having awns as well as the bear. Potatoes also are everywhere cultivated. Various farmers have raised white oats and pease, as well as turnips and artificial grasses. And Mr Laing of Papdale, in addition to these, has raised barley with much success.

From time immemorial, the ordinary mode of cultivation in Orkney has been to sow bear and grey oats, alternately in the same field. And the ground is enabled to hold out with this severe rotation, by the great profusion of sea-weed which is everywhere found, and assists in manuring for the bear,—the ground seldom receiving any manure for the oats.

A great proportion of the horses, cattle, and sheep, are of the small Orkney breed. But many excellent horses and cattle have been introduced from Angus-shire, and other southern counties;

and Mr Laing of Papdale has shown, on a considerable scale, that Cheviot and Merino sheep, or a mixture of them, thrive very well.

The crops of grey oats and bigg, in favourable seasons, have a considerable appearance on the ground; and, considering the mode of culture, are fully as good (particularly the bigg), as can be expected. It may be observed, however, that here it is not easy to specify the returns from a particular field, as the farmers are not in the practice of computing the produce by the acre. When the ground is in good condition, the crop of white oats and barley has an admirable appearance; and, when the filling season is favourable, approaches to the excellency of the same crops in the southern parts of Scotland. The soil and climate are extremely well adapted for the culture of turnips, potatoes, and artificial grasses, such as clover and rye-grass; and very fine crops, particularly of the two first, have been raised in this quarter.

Of the great farms, renting from L. 100 to L. 200 per annum, the leases are generally of nineteen years duration. Of farms of more moderate extent, the leases are in some cases shorter. And most of the smallest farms were let from year to year, until about two years ago, when the proprietor of Eday let these for the same period of nineteen years as the rest of his farms. It may be observed, as a peculiarity of these islands, that the farms are let for a gross rent, and not by the acre. Most of the farms have a considerable proportion of pasture ground attached to the arable.

Several of the dwelling-houses on the farms are rather unsuitable; but not a few of them, particularly on the largest farms, are comfortable dwellings, consisting of more stories than one. The same distinction applies to the offices on the farms, the smaller ones being rather mean, while the largest farms have offices spacious and substantial. They are, in general, erected by the proprietors; and for the most part are in a state of progressive improvement. Three of the farmers in these parishes have thrashing-machines turned by horses. Most of the ground is unenclosed; but on several of the largest farms, some substantial stone dikes have, within the last few years, been erected.

The greatest part of Eday being covered with moss, presents a great obstacle to agricultural improvement, though it is to be allowed that this is of the greatest benefit to the inhabitants for fuel, and contributes a considerable share of the same important commodity to the inhabitants of several of the adjacent islands,

and some cargoes have been sent to the Frith of Forth within the last two years. Almost the whole of Stronsay, with the exception of about a square mile covered with moss, in the south-western part of the island, might, without much difficulty, be brought under cultivation. Some parts are fertile and other parts are poor, but it is all free of stones and wet, while there are no places so steep as to prevent the plough passing along. The desiderata are skill, industry, and capital, along with the division of that part which is now common. It must be observed, however, that, of late years, considerable progress has been made in extending cultivation over waste ground in these parishes; and one proprietor, Mr Laing of Papdale, stands prominently forward in this species of improvement, having, in the course of two years, made the plough to pass over more than 100 acres of barren moor. It is a curious fact, that ground which has been yielding grey oats and bigg alternately, for a series of years, refuses to yield white oats, and this, too, even though the ground is of excellent quality. The cause of this may be, the quantity of shell sand, which mixes more or less with the sea-weed, that has been used as manure for centuries, destroying the adhesion of the soil. But, whether this be the real cause or not, it is certain that white oats grow in contiguous ground that has been newly cultivated.

The ease with which sea-weed can be procured as manure, by presenting a temptation to the farmer to have always a grain crop upon his ground, may be supposed to have much impeded the introduction of the improved mode of agriculture. Another obstacle which may be mentioned, is the manufacture of kelp from sea-weed, which, for nearly a century, has occupied a great proportion of the labouring part of the community, during the summer season, and thereby withdrawn the attention of all classes from agriculture. The ardour for kelp making is, however, much abated, in consequence of the little remuneration which it brings, the price having fallen from L.15, or even L.20 per ton, to L.5.

*Fisheries.*—The fishing, which is of most importance to the great body of the inhabitants of these parishes, is the sillock or cooth. Besides furnishing the people with a considerable part of their food during three-fourths of the year, the taking of this fish, which is both with the bait and fly, affords to old and young a source of interesting amusement, more especially during the pleasant evenings in summer. The lobster-fishing has been carried on here,

for about half a century. This fish is caught during the months of April, May, and June, a little without the low water-mark, by means of small boats with two men in each, employing for this purpose small nets with flesh or fish used as bait. The lobsters, when caught, are transferred to chests floating in some sheltered place, from which they are taken generally every week, and conveyed to London by welled smacks. The cod-fishing for export commenced in the year 1828, and is prosecuted in the neighbouring seas with small sloops, for the most part decked. The herring-fishing was begun here by Mr David Drever, farmer at Huip, in the year 1814. And soon after, Mr Laing of Papdale, in connection with a company in London, afforded such encouragement, that the harbour of Papa Sound, admirably fitted for this purpose, and in the vicinity of the finest fishing-ground, soon became the great resort of boats from the North Isles, and indeed from all Orkney. Mr Laing, the proprietor of the adjacent ground, has built a considerable village for the accommodation of fishermen who have come from distant places to reside here, and likewise a commodious pier for the curing and loading of the fish. The herring-fishing commences towards the end of July, and continues for six or eight weeks, during which time the number of boats employed has been sometimes about 400, and most of these are manned by four, and some by five men. There are also anchored in Papa Sound from 25 to 35 vessels, (sloops and brigs,) mostly from the south-west of Scotland, attending on the fishing. And in addition to coopers and others, there are several hundreds of women employed in cleaning and salting the fish. Numbers of persons also resort to the station to traffic with the curers and fishers, while visitors come to witness the busy scene, so that the fishing-season is a memorable part of the year in the parish of Stronsay. It may be added, that it is difficult to specify the average quantity caught by one boat, but it varies from the smallest number of crans to about 200. A common number is from 35 to 70.

It may be added, that shoals of small whales occasionally run aground on these islands, or when seen off the coast are hunted ashore by the people with boats. One of these shoals, fifty in number, came ashore at Rousholmn, in November 1834, which yielded oil to the amount of about L.100. And in the beginning of the present year, another shoal, 287 in number, came ashore on the west side of Eday, which yielded a return of L.398. These



fishes, however, are only rare visitors, and their return cannot be calculated on.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce raised yearly in Stronsay, including the holms connected therewith :

4214 bolls of bear of 6 bushels, at 13s. 6d. per bush.,	L. 2344	9	0
570 do. of white oats of do., at 12s. per bushel,	342	0	0
5232 do. of black oats of do., at 8s. 6d. per do.,	2223	12	0
53 do. of pease of do., at L. 1,	53	0	0

10069—total number of bolls of grain, . . . . . L. 5463 1 0

3992 barrels of potatoes, at 2s. 3d. per barrel,	L. 449	2	0
81000 cabbages, at 2s. 6d. per 100	101	5	0
59½ acres of turnips, at L. 4, 10s. per acre,	267	15	0
9600 stones of hay, at 6d. per stone,	245	0	0

1063 2 0

### Cattle and horses.

110 large horses, at L. 3 per head, for grass & fodder,	L. 330	0	0
189 small do. at L. 1, 5s per head, for do. do.	236	5	0
137 oxen, at L. 1, 10. per head, for do. do.	205	10	0
397 cows, at L. 1, 10s. per head, for do. do.	595	10	0
527 stirks, at 15s. per head for do. do.	395	5	0

1360—total number of cattle and horses, . . . . . 1762 10 0

310 swine for keeping, at 5s. per head,	77	10	0
1555 sheep, native breed, for keeping, at 1s. 6d.	116	12	6
3200 rabbits yearly,—value for skins and carcase, 6d.	80	0	0

### Kelp.

215½ tons, at L. 5 per ton, . . . . . 1077 10 0

### Lobsters.

2900 lobsters, at 3d. each, . . . . . 96 5 0

### Herrings and cod.

2800 barrels of herring, at 10s. per barrel,	L. 1400	0	0
4 tons of cod fish, at L. 12, 12s.	50	8	0

1450 8 0

Total value, . . . . . L. 11,126 18 6

Account of Produce, &c. in the Parish of Eday, including Pharey and Holms.

	Bear, bolls.	Oats, bolls.	Beans, bolls.	Potatoes, barrels.	Turnips, acres.	Cabbages, hundreds.	Hay, stones.	Cows.	Oxen.	Stirks.	Horses.	Sheep, Cheviot	Sheep, native.	Sheep, High-land.	Swine.	Arable land, acres.	Improved last 3 years, acres.	Green pasture, acres.	Rabbits, No.	Peats sold, fathoms.	Tons of kelp.	No. of hands employed.	No. of lobster boats.	No. of hands employed.	No. of sloops for cods.	No. of hands employed.	Herring boats.	No. of hands employed.		
Greentoft,	125	300	10	200	15	600	1600	15	4	30	10				6	153	95	61												
Stansquoy,	100	230		120	6	600	400	9	4	16	5				4	75	50	50												
Carrick,	40	75		60	4	400	200	6	2	12	4	300			3	35	3	90	150											
Skéal,	6	140		65	2	800		6	2	16	4			180	4	40	1	30	200											
Musgar,	35	40		35	2	100	45	5	2	15	2				4	16	48	49												
10 small farms,	170	195		165	2	8000	35	34	10	18	18	100			25	75	3	25												
11 do.	145	160		150	1	8000		30	8	18	17	80			22	61	2	24	100											
49 do.	445	480		545		234,300		120	30	98	80	60			70	180	10	90	60											
68 do.	408	510		612		230,000		70	10	80	40				68	204	12	102												
Holms of Eday & Green Holm,										4		480						120	1120	209	8	14								
Tale of Pharey,	80	100		90		6400		12	7	10	14		200		17	40	80													
	1616	2330	10	2042	36	80,100	2280	307	79	317	194	300	920	180	223	879	126	720	1680	466	161	212	19	38	2	14	24	26	104	

Note.—The rent of arable land and green pasture ground averages from 10s. to 16s. per acre; but to all the arable land there is attached a right of pasture on the common hill, and peats free.

The average gross amount of raw produce raised yearly in Eday, including Pharey and the Holms.

1616 bolls of bear, of 6 bushels to a boll, at 18s. per boll,	L.1050	8	0	
785 bolls of white oats, do. to do. at 11s. 6d. per boll,	451	7	6	
1445 bolls of black oats, do. to do. at 8s. per do.	578	0	0	
10 bolls of beans, do. to do. at L.1,	10	0	0	
2042 barrels of potatoes, at 2s. 3d. per barrel,	229	14	6	
36 acres of turnips, at L.4, 10s. per acre,	162	0	0	
2280 stones of hay, at 6d. per stone,	57	0	0	
90100 cabbages, at L.1, 5s. per 1000,	112	12	6	
307 cows for grass and fodder, at L.1, 10s. per head,	460	10	0	
79 oxen for do. do. at L.1, 10s. per head,	118	10	0	
317 stirks for do. do. at 15s. per do.	237	15	0	
25 horses, (large size,) for grass and fodder, at L.3 per head,	75	0	0	
169 horses, (small size,) for do. do. at L.1, 5s. per do.	211	5	0	
300 Cheviot sheep, grass for the year, at 6s. 6d.	97	10	0	
180 Highland sheep, grass for the year, at 3s. 6d. per head.	31	10	0	
920 native sheep, do. do. at 1s. 9d. per do.	80	10	0	
223 Swine, at 4s. each,	44	12	0	
1630 rabbits skin and carcase, at 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d each,	37	7	1	
466 fathoms of peats sold yearly from the island, at 6s. per fathom.	139	16	0	
1560 barrels of herrings, at	L.780	0	0	
5400 lobsters, at 3d. each,	67	10	0	
8 tons of dried cod fish, at L.12 per ton,	96	0	0	
		943	10	0
161 tons of kelp, at L.5 per ton,		805	0	0
		<hr/>	<hr/>	
		L.5933	17	7

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are two parish churches, both in central parts in these islands. The one in Stronsay was built in 1821, the other in Eday, in 1816. Besides these, there are two places of worship connected with the United Secession. That in Stronsay was built in 1800, and that in Eday, in 1829. The parish minister in Stronsay, until about a year and a half ago, was wont to cross the Sound (in breadth four miles) every fourth Sabbath, to preach in Eday. But in the spring of 1834, the Committee of the General Assembly for managing the Royal Bounty appointed the present missionary minister to officiate in Eday; and since that time, the parish of Eday has enjoyed the same benefit of public worship, every Sabbath, as Stronsay, which has been also benefited by this appointment, as the minister of Stronsay can devote all his attention to that parish. Since the appointment of a minister to Eday, a manse has been erected for his residence, partly by collections and subscriptions in Orkney and in the south; and partly by the assistance of the present incumbent in Stronsay.

*Education.*—In these parishes, there are three principal schools. Two in Stronsay, and one in Eday. Of those in Stronsay, one is the parochial school, and the other is supported by the Society for

Propagating Christian Knowledge. This school was established by the Society in the year 1782. And it may be worthy of being noticed, that since that time it has continued in the same family, being taught first by the father and afterwards by the present teacher, his son, who is also an elder in the parish church. The school in the parish of Eday is supported by the Committee of the General Assembly for Promoting of Education in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It was established in the year 1827. Previous to this time, there was no regular school in the parish of Eday. Although the people in Eday were thus so long without any public school, it should be observed that the children were not altogether neglected. They were for the most part taught to read the Scriptures by their parents or some of the neighbours. The Assembly's school, however, has been of great benefit to the parish, as it has spread education among all the families; taught the young to read with more accuracy than formerly, as well as taught them branches to which they could not have access before.

The parish schoolmaster in Stronsay receives a salary of L. 25, 13s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; add to which the fees of scholars, L. 3; total, L. 28, 13s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. The teacher of the Society's school in Stronsay receives a salary of L. 15; add to which, the fees of scholars, L. 1, 10s.; total, L. 16, 10s. The teacher of the General Assembly's school in Eday receives a salary of L. 25; add to which, the fees of scholars, L. 5; total, L. 30.

The average number of children attending these schools in Stronsay, during the summer, are 48; during the winter, 65. The average number attending the Assembly's school in Eday, during summer, are 24; during winter, 36. The fees are from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per quarter.

Besides these schools, there are other casual schools, in more remote parts of the islands, taught by persons who earn their livelihood, partly from the fees of the children, and partly from following some other occupation.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid in these parishes, is about 27. They receive from 1s. to 15s. during the year. The only fund for relief of the poor is that which is procured by weekly collections in the parish churches on Sabbath, with the exception of a donation of L. 2, 2s., per annum, from Mr Balfour of Trenaby for the poor of Stronsay. The collections amount to about L. 8, 5s. Sterling,

per annum. It may be observed, that, although there are many poor persons in these parishes, yet they are more able to find support for themselves here than in large towns. If they procure from their relatives or neighbours some meal and a few fish and potatoes, these are sufficient to satisfy their wants. And though very poor, they enjoy a measure of health and contentment. It may be remarked, that the people in these parishes are very charitable in bestowing help, in the manner referred to, on their poorer neighbours.

*Inns, Alehouses, &c.*—There are seven alehouses or inns in these parishes, and the bad effects of these houses are the same here as in other parts of the country.

*Fuel.*—The fuel in the parish of Eday consists wholly of peats, which are dug from the extensive moss that covers the greater part of the island. These peats are of the best sort, and when piled on the hearth make an excellent fire. The inhabitants of Eday, as has been noticed, have right to the free use of peats from the mosses, as a pendicle to their tenements. Several of the north isles of Orkney receive fuel from Eday. Boats containing parties of people to prepare their winter's supply, may be seen sailing from various quarters, in the beginning of summer, when the season for cutting the peats commences. They pay 6s. per fathom for them after they are cut and dried.\* And the yearly rent accruing to the proprietor of Eday, for this commodity alone, is not less than L. 139, 16s. per annum. The inhabitants of Stronsay were wont, in former times, to dig their peats from the moss of Rothesholmn, already referred to. This privilege, however, about fifty years ago, was denied them by the proprietor, and the question being brought before the Court of Session, it was decided in his favour. Mr Anderson, in his Account of these parishes in 1787, anticipated that this decision would “soon be found a great cause of diminishing the inhabitants.” The numbers, however, have considerably increased since that time, showing that a scarcity of fuel is too feeble a barrier to check population. The tenants in Rothesholmn, and some other families, receive their peats, as formerly, from the moss. But most of the remaining families receive the little fuel they use from Eday, and the average expense to one family is about L. 1, 5s. yearly, to which may be added the expense of coal, as some of them use a considerable quantity.

\* The measure above-mentioned is of much greater dimensions, than that usually known by the fathom. It contains 12 feet in length, 6 in breadth, and 6 in height.

July 1841.

# PARISH OF ST ANDREWS.\*

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKWALL, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JAMES SMELLIE, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE present designation of this parish is that by which it has, from time immemorial, been known; and no other, nor more satisfactory account of its origin can be obtained, than that it is derived from *Saint Andrew*, the tutelary saint of Scotland.

*Extent, &c.*—The parish of St Andrews is situated on the east coast of the mainland of Orkney. Its extreme length is about 6 miles, and its medial breadth 2. Its superficial extent has never been ascertained by actual measurement, but may be estimated at 13 square miles. It is bounded on the north, by Shapinshay firth; on the east, by an arm of the sea called Stronsay firth; on the south-east, by Deersound; on the south, by the German ocean; on the south-west, by an undivided common of some miles in extent, which lies between it and the parish of Holm; on the west, by the parish of St Ola; and on the north-west, by Inganess bay. It is separated from the parish of Deerness, with which it was formerly ecclesiastically united, by Deersound, and a narrow isthmus called *Sandaysand*. In consequence of its being variously intersected by the sea, its figure cannot be well described; but the principal part lies south-east and north-west, while an inferior division projects from the northern end, in an easterly direction.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The face of the parish, though generally flat, is diversified by gentle inequalities in the ground. But the highest point is not more than 350 feet above the level of the sea, with the steepest acclivity only nine degrees; and the least elevated parts are sometimes covered by the rising tide. It is intersected from east to west, by three ridges or inconsiderable rising grounds; one at the south end, another at the north, and a third in the middle, almost equidistant from each of the others.

The line of sea-coast, extending along the south, east, and north

\* Drawn up by the Rev. George Smellie, Assistant and Successor in Lady parish, Sanday.

sides, may be eighteen miles in length. At three places, viz. the isthmus connecting this parish with Deerness, a small creek of Deersound near the church, and a part of Inganess bay, it is sandy, and at the southern and eastern boundaries, it is rocky and precipitous. At the former of these, the face of the rock is nearly 180 feet of perpendicular height; and at the latter 95, where it is not so remarkable for its elevation, as for its picturesque appearance; some parts standing in detached columns, and presenting a dauntless front to the fury of the ocean. The rest of the sea coast, though occasionally varied by projecting cliffs, generally consists of a low beach, affording sea-weed for the manufacture of kelp.

One of the chief natural curiosities of this place is a deep cavern, which in the neighbouring district is called the *gloup*.\* It is situated a few yards from the precipice on the east coast, is eighty feet deep, and fifty-six by thirty wide; and the water in its bottom communicates with the open sea by a passage through which a boat may enter, at certain states of the tide and weather. Additional interest is given to this place by the circumstance, that Sir James Sinclair, natural son of Robert Sinclair, Earl of Orkney, threw himself into it, and perished. He was prompted to this horrid act, by fear of the vengeance of his sovereign James V., whose displeasure he had incurred, by representing the Islands of Sanday and Eday as insignificant holms, and thus fraudulently attempting to obtain possession of them, as a reward for his good services in discomfiting the Earl of Caithness and Lord Sinclair at Summerdale.

*Meteorology.*—Though in rare instances, Fahrenheit's thermometer in the shade has been known to fall to 16° and rise to 74°, yet the following may be taken as the average annual and monthly heights calculated from observations made twice every day, for seventeen years—from January 1812 to December 1828. Average annual height, 44°.64

Monthly height, January,	. 36°.4	Monthly height, July,	. 54°.5
February,	. 37°.2	Do. August,	. 54°.3
March,	. 38°.2	Do. September,	. 51°.5
April,	. 41°.3	Do. October,	. 45°. .
May,	. 46°. .	Do. November,	. 40°. .
June,	. 52°.3	Do. December,	. 39°. .

The climate is subject to frequent and rapid alternations of temperature, as might easily be shown by a table of observations for

\* The term *gloup* seems to be generic, as it is elsewhere, in these islands, applied to other caverns of a similar description; and may probably be derived from the Icelandic word *gloppa*, which is used with reference to the crater of a volcano.

each day of a whole year. And though slight frosts are common in winter and spring, yet the mercury in the thermometer seldom remains so low as the freezing point, for one continued week. The character of the climate is rather damp than cold. And though instances have occurred, when many successive weeks during summer have passed without a single shower, yet such are rare; and drought less frequently than wet proves injurious to agricultural pursuits. Eight or nine months of the twelve may often, not inaptly, be denominated *rainy*. The following are the average heights of the barometric column, calculated from the same number of observations made during the same period as mentioned in regard to the thermometer. Annual height, 29.675 inches.

Monthly height, January,	29.607 in.	Monthly height, July,	29.773 in.
Do. February,	29.502	Do. August,	29.757
Do. March,	29.576	Do. September,	29.710
Do. April,	29.572	Do. October,	29.617
Do. May,	29.603	Do. November,	29.621
Do. June,	29.850	Do. December,	29.539

In December 1833, the mercurial column was only 27.7 inches in height; and on the 26th May 1834, it was 30.67 inches, so that the range of the barometer is at least 2.97 inches. But atmospherical changes are often very rapid; a clear and serene sky being not unfrequently, in the space of a few hours, entirely hid under dark and stormy clouds.

Rain appears at all seasons of the year, in forms varying from gentle mist to weighty drops; but generally falls more gradually here than in more southern districts of Britain. Torrents of rain are uncommon—the heaviest showers being usually of short duration; and these come from the west when the wind is strong. The south-west, however, in consequence of the greater frequency of rain from that direction than from any other, may be denominated the *rainy quarter*. But though the climate be damp, yet, owing to the gentle precipitation of moisture in general, probably no greater quantity of rain falls annually here than in many places which have the character of a much drier climate. Dr Barry says, “that, from some attempts to obtain a measurement, we have reason to conclude, that the annual quantity of rain that falls in those islands amounts to twenty-six inches at an average.” And this may be assumed as the quantity for this parish.

High winds are frequent. The most furious blasts are from the west and north-west. But the longest continuance of wind in one direction is generally when it blows from the east. The following are the proportions of time during which winds from the four cardinal points, or those approaching nearest to them, prevail



in the course of the year, also calculated from observations made during seventeen years:—North, &c. 75 days; east, &c. 82.14 days; south, &c. 107.14 days; west, &c. 100.72.

*Hydrography.*—Deersound is the best roadstead contiguous to this place. Notwithstanding several sinuosities in its shores, it may be said to lie nearly north-east and south-west. It is four miles long from the point of Ness, which forms one side of its entrance, to its innermost part, and from one to two miles broad. Being well defended on all sides, its mouth six or seven fathoms deep, and its bottom consisting of clean sandy ground mixed with clay, it forms a safe retreat for vessels of all sizes. Good anchorage may be found in many parts of it; but perhaps the safest place is that behind the point of Kirbister, on the Deerness shore. The most common resort for vessels, however, and at all times a sufficiently safe situation, is in six fathoms water, about three-fourths of a mile from the point of Ness, and towards the St Andrews side of the bay, where the pilot's rule for bringing up a vessel is, to bring her into a straight line with the Mull-head of Deerness and the point of Ness, and then anchor within that line. Wallace, in his History of Orkney, says, that "Deersound is capable of sheltering the greatest navies." It is not now much frequented. Formerly, a few ships bound for Davis's Straits or Greenland, and some engaged in the Iceland fishery, touched here, principally for the sake of hiring men. But, since the burning in 1823 of Mr Scoresby's ship, the *Fame of Hull*, a name occurring in almost all scientific dissertations on the arctic regions, no whale-fishing vessel has been seen here; and, by the Iceland fishermen, it has been almost deserted since last French war.

Inganess Bay, the only other bay falling under our observation at present, is still less frequented, being exposed to the open sea from the north-east. It lies in the same direction as Deersound, but on the north-west side of the parish. It is bounded on the west and south by St Ola. Its length is two miles and a half, its breadth upwards of one, and its depth from two and a half to twelve fathoms. The best anchorage is about a mile from its inner extremity, in six or six one-half fathoms water; and this is quite safe in certain directions of the wind. There is no tideway in either of these bays, except the little occasioned by the ebb and flow of their own waters.

In the north end of the parish is the only sheet of fresh water deserving the name of lake. Its length is one mile; its breadth, three-fourths; and its greatest depth in winter, eleven feet of wa-

ter, with perhaps as many of mud. It falls five feet of perpendicular height, in dry seasons, and is then only seven feet above the level of the sea. In winter, it has been so completely frozen, as to be safely crossed on foot.

From the small extent of territory in this part of the mainland of Orkney, running water never attains a magnitude greater than a paltry rill. And none of the springs, all of which are inconsiderable, possess a temperature above that of the climate, or manifest any remarkable chemical properties.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The direction of the strata of rocks is generally from east-south-east to west-north-west, with the dip to north-north-east. Their inclination varies from  $5^{\circ}$  to  $13^{\circ}$ , and, in some situations, even more. Around the lake, they range almost from east to west; and, at one part of the precipitous coast on the east, they seem completely deranged; sometimes, contrary to the general rule, ranging from south-west to north-east, with the dip to the north-west, and, at other times, while ranging in the same direction, dipping to the south-east, and indicating the existence of subterranean action in their neighbourhood, at some remote period. From a remarkable aperture in these rocks, called the Hole of Row, northwards for a quarter of a mile, entire disorder prevails. The strata lie in all directions; the beds are undulated in their form, more inclined than in other places, and some of them placed in an almost vertical position. Along the sea-coast, on the north, some other traces of derangement appear.

The prevailing rocks are argillaceous sandstone and sandstone flag, apparently belonging to the old red sandstone formation. But trap dikes evidently occur at the place where the strata are so much deranged. Traces of calc-spar and iron pyrites are found in the vicinity of the latter, and of bog iron ore in the marshes. We do not know that any fossil organic remains, either animal or vegetable, were ever discovered in this place.

The rocks are, in all cases, covered with red clay, mixed with gravel, over which rest sand, loam, or peat. Peat occurs both on the higher and lower grounds. In almost all instances, it is of a light and spongy consistence, of a chesnut colour, and apparently composed chiefly of moss and heath. But, at the bottom of deep moors, it is blacker, more friable,—and when dried, harder than in other situations; and contains branches of trees in a half-decayed state. Within the last five years, in the course of trenching a bog about a quarter of a mile from the minister's house, hazel-nuts

were found in a state of perfect preservation, at the distance of three feet below the surface of the ground, although no trees of that kind at present exist in the island.

The soil seems generally to be untransported, except in a few sandy spots near the sea shore, where its situation and appearance prove that it has been accumulated by the force of the wind; and in valleys, where a more than ordinary depth betrays its dependent character. But the circumstance of greater depth in particular situations, though perhaps originating in transportation, may not be altogether owing to that cause. For if the accumulation were once begun, the increase of soil itself would give greater vigour to vegetation, and the decay of its productions, then, independently of the former cause, maintain the accumulating process. And this proceeding in a natural course, if only commenced by the operation of some extrinsic circumstance, might account for the phenomenon. Perhaps few places, for their extent, can boast of a greater variety of soil. One kind does not extend far, till it is interrupted by another. It is sometimes, though rarely, sandy, and, at other times, loamy, but generally clayey or mossy. Sand, loam, moss, and clay, are, however, found combined in infinite variety of proportion. But the soil that has been long under cultivation, has assumed the black colour of productiveness, from having been manured chiefly with decomposed organic matter. Large portions of the uncultivated ground are covered with a thin stratum of mossy matter, resting on gravelly clay. And this kind of soil, called *yarpha*, yields few productions except mosses, some of the coarser grasses, and stunted heaths. The soil in general, independently of the sterile clay on which it rests, is seldom more than three or four inches deep, unless in spots where cultivation has been carried on for many years, or where some extrinsic accumulating process has been in operation; in which cases, the depth is often from eight inches to a foot, and in marshes sometimes much more. Its general character is extreme wetness, while rainy weather continues,—and a tendency to become hard and to crack in drought.

Grubs are most common in places that have been recently brought under cultivation, particularly if mossy, and seldom do much injury to fields that are regularly ploughed.

It is stated in the former Statistical Account, that “small bits of lead are sometimes found here,” probably referring to the rocks on the east coast; and such was once the general belief. But it is now

supposed that iron pyrites was mistaken for lead, as none of the latter mineral can at present be discovered. The same has also been ignorantly mistaken for silver.

*Zoology.*—Hares were found here at an early period, but had afterwards become extinct till within the last few years, when they were again introduced, and they are now very numerous, much to the annoyance of the farmer. Rabbits are seen in different parts, but have a predilection for the sandy ground called *links*. Otters live in the rocks by the sea shore; and seals abound in the bays. Grouse are found here and in the adjacent moors. A great variety of sea fowl occurs. Eleven species at least of the tribe *Anas* occasionally visit Deersound. Swans are seen in spring and autumn, as they migrate to other latitudes, and often rest for days on the lake, where they sometimes fall a prey to the sportsman. They also occasionally appear during winter, when it is supposed that they pass the season in the neighbourhood. Solan geese are sometimes seen; and a species of sea fowl, *Anas bernicla*, Lin. Syst., which has here received the name of Horra-goose, perhaps from its loud hoarse cry, comes to Deersound about the end of December, and remains till the end of February. It is worthy of remark, that this bird is not known to visit any other part of Orkney, excepting Hoy Sound and Westray firth. Several lapwings choose this as a situation for rearing their young. Other migratory birds are seen in winter, as snow-buntings, fieldfares, and blackbirds, &c. And the landrail is a hibernating bird common in this place. But, for a complete list of the great variety of birds which may at different seasons be found here, we refer the reader to Barry's History of the Orkney Islands,\* where those enumerated and described will, without many exceptions, illustrate the ornithology of this parish.

Whether deer ever lived here, it is now difficult to ascertain. But part of the antlers and bones of one of these animals were dug out of a tumulus on the glebe during the incumbency of the present minister; and a few other remains of them have been discovered in the island. In corroboration of a prevalent tradition that this neighbourhood was once inhabited by these animals, we are reminded of a supposed derivation of the names *Deersound* and *Deerness*, from deer,—the one signifying the sound and the other the cape of deers. But, whatever may be the fact as to the existence of deer in this place at some former period, it is much

\* Book III. Chapter I.

more probable, according to the opinion of the more intelligent, that these names come from some language now in disuse. And "in Gaelic, which may have been the language of the country under the Pictish kingdom, *Deerness* or *Durness* signifies a peninsulated promontory."\* According to Dr Barry several remains of deer have been found. He says, "an entire skeleton was dug up, some years ago, in the heart of an old ruin, in the middle of a loch in a parish contiguous to one that is said to have derived its name from its being the abode of these animals. The parish to which we allude, is Deerness,—a peninsula on the eastern extremity of the mainland, which is believed to have been named the cape of Deers, because it abounded in these quadrupeds, that found shelter in the forest with which it was then covered, and which was afterwards destroyed by a storm and inundation. In some of the ground in that parish, which is of a marshy nature, deers' horns have several times been found." The "parish contiguous" can be no other than St Andrews. But, besides there being no loch "with an old ruin in the middle" of it,—the old ruin evidently referred to, standing on the margin of the lake,—we never heard of the "entire skeleton" of a deer being discovered anywhere in the parish, nor of "deers' horns being several times found." And it does not appear, that the Doctor's account of the former state of Deerness is sufficiently authenticated.

The species of fish most abundant in Deersound and Inganess bay, is the colefish. Small rock-cod of a red colour, the *Gadus mustela*, and some varieties of the tribe *Pleuronectes*, may also be got in considerable numbers. Trout is occasionally met with. And several other kinds of fish, which are unimportant in an economical point of view, occur in these bays. Eels are to be found in abundance in the lake, but are seldom sought after. Quantities of large cod, haddock, skate, dog-fish, herrings, also mackerel, and some others, are, however, brought from the adjoining seas.

With regard to shell-fish, there are numbers of crabs and lobsters; also cockles and razor-fish, which are taken chiefly in the spring season, and used as articles of food. Oysters of a superior size are not unknown in some parts of Deersound. Limpets occur on all the rocks along the sea shore that are, at the return of every tide, covered by the salt water,—but are used only as bait for other

\* Old Statistical Account of Scotland.

fish. The catalogue might be greatly extended by an enumeration of many other less important kinds.

*Botany.*—We are not aware that any very rare plants occur here. But, as a kind of index of the nature of the soil, we may mention the following—yellow water-flag, marsh marigold, buck-bean, cotton-grass, mint, butterwort, and yellow rattle; corn-marigold, wild-mustard, docks, sorrel, and thistles; devils-bit, dog's-tail grass, rush, dwarf-willow, foxglove, plantain, common primrose, sundew, heath, parnassia, mushrooms, puff-balls; and a variety of fuci on the sea shore, which are burned for kelp. There is no wood in the parish, yet the peat mosses bear presumptive evidence of its having grown here or not far distant from this place, at some former period. Some years ago, the removal of the sand on the sea shore, in the immediate vicinity of the bog in which were found hazelnuts, discovered several branches of birch trees. This was occasioned by a violent gale of north-east wind; and wherever the sand was removed, the stratum below was peat moss to the depth of several feet. In the eighth appendix to Dr Barry's history, we have an extract from a manuscript by Matthew Mackaile, preserved in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, where it is said that, "at the east end of the main, at head of Deersound, at Campstown, there is a little wood (almost two pair of beets in length, and one broad, and as tall as a man,) of the ordinary *Salix angustifolia* or *viminia*." All remembrance of this has long since vanished.

A spirited attempt was, a few years ago, made by Mr Baikie of Tankerness, to introduce the useful and ornamental article of wood. He planted with plane-tree, fir, ash, willow, &c. several acres of ground along the north side of the lake; but no hope is entertained of the success of the attempt,—indeed, the trees have almost all entirely disappeared. Perhaps the sea breeze, combined with some ungeniality in the rough and uncultivated soil in which they were planted, rather than any peculiar rigour of the climate, has proved adverse to their growth: for various kinds of fruit trees, and even tender shrubs will thrive well in a good soil, and under the protection of a sufficient wall. About four years ago, the same gentleman planted two or three acres of good ground near his house with the same kinds of wood, and the young trees seem healthy, and are progressing in stature.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

This parish was formerly united *quoad sacra* with Deerness,—a circumstance which has led to various inaccuracies in occasional  
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references to the one as well as the other of them in accounts of the Orkney Islands, and even in the Old Statistical Account. The minister always resided in St Andrews. He officiated every alternate Sabbath in the adjoining parish of Deerness, till May 1830, when, in consequence of the Parliamentary grant of 1823, for building churches and manses in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the latter was blessed with a resident clergyman of its own, and the former with a regular dispensation of religious ordinances.

*Parochial Register.*—The only parochial register is the session-record, which extends backwards to the year 1657, and contains an account of births, marriages, and sessional transactions. It was accurately kept till the year 1796 inclusive; but from that period till 1804, it was sadly neglected. And, notwithstanding the exertions of those who have since had the charge of it, to render it more complete for the succeeding period, it still forms a very imperfect record of the parochial events of the present century,—the carelessness or bigotry of Dissenters often preventing them from applying for the registration of their children's names.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners are, Lord Dundas; James Baikie, Esq. of Tankerness; and James Stewart, Esq. of Brough.

*Antiquities.*—In different parts of the parish are to be found ruins, now almost levelled with the ground, which are called chapels. We could particularize at least four, each in a separate division of the parish, called an *ursland*, and situated near, or in the midst of a considerable extent of good ground. It is thought that they are the remains of Roman Catholic chapels, one of which probably formed an appendage to the dwelling of each considerable proprietor, for whom, in former days, it was customary to reside on his estate. On the point of Ness, there is the vestige of a small rude fort, consisting of a circular embankment of earth and stones, which is said to have been used, in days of piracy, for annoying vessels when entering Deersound. One piece of ordnance still lies on the spot. There are in the parish three tumuli, denominated *howies*. One of these stands on the minister's glebe, by the side of the lake, and projects into the water. It is about 140 yards in circumference at the base, and 12 feet high. At the time at which the last Statistical Account was written, it contained a wall 9 feet thick, in which, says the writer, "there seem to have been no apartments, or if there have, they are now filled with rubbish. Some pieces of wall have been found on the out-

side, but their use or form cannot be ascertained." Besides the deer's horn already alluded to, small bone rings, shells, and bones of various kinds of animals, have been found in it. Part of it has also the appearance of having, at one time, been a burial ground. Another of these tumuli stands near the centre of the parish. It is of a truncated conical form, hollowed at the top, 90 yards around the base, and 16 feet in height. It appears to have been surrounded by a mound, at the distance of twenty yards from the base, but has not been opened within the memory of man. A third tumulus, of larger dimensions than either of the former, being 36 feet high, is situated on the isthmus at the southern extremity of the parish, and is called Dingy's How, or Duncan's Height. No record or tradition remains of the age of these accumulations, nor of the objects which they were intended to serve; but a superstitious belief, now almost exploded, once invested them with a sacred character, and regarded them as the residence, or the haunts of fairies.

*Public Buildings.*—The only erections of a public nature, are, the plain parish church and school, unless we include two small and simple undershot water-mills for grinding corn. The summer residence of Mr Baikie of Tankerness and the manse are conspicuous among the humbler habitations of the peasantry.

The stone used in building is sandstone flag, which is found here in great abundance, and of very superior quality. It is obtained at little expense, as it occurs almost every where, at a short distance from the surface of the ground. Roofing slate has been lately discovered in one part of the parish, though only of an inferior kind, and to an inconsiderable extent. The farm-houses are, however, generally roofed with straw or heath. And it may be remarked, that the mode of thatching in these islands is different from that adopted in the southern parts of Scotland. The straw or heath is first twisted by the hand into the form of a thick rope, which, when so prepared, is called *simmons*. Parallel folds of this cordage are passed over the joists from eave to eave, till the whole of the building be once covered. A stratum of loose straw is then interposed between this, and another layer of the same cordage; and these are alternated until a covering be formed, which will hold out the wind and rain. The inferiority of this method is, however, manifest, from its requiring repair, almost every year. But this often consists of nothing more than an additional stratum of *simmons*.



## III.—POPULATION.

No information can be obtained respecting the ancient state of the population. In 1831, it amounted to 857 persons—382 males, and 475 females. According to the return made to Dr Webster in 1755, and according to the enumeration by Mr Scolly, the incumbent in 1772, it was at these respective periods, nearly the same as at present. But, at the time at which the last Statistical Account was drawn up, there was a considerable decrease, owing, it was alleged, to “the continual drain of men to the navy, to the northern fisheries, and, above all, to Hudson’s Bay. Before the year 1741, the Hudson’s Bay Company’s servants were all taken from England, Ireland, or the Shetland Isles. About 1741 or 1743, they began to get a few from Orkney, and, finding them to be submissive and industrious, they now take most or all of their trades-folk and contracted servants from this country.” Whatever effect these supposed causes may have had upon the population forty years ago, they certainly do not seem at present to exercise any sensible influence over it.

The only person of independent fortune residing in the parish, is Mr Baikie of Tankerness. And the number of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards, is three, viz. those mentioned as the chief land-owners. The number of families is 156, and of inhabited houses, 146. There is one fatuous, and one blind person.

One peculiarity in the customs of the people that may be mentioned, is, that the majority of the men may be said to have no fixed profession, but are farmers, fishermen, and artisans, at different seasons of the year. Another is, that each tenant claims an exclusive right to the fields which he rents, only during the time that the crop is on the ground. Although a little improvement in this respect has, of late, begun to manifest itself, yet, what was written for the last Statistical Account, will, in general, still apply. “All the cattle, horses, sheep, swine, geese, &c. go at large for about nine months of the year. As soon as any one tenant cuts and brings in his corn, the whole country becomes at once a common, and all his neighbours must follow his example, or leave their crops, ripe or unripe, to be trodden down and destroyed.”

The people are decent in their external appearance. And although their habits, in regard to the preparation of food, and cleansing of kitchen utensils, might, in some cases, give offence to

a delicate or refined taste, yet they are very particular in the observance of such rules as fall within their own notions of decorum. They are, however, very deficient in attention to the order and cleanliness of their habitations. The interior of the apartment commonly occupied by the family is generally coated with dust, ashes, and soot,—owing, in no small degree, to the practice of having the fire-place in the middle of the room, without any other chimney to conduct the smoke outward, than a hole in the roof of the house. In addition to this, poultry, and even pigs and calves, as well as dogs and cats, are often admitted to a corner of the same apartment with the family. The food of the people consists of bread made of the meal of oats or bear, and sowens, which is a preparation from the siftings of oatmeal; also of potatoes, cabbages, milk, butter, cheese, and fish, with a small quantity of animal food,—and that chiefly goose or bacon.

Poaching is unknown; and smuggling is almost at an end,—the only remaining instances of the latter being occasional attempts to make a little malt for private use, without previously lodging information with the excise officer of the district.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—The lands never having been surveyed, and the cultivated parts lying in detached shreds of every size and shape, it is impossible to state accurately the number of acres that this parish contains, or that is under cultivation. But from the best local knowledge, we may venture to give 2200 acres, as an estimate, of the quantity ever under tillage, which is probably a near approximation to the truth. Perhaps half of the ground that has never been touched with the plough might, by labour, be made yield the means of human subsistence. But from the wetness and natural poverty of the soil, it is questionable whether in a corner so remote from markets this could, except in a very few cases, be done with a profitable application of capital.

Where the extent of a farm is not known, either by the landlord, his tenant, nor any one else, it is difficult to state the average rent of arable ground. But it may be estimated at from 7s. to 10s. value per acre. Along with the arable land so rented, however, the tenant receives as much or a greater extent of pasture ground, which is considered as going into the bargain. The practice of grazing cattle for rent is so little known, that nothing satisfactory can be said as to its average expense.

*Wages*—There are but few cases, in which farm-servants are hired,—the farms being generally small, and the members of the family sufficing for the accomplishment of the necessary work : so that an estimate of their wages would be drawn from a small induction of particulars ; and as the terms of service are often short, and peculiar to the country, little information of general utility could be obtained even from these particulars. A man's wages, however, for a year, may be from L. 6 to L. 8, exclusive of board ; and a woman's, from L. 2 to L. 4, according to their capabilities. The harvest-fee, for a period understood to extend to six weeks, is from L. 1, 1s. to L. 1, 10s. for a man ; and for a woman, 15s. or upwards. Hiring persons by the day for farm-work, is not yet so common as to enable us to say any thing decisive as to the rate of expense. But men may be hired for quarrying or breaking stones and other ordinary purposes at little more than 1s. per day. Mowers, master-masons, and regularly bred workmen, receive from 1s. 6d. to 2s. each per day.

*Produce, &c.*—The kind of grain called bear or big is sold, when raw, by the *wey*, a quantity equal to 16 stones Dutch or  $18\frac{1}{2}$  stones imperial ; and when dried, then called " melder-corn," by the " meil," which is nearly  $11\frac{1}{4}$  stones Dutch or  $14\frac{1}{4}$  imperial. These quantities of raw and dried grain, respectively, are considered of equal value, and may be purchased at a sum varying from 14s. to L. 1 Sterling. Oats, which are generally of very inferior quality, are sold after the same manner ; only that the above mentioned denominations, when applied to this sort of grain, signify about a fourth less than when applied to bear. The " meil" of oats sells at the rate of from 8s. to 16s. Both kinds are frequently sold unthreshed, and the prices vary chiefly according to the demand for fodder. Potatoes sell at from 8d. to 1s. per anker, *i. e.* from 2d. to 3d. per peck. Turnip and hay are not raised in sufficient quantities to become general articles of purchase. Cattle sell at from L. 3 to L. 6. But the average price of a cow either for milk or beef, may be stated at L. 3, 10s. ; of a sheep of the common kind, 8s. and of the larger breeds, L. 1 ; of geese, great numbers of which are reared here, 1s. 9d. or 2s. each ; of common fowls, 7d. or 8d. ; eggs,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 4d. per dozen ; and butter, 6d. or 7d. per lb. Beef varies in price at different seasons of the year, from  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 5d. per lb. And most other things are in proportion.

*Live-Stock.*—The species of horses most esteemed here, for ordinary purposes, is that called the " garron," supposed to be of

Norwegian origin. Their distinctive characters are thick necks and heads, with short ears. They seldom exceed fourteen hands and a half in height, and are very strong and hardy. The breed of black-cattle, which appears to be the oldest known, if not the indigenous, species of this country, is still common, though much mixed. They are small, thin, and often ill-shaped; but this probably proceeds from bad treatment. On the scanty pastures, which the soil affords them, however, they are more profitable for the dairy than more improved breeds; and their flesh is highly esteemed for its delicacy. The native sheep are distinguished from the southern breeds by inferiority of size and shape, and the excessive shortness of their tails; and from the famous Zetland breed, by the general coarseness of their wool. They are sometimes of a gray, and at other times, of a dark tawny or black colour, as well as white. The head is often ornamented with horns,—that of the male almost always with large twisted ones, sometimes six or seven pounds in weight. And these frequently prove fatal to them in swimming. In order to obtain marine plants for food, it is customary for these animals in winter to repair, at low water, to the sea-side, where they sometimes forget the necessity of retiring from rocks which are insulated at half-tide, before the water entirely surrounds them; and when they are at last swept from their footing, the strongest often perish first in the attempt to reach land; their heads being borne down into the water by the weight of their horns, and their destruction occasioned by what is intended to beautify their appearance when confined to their native element. A kind of hog, of a diminutive size, and having small tapering extremities, was formerly common in this place, but is now nearly extinct. Its most peculiar features are a ridge of strong upright bristles extending from between the ears to the tail, the ears quite erect, and the back arched like that of some species of the hyena tribe.

*Husbandry.*—The state of husbandry is in general wretched. Established customs are inveterate in spite of their absurdity, and there seems to be no possibility of getting out of the old beaten track. There are indeed one or two creditable exceptions, but the following may be received as the character of the husbandry commonly pursued. There is no regular rotation of crop, no rest for the soil, no means used effectually to clean the ground from an abundant crop of weeds, and no manure afforded except once in every two years. Bear, and a kind of small-bearded grey oats are sown alternately on the same ground, from generation to generation,—the former

receiving manure, either sea-weed, the cleanings of the dwellings of domestic animals, or a cold inactive composition of these with earth, there being no lime in the place, while the latter is sown without any fertilizing substance, and left to wear out the transient effects of what raised the preceding crop. Green crop is almost unknown. Turnip, hay, pease, or beans, are hardly thought of. And potatoes, which, if properly managed, might tend to clean the ground, are either confined to the drier parts, or planted in so small quantities, that before a whole field can be taken in rotation, the good effects are lost upon what was first treated in this manner. The mode of ploughing is in keeping with the system of cropping. The ridges are seldom drawn straight. They are so much raised towards the middle, that there is not soil left in the furrow sufficient to cause almost any vegetation; and their different parts are often of unequal breadths, which occasions a great waste of time and labour in ploughing. Little attention is paid to the reclaiming of waste land. Indeed, no regular plan is ever pursued for thus improving the district. The chief way in which any portion of it is reduced to cultivation is, when a person from inability to stock a farm, or other adverse circumstances, retreats to the common, rears a cottage, and partially subdues the surrounding spot. But in bringing one acre into a profitable state, the surface of several acres is skinned and destroyed; and at best, this practice, instead of substantially improving, only studs the common with half-cultivated patches. Within appropriated bounds again, it seems an established, if not a sacred maxim, that what has once been ploughed shall never be allowed for a year to rest, and what has never been turned up, must be allowed for ever to remain. So far, indeed, is this principle carried, that insignificant spots of ploughed land are not unfrequently seen in the midst of pasture fields, where, independently of the expense of labour, the crop from depredations of cattle and other causes, seems hardly sufficient to supply seed for the succeeding season. And deformed shreds of grass may be observed stretching into, or surrounded by corn-fields, as if it were sacrilege "*curvo aratro laedere.*"

Trenches have sometimes been cut, to draw off water. But to the improvement of covered drains, the example has yet to be set. Irrigation and embanking are both unnecessary and impracticable.

Leases were formerly granted for three years, or for one, two,

and even three nineteens of years. But leases of more than a single year are now seldom obtained.

Farm buildings are constructed of stones and clay, and covered with thatch. They are seldom so high as conveniently to serve the purposes for which they are intended, and not rebuilt till they are actually falling down. The few existing enclosures, excepting those on the minister's glebe, and one other farm, are mostly insufficient turf walls.

Improvement of any kind in agriculture cannot be said to have yet generally commenced. One is animated by the anticipation, rather than by the appearance of its first dawn, and all obstacles combine to retard its progress,—want of lengthened leases, want of capital, of enclosures, of winter herding, and want of the separation of the lands of different farms. It is common for the arable lands belonging to several farmers to be so intermixed, that the breadth of 100 yards can scarcely be found in the possession of one tenant. Lands so distributed are called *run-rig*: and farmers who hold their lands only for a single year, such are styled *tenants at will*. Now, where there are few or no enclosures, and the disproportion between the extent and the productiveness of the ground, is very great—where a farmer has often not half a dozen ridges lying together, without some of those of his neighbours intervening, and winding their serpentine course along them,—and where leases are seldom granted by the landlords to excite a spirit of improvement among their tenantry, the wretchedness of the husbandry cannot be altogether charged against the listlessness of the peasantry. And till these obstacles be removed, it is impossible that improvement can proceed to any extent, or the industrious powers and spirit of the lower ranks be manifested. In the same way, while one tenant cannot improve without the consent and co-operation, not only of all his neighbours, but also of the proprietor himself, or while improvement is altogether impracticable from the manner in which the lands are partitioned; while there is no encouragement, at least on the part of the tenant, to inclose, as he holds his farm only from year to year; and while, consequently, the crops which are sown have not a fair trial,—it is difficult to say what is the productive power of the soil, or what are the improvements that would reward enterprise and industry. But, from a few specimens of superior management, it is evident that the lands are capable of yielding a much greater return than they at present make. Whether, however, they would repay the

labour requisite to give the experiment its full force, is a question not so easily answered.

*Fishery.*—The only employment of this kind that is here prosecuted on a large scale as a source of economical wealth, is the herring-fishery. The curing of herrings commenced with us only in 1833, and as this is but on the advance as a station, and the fishing has not been attended generally with its usual success, since it began here, nothing can yet be said as to its annual profits. The people of the place, however, were in the habit of prosecuting this employment, and delivering their fish at other stations, for several years before curing commenced in their own parish.

*Raw Produce raised in the Parish.*—When most of the farmers know neither the quantity of grain that they sow, nor that they reap, but calculate both by guess, or do not calculate at all, and when few of the particulars under the present head of inquiry will apply to this place, as must be evident from some of our previous remarks,—little information can be expected on this part of our subject. But the chief sources of wealth, independently of the grain which is raised on the lands, are selling of cattle, fishing, and the savings of persons employed as seamen out of the country, who come home to spend the winter months, and the decline of life among their friends. Formerly the making of kelp, and with the women the plaiting of straw, formed the two principal means of earning money. The former of these, indeed, at one time, constituted the chief source of revenue to the whole county. And though it now yields little or no direct profit to the proprietor, it is still an object not unworthy of his attention. For, in many cases, the making of a certain quantity of kelp is part of the tenure by which lands are held: and so long as this commodity fetches as much in the market as is allowed in value for making it, it is the means of bring hard cash into the hands of the landlord, and in effect enables the tenant to pay more for his farm, than he could in other circumstances afford.

*Manufacture.*—The only manufacture is that of kelp. It is not now conducted so eagerly and so extensively as formerly. It might, at one period, have occupied sixty or seventy persons for a month: but now, not nearly so many. The number of hours per day that they work is uncertain, for those who cut the weed from which it is made are almost unremittingly occupied while the tide allows them to reach it, whether that time be day or night. They often rise at one or

two o'clock A. M. to prosecute their toil, and may sometimes be seen at it till eleven P. M. But they refresh themselves with sleep during part of the intervening period, when the return of the waters covers the sea-weed. Both men and women are employed in this work, the former receiving from L. 1, 1s. to L. 1, 10s., with four stones of meal, and the latter from 15s. to L. 1 Sterling, and three stones of meal, for a month's labour. Although persons so occupied have little sleep; are subjected to irregular periods of refreshment; often stand for hours in water, and seldom have their feet dry; yet, as this employment engages them but for a short period, and that at the best season of the year, the month of June, when the sun is upwards of eighteen hours above the horizon, it has not been found prejudicial to the health of those who are not constitutionally delicate. And it does not seem, farther than any other occupation, to deteriorate their morals,—more than ten or twelve persons seldom forming one company, and single families often working by themselves.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no town or village in the parish. The nearest town is the burgh of Kirkwall, which is seven miles distant from the remotest, and two and a half from the nearest, part of the parish. The road to it is one of the best in the country, though not a turnpike, and has hitherto been kept in repair by means of statute labour.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The situation of the parish church is tolerably central, being four miles from one extremity of the parish, and two and a half from the other. It was built in the year 1801, and was enlarged and thoroughly repaired in 1827. It is, at present, commodious and comfortable, affording accommodation for upwards of 400 persons. Formerly, there was a nominal rent charged for some of the seats, but now there is nothing paid for any of them.

The manse was originally built in the year 1756, but left in a very superficial state. In 1793 it was all renewed, except the walls, which were then heightened and much weakened by alterations. It was last repaired in 1830, when an addition was also made to it, and is at present comfortable, but far from a state of permanent sufficiency. The extent of the glebe is 17 acres, and its annual value may be estimated at L. 6. The amount of stipend is L. 200 per annum, exclusive of L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.



There are no chapels in the parish, either in connection with the Established Church or any other body of Christians. There are 70 male heads of families, and individuals from 84 families, who attend the parish church. The number of persons of all ages who attend it, is from 250 to 300, but the number is constantly varying. The average number of communicants is about 200, but, like the former, is variable. Divine service is regularly attended by almost all who profess adherence to the national church. Dissenters attend divine worship beyond the bounds of the parish.

Contributions are made here in behalf of the Orkney Church Bible and Missionary Society, to the amount of L. 5. The annual amount of church collections, for religious and charitable objects, is L. 6, 10s. 10½d. at an average of eight years.

*Education.*—There is no permanent school except the parochial one. And the branches taught in it, are reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar. At present, the parochial schoolmaster is so nearly blind as to be incapacitated for discharging the duties of his office, and cannot be compelled to provide a substitute. The school is, however, taught by a qualified person, who, in addition to the school-fees, receives a small gratuity from the heritors. The schoolmaster's salary was, by the late augmentation, raised to L. 27; and the school-fees, under an efficient teacher, may amount to from L. 9 to L. 12 Sterling. He has, besides, a school-house, consisting of two comfortable apartments. The expense of attendance at the school is, for English, 1s. 6d.; for ditto and writing, 2s.; and for these with arithmetic, 2s. 6d. per quarter. It may be affirmed, that no person belonging to the parish, above seven years of age, and of ordinary capacity, is entirely unacquainted with the elements of education; and that there is none, above ten, unable to read with some degree of intelligence. And the people seem to be so far alive to the benefits of education, that, in the present unfortunate circumstances of the parochial school, they make such exertions as prevent their children growing up in total ignorance.

The school is situated in the immediate vicinity of the church and is of course equally central. Winter, however, being the season most convenient for attendance, and the roads being then bad, as well as the days short, it is hardly possible that it can be attended by the children of those who live in the more remote parts of the parish. The population that lies beyond the reach of convenient attendance, is, probably, not more than 150 persons. And for the children of such, care is taken to encourage temporary se-

minaries of instruction. Two schools placed at a moderate distance from the extremities of the parish, instead of one central school, would meet all the exigencies of the case.

The few remaining traces of superstition are fleeing away before the progress of enlightened knowledge. But the novel and fashionable modes of education have not yet been introduced.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The number of persons receiving parochial aid, is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  at an average of eight years; to each of whom is allotted, only, the small pittance of from 1s. 6d. to 10s. per annum, with occasional supplies as necessity requires. The only sources whence funds for their relief are derived, are, church collections, marriage dues, and payment for the use of the mortcloth, which, exclusively of the first, amount annually to L. 1, 18s. 9d. But from the same funds are paid precentor's and church officer's salaries. The old virtuous principle of attempting self-support, so long as it is possible, still so far prevails, that application for assistance is seldom made, till "urged by necessity's supreme command!"

*Fairs.*—Cattle markets are held at two places in the parish, Knockhall and Oclester, three times a year; at Candlemas, Midsummer, and Martinmas.

*Inns, Alehouses, &c.*—There is only one licensed alehouse. It is situated at the side of the road leading to a neighbouring parish, and at one of the places where a cattle-market is held. It seems to be established for a useful purpose, is orderly kept, and is not known to produce any bad effect upon the morals of the people.

*Fuel.*—The general description of fuel, and indeed all that is used here, except a small quantity of coals, brought either from Newcastle or the ports on the Frith of Forth, is peat, which is obtained at the distance of a quarter of a mile, or at most two miles, from each house. But as each family undertakes the labour of cutting, drying, and carting home as much as will suffice for its own consumption,—little can be said satisfactorily of the expense of this sort of fuel. The carting alone occupies three weeks, or a month of constant labour.

*Revised August 1841.*

QUOAD SACRA PARISH OF DEERNESS.  
THE REV. THOMAS WAUGH, MINISTER.

THIS parish lies south-east from St Andrews, from which it is almost separated by Deer Sound: on the other sides, it is bound-

ed by the German Ocean. From Mullhead to the isthmus, it is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles long, and its breadth varies from 1 to 3 miles.

*Parochial Registers.*—There is only one of these : and it relates to marriages and baptisms. It commences in the year 1753, and, except for a few years, has been all along regularly kept.

*Land-owners.*—These are, the Earl of Zetland ; Mr Balfour of Trenaby ; and Mr Groat of Newhall.

*Population.*—The amount of the population at present is 771,—the increase since 1831 being about 100.

Number of illegitimate births during the last three years, 8.

*Agriculture.*—Considerable improvements in agriculture have taken place of late years, from the introduction of improved implements, and from the better division and enclosure of lands.

*Fishery.*—The herring-fishery is prosecuted here by means of 50 or 60 boats, each having four men and a boy. The average quantity taken this season, is about 50 barrels.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Number of families belonging to the Established Church, 141 : of Dissenting families, 12.

The parochial church is one of the 42 endowed by Parliamentary grant. Stipend L. 120. The glebe and garden occupy about three acres. The manse, built in 1828, is in good condition.

*Education.*—There is one school in the parish. It belongs to the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Salary L. 12, besides L. 3 from the heritors.

*Poor.*—About twenty persons receive parochial aid. The amount of church collections for their behoof is betwixt L. 9 and L. 10 a year. One heritor contributes one guinea yearly.

*September 1841.*

# PARISH OF SOUTH RONALDSAY AND BURRAY.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKWALL, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JOHN GERARD, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS parish consists of three parishes united, time immemorial, under one minister, viz. *1st*, South or St Mary's parish, comprehending above one-third of the large island of South Ronaldsay, and three islands in the Pentland Frith, two of them inhabited, Swona, and one of the two Pentland Skerries; *2d*, North or St Peter's parish, comprehending the rest of this large island of South Ronaldsay; and, *3d*, the parish of Burray, which consists of the islands of Burray, Hunda, and Glumesholm. The two first are inhabited.

*Geology.*—The highest land in the parish does not exceed 300 feet above the level of the sea. The general inclination of the rocks is to the north-west; but some varieties of that inclination are truly striking. On the east side of Stoos-head, where the rock is above 200 feet high, the rock is suddenly depressed to the south-east about 75°, going down into the German Ocean, and, at a few yards distance on the north and south side of this, the general depression to north-west prevails, and continues over the whole parish, except a small portion east or Grimness-head; and, on the north-west end of Glumesholm, the depression is not less than 80°. These sudden variations in the position of the various strata, prove clearly that all were laid down by water, and long continued in a soft state. The sudden depressions prove that softer materials below gave way to their pressure, and occasioned this variety of position. The whole of the islands in the parish, are composed of sandstone and dark blue slate or rather flag. The sandstone can seldom be quarried in thin pieces; but the flag or slate may be raised in slabs from six to eight feet diameter, at Hoxa and Herston.

The rents in the rocks can be traced nearly in a straight line from south-west to north-east, over Pentland Skerry; and it deserves notice, that where they come in sight, on the other islands, they run in the same direction. This is easily explained by the general direction of all strata, as they become indurated, from the universal principles of their cohesion and shrinking. Shrinking chiefly explains the direction of the rents in all rocks, and the strange appearances of some within flood-mark, where the surface of the rocks is like street paving, with round stones from two inches and upwards. In the deeper strata of sandstone, are many fragments of blue slate, quite solid, proving that they had been broken down from a bed or stratum, and then tossed about on the shore, and left in small parcels of a few inches in extent, and at other places in strata of two inches and upwards, between deep beds of hardest sandstone. In the small rents of this rock, under and about a-quarter of an inch, the iron and sulphur make a crust of hardest texture, which withstands the waste of time for thousands of years.

Some other appearances in this rock deserve notice. The rents, in some places, have formerly been of more extent than those now seen, as is proved by the large pieces of basaltic rock everywhere on the surface of moors and arable land, and on the shores, from 2 to 9 inches in diameter. But, on the north corner of the parish of Birsay, within flood-mark, this is seen to perfection;—the rent to twenty inches wide is filled in solid form, and projects above the surface of the rock washed by the tide. Till I saw this, I never could conceive how this substance was formed, nor whence it came. It seems to prove that all basaltic formation is, by heat long continued. That which we now see cold and solid was certainly laid down by water; and heat from the central part of our globe produced crystallizations of every form, from the diamond to the particles of sandstone. Quartz of different sizes, from that of the pea to three inches in diameter, are found, of various colours, perfectly smooth, on the highest land in Orkney; and in this parish, they are found in the clay where the mountain has been bared by storms; and I have seen sixty such in a piece of stone about a foot in diameter.

There is evidence to an attentive observer that these islands came gradually into their present form and appearance. I have seen the roofs of the giant grass in sandstone, (a specimen of which I lodged in the College Museum of Edinburgh,) and have traced it for several feet. This proves that the stratum of sandstone

was formed in fresh water. I have also found wood lodged in the sandstone as it was laid on the beach, and reaching over different layers of the sand, and then covered over. The different depressions in Orkney astonish the attentive observer. They appear to have happened at vast distances of time from each other; for that part which remained above the sea, till peat moss of considerable depth was formed, is now under the sea. The most striking instance is on the north side of Widewall bay, bounded by the lands of Hoxa.

The geologist who visits our island may attend to Otterswick bay in Sandy,—an island south of Shapinsbay, and the bay of Skail, in the parish of Sandwick, in Pomona or Mainland. It is evident, that the materials of which the whole Orkney islands consist and the base on which they rest, have sunk down very gradually.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The remains of Picts' houses are numerous and of great extent. Of late years, a few ancient coins have been found; but they do not throw light on the periods when these islands were invaded. The mounds called *hill dikes* have, in many cases, been entrenchments thrown up by invaders. At the manse, there is an underground building 3 feet wide, 2½ feet high, and 11 in length, neatly paved with water-worn stones from the beach, and covered with thin stones. This is supposed to have been a Pictish grave.

Some large standing stones, supposed to be Druidical monuments, still remain; one, about 11 feet high, stands near the manse, and deep in the earth.

There were nine places for Popish worship in the united parishes, with burying-ground at eight of them.

#### III.—POPULATION.

Population in 1831, North parish,	1628	} 726 in South parish
South parish include	687	
Swona and the Skerries,	89	
Burray, including Hunda,	357	

Total, 2711

Within the last twenty-four years, 480 couples have been married, and not above five of these were independent of fishing.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

Before the herring-fishing began, the people fished *skrae* or *sillocks*, *podlies*, and sold them by thousands,—taking other fish for their own families. Now, much of their time is employed in preparing for herring-fishing, and less is done in laying in store for their families. Bad weather prevents the boats from going to sea

in the winter season ; insomuch that I have known when there was not so much fish taken during five months, as would furnish one meal to each inhabitant of the united parishes, and when even the cormorants died for want of food. At other times, the influx of small fish into some bays was such, that nets took them up with ease, and in great abundance for some weeks.

Hundreds have married in the hope of receiving L. 3, 12s. of wages from the herring-fishing : but even this is sometimes a deceitful expectation,—that fishing being often very unproductive.

In 1838, there were 245 herring-boats, belonging to the united parishes, and 4066 barrels were cured. Could the curers have 4s. clear on each barrel, this would make L. 813 of clear gain.

Most of the small crofts are let at double rent, in the hope of payment being made practicable from the proceeds of the fishing.

The universal appetite for spirits is dreadful, and the many hundreds of pounds spent in this destruction of health and morals, is appalling. The curers give one bottle of whisky to the crew of every boat : and the children are taught to drink at home, &c.

At our yearly market, at Martinmas, the sums spent in drinking and dancing are very great. We try to suppress these practices ; but in vain.

*Fishings.*—The cod-fishing was begun in 1817. Now, eleven sloops belonging to this parish are employed in it. In 1838, there were 116 tons, 16½ cwt. of cod, ling, and hake fish dried, at L. 14 per ton.

Although the whole herrings cured in our stores in 1838, amounted to 12,180 barrels, yet boats from other places had their share of the profits, and the whole produce of the fishing far exceeded that amount.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The attendance at the parish churches has been far better, and our collections have actually increased, since a minister of the United Secession was settled in 1830.

In the three united parishes, 939 sittings are wanted to complete the legal accommodation. If a small loft were put in each end of South Church, and the present seats repaired, the accommodation would be complete, and the attendance much better. North parish should have accommodation for 1020 ; but the actual accommodation is only for 414, at 18 inches each ; and there is no accommodation for the island and parish of Burray.

About forty years ago, the church in the island and parish of

Burray fell into ruins, during the incumbency of the Rev. James Watson, and it has not since been repaired; while it stood, there was sermon, in each of the three parishes by turns. Thus the people could have sermon, only once in three weeks. And the effects of this, as may be imagined, were deplorable.

Since 1st January 1837, the minister has preached every Sabbath in North Church, and his son has volunteered to preach twice every three weeks in South Church, when health and weather permit.

In 1832, the parishioners offered to put a loft in North Church, to accommodate 250 people. Lord Dundas, as chief heritor, consented; but some of the other heritors discouraged the proposal. Baptists have, in consequence, invaded the parish.

*Education.*—William Tomison, a native of South parish, who went into the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, about the year 1770, and, by his fidelity and industry, acquired a considerable fortune, left, about forty years ago, his gains for the first twenty-five years, for the endowment of a free school to the inhabitants of the three united parishes. There is, in consequence, a commodious house, and a salary of L. 40 for the teacher. To this endowment, the Right Honourable Lord Dundas added a croft of land surrounding the house.

Mr Tomison also left L. 200 in aid of the poor's funds of his native parish, and a sum for the erection and endowment of a female school; which, in terms of his will, is left to accumulate for a certain period.

A parochial school was erected, about twenty-six years ago, near the village of St Margaret's Hope. We have excellent teachers in South and North parishes. But the vast extent of these parishes requires many more than the above schools, and the inhabitants have made great exertions to supply the deficiency. At present, we have eight subscription schools, making altogether ten schools in the three united parishes.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The people are very patient in tribulation and content with little. The heritors have not been called upon for an assessment. But some of them have contributed liberally on occasions.

*Inns.*—There are sixteen public-houses in the united parishes, though seven would be sufficient.

*Fuel.*—Fuel is fast wearing out in the three united parishes.

October 1841.



# UNITED PARISHES OF EVIE AND RENDALL.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKWALL, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. DAVID PITCAIRN, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THESE parishes have retained their present names from time immemorial, and nothing satisfactory can be said as to their etymology.

*Extent, &c.*—The parish of Evie, which is the most northerly of the two, runs from north-west to south-east, about 6 miles in length, being very narrow towards the northern extremity, and gradually increasing in breadth, till it joins the parish of Rendall, which is much more compact, and may be estimated to extend from 4 to 5 miles square.

*Situation, &c.*—These parishes are situated on what is commonly called the mainland of the Orkney Islands. They are bounded on the north, by the ocean; on the north-east, east, and south-east, by a sound or frith, which separates them from the islands of En-hallow, Rousay, Wyre, Gairsay, and Shapinshay. The southern boundary is partly a bay of the sea, called Damsay sound, and partly the parish of Firth. To the west of Rendall lies the parish of Harray; and the parish of Birsay meets Evie on the north-west.

*Topographical Appearances.*—Costa-head forms the northern termination of Evie. It is a hill of considerable size and elevation, presenting to the ocean a face of bold and precipitous rock. From Costa, there is a contiguous range of hill ground, which divides these parishes from Birsay and Harray. These hills are covered with peat moss or heath, mixed with coarse grass. Their outline and general aspect is exceedingly tame and uninteresting. In height, they are very uniform, and probably not more than from 300 to 400 feet above the level of the sea. There are also hills of smaller dimension, but of the same character, which intersect the parish of

Rendall ; and the whole of this hill ground, which constitutes by far the largest portion of each parish, is undivided common,\* separated from the grass and corn lands, by an earthen fence, called the Hill Dike. The cultivated ground generally lies on a gentle declivity towards the sea shore, and varies in breadth from half a mile, to nearly a mile and a half, in some places.

The outline of the coast is not marked by any of those deep indentations which are common throughout Orkney. The beach, with the exception of one small bay, of beautiful white shell sand, is rocky. In some places, the rocks rise abruptly, forming a kind of wall against which the sea dashes ; and there are a few fissures, (on a small scale, however,) which are not destitute of the picturesque ; but for the most part, the rocky shore is low and flat. There is no headland of any importance, except that at Costa, already mentioned. The principal bay is at Woodwick, and Gairsay is the only island which deserves notice. It is part of the parish of Rendall, from which it is separated by a narrow sound. It is nearly circular, and in circumference upwards of four miles. The ground gradually rises from the shore, and terminates in a beautiful conical shaped green hill, upon the summit of which there is a cairn of stones ; but at what period carried there, or for what purpose, there is no tradition.

*Meteorology.*—The ordinary range of the barometer is from 28½ to 30. I have rarely observed it higher or lower.

*Climate.*—The climate of these parishes is decidedly damp. Besides the moist fogs which are common in spring and the beginning of summer, it seldom happens that we have a week of continued dry weather. There is a great humidity in the atmosphere, and the diseases which are prevalent, are precisely what might be anticipated from such a climate. Feverish colds, with dysentery, occur every season ; cases of ague and consumption occur occasionally, and very few of the people who are advanced in life, are free from rheumatic attacks. To some constitutions, however, the climate seems to be positively beneficial, and many of the inhabitants outlive the allotted term of threescore years and ten.

*Hydrography.*—The frith that bounds the parish of Evie on the north-east and east, is called Enhallow Sound. It varies in

\* The common belonging to the parish of Rendall is now about to be divided.

breadth from two to three miles. There are dangerous shallows in the centre. In some places, it becomes suddenly deep, which causes what is called in this country a "roast." When the tide ebbs over the submarine precipice, the surface is violently agitated, even in calm weather, and still more so when the wind is blowing contrary. In this sound, and likewise in that which bounds Rendall on the east and south-east, the tide ebbs and flows with a current at the rate of six to eight miles in stream-tides, and three to five miles in neap-tides, per hour. The water is strongly saline, and so beautifully transparent, that objects lying below can be distinctly seen at the depth of three or four fathoms.

There are numerous springs of fine water in both parishes. Most of them are perennial; but a few flow only in winter. In the grass parks adjoining the manse, there is a spring which never dries up. The water is chalybeate; but not so strong as to be unpleasant. The marshy ground in the vicinity furnishes evidence of a connection with iron, from the scum that settles on the small pools, and from the colour given to the drains which have been cut. I have not heard of any other spring that can be denominated mineral.

The only lake or loch lies on the boundary line betwixt Evie and Birsay. It extends nearly two miles in length, and is about half a mile broad. There is a small island in the centre, which has been found, by a late decision of the Sheriff-Court, to belong to a Birsay proprietor. But it is admitted that one-half of the loch is common to Evie. There are plenty of excellent trout in it; and although the depth of water is not great, yet it is of essential use in driving a meal-mill in summer, when the other mills are at a stand. The locality of this loch of Swana is exceedingly pleasing; and, were the surrounding hills partially clothed with trees, the landscape would merit the title of beautiful.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The mineralogist finds these parishes a very unfruitful field. The rocks here are all of the secondary formation, passing from blue slate to white sandstone. The colour and consistency of strata differ widely; some being almost as hard as flint, and as dark as lava; and others quite soft, and of a brownish-grey. The rocks are all in horizontal strata, with a gentle dip towards the sea; and I am not aware of their suffering any derangement from cross veins or dikes. Indeed, wherever the soil is removed, either by water-courses or the pur-

pose of quarrying, the uniformity of the strata and also of the dip is very marked.

I have not seen, nor have I been informed, of any organic remains being discovered, or of any particular spars. Towards the north end of Evie there is a vein of pyrites; but it is too insignificant to be worked.

It is said that at Woodwick, on the southern extremity of Evie, there is a considerable deposit of marl. If it really exists, no use is made of it. In the neighbourhood of the rivulets, on pieces of low ground, there are various deposits of sand and gravel mixed with clay and peat-mould, washed down from the hills. Part of the ground close to the manse is of this description.

There is an inexhaustible supply of excellent peat in the various valleys which intersect the hills. There are also peat-bogs in the low grounds, which might easily be drained. In Rendall there is a large valley, which is an unbroken peat-moss. Some portions of it are so full of the roots and branches of trees, that the people cannot work to advantage. Last summer, there was excavated a solid trunk of a tree. It appeared to have been of stunted growth, and was chiefly remarkable for its freshness. It is interesting to ascertain the fact, that trees, even of puny dimensions, have at some remote period adorned a country, where now they can only be reared in inclosed gardens.

The soil of these parishes is partly a rich black loam, and partly a mixture of clay and sand, resting on blue slaty rock, sometimes inclining to sandstone. In Rendall, the soil is generally of a lighter and sharper description than that of Evie.

*Zoology.*—Although the whole country is destitute of cover, the quantity and variety of small birds is great—starlings, larks, linnets are the most numerous. Grouse are found on the hill-grounds, and snipe in the marshes. As a *rara avis*, there once was brought to me a young water-hen. Sea-fowl, large and small, from the heron and the cormorant to the dotterel, abound; but I am not aware of any species existing here, that is not common to other parts of Orkney. I have seen lately a very fine specimen of the Death's headmoth.

*Botany.*—The natural grass is full of wild flowers, which not only give to the pasture-ground the appearance of a beautifully variegated carpet, but it is probable that this aromatic and medicinal food contributes both to the health of the cattle, and the richness of the milk.

Trees there are none, excepting in the manse garden. A few apple-trees, planted by a former incumbent, are now bearing; and about a dozen more, planted within the last three and four years, (all on the wall,) are promising. Pear-trees planted at the same time have grown well to wood, but have neither blossomed nor yielded fruit. The cherry-trees of the same age have, for the last two seasons, made a tolerable show of blossom, and some fruit set, yet we have never had a ripe cherry. These trees having all an exposure to the south-south-east, are protected from the winds, which are here most blighting. And as the soil in which they are planted is good, it is only the want of sunshine that can hinder their prosperity.

Shortly after my settlement in 1830, I laid out a piece of pleasure ground in front of the manse, and planted alders, mountain-ash, laburnum, ash, elm, plane, and birch. The situation is exposed to the west wind, which, even in summer, is here so hurtful to vegetation, that it blackens the very nettles and docks. But they have struck their roots deep in rich earth, and I have much pleasure in observing their progress. Many of the original plants died gradually, but beautiful suckers shot up; and there is now the appearance of a shrubbery. The alders and mountain-ash seem to thrive best.

Under this head, it may be mentioned, that all kinds of esculents, flowers, and shrubs that suit the climate, grow with a remarkable luxuriance.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The late Sir W. Honeyman, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, was born at the family residence of Aikerness in Evie. His extensive possessions throughout Orkney have now all passed into the hands of other proprietors; and the ancient mansion was pulled down about fourteen years ago, to give place to a modern farm-house and steading.

The mother of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine was of the family of Halcro, one of the oldest in Orkney, said to be lineally descended from a Norwegian King, and connected by marriage with the Royal House of Scotland. Margaret, the daughter of Hugh Halcro, was married to the Rev. Henry Erskine of Chirnside, at the kirk of Evie, 27th May 1696.\*

\* It may not be uninteresting to record the certificate furnished her on that occasion, of which the following is a copy:—

At the Kirk of Evie, May 27, 1666. To all and sundry into whose hands these

The Hall of Rendall is at present possessed by Mr John Halcro, whose small remaining property has escaped the waste of eight centuries.

*Land-owners.*—The principal landed proprietors at this time are, William Traill, Esq. of Woodwick; John Balfour, Esq.; and William Gordon, Esq.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers of Rendall were lost in consequence of the house, where they were kept, having been burnt. There is one old volume of the Evie registers extant, but it is quite in tatters. It contains minutes of session from August 1725 to January 1759; also registers of births and marriages from 1725 to 1802. There is a new volume for the united parishes, in which are recorded baptisms from 1802, marriages from 1814, deaths from 1816, to this date; and since May 1830, the minutes of session have also been regularly kept.

*Antiquities.*—Under the head of antiquities, may be mentioned those circular ruins commonly, though perhaps erroneously, called Picts houses. There are no less than nine of them, of different sizes and at irregular distances, planted along the shores of Evie and Rendall. What was the precise nature of these buildings, it is difficult to conjecture. That they were at one period inhabited, seems probable, from the quantity of shells still found around them. There are also a number of tumuli in Evie, some of which were opened in 1818 by the son of a former minister of the parish. They were all found to contain a square open space, formed by four flat stones, having one at the bottom and another on the top. These holes were from one foot to two feet square, and about 18 inches deep. In the bottom of each, were invariably found a quantity of ashes, charcoal of wood, and small fragments of burnt bones.

In the summer of 1832, when taking down a small old farmhouse at Cottascarth in Rendall, to rebuild it, there fell from a hole in the wall 150 pieces of silver coins, which had been wrapped up in part of a meal sieve, overlaid with a bit of coarse wool-

presents shall come, be it known, that the bearer hereof, Margaret Halcro, lawful daughter of the deceased Hugh Halcro, in the Isle of Weir, and Margaret Stewart, his spouse, hath lived in the parish of Evie from her infancy, in good fame and report; is a discreet, godly young woman, and to our certain knowledge free of all scandal, reproach, or blame. As also, that she is descended of her father of the house of Halcro, which is a very ancient and honourable family in the Orkneys; the Noble and potent Earl of Airly and Lairds of Dun in Angus; and by her mother, of the Laird of Barscobe in Galloway. In witness whereof, we, the minister and clerk, have subscribed, &c.

len cloth. These coins were chiefly sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns of the reigns of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., with a very few Scotch. It is not unlikely they may have been deposited in this concealment, during the usurpation of Cromwell. They were sold, and the landlord generously allowed his poor tenant to reap the whole benefit of this unexpected treasure.

Mr Gordon has erected a moderate-sized mansion-house at Burgar, where he resides. A central church for both parishes, and a parochial school and schoolmaster's house, have been built since the publication of the last Statistical Account.

### III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1789,	.	1564
1811,	.	1227
1821,	.	1329
1881,	.	1450—males, 617; fem. 833.

The great decrease from 1789 to 1811 most probably arose from so many men engaging in the army, and especially the navy, during the war. At a later period, in several instances, four, five, or six small farms were thrown into one, which also tended to diminish the population; and I incline to the opinion, that, a hundred years ago, the population must have considerably exceeded what it was even in 1789, as the registered baptisms were nearly one-third more numerous.

There being neither town nor villages, the people are all dispersed over the country.

For the last seven years, the yearly average of registered births has been  $21\frac{2}{7}$ ; but a good many parents forget or decline to register; of deaths,  $14\frac{2}{7}$ ;\* of marriages,  $7\frac{1}{7}$ .

Mr Gordon of Outer Evie is the only person of independent fortune residing in the parishes.

There are 10 proprietors of land of the yearly value of L.50 and upwards.

There are 2 persons insane, and 4 more or less fatuous; 3 females are blind.

*Languages.*—In the language of the people, there is an intermixture of Norse words with Scotch and English; but, on the whole, they speak more correctly than the peasantry do in other parts of

\* Only when the mortcloth is used, have the deaths been registered. The whole deaths during the last six years have been about 100; and it deserves to be noticed, as an extraordinary deviation from the usual rate of mortality, that the deaths under ten years of age, during that time, are only 15.

Scotland. The accent is peculiar, though far from being unpleasant.

The people are naturally shrewd and sagacious; their character is not without defects; but in many respects, it is very estimable. Gross immoralities are not known here. They are quiet and peaceable, and remarkable for their politeness to each other, and for their kindness to strangers. They manifest a high respect for religion, and, with the exception of a very few, are a regular church-going people.

#### IV.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Evie and Rendall were originally two parishes. It is not known when they were united: but it is supposed to have been as early as the Reformation. There was formerly a church in each parish: but both falling into decay, a single church was built about the end of the last century in Evie, within a mile of the boundary of the two parishes. The church contains 498 sittings. The number of communicants is about 620. In favourable weather, the church is always well attended. The population attached to the Established Church amounts to 1350: dissenting population, about 100 Seceders and Independents. The stipend amounts to L. 154: the annual value of the glebe may be about L. 50.

*Education.*—There are one parochial and five other schools in the parish. The parochial teacher's salary is L. 30 per annum. He exacts no school fees: and about L. 4 of his salary is given to a young man for teaching a small number of children in the island of Gairsay. The parochial school is situated at Evie. One of the non-parochial schools is on the scheme of the Society for Propagating Christian knowledge. All the people of the parish, of proper age, can read.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average amount of church collections for the poor is about L. 15 per annum: from mortcloth dues, &c. L. 1, 17s. The average number of paupers is about 40.

November 1841.



# UNITED PARISH OF HOLME AND PAPLAY.

PRESBYTERY OF KIRKWALL, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. ANDREW SMITH, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—THIS parish stretches along the winding shores of the Sound of Holme. On the north, it is bounded by the parishes of Kirkwall, St Andrews, and Deerness. It is four miles distant from Kirkwall. Its length from west to east is about six miles; its breadth from north to south, betwixt one and two. At the west entrance of the Sound is the promontory of Howquoy Head; at the east entrance is the promontory of Roseness. Nearly in the middle of the Sound, stands the island of Lambholme, about three miles in circumference, which belongs to this parish. Betwixt this island and the Mainland, there is a pretty secure anchorage ground, called Holme Sound.

The soil is in general light, thin, and loamy. The climate, though humid, is on the whole salubrious.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owner is Alexander Græme, Esq. of Græmehill, who possesses nearly the whole of the parish. He does not reside in the parish.

## III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1811,	.	747
1821,	.	773
1831,	.	747
Number of families in 1831,		164
chiefly employed in agriculture,	.	117
trade, manufactures, or handicraft,		17

The population consists chiefly of farmers, who pay rents of L. 10, L. 15, and L. 20.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—There is nothing in the agriculture of this parish to distinguish it from the other parishes of Orkney.

*Fisheries.*—Cod and herring-fishing are carried on by the people of the parish in Holme Sound, and the adjacent sea. These fishings, however, have been very unproductive for some years past.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical Estate.*—The stipend amounts to L. 157,—of which L. 97, 4s. 10d. is from parsonage teinds. The value of the glebe is about L. 4 per annum.

*Education.*—There is only one school in the parish, the parochial. Salary of the master L. 26 per annum. He has also a croft worth about L. 7 per annum. The parochial school was established here, as in most other parishes of Orkney, only about thirty-five years ago. Rural employment of one kind or another occupies the youth from seven years of age upwards, during spring, summer, and autumn,—and during that long vacation, they forget what they had acquired in the previous winter.

*Poor.*—Average number of poor on the roll, 15. Average amount of church collections in their behalf, about L. 2; average amount of other voluntary contributions, about L. 5, 10s.; of mortifications, mortcloth dues, &c. L. 9, 10s.

*November 1841.*

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE COUNTY OF ORKNEY.\*

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*Name.*—ORCADES is the ancient name of these islands; under which, they are mentioned by Pomponius Mela. It is probably derived from Cape Orcas, which Ptolemy mentions as a promontory in Caithness. Whether the modern name of Orkney is a corruption of the old one, or has a different etymology, we shall not enquire. Previous to the passing of the Reform Bill, it formed a complete county, and sent a representative to Parliament. But that act united Orkney and Zetland as one county; and the latter cluster of islands, which formerly was not represented, now unites with Orkney in returning a member. Orkney and Zetland, however, are so unconnected in other respects, and so dissimilar, that this notice refers only to the Orkney group.

*Extent.*—The county of Orkney extends between the parallels  $58^{\circ} 44'$  and  $59^{\circ} 24'$  north latitude, and between  $2^{\circ} 25'$  and  $3^{\circ} 20'$  west longitude. It is separated from Caithness by the Pentland Firth, which is about 12 miles broad, and thence stretching out to the north, it separates the Atlantic from the German Ocean.

Its population in 1831 was 28,047, and its Parliamentary constituency in 1840 was 381.

*Topography.*—There is much waste ground, and many hills in Orkney; but, in general, it cannot be called mountainous. The Ward Hill of Hoy, which is the highest, is about 1600 feet above the level of the sea, and other hills in that island are nearly as high; but none of the other islands have hills of any considerable height. A few of these islands are flat, and Sanday is particularly low; so that, at the distance of some miles, the land seems to be sunk beneath the waves, and the more elevated houses appear like solitary pillars in the ocean. The great extent of coast must be obvious, when we mention, that the number of these islands is 67. Of these 27 are inhabited, and the smaller ones, called holms, are used for pasture, &c.

\* Drawn up by the Rev. Charles Clouston, Minister of Sandwick.

In some places, the coast is flat and sandy; in others, bold and rocky, forming a range of perpendicular or overhanging precipices that resist the encroachment of the waves, while the lower and softer portions of land have been swept away by their fury. As in most other parts of the world, these precipices are highest on the west side, those of Hoy reaching the height of 1000 feet perpendicular. They present sublime scenery, and magnificent exhibitions of strata for the geologist. They are frequented by a variety of sea-fowl, which build, in some places, as closely as pigeons in a dove-cot, on the harder strata that protrude beyond the softer, with remarkable regularity.

The gradual destruction of the precipices gives rise to numerous caves and fissures. These add greatly to the interest of the scene, which, when the waves dash against them, is one of the grandest in nature.

This cluster of islands is generally divided into the Mainland or Pomona, which contains more than half of the population, viz. 15,787,—the North Isles containing 8360,—and the South Isles, 4700.

*Meteorology.*—It will be seen, from the tables inserted in the account of Sandwick, that the mean annual temperature of Orkney is  $46\frac{1}{4}$ ; whence it appears, that neither are our winters so cold, nor our summers so hot, as those of places where the mean annual temperature is much the same as ours, such as Applegarth in Dumfries-shire, (Vide account of that parish.) Again, comparing our table with that kept for nine years by Mr Hutchison, in Glasgow, where the mean annual temperature is  $49.75$ , or  $3\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  above that of Orkney, I find that the temperature of November, December, and January is almost the same in both places; but that of Glasgow gradually rises above ours in spring. In May, June, July, and August, it is  $7^{\circ}$  above ours, and falls again in September and October. This is what might be anticipated from the insular situation of Orkney; the temperature of the deep surrounding ocean not being quickly changed, and the uniformity of its temperature producing such a uniformity near its shores, that excessive heat, and long-continued frost, are equally rare. This arrangement may be pleasant or favourable to animal life, but it is far from favourable to vegetation, as the luxuriance of our common crops depends on the temperature of three or four months in summer, while they are on the ground, and not at all on that of the rest of the year; and if we could gain a few degrees

of temperature in these months, by sacrificing as many in winter, our agriculturists would greatly gain by the exchange. The above-mentioned tables also show, that the mean height of the barometer for twelve years, at the manses of Stromness and Sandwick, was 29.640.

There are no aqueous meteors peculiar to Orkney; but I may mention a kind of cloud which I have observed four times, covering a considerable part of the sky, hanging down like a dark drape, and each time followed, within twelve hours, by a storm. Water spouts are not common.

The west and south-west winds are thought to be the strongest and most prevalent; but, for about two years, the south-east has prevailed very much, as may be seen from the following table, showing the number of days that the wind blew from the different quarters each month, during the year 1840.

	Calm.	N.	N. E.	E.	S. E.	S.	S. W.	W.	N. W.
January,	1	2½	1	3	6½	6½	1	8	1½
February,	2½	1	0½	1½	14½	6	1½	1½	0
March,	1	6	0½	0	5	0	3	7	8½
April,	1½	1½	0½	0	7	4	5	6½	4
May,	0½	5½	6½	7½	4	1½	1½	1½	2½
June,	1	3½	0½	4	6	0½	2½	7½	4½
July,	2½	7½	1½	1½	3½	2	3½	5	4
August,	2	0	0½	5½	9	3	3½	7	0½
September,	2½	2	1½	2½	3	7	2½	7	2
October,	0½	6½	0½	4	4	0½	3½	5	6½
November,	5	4	2½	2	6	3½	1½	2½	3
December,	3	3	1½	0½	8½	6½	0½	4½	3
Total,	23	43	17½	32	77	41	29½	63	40

*Hydrography.*—This country is bounded, as we have mentioned, by the Pentland Firth and the Atlantic and German oceans: it is also intersected by their waters, which form firths or sounds, through which the stream-tide runs at the rate of nine miles an hour. The tides are irregular and very perplexing and dangerous to strangers; but they facilitate the intercourse between the different islands, carrying those who know how to take advantage of them, with railway speed; so that even with a contrary wind, a tolerable passage may be made, when the tide is favourable.

In most places, there are springs of good water; and chalybeate ones are not uncommon, flowing from the granite, clay flag, or sandstone. There are numerous lochs. That of Stenness is by far the most extensive, being about fourteen miles in circumference.

*Geology and Mineralogy.\**—There is a district of gra-

\* The article on this subject, inserted in the account of Sandwick, is applicable to all Orkney.

nite and gneiss, about six miles long, and one broad, the south extremity of which is in the island of Græmsay, from which it passes in a northerly direction, through the town and parish of Stromness; and the other end is seen in a precipice, on the southwest coast of Sandwick. Its range, however, is not continuous. In one place, it passes into mica slate, containing garnets; and in the road above Edinburgh Park, hornblende rock is found.

The other rocks of which Orkney is principally composed, are classed by geologists as of the old red sandstone formation, which embraces the conglomerate, certain greywacke slates, bituminous claystones, yellow and red sandstones, &c.

The conglomerate forms a belt around the gneiss, from 50 to 100 yards thick,—which contains portions of the primitive rock of various sizes imbedded; and the farther from the primitive rock the strata are, they have less of these portions or coarse slate till they gradually pass into the schist, which occupies more space than all the other rocks together. It is argillaceous, siliceous, or calcareous; but the first prevails most. The strata generally dip westward, at an angle about  $20^{\circ}$ , particularly in the west mainland, and the nearest islands; but in some places, there seem to have been so many forces at work, elevating and distorting the strata, that, in a short space, they dip in all directions. What is in immediate contact with the east side of the conglomerate, in some places, dips slightly eastward.

In two places, this is quarried as an inferior roofing slate, and is of the same formation as the paving stone of Caithness. Almost all the houses and dikes in Orkney are built of it. When much weathered, as on the precipices at the west coast, the harder portions protrude, and form the figured stones much noticed by the older writers.

In a few places, the calcareous strata are burnt for lime, but not to a great extent. In others, the strata are bituminous on the surface, or have small cavities filled with soft bitumen, and occasionally glance-coal; or there are numerous nodules, and veins of Lydian stone or chert. In the West Mainland, these strata are frequently intersected by whin dikes, the thickest of which is ten feet wide, and which run due west. These, and veins of pyrites, crumble and destroy the strata near to them, thus giving rise to fissures of various kinds in the precipices. It is in these strata that fossil organic remains so frequently occur, generally of fish, more rarely of vegetables, and both may be seen on

the same specimen. The ichthyolites prove our schists to be identical with those of Caithness, and of some places south of the Moray Frith.

Sandstone, some hundred yards thick, lies close to the primitive rock on the coast of Sandwick. Veins of galena, associated with heavy spar, stromnite, quartz in veins or rock crystal, calcareous spar, iron, and copper pyrites, are found in these strata. Upon these rests the upper sandstone, which is now considered as one of the rocks of the old red sandstone formation, though it was formerly classed among the newer sandstones. It is very soft, and generally of a light grey colour; but in Eday it is red. Our highest hills are formed of it. In Hoy, it contains a fine vein of manganese; and another of brown hematite, or iron ore, is found there. Trap rocks also occur, as greenstone, basalt, porphyry, or amygdaloid; most frequently as whin dikes through the clay flag, but also through the granite on its north extremity, and, I think, through the upper sandstone of Hoy hill, above the green of Gair. One of these dikes also bounds, on its south-east side, a mass of amygdaloid in Walls, extending about 300 yards along the coast. A large bed of trap occurs in the west hills of Hoy, more than 100 feet thick, and extending for several miles; and in its neighbourhood, at Rackwick, is a fine vein of fibrous gypsum.

The alluvial deposits are neither extensive nor interesting. Some rolled blocks of granite are found, far from their original position. There are many collections of sand in the neighbourhood of sandy bays. There is abundance of clay, and in most parishes, of peat moss; in many places, marl; and in some, bog iron ore. In the peat mosses, roots of large trees, hazel-nuts, deer's horns, &c. are frequently found, showing that forests formerly existed there.

The decomposition of the clay flag makes clay the predominant natural soil; but in some places, there is pure sand, and these are mixed in various proportions; but the best soil is a rich black loam.

*Zoology.*—Orkney is particularly rich in sea birds and fish. Seals are pretty common, and otters rare. A few pairs of both species of eagle annually build in the precipices. There are several species of hawk and owl; and grouse are numerous on our heath-covered hills. We have also the great northern, and other species of diver; great numbers of gulls of different species; a few swans in winter, and some wild geese in spring, and many species of duck all the year; also several kinds of grebe; and one pair of the great auk

used to build here. There are many other rare birds of passage, or occasional visitors, which need not be specified. Several species of whale, indeed all that inhabit the North Sea, have either run ashore on these islands, or been seen in the neighbourhood, and even a sea-horse from Greenland has wandered hither. All other species of fish found around the north of Scotland, are also found here, with the exception of the salmon, for which we have no inviting rivers.

Butterflies and winged insects are not numerous; but there is a great variety of sea insects, and molluscous animals, some of which have not yet been honoured with a name in the catalogues, or a place in the collections, of naturalists. Messrs Forbes and Good-sir have lately brought some of them into notice, with the *Netritina fluviatilis*, which has not yet been found in other parts of Scotland. Lobsters and crabs are abundant, and the former are sent to the London market. Horses, cows, and sheep are generally of a small size.

*Botany.*—It will be seen in the Account of Sandwick, that the Flora of Orkney contains 610 species of plants, which are probably more than might be expected in its high latitude; 133 of these are sea-weeds, many of which are very beautiful, and some very minute. The only Orkney plant new to Britain, is the *Chara aspera*. A few may be mentioned here, which are either rare or beautiful; as *Primula Scotica*, and *Primula elatior*, *Scilla verna*, *Digitalis purpurea*, *Valeriana officinalis*, *Cochlearia Danica*, *Epilobium angustifolium*, *Senecio viscosus*, *Thlaspi arvense*. The following are principally Alpine plants, and are found in Hoy, and some of them there only; *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Juniperus communis*, *Narthecium ossifragum*, *Hypericum elodes*, *Dryas octopetala*, *Rhodiola rosea*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, and *S. hypnoides*, *S. aizoides*, *S. cæspitosa*, *Silene acaulis*, *Solidago virgaurea*, *Arbutus alpina*, *A. uva ursi*, *Azalea procumbens*, *Drosera longifolia*, *D. rotundifolia*, *Pyrola rotundifolia*, *Scirpus pauciflorus*; also several cryptogamous plants, which need not be specified.

There are no forests in Orkney; and the climate seems very unfavourable to the growth of trees; but the few plantations which have lately been tried, succeed so well in sheltered situations, as to encourage the hope that more extensive plantations would thrive in the most sheltered inland valleys. The trees that succeed best, are the plane, ash, mountain-ash, elm, willow, &c.



*Civil History.*—The ancient history of Orkney is very interesting; and it is said that “there are probably few districts of the same size in the world, about which more has been written.” In “Thoughts on Orkney and Zetland,” will be found a list of nearly fifty printed volumes, and fifteen manuscripts, relating solely or principally to these islands, besides a greater number of volumes containing passages relating to them; but for the ancient history, we shall only refer to the Orkneyinga Saga, and Torfaeus’ *Orcades*; and for more modern accounts, to Wallace’s description in 1693, and Barry’s history, 4to, in 1805, which is the most comprehensive that we have. From these accounts, it appears that the first permanent inhabitants of Orkney probably came from Caithness; that the Picts retained possession of it, for a considerable time, and Belus, Gaius, and Gunnas, are mentioned as three of their kings, but they were conquered by Harold Harfager, King of Norway, who arrived A. D. 876, and on his return to Norway, invested Ronald, Count of Merca, with the government of Orkney. It was thus held by a long line of about thirty Scandinavian Earls, whose practice it was to fit out fleets, and sail during summer to neighbouring places, which they plundered, or laid under contribution,—so that they were generally known and feared, throughout Great Britain, and were also so much respected, that they intermarried even with the royal families of Scotland and Norway. After them, the

“St Clairs held princely sway,  
O’er isle and islet, strait and bay;”

Earl Henry Sinclair having obtained a renewal of his investiture from Norway in 1379. This rule of Scandinavian Earls was finally terminated in 1468, when Orkney and Zetland were handed over to James III. in pledge for the portion of the Princess Margaret of Denmark, whom he married; and ever since, they have remained politically united to Scotland. After this, the Earldom was several times annexed to the Crown, not to be alienated again, and as often granted to some one of the nobility, or sons of the King, till a redeemable mortgage to James, Earl of Morton, was rendered irredeemable in 1742, and in 1766 he sold his estate for L. 60,000 to Sir Lawrence Dundas, the great grandfather of the present Earl of Zetland, who is the greatest proprietor in Orkney. The Crown has also a considerable estate here. Besides these, there are few who have a rental of L. 1000 a-year; and in some parishes, so great is the subdivision

of property, that a great part of it is occupied by udallers, who possess about ten acres or less of arable ground.

Christianity seems to have been introduced here by St Columba so early as A. D. 570 ; but it was again introduced by Olaus Friguesson, King of Norway, A. D. 1000.

*Antiquities.*—What has just been said on the history of Orkney will throw some light on its remaining monuments of antiquity, for descriptions of which we must refer to the Accounts of the parishes in which they occur ; but we may briefly notice, that to the Picts, or those who inhabited it, previous to the arrival of the Scandinavians, are ascribed the Picts' houses, such as that of Quanterness, near Kirkwall ; the elf-stones, tumuli, or burying-places, such as have lately been opened in Sandwick ; the standing-stones of Stenness, and the broughs, one of which was lately opened in Evie ; and either to them or their successors we owe the dwarfie stone of Hoy, and cromlechs, or altars. To the Scandinavians are ascribed some graves, in which armour and various articles are found,—and the pundler and bismar, which are rude instruments still used for weighing ; and it is well known, that they erected the stately Cathedral of St Magnus, the Bishop's Palace, and Castle of Kirkwall. But the Earl's palace there and that at Birsay were built after the annexation to the Crown of Scotland, and, it is believed, also the Castle of Nothland, in Westray.

*Population.*—The population of the county had increased ten per cent during the ten years previous to 1831, and 15 per cent, during the ten years preceding that, probably owing, in a great measure, to improvements in agriculture, and the extension of the fisheries. All speak English. The customs and habits of the people are not very different from those of others similarly situated. Their dress, in general, is plain, and their food as poor as need be. If low in the scale of earthly comforts, they stand high as an intellectual, moral, and religious people. And I believe that crime is less common here than in most parts of Great Britain.

*Agriculture.*—In this department, considerable progress has been made of late, but it is still in a very backward state. The single stilted plough is now, indeed, a curiosity, and the common kind is introduced, with iron-teethed harrows, rollers, &c. which are decided improvements. A great part of the ground is occupied by tenants at will, in farms of not above ten acres of arable land, and observe no rotation, but an alternation of oats and bear, part of

an acre only being planted with potatoes for family use. Under this system, as might be supposed, the soil is so full of weeds, that the crop of grain is frequently choked, and the field is more pleasing to the botanist than the farmer. There are, however, many bright exceptions to this rule, too numerous to be named; but among our greatest proprietors, Mr Pollexfen of Cairston, Mr Baikie of Tankerness, Mr Heddle of Melsetter, and Mr Traill of Woodwick, are the most distinguished. An enterprising farmer from the south, also, has lately given a stimulus to agriculture,—so that there is a prospect of more extensive improvements being speedily introduced. Many obstacles, however, prevent these improvements from being generally adopted by the cottagers, such as, want of capital and encouragement, defective leases, insufficient accommodation, &c. The common breeds of sheep and cattle are very small; and for some years, there was little encouragement to rear or improve them, but the present great demand and high prices, with easy access to the southern markets by steam, are inducing many to try improved breeds.

*Quarries.*—There is no quarry of consequence; but there is abundance of our common clay-stone and flag for building in every parish. Some of this, resembling the Caithness paving-stone, has been polished and exported for southern markets, and also some of the Stromness granite; but hitherto, these have not been extensively quarried.

*Fisheries.*—The herring and cod fisheries have increased very much, of late. At the commencement of this century, they were entirely neglected; but already they are so extended, as to bring in more money than the kelp used to do, even when the largest quantity was manufactured; and they promise to be still farther extended. These may be considered as the substitute for kelp, and though they do not compensate the kelp proprietors for the destruction of that manufacture, yet it is believed that the proprietors will ultimately receive some benefit indirectly from the fisheries. During the last three years, the average number of sloops engaged in the cod-fishery was 18; and the quantity of cod cured each year, 381 tons; while the average number of herring-boats belonging to Orkney has been 724; and of herrings cured on shore and afloat, 42,073 barrels. These are sold by the fishers to the curers at about 10s. per cran or barrel: and the cod bring as much per cwt., producing L. 24,852 per annum,—

whereas the largest quantity of kelp ever made in one year (1826) was 3500 tons, which, at L. 7 per ton, would produce L. 24,500.\*

*Manufactures.*—The principal manufacture carried on, is that of straw-plait for ladies' bonnets; in which about 2000 girls are constantly employed, and almost all our young women, and some of the married, do more or less, in the intervals of their other occupations.

The building of boats, and making of sails, nets, and cordage, may also be mentioned; and there are two licensed distillers at Kirkwall, and one at Stromness.

*Navigation and Trade.*—In 1833, there were 78 vessels belonging to Orkney, carrying 4049 tons, and 319 seamen; and probably the number has since increased.

The following table shows the sums received in Orkney in 1833, from farm-produce, manufactures, fisheries, &c.

Bear or big, 5178 bolls, at 15s. per boll of 6 bushels, or L. 1 per quarter,	L. 3688	10	0
White oats, 1515 bolls, at 12s. do. of do., or 16s. per quarter,	909	0	0
Malt, 10,696 bushels sent to Leith, say 3s. per bushel,	1604	8	0
Peas, 234 ditto, at 3s.	85	2	0
Oatmeal, 40 bolls, at 14s. per boll of 140 lb. imperial,	28	0	0
Horses, cows, and oxen, 954—1 quarter horses, at L. 9—3 quarters cattle, at L. 3,	4290	0	0
Ditto, not entered at custom house, about 246 at ditto,	1104	0	0
Eggs sent to Leith, 50 tons, 100 dozen per cwt., 100,000 dozen, at 6d.	2500	0	0
Sheep and swine, 40 of each, at L. 1.	80	0	0
Butter, about L. 2000; hides, about L. 700,	2700	0	0
Rabbit skins, more than 2000 dozen, at 5s. 6d. per dozen,	600	0	0
Feathers, about	250	0	0
Kelp, supposed scarcely to exceed 500 tons, at L. 4, 10s.	2250	0	0
Straw manufacture, including rent, cutting, plaiting, &c.	4800	0	0
Herrings, 34,000 barrels, at 10s. per barrel,	17000	0	0
Cod, fished by about 40 sloops of 30 tons, 14 tons each, at L. 13 per ton,	7280	0	0
Lobsters caught by 432 men, in 216 boats,	1800	0	0
Whale fishing, about 25 ships, taking 20 men each, 500 men at L. 15,	7500	0	0
Hudson's Bay Company pay annually for the wages of men employed in Hudson's Bay, about	1500	0	0
Total,	L. 60114	0	0

The two principal towns are, Kirkwall, which is a royal burgh, and Stromness, which is a burgh of barony. A steamer goes once a-week to Lerwick on one side, and to Leith on the other, touching at intermediate ports during the summer; and all the year,

\* The number of sloops and boats engaged in fishing, and the quantity of fish caught:—

Dates.	No. of vessels on Cod-Fishing.	No of Herring-Boats.	Barrels of Herrings cured.	Weight of Cod, tons. cwt.
1837,	19	706	39,552	359 0½
1838,	18	732	36,827	375 19
1839,	17	734	49,840	410 4

sailing packets go, about once a month, between Leith and each of the two towns. We have now a daily post to the south, and a post-gig daily travels between Kirkwall and Stromness, which carries passengers; other vehicles also go occasionally. The public road between these two places is about fifteen miles long, and pretty good; and there is a considerable extent of as good road in other parts of the Mainland. The principal harbours, and the most frequented by shipping, are those of Stromness and Long Hope, but there are many bays besides, in which vessels frequently take shelter; and at the former of these places, there is a patent slip for repairing them.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—Till 1832, there were six clergymen in each of the three presbyteries in the synod of Orkney; but since that time, five more have been added by a disjunction of two parishes, and by two Government churches, one on the Royal bounty, and one aided by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. There is still, however, much need of several more; for in some cases, one clergyman has two or three parishes under his charge, and as many churches, so that he can only preach in each of his parishes once every two or three weeks, which is an evil that cries loudly for a remedy. There are sixteen Dissenting ministers of different sects, but most of them of the United Associate. Schools are established in all the parishes, and all the young are taught to read, and many of them to write. Sabbath schools are also in general operation. There are good public libraries in each of the towns, both for the higher and lower classes, and similar institutions in most of the country parishes. There is an evident improvement in the conduct of the people since they have enjoyed increased facilities of education. Besides the usual religious, charitable, and other kinds of Societies, there is an “Orkney Natural History Society,” which has a museum in Stromness.

The principal fairs are the Lammø fair at Kirkwall, and one beginning on the first Tuesday of September at Stromness: and there are numerous cattle fairs in different parishes.

Table shewing the number of persons committed for trial or bailed for different offences in Orkney and Shetland in the year 1840:

Offences against person,	6
Offences against property committed with violence,	11
Do. do. without violence,	10
Malicious offences against property,	4
Other offences,	15

TABLE shewing Ecclesiastical State, &c. of Parishes in the County of Orkney.

Parishes.	Population in 1831.	Ecclesiastical State.				Parochial Schoolmasters' Emoluments				Annual Amount of Contributions to the Poor.			
		Fams. belonging to Estab. Ch.	Individuals	Families of Dissenters or Seceders.	Individuals	Amount of Parochial Ministers' stipend	Schools in Par.	Salary.	Fees.	Total.	From assessment or voluntary contrib. by Heritors.	From Church collections.	From Alms, Legacies, Mortcloths, &c.
Kirkwall and St Ola.	3721	...	...	...	249	L.150 & L.150	8	L.26 0 0	See text.	L.5 0 0	L.39 3 8	L.2 0 0	...
Orphir.	996	...	...	...	...	L.150	10	...	...	L.31 0 0	10 0 0	...	...
Stromness.	2944	...	...	...	...	L.150	8	...	...	...	50 0 0	...	...
Hoy and Gramsay.	546	...	...	...	...	L.150	9	25 0 0	...	5 0 0	4 10 0	...	...
Sandwick.	1019	...	...	...	...	L.150	9	34 4 4	...	...	11 9 7	...	...
Firth and Stennes.	1167	...	...	...	...	L.150	1	26 0 0	...	...	9 0 0	...	...
Walls and Flotta.	1067	...	...	...	...	L.158	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shapinsay.	809	...	...	...	...	L.150	2	25 13 3	...	10 0 0	7 0 0	...	...
Rousay & Eagleshay.	1253	...	...	...	...	L.150	4	26 0 0	...	6 0 0	4 15 0	...	...
Cross and Burness.	981	...	...	...	181	L.200	1	46 14 4	...	10 0 0	6 0 0	...	...
Wetray.	2032	...	...	...	600	L.198	5	28 0 0	...	...	4 12 0	...	...
Lady.	838	...	...	...	...	L.158	6	46 10 0	...	...	...	...	L.9 17 0
Birsay and Harray.	2987	...	...	...	...	L.210	8	26 0 0	...	...	...	...	7 0 0
Stronsay and Eday.	1827	...	...	...	...	L.210	8	25 0 0	...	3 0 0	8 5 0	...	5 0 0
St Andrews.	837	...	...	...	...	L.200	1	27 0 0	...	10 0 0	...	...	...
Deerness.	771	...	...	...	...	L.120	1	...	...	...	9 0 0	...	...
South Ronaldshay.	2711	...	...	...	...	L.202	10	...	...	...	...	...	...
Evie and Rendal.	1450	...	...	...	...	L.154	6	30 0 0	...	...	15 0 0	...	...
Holme and Paplay.	747	...	...	...	...	L.157	1	26 0 0	...	...	2 0 0	...	9 10 0



# ADDITION TO THE ACCOUNT OF HOLME AND PAPLAY.

BY THE REV. ANDREW SMITH, MINISTER.

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## L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

“THE parish of Holm,” says Mr Vedder in his *Orcadian Sketches*, “is perhaps one of the most beautiful in the Orcadian archipelago. It slopes gently to the ‘sweet south,’ and is protected from the influence of the northern blast by a range of heath-clad hills, sufficiently high for this purpose, without being high enough to retain their snowy coverings on the return of spring. A considerable number of limpid rivulets meander from the heights to the shore, giving an air of fertility and freshness to the scene,—while the shore itself is laved by one of the noblest friths that can be conceived—rushing to and from the German Ocean with tremendous velocity, and with a noise, should the wind blow in an adverse direction, ten thousand times louder than the fall of Lodore, so admirably described by Southey. Where, indeed, can there be a greater difference than between the surplus water of a puny mountain-lake falling from an elevation of some forty or fifty feet, and the illimitable unfathomable Atlantic urging its restless course through a narrow strait, chafed and maddened at intervals by rock, islet, and headland; while the fierce east wind sweeps o’er its agitated surface, making the white billows take even a vertical direction, as if they would brave the very heavens.”

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Eminent Persons.*—Under this head, the family of Græme, descendants of Bishop Græme, who occupied the see of Orkney from 1615 to 1638, may be mentioned as having been uniformly kind and indulgent landlords to the people of this parish. It is stated in the old Account, that they had resided at their family seat of Græmes-hall, for a hundred years, and cherished a spirit of industry among their tenantry; that the ancient rents of the farms had never been raised; and that, though no leases were given, many of the tenants living at the time that the Account was drawn up, held the same farms that had been occupied by their forefathers for several generations. Mr Patrick Græme, who was sheriff-depute of the county about the

year 1770, particularly encouraged among his tenants the culture of flax, which was consequently more attended to in Holme at that time, than in any other part of Orkney. He furnished them with linseed gratis—had them instructed in all the particulars relating to the cultivation, manipulation, and manufacture of it into linen cloth. Their families were thus furnished with what is much wanting in the present day, profitable employment in the winter season and in other intervals of agricultural labour,—the female domestics spinning it into yarn fit for weaving into cloth. It is also stated, that, for many years previous to the date of the old Account, (1795,) there had been annually exported of such cloth, woven and bleached, in the parish, 20,000 yards, which always brought a good price at Newcastle and other English markets. By the profits hence derived, the tenantry of Holme became distinguished above their neighbours for industry and wealth. But, on the death of their benevolent landlord, who was suddenly cut off in the prime of life, their exertions in this branch of industry gradually relaxed, until their culture of flax and their linen manufacture were entirely given up. He was succeeded in the property by his brother, Admiral Alexander Græme, who distinguished himself in the action with the Dutch fleet off the Dogger Bank, where he lost his right arm in the cause of his country. Though he did not reside on his estate, having no turn for rural affairs, yet his tenants always experienced from him the greatest kindness and liberality. Alexander Sutherland Græme, Esq. having lately succeeded to the property, is, as before stated, the principal land-owner in the parish,—the estate of Græmeshall being nineteen-twentieths of the whole.

*Parish Registers.*—The register of births and marriages begins in 1654. The record of the kirk-session begins in 1673. It may be mentioned as evidence of the heterogeneous mixture of Episcopacy and Presbytery, which continued for several years in this synod,—that it is recorded of Mr George Tod, December 11th 1681, and of Mr James Graham, February 26th 1688, that they “were transplanted by the bishop and presbytery from their former charges to the kirk of Holm, as their presentation, institution, and induction thereto bear.”

*Mill.*—There is but one mill, driven by water, to which the tenants are astricted, paying the usual proportions of multure,—a twelfth part for oats, and a sixteenth for bear. There is no kiln



at this mill, nor, I believe, at any other mill in the county,—but a kiln is an appendage to every farm-house and also to every manse.

### III.—POPULATION.

It is stated in the old Account that, “ although there are upwards of fifty farmers who pay from L. 6 to L. 12 Sterling of yearly rent, and who have brought up from five to ten children of both sexes, yet there are not four of them who have the assistance of a son at home of twenty years of age. From fifteen to that age, the youths, from a disposition to leave their native country, take to a sea-faring life, and most of them never return,” and it is added, that “ the females give material assistance in farm-work.” The case is much the same at present. It is to be observed, however, that this continual emigration of the young men proceeds not merely from a restless disposition which disinclines them to settle at home, but it is with them a case of necessity—there being no employment in the farm for them. Most of the youth have no other means of living but engaging as hands on board of coasting-vessels and revenue-cutters, or vessels trading to the Baltic and foreign countries, and few of them ever return. The population must in this way be, at least, kept stationary.

Every householder, both tenant and cottar, has a share of a fishing-boat, by which he supplies his family with fish of various kinds. The coal-fish, termed here, when young, sillocks, and when a year old, keuths, furnish both agreeable food and excellent oil, and are found quite at hand in the Sound, a little off from the shore, most part of the year ; and on going out of the Sound, a mile or two eastward of Roseness, there is found abundance of haddocks, cod, ling, skate, flounders, halibut, &c.

It is only with a view to domestic provision, however, that any engage in fishing. None are fishers by profession. They are a community of small farmers, with such a proportion of the ordinary handicrafts among them of shoemakers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, &c. as can find sufficient employment.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—From the period at which the old Account was drawn up (1795) to 1829, agriculture had been making slow advances beyond a rude state. The plough with one stilt—the harrows with wooden teeth, had gradually given place to better implements. But the sowing of oats and bear in uninterrupted succession, without any alternation of green crop, except a trifling extent of potatoes, continued still to be the general practice. A change of seed was

never thought of,—nay, the worst of the grain produced on the farm was selected as the most proper to be sown. The produce accordingly was just what might be expected from such husbandry,—the average produce being three times the quantity of seed sown for oats, and five times the quantity for bear. The fields were everywhere overrun with weeds, both annual and perennial.

But since 1828, two occurrences have taken place, and that almost simultaneously, which promise to effect in due time a material alteration for the better in the agricultural industry of this parish. In the above year, Mr Græme's property was surveyed, cleared of run-rig, and laid out into a considerable number of farms of various sizes; and whereas hitherto, the tenants had, with only one or two exceptions, been all tenants at will, they were now admitted to leases of fifteen years. For the first five years, they were to hold at nearly the old rent, and then a small rise was to take place, but with liberty then to quit; another small rise at the end of the tenth year, with liberty then also to quit. They were restricted from flaying the surface of the hill-ground,—a custom which had long prevailed among them for making up their compost dunghills. They were bound to a strict observance of winter herding, and to have a certain proportion of their farms regularly under green crop and grass. A plan of the estate was made out, which shows that there are 2850 imperial acres divided into farms, and 4767 acres of undivided common.

The other occurrence alluded to, was the introduction of steam navigation, which will prove an effectual remedy for what has hitherto been a principal obstacle to agricultural improvement in Orkney—distance from the best markets for the ready and profitable disposal of stock. Since 1836, a powerful steam vessel has plied weekly for eight months of the year betwixt Leith and Kirkwall. In consequence of this accommodation, the farmer in this quarter, who formerly depended on the casual visits of drovers from the south, for the sale of their cattle at an inferior price, can now ship them on board the steamer, on the morning she sails from Kirkwall, and after a run of thirty-six hours, have them ready to be shown in the Edinburgh market.

The average rent of land in the parish is 10s. per acre. The annual quantity of bear grown in the parish may be averaged at 785 bolls of 16 stones Dutch. Annual quantity of oats, 585 bolls same weight.

The number of acres in grass is 829 ; the number sown with turnip, 65 ; the number planted with potatoes, 96.

The total rent of the parish may be estimated at L. 876.

The price of raw bear, on an average of the last seven years, per quarter of 348 lb. imperial, is 16s. 7d. The price of oats on the same average, per quarter of 184 lb. imperial, is 7s. 6d. Each quarter of bear or of oats is eight bushels measure.

Of the bear, about 170 bolls are payable in kind to the Crown. A quantity is disposed of to the distillers in Kirkwall, and a part of it in malt, to the brewers there. The remainder is reserved for the use of the parishioners for seed. There has never been much oatmeal sold out of the parish.

The bear here mentioned is what is commonly called big, an inferior sort of barley, and the oats are of the small black or grey kind. These inferior grains have been hitherto preferred, the former on account of its ripening earlier than barley, to avoid the hazard of a late harvest, and the black oat, on account of its not being so liable to be shaken as the white kind, by those boisterous winds which occasionally prevail here in autumn. But there is no reason to doubt that, were the land once brought into good heart by improved modes of farming—both barley and red oats, which are less liable to be shaken than the white, and at the same time are a stronger grain, might be successfully cultivated.

The soil, in general throughout the parish, is of a kind that readily admits of improvement, especially by lime, (which has never yet been applied to it) being, for the greater part, a light black loam, in some places mixed with sand, and in others having a mixture of clay. But, whatever be the variety of the surface, the bottom is uniformly of a porous nature, so that whatever quantity of rain may fall, it soon disappears, and of course there is no marshy ground, nor stagnant surface water to be seen throughout the parish.

From two to three tons of turnip seed grown in the parish have, of late, been annually exported to Edinburgh and other places, for which the seedsmen have readily allowed the highest current prices, on account of its superior quality. This is a new and quite unlooked for article of profitable produce to the Orkney farmer. Rye-grass seed sown in Orkney is equally prized by seedsmen.

The excellence of the turnip seed naturally arises from the peculiar suitability of the soil and climate to the cultivation of this root, which, in several instances, has succeeded here, when it has failed in countries further south. Here it is not subject to

the black-fly, nor any other destructive insect. It often grows to the size of 12 lb. or 14 lb. ; and more than thirty tons have been produced on an acre.

Nor are the soil and climate less favourable to the production of the potato, which here has not yet been infested with the disease called the curl, so frequently injurious to this root in the south ; and where the soil is in good heart, it has yielded from thirty to forty fold. The planting of this root is found to be the readiest way to bring waste and barren ground into tillage.

No less peculiarly well qualified are the soil and climate for the production of the artificial grasses, red, white, and yellow clover. Rib and rye grass, with some other kinds have been cultivated most successfully for green food, while they have also yielded a plentiful quantity of hay. From land that will produce luxuriant crops of the above roots and grasses, there may also be expected, under a proper mode of management, corresponding crops of those kinds of grain which have been found best adapted to the soil and climate. The observation may be extended to flax, which, as has been already stated, was for several years cultivated in this parish with great success, and the manufacture of which into cloth furnished useful employment to female industry, which, at the present time, is much wanted. The same observation may also be extended to hemp, to which the soil that produces flax may be presumed to be equally favourable. The raising of it might also supply employment to several additional hands, in preparing and manufacturing it into ropes, sails, and nets.

About forty years ago, the common Orkney breed of cattle was the only kind generally reared in the parish. But of late years this breed had been considerably improved by the introduction of the West Highland or Dunrobin bull. And a more considerable improvement is now expected by means of crosses with the Teeswater or short-horned breed.

A bull of this breed was introduced here, about two years and a-half ago. The calves of the first cross betwixt this bull and Orkney and Dunrobin cows advanced so quickly in size and condition, in the course of twelve months, that they were readily sold at nearly L. 6 per head ; a price which commonly was with difficulty obtained for the best Orkney and Dunrobin breed of four years old. The introduction of the Teeswater breed, either pure, or as crosses, has in various places tended much both to in-

crease the size of cattle, and also to quicken their fattening for the butcher.

*Prices.*—It is stated in the old Account, that, “ during the previous thirty years, provisions were tripled in price, but not improved in quality,” and that in 1762, a good mart cow could be purchased for 15s. When a whole carcass was purchased, the beef was had at a penny per pound ; and in 1795, a mart cost L. 2, 10s. At the same date, farmers paid their men servants from L. 1, 10s. to L. 4 a year ; and female servants from 10s. to L. 1. Day-labourers, from 6d. to 8d. without victuals ; tradesmen’s wages from 1s. to 1s. 6d. Eggs were then three-halfpence a dozen ; a good fowl 6d. ; chickens 3d. a pair ; beef and mutton from 2d. to 2½d. per lb.

At present, the wages of a man-servant for farm-work is L. 8 a year ; of a woman servant L. 3. The hire of a labourer in summer is 1s. per day without victuals, or 6d. with victuals. In winter, he is paid by the hour. Harvest hire for a man is from L. 1, 5s. to L. 1, 10s. ; for a woman, from 14s. to 18s. Mowers receive 1s. 6d. a day, and six meals. The same number of meals is expected by farm-servants, during the seed time. Eggs are now 4d. a dozen ; fowls 8d. a piece ; chickens 6d. a pair ; beef and mutton from 4½d. to 6d. per pound.

*Fisheries.*—It has been already stated that every householder has a share of a boat, by which at intervals of leisure he may procure for his family a supply of fish, which forms a material article in their diet. They are also all adventurers in the herring fishing, which occupies them, including the preparations for it, about two months. These two months could be spared from the care of their farms, under the old mode of farming, without much inconvenience ; but it is rather doubtful, how far their engaging in this fishing may be compatible with their following out, with due activity and exactness, the improvements connected with their leases, by preparing compost manure, keeping clean their green crops, and harvesting their hay, the more especially, as the former part of the season is occupied chiefly in carting home their peats.

But the fishing that might be prosecuted with the greatest and surest emolument, and for which the country has peculiar facilities, is the cod and ling fishery ; but which, both from want of capital and want of hands, has been hitherto neglected. For the encouragement of hands making fishing their occupation, there

has been laid out here a site for a fishing village, and due encouragement held out to settlers. The situation is at the ferry side, close by the harbour of Holme Sound Bay, and is peculiarly convenient for prosecuting the cod and ling fisheries. It is within a few miles of the German ocean on the one hand, and the Atlantic ocean on the other. All along the neighbouring coasts, and at no great distance from the land, there are banks where cod are found in plenty. In proof of this, it may be mentioned that in the island of Waas, the small farmers on the shores of the Pentland Frith, have sometimes employed the time they could spare from their ordinary labour in fishing, and, with a few boats indifferently fitted out, have been known to catch from fifty to sixty thousand cod in one season. But had the attention of these men been solely directed to the occupation of fishing, and had they been provided with boats of a proper size and construction, they might no doubt have caught ten times that number in a season.

A proof of what capital can effect on the fishing banks of Orkney, is the success of a wealthy English company who, for more than half a century, have employed, and still employ, about a dozen of welled smacks at an expense of L. 60 or L. 70 per month, to supply the London market with live cod and lobsters.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Holme Sound is a thoroughfare betwixt the eastern and western coasts of the kingdom, by which vessels can pass from the one to the other with greater dispatch, and with greater security than either by the Caledonian Canal when in its best state, or the Pentland Frith.

Holme has great advantages for navigation over the Pentland Frith and Caledonian Canal. In passing through Holme Sound, all that is necessary to be considered is the time of flood or ebb tide suitable to the course in view to be steered; and when this is observed, vessels, on entering the Sound are sure of falling in with a regular current, moving during spring tides at the rate of nine miles an hour; and should any mistake occur as to the proper time of tide, there is safe anchorage in several parts of the channel, in which to await the proper tide. The lights, too, erected for the direction of vessels entering either end of the Pentland Frith are equally serviceable for directing vessels to either end of Holme Sound; a light-house, erected forty years ago on a skerry at the eastern opening of the Frith, is a plain guide to the eastern opening of Holme Sound, which is but twelve miles farther north, betwixt the

Head of Roseness and the opposite point of Burray, where there are neither rocks nor shoals. The light-house, too, recently erected on the north-west extremity of Dunnet Head, for preventing vessels mistaking the bay of Dunnet for the Pentland Frith, formerly a cause of shipwreck, is of equal importance as a guide for vessels making for or departing from the western entrance of Holme Sound by Stromness and Hoymouth, which is but fourteen miles of a straight course farther north than the western entrance of the Frith. Here, too, the navigation is safe. During last war, large convoys of merchant vessels bound for the Baltic, after rendezvousing in Long Hope of Waas, commonly preferred the course eastward by Holme Sound to that by the frith, and were occasionally seen passing along the Sound to the number sometimes of from forty to sixty sail. Skeldaquoy Point, stretching out to the length of a quarter of a mile from the shore, forms the west side of what is called Holme Sound Bay, where vessels of 200 tons may conveniently anchor. It is from this part of the shore that the post and travellers are ferried over to Burray. The ferry is about four miles and a-half broad, and with a good boat and crew is attended with no danger.

There has been, for some time past, a daily post from Edinburgh, which, during the summer, generally reaches Kirkwall within the third day. The mail is dispatched from Kirkwall by a foot-post to the ferry of Holme, where a boat with four men crosses over to Burray. He then proceeds across Burray to the small ferry of Water Sound, by which he crosses over in a boat with two men to the village of St Margaret's Hope, in South Ronaldsay, where there is a sub-post-office. From that, he proceeds through South Ronaldsay, a distance of about eight miles to Burwick, on the Pentland Frith,—from which the mail is conveyed in a boat with four men, across the Frith, a breadth of twelve miles, to Huna in Caithness; from which a gig post takes it to Wick, a distance of eighteen or twenty miles.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—This is one of the few parishes in Orkney in which there has always been but one church. According to tradition, it was dedicated to St Nicolas. It is situated in the east-most district of the parish, called Paplay. Of this name for the site of church and manse, there are instances in other Orkney parishes. The Paplays are always the most fertile spots of a parish, and are supposed to have been so named from their being allotted for the residence of the papæ or priests in the times of popery. The

site of the church of Holme is far from being central. It is from four to five miles distant from the west end of the parish, where the population is equally dense as in the other quarters of it. It was rebuilt in 1818, and affords sufficient accommodation. It is kept in good repair. No seat rents have ever been exacted. The average number of communicants is from 100 to 110. A new manse and offices were built in 1804, all in the most substantial manner, and on the most convenient plan, and are kept in good repair. The glebe consists of about seven acres. The soil is good; but the shores were the most valuable part of it, so long as there was a market for kelp, as they yielded annually about four tons of kelp, which sold at an average of L. 7 per ton; but, for some years past, the expense of making it would exceed any price that could be obtained for it. Up to 1815, the stipend, in common with that of six other parishes in the synod, was on a very anomalous footing. It consisted of certain portions of malt and grease butter, paid out of the cumulo revenues of the bishopric. The allotment out of these revenues for the stipend of Holme, consisted of 86 meils of malt weighed on the malt pundler, (the meil being equal to 12 stone Dutch) and six barrels of grease butter. The vicarages or small teinds drawn in kind also formed part of the stipend. The vicarage teind butter was weighed in merks on the Bismar.\*

But when the act of Parliament was passed for augmenting the small stipends, in all cases where the parochial teinds were inadequate, it became necessary to place these stipends on the same footing with others, and for this purpose, to institute in the respective parishes a process of valuation of teinds. The teinds of this parish being found deficient for raising the stipend to L.156, 6s. 8d. by about L.60, this sum is accordingly paid from the Exchequer, half-yearly, at Whitsunday and Michaelmas.

The United Associate Seceders have a chapel on the north-east corner of the parish, where it borders on the parish of St Andrews.

The Earl of Zetland is patron of the parish.

A school in a more central situation than the parochial school is much required.

\* For a particular account of these ancient weighing instruments, the Pundler and Bismar, see Dr Barry's History of the Orkney Islands, Book ii. ch. v. p. 211.

January 1842.





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# PARISH OF LERWICK.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. THOMAS BARCLAY, MINISTER.\*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—THIS parish extends, from north to south, about 6 miles along the sea coast, and is nowhere above a mile in breadth. On the east and north-east, it is bounded by the sea, which separates it from the island and parish of Brassa, and forms that excellent harbour commonly called Brassa Sound.

The parish, and country around it, are rocky and mountainous. The soil, on the mountains, is generally peat or moss, and is deep to their very summit. The arable land lies in spots along the sea coast; the soil is light and sandy, but as fertile and productive as can well be supposed from the situation and climate. The highest hill in the parish rises little more than 300 feet above the level of the sea. The air, though moist, is far from being unhealthy.

*Harbours.*—The only harbour in this parish is that of Lerwick, or Bressay Sound, a capacious bay, in which vessels, well found, may ride at all seasons in perfect safety; and what renders this harbour particularly commodious, is, its having two entries, one from the south, and another from the north. On the outside of the north entry, lies a sunk rock, called the Unicorn.

*Geology.*—The predominating rocks in this parish are sandstone and conglomerate, both of which belong to the old red sandstone of geologists.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—There are three volumes of parochial registers in the possession of the session-clerk. The first begins in the year 1704, and ends in 1750. The births and marriages are both recorded in this book; but, owing to the originally imperfect binding of the volume, it is now almost in fragments, and the births for several years at the commencement have been either not recorded, or more probably the record has been lost. The second volume

\* From notes furnished by H. Cheyne, Esq. of Tangwick, W. S.  
SHETLAND.

commences in the year 1751, and seems to have terminated in the year 1777; but the latter year has been torn away. It appears to have been kept in a very regular and accurate manner, and is in very good preservation. Births, marriages, and deaths are all recorded. The third volume commences in the year 1778, and is that still in use, being only about half exhausted. It contains a register of births and marriages—the latter probably complete, but the former, from its being optional with Dissenters to register, has probably been much neglected. The people of all sects are now, however, it is believed, alive to the importance of registration. This volume contains no register of deaths till the year 1817; and from the want of some imperative regulation for ascertaining and communicating the facts, they have necessarily been entered in a very irregular manner. The session-clerk, apart from his own observation, is almost entirely indebted to the sexton for his information respecting these.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners of the parish are, Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart.; William Hay of Laxfirth; James Greig of Sand-sound; Earl of Zetland; Charles Ogilvy of Seafield; Francis Heddle of Helerness, and others. Sir Arthur Nicolson is the principal land-owner. This enumeration does not embrace the town of Lerwick, which contains many considerable owners of house and park property, besides those above-mentioned.

The valued rent of Zetland is L.28,275, 14s. 6½d. Scots; but no apportionment of it upon the lands was ever made,—owing to which the Zetland landholders, until the late extension of the franchise, were excluded from qualifying as freeholders. All public assessments are levied, and divisions made, according to the number of merk lands in the parish. All arable lands were anciently, under the Norwegian law, rated as merks,—a merk containing eight ures. These merks are quite indefinite as to extent. It is, indeed, clear that the ancient denomination of merk land had not reference to superficial extent of surface, but was a denomination of value alone, in which was included the proportion of the surrounding commony or scattold. Merks land are of different values, as sixpenny, ninepenny, tweldepenny—a tweldepenny merk having formerly at least been considered equal to two sixpenny merks; and in some old deeds, lands are described as 30 merks sixpenny, otherwise 15 merks tweldepenny land. All assessments have, however, for a very long period, been levied, and all privileges apportioned, according to merks, without relation to whether they were sixpenny or tweldepenny. The ancient rentals of Zetland

contain about 14,000 merks land; and it will be noticed, that, however much the ancient enclosed land be increased by additional improvements, the number of merks ought to be and are stationary. The valued rent, divided according to the merks land, would make a merk land in Zetland equal to L.2 Scots of valued rent. The parish contains 253 merks land. Lerwick is built on the commony or scattold of Sound. The real rent of the country parish is believed to exceed L.500. The real rent of the town is about L.3700.

*Mansion-Houses.*—Excluding the town of Lerwick, the only house in the parish that can be properly termed a mansion-house is that of Gremista, the occasional residence of Sir Arthur Nicolson. There are, however, several houses in the neighbourhood of Lerwick, the summer residences of gentlemen residing in the town, which have been built within these few years, and have greatly improved the appearance of the neighbourhood.

*Antiquities.*—The only antiquities worth noticing are the remains of a Pictish burgh or castle, on a small island in a lake close to Lerwick. It is fast hastening to decay. There are, or at least were lately, the remains of several chapels at Gulberwick.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of the town of Lerwick, in 1837, was	3068
of places immediately adjacent,	52
of the country part of the parish, in 1831,	444

The number of illegitimate births within the last three years in this parish, was 5.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The real rent of the parish is L. 4200.

The only improvements that have been made within the last fifty years are in the neighbourhood of Lerwick. That town was originally built on the commony of Sound, and was surrounded by deep moss. The increase of the inhabitants has gradually caused the cutting up and consumption of this moss for fuel, until the immediate neighbourhood has mostly come to consist of extremely bare, stony, or rather rocky ground. Within the last twenty years, a common, surrounding the town, of about 40 acres, has been enclosed and divided into 31 parks, which are now mostly cultivated and laid down to grass. They yield a rental of about L. 80, from which the minister's stipend, falling on the town, and other expenses, are in part defrayed. Several gentlemen have also, at much expense, brought under cultivation ground in the neighbourhood of the town. And the summer residences of Mr Hay,

Mr Ogilvy, Mr Greig, and Mr L. Duncan, display, on a limited scale, such as the locality admits of, considerable taste and spirit of improvement. Mr Ogilvy's residence at Sound is laid out with equal taste and convenience; and the sheltered situation of Mr Duncan's is evinced by a small but flourishing little plantation before his house.

*Manufactures.*—Properly speaking, there is now hardly any manufacture carried on in the parish. The women in this, as in other parishes, are a good deal employed in knitting stockings, mitts, and other articles of hosiery. There was formerly a straw-plait manufactory; but, for several years, it has been dropped. There is an attempt at present making by Messrs Hay and Ogilvy, to establish a herring-net manufactory; and there can be no doubt of the propriety of thus securing employment on the spot in the manufacture of an article, the weaving of which is so simple, and so easily acquired, and which is now much used in the district. The population of Zetland are generally too much averse to turn their spare time to account. They fish during the season. They necessarily apply to their small labourings and harvests; and they cut their peats at the proper seasons; but when not so engaged, many of them are apt to be idle, or at least to employ themselves in a listless manner. It is said that the want of leases accounts for this; but those who know the district are aware that there are many who have no such excuse; and that there are few who could not obtain leases, if they wished.

*Quarry.*—In Lerwick, there is a freestone quarry wrought; and several vessels, some of them of 200 and 300 tons burden, have been built by Messrs Hay and Ogilvy.

*Fishings.*—The fishing most constantly followed in Zetland is that of ling, which is carried on from the middle of May to the beginning or middle of August. It is, however, only followed by a very few boats from this parish. There are a number of small sloops that pursue the cod fishing, during summer; but it is subject to great vicissitude; the fish appearing for a series of years to leave the banks, on which, for another series of years, they are again found. The herring fishing has, of late years, been carried on with considerable spirit, in the manner practised on the Scotch coast, and in larger boats than were formerly used in Zetland. In 1834, the take in Zetland exceeded 50,000 barrels; but since then, it has gradually declined. In 1839, 174 boats, mostly belonging to this parish, delivered herrings in or near Lerwick,

but the whole take from these was only 4872 barrels, and the herring-fishing last year was a total failure. The losses sustained by both curers and fishermen were consequently very severe, and have much damped the energies, and contracted the means of both. It may be doubted if the Zetland fishermen yet understand the habits of the herring, or the best way of looking out for them; and it is matter of wonder, that greater exertions to procure some of the experienced fishermen from Scotland, to follow the herring fishing in Zetland, have not been made. Notwithstanding of the late failures, yet, as a large capital is invested in boats, nets, and materials, the fishing will, doubtless, be again attempted another year.

*Navigation.*—The number of vessels belonging to Lerwick is 85. The amount of their tonnage, 3132.\*

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—From an account now taken, the number of families belonging to the Established Church in the town is 458; in the landward district (in 1831) 80 families. And from an account now taken, the number of Dissenting or Seceding families, is 187.

About 40 families in the town may be said to attend no place of worship, being generally the most wretched, and standing most in need of Christian instruction. The usual excuse for non-attendance, is want of proper clothing, &c.

The stipend amounts to L. 150, and L. 8, 5s. 9d. is allowed for communion elements. The stipend is made up thus: From the bishopric rents of Orkney, L. 27, 15s. 6d.; from town of Lerwick, L. 16, 13s. 4d.; from lands of landward district, L. 23, 0s. 8½d.; from Exchequer under small stipend Act, L. 90, 16s. 3d.; total, L. 158, 5s. 9½d.

There is neither manse nor glebe in the parish. The compensation paid by the heritors is L. 50 per annum.

*Education.*—There are four schools conducted by male and by female teachers in the parish; and one additional for boys, and one for girls of the middle class of society, are required. Perhaps, a well conducted model-school, accessible to all teachers in Zetland, and the children of the parish, would be a very great advantage. It is luckily now beginning to be perceived, that teaching is a profession requiring previous training; and, in the schools

\* Lerwick being the seat of the Custom-house, all vessels belonging to Zetland are registered there.



in Zetland, though conducted by estimable, zealous and right-minded men, the mere attainment of reading and writing, combined with the almost mechanical reading of the Scriptures, form the staple of the education; and but too little attention is paid to the moral and intellectual part of education. The Sunday schools, wherever established, have been productive of very great and palpable good effects.

The yearly amount of the parochial teacher's salary is L. 34, 4s. 8½d; his fees amount to about L. 30 per annum.

*Savings Banks.*—There is one of these banks established in the parish. But the succession of bad crops and fishings has almost entirely stopped the deposits, for some time.

In 1838 the sums withdrawn amounted to L. 45; in 1839 to L. 16, 8s.; and in 1840 to L. 13, 9s.

*Poor and Poor's Funds.*—The number of persons receiving parochial aid is 105. The average sum allotted to each is 1s. 8d. per month. The average annual amount of contributions for their relief, is L. 116. This sum is taken from the receipts for the year commencing 1st December 1839, and ending 1st December 1840, and may be deemed a fair average; the collection not having much varied, for several years. Of the above amount there was derived from church collections, L. 74, 0s. 2½d.; allowed by heritors to make up deficiency, L. 22; from two donations, L. 6, 5s.; mortcloth hire, L. 2, 12s. 6d.; collection at sermons by minister of parish on St John's day, at request of masons of Morton Lodge, L. 12, 1s.; total, L. 116, 18s. 8½d.

*May 1841.*

UNITED PARISHES OF  
BRESSAY, BURRA, AND QUARFF.\*

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. ZACH. M. HAMILTON, *Minister of Bressay.*

THE REV. JAMES GARDNER, *Minister of Quarff.*

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Situation, Boundaries, &c.*—These parishes comprehend six islands, with a part of the mainland of Shetland. One parish lies on the east of the mainland, consisting of the islands of Bressay and Noss, divided from each other by Noss Sound, and from Lerwick by Bressay Sound.

Bressay is nearly six English miles in length; its breadth varying from two to three, or, at some points, rather more. Its aspect on the west is somewhat diversified by indentations of the coast, the height of its hills, the cultivated land sloping toward the sea, and by the houses, cottages, and hamlets interspersed from south to north. Tracks of hilly ground run through it in irregular directions, between which that sort of variety occurs, which is formed by the intermixture of pasture and peat moss.

Noss is two miles long, and a mile or more in breadth, having an acclivity from west to east. The greater part of it is pasture ground; but in the lower part, there is enough of cultivation to form a comparatively large and good farm.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The most prominent object in Bressa is the Ward or Beacon Hill near the south extremity, which rises 724 feet above the level of the sea, somewhat conically shaped; and, being covered with heath, stunted grass, and peat-moss, it has a very sombre aspect. St Andrew's or Ander Hill, on the east side of the island, is a hilly ridge, 400 feet or more in height.

Some caverns occur along the coast, one of which, on the south part, is the most remarkable, and has never been thoroughly ex-

\* Drawn up by the Rev. George Marshall, minister of Flisk, formerly minister of Bressay.

plored, although a boat may penetrate into it for a considerable way. On this quarter of the island, there are various perforations in the rocks forming natural arches, by means of a column from each projecting into the sea, below which boats pass in favourable weather. One of these is known by the name of the *Giant's Leg*.

Both in Bressay and Noss, the coast is rocky, sometimes very high; while at some intervals, a small extent of sloping beach occurs, of a sandy but oftener a calcareous description.

The principal headlands on the south, are the Ord, the Bard, and Hammer. The Ord is a reclining rock above 500 feet high, and inhabited by Eagles. The Bard and Hammer are bold promontories, which, with the whole coast to the south-east, and Hova, the south headland of Noss opposite, are about 200 feet high.

Noss is distinguished principally by its eastern headland, called the Noop, or by mariners, Hangcliff, the height of which is said to be about 600 feet.

Around the coast of both islands, there are some holms or uninhabited islets, the most remarkable of which is the Holm of Noss, a perpendicular rock, 200 feet in height, separated from Noss by a very narrow channel, having a space on the top sufficient for the pasture of a dozen of sheep, for two or three months. The method of communication between the island and this holm, by means of a cradle suspended on ropes, is detailed in the former Statistical Account.

Quarff, a part of the mainland, forms the middle parish, lying six miles south-west from Bressa, and situated between the parishes of Lerwick and Tingwall on the north, and that of Dunrossness on the south. The inhabited part is mostly a valley between high hills; extending about two miles between the east and west sea, and about half a mile broad, but having uncultivated or pasture ground belonging to it, extending a mile on the north and south. The winding valley, cottages at convenient distances near the foot of the hill on both sides, having a meadow between them, and a pleasant bay on the east and west,—exhibit a picturesque and simple scenery.

The Cliff and Coningsburgh hills terminate in a ridge on the south part of the valley, as do the hills of Tingwall and Lerwick on the north. The height of Scraefield, the highest point on the north, may be above 500 feet.

West from Quarff is the parish of Burra, which comprehends

the Isles of House and Burra, and the small Isles of Hevera and Papa.

House (or the East Isle of Burra) lies about half a mile from Quarff; and Burra, or the West Isle, the same distance from House. In their appearance, there is nothing very remarkable; but they are mostly two hill ridges, irregular in shape, the one about six, and the East Isle about five miles in length, and from half a mile to a mile in breadth. The south part of the Isle of House is a peninsula, a mile in length, the greatest part of it consisting of pasture ground. The coast of both is rocky, especially on the south, and particularly that of Burra, on the west. At one point the two islands approach so near to each other, as to be joined by a bridge composed of some loose timbers resting on two rude piles of stones.\* The Isle of Papa, a mile north from Burra, is a small spot inhabited by two families.

Hevera, two miles south from Burra, has the appearance of a high rock, having only one proper access by a romantic sort of creek, *inter scopulos pendentes*. It accommodates five families, whose houses are frightfully situated on the brink of the precipice. An islet is attached on the south to this, called Little Hevera.

Noss Sound is not a quarter of a mile broad, about twenty feet deep, having a strong tide, and is often impassable with easterly winds. †

Bressay Sound is well known as a harbour. In the middle, opposite Lerwick, it is hardly a mile broad, and perhaps fifteen fathoms deep, the tide falling in it about eight feet; narrowing very much to the north entrance; but its breadth and depth increasing towards Quarff, on the south, where it opens into the ocean.

Cliff Sound, nearly half a mile broad, is, like Bressay, a difficult sound in stormy weather, owing to its situation between high grounds on both sides. It is said to be eight or ten fathoms deep.

Stream Sound is the junction between the Cliff and Burra Sound, said to be six fathoms deep, running east and west between the north point of House, and south of Trondra; its breadth, about a quarter of a mile, between these points; its current as visible as that of a river.

\* Since this account was written, some improvements have been here made.

† The statements here given of the depth of these arms of the sea, are given from the opinions of fishermen in the neighbourhood, and cannot, therefore, be warranted as correct. An accurate survey has since been made by Captain Thomas.

The West, or Burra Sound, is somewhat broader and deeper, extending the length of Burra; and, being narrowed by the approach of the opposite points at the bridge, toward the south, it affords a space for more tranquil boat-navigation, than any other in the parish.

Various springs in the different districts have a slight mineral tinge, perhaps from the bog-iron that frequently occurs.

Bressay has a dozen of small lochs, two or three of them only being half a mile in length or breadth, but some containing excellent trout, seldom disturbed by the angler. Burra and Quarff have each two small lochs.

*Geology.*—Bressay and Noss belong to the old red sandstone formation: Quarff to the clay-slate and mica-slate formations; the Isles of House, Burra, and Hevera are of primitive formation; and Papa of epidotic syenite.

Quarries of coarse slate, of a grey, heavy kind, have been for a long time wrought in Bressay, the layers being from four to ten feet deep, mostly imbedded between rocks of sandstone. Some inferior kinds of limestone are found in Quarff and in Burra.

*Zoology.*—The headland of the Ord of Bressay affords a domicile to a few eagles. The Noop of Noss, in summer, exhibits a curious spectacle, being covered with birds of passage and others, which occupy the narrow shelving of the rock. The noise of these creatures is occasionally like that of the most deafening waterfall.

Whales are sometimes seen in the Sounds. One above forty feet long was lately brought ashore near the manse, said to be the species *Balæna boops*.

Although there are few trees here in the present day, yet there must have been a time when they did exist in it, as many of the *ipsa corpora* are found in the mosses here, as in other places of the country. It can hardly be said that any experiments in planting made in this country have been made with such energy, that their failure should be held decisive. Several spots near the mansion-house were, some years ago, planted with willows and ash. The plants of ash are not in the same state of progress as the willows. Some plane trees thrive tolerably. In the ground adjoining to the mansion-house, there are various plants of aspen, poplar, laburnum, elm, and plane-tree thriving well. The climate does not appear to favour evergreens.

Culinary vegetables thrive well; and gooseberry and curran

bushes produce tolerably, but require the shelter of a wall. There have been often at the Mansion-house tolerable crops of strawberries. There is not, so far as I have heard, any instance of a hot-house in this country, except here ; and in it the vines produce an exuberant crop of large grapes.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

. In the year 1636, the Rev. William Umphray, who had been at that time fifty-five years minister of this charge, executed two deeds of mortification, by which he left eight merks of land to Burra and Quarff, and four to Bressay, for maintaining a reader, and other pious uses, together with the interest of L.20 Sterling to the one, and of L. 150 Scots to the other. The communion cups seem to have been his gift, as they bear his name, with the date 1628.\*

An event of great importance to the minister and people lately took place, in the erection of a Government church in Quarff. Before this erection, the charge of these parishes was one of the most difficult kind, the Bressa and Burra churches being about twelve miles distant from each other ; and it behoved the minister to go in a very small boat to Quarff, then to walk two miles, and lastly, to embark with his Quarff parishioners for the kirk of Burra, situated at five miles distance. His Sabbath days' journies thus occupied eight hours, before his return home. The arrangement of places so distant under one charge, rendered it impossible for one man to go through the duties of a minister in them, with any regularity or satisfaction.

Its first minister, Mr James Gardner, was inducted September 1830. The district at present allotted to him consists of Quarff, with the adjacent islands in Burra parish ; and he has the duty of preaching in the Burra church, as circumstances may permit. But as there are contiguous parts of Coningsburgh, Gulberwick, and Tingwall, for whose inhabitants it is vastly easier to attend at Quarff than at their own parish churches, the Presbytery have it in contemplation to annex, *quoad sacra*, these contiguous places to the charge of Quarff. It is much to be wished, for the sake of order, and the comfort of all concerned, that the whole were constituted a separate parish. The ground required for the church and manse, was generously given by the late Charles Ogilvy, Esq. of Seafield, and the disposition executed by his son, John Ogilvy, Esq.

\* The Bressay bell declares, in Latin, that it was cast, in 1723, at Hamburgh, for the use of this kirk.

*Land-owners.*—The land-owners are, in Bressa and Noss, William Mouat, Esq. In Quarff, the Right Honourable Lord Dundas; John Ogilvy, Esq.; Mr Andrew Irvine; and Mr Thomas Henry. In Burra, John Scott, Esq. of Scalloway. In Hevera, Robert Bruce, Esq. of Symbister.

For time immemorial, separate sessions have been held at the kirks of Bressay and Burra; and it is probable that a volume or volumes of minutes and registers have been lost, at both places. The first extant are in the worst condition, and much mutilated; the earliest date 1787. They are now better kept; and it is found expedient to have a separate book and register at Quarff.

In Noss, a small burying-ground is used, lying round the fragments of what appears to have been a Popish chapel.

There are three burying-grounds in Bressay. The most ancient appears to have been at Gunista, on the north part of it. There is here a small fragment of a church, which seems to have had vaults below it, or, according to tradition, a prison attached to it. On the site of this church, a spacious tomb of hewn stone, and neat workmanship, was built by some former proprietor, the walls of which remain.

The ruins of a church appear also at Culbinsgarth, on the north-east, where there is another burying-ground; and from this place Mr Umphray's deeds of mortification are dated. How long before this the manse and kirk had subsisted, does not appear; but they were both removed to the present site, on the west, in 1722; and since that time, the church has been renewed once, and the manse twice.

Several traces of Pictish buildings occur, mostly in the form of subterranean cells; and both in Bressay and Burra, are some of these objects called *standing-stones*.

Of late years, some tumuli were discovered, containing square stones, within which were bones, exhibiting marks of combustion. Other conically shaped knolls, that have every appearance of being tumuli, have never yet been opened.

The churches in Bressay and Burra are small and incommodious. The Government Church in Quarff is a commodious and beautiful building.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1801, the population was	1330
1811,	1411
1821,	1585
1831,	1699

One family only of independent fortune resides in the parish,—and this in Bressay, only during summer.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—Measurement by acres is here unknown, and that by *mark* land, which has been used for time immemorial, is, and has been, for many years, ill defined and arbitrary. Originally, a mark of land must have been a definite measure, and probably a measure only of cultivated land. But as every small farm has a portion of pasture or uncultivated ground belonging to it, an industrious tenant does what he can to add to the cultivated space as much as he can spare from the pasture. In some places, a mark signifies a space equal to an acre, and in others only to half an acre.

Certainly it would be far better, in order to prevent erroneous calculations and disappointments, that farms in this country were measured precisely by acres as in the south.

In this and most parishes here, the cultivated land is often not a third, or a fourth, or not nearly so much of the waste land or undivided common. The rental land, or that which has been in cultivation from olden times, consists in

Bressay and Ness, of 342 marks.	
Burra,	252
Hevera,	18
Quarff,	93

*Rent.*—The average rent of land in the three districts is L. 1 per mark, with public burdens. But perhaps the outsets, or small farms occasionally let from the common, may make the cultivated space amount to a third more than what has been stated. The rental land connected with any hamlet or township, as it is called, lies in run-rig among the tenants. The outsets lying by themselves and unfettered by the system of run-rig, and being sometimes enclosed, possess by these means greater facilities for improvement than the other.

*Husbandry.*—The mode of cropping, from time immemorial, has been by oats and bear alternately on the infield, with potatoes once in four or five years. The manure employed is a compost of moss earth, dung, and sea-weed; the earth being taken from the common during summer, and mixed with the dung as it accumulates, and with the sea-weed as it casts up. The offals of herding are also considered an excellent manure.

A good many years ago, the proprietor of Bressay brought a grievance from Berwickshire to manage the farm annexed to the



mansion-house, who afterwards took the lease of a small farm and managed it by the same mode of agriculture to which he had been accustomed in the south; it was found that it seldom failed to produce an average crop of grain, turnip, rye-grass, or clover, compared with any hill district in Scotland. One or two tenants possessing advantages above the rest, availed themselves of the example thus set. But as to the generality, their poverty, and the want of leases, enclosures and roads, together with the system of run-rig, effectually bar all attempts at improvement. Other obstacles, however, arise from their engagements in fishing, and from the circumstance that the young men of almost every family, in the months of February and March, run eagerly to Lerwick to engage in the Greenland and Strait's fisheries, and, of late years, to the cod-fishing; so that, both in spring and harvest, a great part of agricultural labour devolves on the females. But even many of the men who remain at home, think nothing of deserting their farms for a whole day, now and then, for the sake of any traffic with ships in the harbour. Of course, from these circumstances alone, much agricultural improvement is not to be expected.

Two or three leases only exist here, the duration of which is from nineteen to twenty-five years.

Many of the farm cottages have of late years been rebuilt on an improved plan, and emulation has been excited on this matter.

It should be mentioned, that the best cultivated farms may produce 5 or 6 bolls of oats, and 8 bolls of bear to the proportion of an acre, or 200 ankers of potatoes. It is seldom that meal is sold; but when this happens, it is sold by the lispund, a foreign measure at present very variously defined. The average price of oatmeal in Bressay is 4s., and of bear meal 3s., reckoning to the lispund 36 lbs. of 16 ounces. Potatoes are sold at 8d. per anker.

*Rate of Wages, &c.*—Labourers' wages from 10d. to 1s. 6d.; ma- sons, from 1s. 4d. to 3s.; carpenters, 3s.; journeymen, 2s.; quar- rying and building dry stone dikes per fathom, 2s. 6d.; wages of a housemaid per annum, L.2; of a farm female servant, L.1. Sum- mer's grazing of a cow, from 7s. to 10s.; of an ox, 15s to L.1; winter's fodder, from 5s. to 7s.—Price of a full-grown wedder, 7s.; of an ewe, 5s. The average weight of a cow for slaughter is about two cwt., of an ox about six years old, about three cwt. The sheep are, in general, left to run at large on the common.

The weight of one fleece may be from one to two or three pounds.

*Quarries.*—Stone quarries for the purpose of building may be here found almost in any place. Slate and flag is shipped from the quarries in Bressay, for the different parts of this country, and on some occasions is carried to the southern coasts. In these quarries, a dozen of men and boys are employed, at wages of 10d. or 1s. a day.

*Fisheries.*—The ling-fishing is called the haaf or far-fishing. Bressay sends to it thirteen or more boats, 18 or 20 feet in keel; Quarff, four ditto; Burra, ten, of 15 feet keel. Of the largest of these, each boat carries fifty *bughts* or lines, each *bught* being fifty fathoms in length. The expense of outfit of one of these boats, may be from L.20 to L.26. In each, there are commonly six sharers; but if a man is needed to complete the crew, he may be hired sometimes for L.1, 10s., or a sum between that and L.3. A haaf boat may be hired for the season for L.2, 8s.

On this fishing, the Bressay and Quarff people have to proceed far to the eastward, sometimes till they lose sight of land. The Quarff people have to leave their homes during the week, and to lodge at Noss as a fishing station, where others also, from different parishes, are collected, and have a few shillings to pay for the use of the huts in which they are accommodated; those from Bressay set off from their own homes. Both of these, and also all who fish to the eastward, must be at open sea at least for one, sometimes for two nights. The Burra people do not need to go farther out to sea than one mile, their lines being set in the evening, and drawn on their return in the morning.

From their employers they receive at present 6s. 6d. for the cwt. of wet ling, and 4s. 6d. for the tusk and cod, which they bring from this fishing. The accounts I have received of the fishermen's profits differ somewhat. A gentleman, whose knowledge ought to be accurate, stated to me from his books, that the average profit of each man for the season was from L. 4 to L. 5. The average amount of the Bressay ling-fishing may be about seventy cwt. in a season to each boat. Of the Quarff fishing, fifty cwt. Of the Burra fishing, eighteen cwt.

The cod-fishing to the west and south-west of this country employs many hands, and begins about Whitsunday; being carried on by small sloops of between fifteen and twenty tons. From the whole of this parish, six or more sloops of this kind are sent to it,

and last year, there were about seventy of the parishioners who engaged in it. Eight or ten men commonly are partners in a sloop; but sometimes boys are hired to make up their complement, whose wages may be L. 2, and 1s. 6d. per ton of fish. These sloops may get in a season from four to ten tons.

The herring-fishery commences at the conclusion of the former, in the month of August. The same persons mostly engage in this as the two former, and the boats used for the ling fishing are employed by them, along with some of a larger size, by others who have prepared them for the purpose. The ordinary kind of boats must be provided with nets, the expense of which is about L.22. Some, however, make their outlay only L. 6 or L. 7. They need only to go on this fishing, two or four miles from land. Last year, the Bressay boats alone got 1528 crans, the average being seventy six to each boat. The Quarff boats got 390 crans. The Burra men had not yet engaged in this fishing.

The curing of herring in Bressay employs about thirty women and children in the season.

The manufacture of kelp in Bressay employs twenty or thirty boys and girls, who receive 9s. or more in the month, and have to work at least three hours every tide, by day or night. An overseer is employed, who receives at the rate of L. 2 per ton for his own wages and payment of the workers.

The manufacture of Shetland hosiery is carried on by the industrious, although it has not so much encouragement as in the days of Provost Coulter.

The manufacture of herring-nets now engages attention, and promises to be a useful employment.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The Bressay church is situated conveniently, and so is the Government church in Quarff. Not so the Burra church. Situated near the south extremity of the West Isle, it caused intolerable hardships to the minister and half of the parishioners; and still gives needless travel to the Government minister in Quarff. Bressay church was built in 1815; is in good repair; accommodates 370; has no free sittings. The Government church in Quarff was finished in 1829; is a beautiful and commodious building built to contain 320; has 106 free sittings. Burra church was built about twenty-six years ago; accommodates 210; has no free sittings; and is seldom in any tolerable state of repair.

The manse at Bressay was rebuilt in 1819. The glebe was exchanged twelve years ago, for one to which it was thought equal in

value ; it is said to contain twelve marks of land, and, according to present rents here, would let for L. 12. The stipend is L.150, of which L.117, 17s. 10d. arise from the parish.

There are two places called meeting-houses in Burra that may, perhaps, each contain 100 ; one of Independents, and the others Wesleyans. I am told that twenty or thirty only are in communion with either. Many of them, when their hours of meeting differ, attend the parish church. Two or three individuals only at particular times have appeared as Dissenters in Quarff or Bressay.

The three parish churches in summer are well attended. Certainly those of Bressay and Burra are not too large for the population. The situation of young persons here, all along, has been quite deplorable. Till lately, they had no opportunity of anything deserving the name of education ; and even, though there had been anxiety shown to bring them to church, there was not, and there is not, room for the tenth part of them either in Bressay or Burra churches. The average number of communicants in Bressay is 290. When there was only one church for the west district, there might be there 150. But, since the erection of the Government church, arrangements not having been completed between Quarff and Burra, and the contiguous parts, the number of communicants cannot be accurately specified.

*Education.*—There are three regular, and commonly four small private, schools in these parishes.

The parish school is in Bressay. The salary is L. 25, 13s. ; amount of fees, L. 1, 6s. ; quarter payments for reading, 10d. ; writing, 2s. ; arithmetic, 2s. 6d. ; a set of book-keeping, 3s. At last examination, there were 25 scholars present.

The Assembly schoolmaster in Bressay has L. 20 of salary ; amount of fees at present L.9. A school is supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, in Burra. The salary L.15 ; amount of school-fees, L.1. Rate of quarter payments, for reading, 10d. ; writing, 1s. 4d. ; arithmetic, 2s. 6d. Number of scholars at present, 26.

For more than twenty years, there have been two schools in Bressa, and one in Burra, taught by women, having each 15 or more scholars. That in Burra, and one of those in Bressay, are extremely useful for the younger children.

Sabbath schools are kept by the Assembly and Society teachers, and one in Quarff, by a catechist of the Edinburgh Society

for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor. One in Bressay is kept by an elder.

Almost all who can get to school between eight and fifteen years of age, are now beginning to read, and a greater proportion than before to write. Upwards of fifteen years of age there are at least twenty who, confessedly, cannot read. I believe that not more than twenty or thirty are capable of the smallest epistolary correspondence. The institution of the Assembly school has excited a desire for education in Bressay beyond what existed before, and the people appear sensible of the great advantage of having a teacher so well qualified as the present. The district of Quarff remains wholly destitute of a teacher, and there a school is loudly called for.

*Friendly Society.*—In this parish, there is a branch of the Shetland Fishermen's Fund, for decayed fishermen and their widows. The annual payment, 2s. and a little entry money at first. In this parish, there are 46 contributors; 18 widows at present, who receive each 14s.; six decayed members, who, altogether, receive L. 1, 14s. 6d.

The nett stock of the general fund is at present, L. 2485, 16s. 7½d. Its concerns are diligently superintended by William Mouat, Esq., the general treasurer. This excellent institution would have prospered much more, had it not been for some unfounded prejudices fostered among the peasantry.

*Poor.*—Bressay.

Average of yearly collections,	L. 12 11 7
Rent of mortified land,	4 4 0
Interest of mortified money,	0 13 6

On the poor's roll are 32 persons at present, who receive at an average each only 8s. yearly. Temporary supplies and funeral charges amount commonly to L. 2.

Burra and Quarff.

Average of yearly collections,	L. 9 0 0
Rent of mortified land,	4 0 0
Interest on a bill and account, variable, at an average,	3 0 0

But it is sometimes necessary to draw small sums besides, from the money in account. Poor on the roll, 25, receiving altogether L. 8, 6s. Occasional supplies, 19s.

The mortified land in Burra ought to yield at least double what it does. But for nearly a hundred years, various causes have contributed to render this spot of ground of no avail for the pious and charitable purposes of the mortifier.

It must be evident, that, if the distressed poor did not receive

some supply from relatives and neighbours, they could not live on the miserable alms the session has to give them. In Bressay, they receive much kind and exemplary beneficence from the family of the heritor.

*Fuel.*—The fuel in general use is peat, although coal may be obtained by trading vessels.

*Revised May 1841.*

## PARISH OF WALLS.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN ELDER, MINISTER.\*

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Boundaries, &c.*—This parish is situated on the west side of Shetland, and near the middle. It is bounded on the east, by the parish of Sandsting, and on all other sides by the sea. It consists of four districts, namely, Walls, Sandness, Papa-Stour, and Foula. Walls and Sandness make part of the mainland, which is the largest of the Shetland islands; a hill of considerable height forming a division betwixt them. Papa-Stour (Stour signifying great) is an island about two miles in length, and one in breadth, lying north from Sandness. It is separated from it by Papa Sound, which is a frith a mile broad; through which, runs a rapid and dangerous tideway. Foula is about three miles long, and one mile and a-half broad, lying to the west of the other parts of the parish, and distant from the nearest point of land, which is in Walls, about sixteen miles. There is another valuable island in the south part of the parish, belonging to Walls district, called Vaila; on which is the residence of the principal proprietor of the parish, John Scott, Esq. of Melby; and inside of which, there is an excellent harbour with two entrances, named Vaila Sound.

The greater part of the coast is rocky, the rocks frequently rising to more than 100 feet in height. On the west side of Foula they are several hundred feet high, and at one point, 1200; and in summer, are covered with sea-fowl. The parish is about ten

\* Drawn up by the late incumbent, the Rev. Archibald Sinclair.

miles long, from the south side of Vaila to the north side of Papa, and five broad, exclusive of Foula.

*Geology.*—The chief rocks on the mainland of this parish are quartz-rock, gneiss, and porphyry, with red sandstone. In the isle of Papa-Stour porphyry, trap, and red sandstone prevail; and Foula is composed of old red sandstone, with subordinate deposits of granite, gneiss, and mica slate.\*

### II.—POPULATION.

The population is 2315: of this number, 1104 belong to Walls; 642 to Sandness; 367 to Papa; and 202 to Foula.—There are four proprietors, each of whom has more than L.50 of rent from land; besides several others who have less.

### III.—INDUSTRY.

With two or three exceptions, the whole of the parishioners are employed in the same manner. They unite the two occupations of fishing and farming. In a favourable season, most of the families have as much meal and potatoes as they require for their own use; and some of them can even sell a considerable quantity. They have also milk and a little butter for family use, besides geese and eggs. Each family, in general, kills a pig yearly, and a few sheep or lambs. Small fish also for home use are obtained in great abundance, at particular times. Tea and tobacco are in general use. When the crops are good and the fishing successful, most of them live in a very comfortable manner. Some, however, live very poorly; chiefly owing to their marrying before they have the means of stocking a farm, or to their settling on small patches of ground which are insufficient for their support. When the crops fail, many families are reduced to great want.

None of the farms exceed six acres of arable ground, and in general they consist of no more than two or three. The rent, on an average, is about L. 1 per acre. Almost every farm has attached to it a greater or less quantity of meadow and pasture ground, without any additional rent; and all have the privilege of cutting peat for fuel in the hill ground, which is both good and abundant, except in Papa; and the right of pasturing there as many sheep, cows, and horses as they can send to it, or the pasture can support.

The parish contains upwards of 1000 cultivated acres. The

\* Papa-Stour is one of the very few Scottish localities of fluor spar. It was discovered there, and is mentioned by Professor Jameson in his "Mineralogy of the Shetland Islands."

crops produced are oats, bear, potatoes, cabbages, and a very few turnip. There are only three ploughs in the parish, and they all belong to proprietors.

The industrious and careful are, in general, well provided with wearing apparel and bed-clothes, manufactured by themselves from their own wool. Their Sunday dresses are imported. Their houses are warm; but very little attention is paid to either order or cleanliness by most. Indeed, it is the general practice to place the byre in front of the dwelling-house; through which, therefore, you must pass on entering; and inside, you meet with calves, sheep, and young pigs, besides dogs and fowls.

*Fishing.*—The principal fishing is that of the ling. It is carried on in open boats many miles from land. A considerable quantity of the cod fish is caught nearer the shore by old men and boys, in smaller boats than those used in catching the ling. The herring fishing has been introduced of late years to a great extent, and is likely to prove very beneficial. It commences after the ling fishing is concluded,—generally about the middle of August, and continues for a month or six weeks.

The rents of the farms are paid from the profits of the fishing, and from the sale of cattle and butter.

#### IV.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are four parish churches,—being one to each of the four districts of which the parish is composed. They are all conveniently situated, (except the church of Walls, which is only one mile from one end of the district to which it belongs, and four miles from the other end), and they contain the legal amount of accommodation. Each congregation has its own elders, session-clerk, and poor's fund, and the Lord's Supper is dispensed annually to each. As there is only one minister, Divine service is performed in the different churches in rotation; in Walls once every fortnight, and in Sandness and Papa once in four weeks, and in summer occasionally once a-fortnight,—both places being attended to on the same day. Foula is visited only once a-year, on which occasion the minister remains in the island two Sabbaths, preaching frequently during the interval. If there was a minister for Sandness and Papa, the minister of Walls might visit Foula twice a-year; but at present, while he attends to it, he leaves behind him three churches vacant. In each church, however, there is a reader, (generally the schoolmaster of the district),



who, every Lord's day, reads a sermon to the people, and unites with them in devotional exercises.

The Wesleyan Methodists have three chapels in this parish, and one minister, who has also to officiate in the parish of Sandsting. Their members are 216 in number.

The Congregationalists have two chapels and one minister, who has also to officiate in many other parts. Their members are 115 in number.

The communicants belonging to the Established Church are 584 in number; namely, 240 in Walls, 159 in Sandness, 136 in Papa, and 49 in Foula.

The stipend of the parish minister is L.150 per annum, and the glebe is worth about L.15.

*Education.*—In each of the districts or parishes, there is an endowed school. One of these is the parish school; the other three are supported by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Occasionally, a few children in different parts are taught by persons employed by the parents for this purpose, on account of the distance at which they are placed from the parochial or Society school; and some are taught at home by the parents themselves. Though not more than a twelfth part of the population attend school at one time, and very often a much smaller number, yet the whole of the young people learn to read their Bibles with tolerable accuracy. A considerable number also learn to write, but seldom before they are grown up,—the parents considering that they discharge their duty sufficiently when they afford them the means of learning to read. As the young people seldom attend public worship till they are able, by their own exertions, to provide themselves with clothes for the purpose, it is of the utmost importance that the schoolmasters be men of piety and intelligence. Many parents might provide their children with such clothes as would enable them to go to church, if there was a willing mind. The industry of the young people themselves in this matter is very commendable. One additional school is required for Walls, which, it is hoped, will soon be provided. The district for which it is needed contains upwards of 300 persons. Scarcely any school fees can be got from the scholars.

*Poor.*—The poor are very easily supported, and in the following manner: The parish is divided into sections; and when a poor person has no relations who can support him, he is assigned to one of these,—the inhabitants of which receive him into their houses

in rotation and board him, while the poor's fund supplies what is required for clothing. This fund is derived from collections made at the doors of the churches, and amounts to about L.10 annually.

*Revised May 1841.*

## UNITED PARISHES OF

# FETLAR AND NORTH YELL.

PRESBYTERY OF BURAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. WILLIAM WATSON, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THE united parishes consist of the Island of Fetlar and the north part of the Island of Yell.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—Fetlar is in north latitude between about  $60^{\circ} 34'$  and  $60^{\circ} 38'$  by Thomas's chart; bounded on the east, by the German Ocean; south, by the wide frith separating it from Whalsay and the mainland; west, by Colgrave Sound between it and Yell; and north, by the Sound which separates it from Unst and Isle of Uyea. It is 7 miles long and 4 miles broad.

North Yell is in latitude between  $60^{\circ} 37'$  and  $60^{\circ} 43'$ ; bounded on the east, by Blue Mull Sound, separating it from Unst; south, by Mid Yell; west and north, by the Northern Ocean. Length, 6 miles; breadth, 5 miles.

The figure of both is very irregular, being indented by numerous bays and inlets of the sea. There are no mountain ranges but several hills, none of which rise more than 300 feet above the level of the sea. In both parishes, there are some fertile valleys.

The coasts, both of Fetlar and North Yell, are of great extent, owing to the many bays in both. In Fetlar, the principal bays are, Tresta, sandy; Aith Bay, pebbly; Funzie, the only ling-fishing station in the island; Gruting Voe, pebbly; Urie, where there is a kind of pier lately built; Sand, a small sandy bay; and Mowick, where the people of the east part of the island bring down their peats from the hill of Lambhoga, to be transported home by sea.

The principal bays in North Yell are, Basta Voe, a broad,

deep, shingly bay; Gloup Voe, long, narrow, and partly sandy; Sand of Brecon, Papal, and Cullivoe.

Our climate is mild but moist; snow seldom lies more than three or four days at a time. Rheumatism and stomach complaints are very prevalent, and sometimes fever comes amongst us, but is seldom very fatal. North Yell is said to be more healthy than Fetlar.

*Hydrography.*—Colgrave Sound bounds Fetlar from south-west to north-west: it is about nine miles broad between Lambhoga in Fetlar, and Burravoe in South Yell, and three miles broad between Hammersness in Fetlar, and Burraness in North Yell. The Sound between Fetlar and Unst, is about six miles broad, and Blue Mull Sound, betwixt North Yell and Unst, about one or two miles, where narrowest. In all these sounds, but particularly in Blue Mull Sound, the tides run at a very rapid rate, so strong when wind and tide are contrary, that no boat or vessel could attempt to stem them.

We have some mineral springs but of no account, and no lochs of any consequence, though numerous small ones. The largest is in Fetlar, in the neighbourhood of the manse, which may be three-fourths of a mile long, and one-fourth broad.

*Geology.*—Serpentine, containing chromate of iron, is an abundant rock; associated with the serpentine are deposits of mica slate, quartz rock, gneiss, chlorite slate, and clay slate. We may add to our list of rocks, diallage rock, syenite and syenitic greenstone, and granite in veins.

*Zoology.*—Sea-fowl in abundance breed on our rocks and holms, and many eggs are taken in the breeding season. Scarths, gulls, kittiwakes, marrots, mother Carey's chickens, and ducks of various kinds, abound. The wild swan pays us a visit in considerable numbers, going north and returning. Of land-fowls we have the corbie, the hooded-crow, the hawk, the grey plover, sparrow, linnnet, starling, blackbird, wren, snowfleck. The mother Carey's chickens breed in deserted rabbit holes in the holms. The plovers, starlings, linnnets, sparrows, snowflecks, and corn buntings are found in large flocks. I have seen only one or two robins, and once heard the cry of the cuckoo. The corncraik comes to us in summer, and wild pigeons are in abundance.

Our breed of cattle and ponies is small but hardy. A good number of both is sold every year; fat cattle, from L.2 to L.3; ponies,

from L.1, 10s. to L.5. The prices of both have been considerably raised since the steamer commenced.

A mixed breed of sheep was, some years ago, introduced into Fetlar, by Sir Arthur Nicolson, and scab, which was unknown among the native breed, was introduced along with them. This mixed breed does not seem to thrive well.

In the small lochs there is plenty of trout, which go up the burn to spawn about the end of September. Ling, cod, haddock, turbot, seath and flounders, are found in our friths and bays, sillocks and piltocks all along our shores. Limpets and welks are common. The limpet is used for bait to catch haddock, sillock, and piltock. Spouts and large muscles are sometimes driven ashore in stormy weather. Large oysters are dragged in Bastavoe; and some spouts are taken in Gloupvøe.

There are no forests of any kind in the parish. A few stunted trees and bushes drag out a miserable existence in some of the gardens. A few apples have grown in the manse garden, also some gooseberries, currants, and strawberries.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—There are 28 proprietors in Fetlar and North Yell, of whom the chief are, Lord Dundas, Sir Arthur Nicolson, and William Mouat, Esq.

*Parochial Registers.*—No parochial register is to be found, of older date than 1754: it commences with the ordination of Mr Gordon on the 12th June of that year, and was irregularly kept till 1803, when a new book was begun, in which the births and marriages are pretty regularly entered; but there are no entries of deaths.

*Antiquities.*—In antiquities, we are not behind our neighbours, if any body thought it worth while to investigate them. We have St Hillary's kirk above Feal, Old kirk at Fetchie Burn, Roman Catholic chapels at Oddsta, Urie, Rossiter, Gruting, Strand, Hubie, Funzie, North Dale, Roman camp at Snawburgh, Pictish forts at brough of Hubie and Aithsness, two round Pictish buildings at Aithsness, several fonts dug up at Aithsness, some urns at Stackaberg with ashes, and bones among the ashes, stone urns dug up in the manse yard in 1828, old burial place at Hammersfield, where the bodies have been burnt, numbers of small round tumuli among the hills. All these in Fetlar. In North Yell, is a brough at Burraness almost entire, and another at Brough.

*Modern Buildings.*—The only modern buildings which we have in Fetlar are, a nondescript kind of house, designed for a mansion-

house, by Sir Arthur Nicolson, and a modern mansion-house, belonging to Mr Smith, an heritor, both built of graystone from quarries in their neighbourhood.

In North Yell, are several modern buildings,—the church, the houses of Gloup, Midbrake, and Greenbank, all built of stone from their neighbourhood, with some freestone from Lerwick, for lintels to doors, windows, &c.

### III.—POPULATION.

Dr Webster's report in 1755 is the oldest authentic statement, and it states the population of the two parishes at 1098

Mr Gordon's in 1793,	1346	M.	F.
Census of 1831, { Fetlar,	843	1678, of these	363 460 in Fetlar.
{ North Yell,	837		365 469 in N. Y.
	Fetlar, 1836,	859	
	North Yell, 1838,	960	

The probable causes of this increase are, *1st*, no drains from the parish since the peace; *2d*, no epidemical diseases; *3d*, early marriages; *4th*, the introduction of vaccination.

All our population resides in the country. We have no towns or villages.

Average of marriages in Fetlar for the last seven years,	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
in North Yell,	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
births in Fetlar,	17 $\frac{1}{2}$
in North Yell,	14 $\frac{1}{2}$
Number of persons under 15 in Fetlar,	306, in North Yell, 283
betwixt 15 and 30,	205, do. do. 212
30 and 50,	178, do. do. 167
50 and 70,	111, do. do. 136
upwards of 70,	43, do. do. 39
	<hr/> 843
	<hr/> 837
In Fetlar, the number of widowers is	17
of bachelors,	6
of widows,	32
of unmarried women upwards of 45,	28
The number of families in Fetlar is	147
in North Yell,	169
Average number of children in a family,	4
inhabited houses, Fetlar,	134
North Yell,	150
uninhabited houses, Fetlar,	9
North Yell,	11

The people are not remarkable for any personal qualities. There are, in the two parishes, two insane persons, two silly, three blind, one deaf and dumb.

The people are social enough among themselves,—sympathize with one another,—are apt to murmur at their high rents,—are not intemperate, since smuggling has been almost entirely put down; but, within these few years, they have fallen into an abominable habit of smoking tobacco.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

All the males in the two parishes, except a few to be hereafter mentioned, are employed in agriculture. Those who are employed in the home fishery, have all something to do with the cultivation of land, as heads of families, or children, or servants belonging to the family. There cannot be said to be any manufactures among us. A few, at their leisure intervals from the work of the farm or fishing, (for these two occupations are conjoined), employ themselves in weaving "hame claith," or in making and mending clothes or shoes. In the two parishes, there may be ten or twelve persons, who are chiefly employed as masons; but all of these have small farms, and most of them are engaged in the herring-fishing in the season. In Fetlar, there are two retail merchants for tea, spirits, cloths, &c. and the same number in North Yell. There are in Fetlar, 123 men at the ling and herring fishing; 32 at Greenland and Davis' Straits; and 26 superannuated labourers. In North Yell, there are 128 ling and herring fishers; 25 at Greenland and Davis' Straits; and about the same number superannuated.

We cannot reckon, in the two parishes, more than five or six men-servants, all above 20. Of women-servants, there are 38 in Fetlar, and 44 in North Yell.

*Agriculture.*—I cannot give an accurate account of the number of acres cultivated and uncultivated in the two parishes; but there are in Fetlar 786½ merks, and in North Yell, 634 merks of cultivated land, each merk being about three-fourths of an acre. Of uncultivated land, there may be in Fetlar from 10,000 to 12,000 acres, all undivided common, except 1200 acres, and a great proportion of which might be cultivated with a profitable application of capital.

In North Yell, there may be from 12,000 to 15,000 acres uncultivated, all undivided common; much of which might be improved, though it is much more rugged than Fetlar, and not nearly so capable of being cultivated.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of land in Fetlar is about 16s. per merk, and in North Yell, about L. 1, with privilege of hill pasture. The expense of grazing an ox or cow for the summer is 6s., and a sheep for the year 1s. 6d.

*Prices.*—The price of oats per lispund of 32 lbs. is 1s. 9d.; of bear, 1s. 8d.; of potatoes, 6d. per anker of 10 gallons; wool, from 8d. to 1s. per pound; wadmal or claith, from 1s. to 1s. 4d.;

stockings, from 1s. to 5s. and upwards. Stockings made in Fetlar have been sold as high as L. 2, 2s. per pair; gloves from 6d. to 10s. per pair.

*Live-Stock.*—A mixed breed of sheep has been introduced into Fetlar. The old breed is kept up in North Yell, which, though much smaller, and producing less wool, seems to stand our climate much better, to be hardier, and to have fewer diseases than the new breed. The cattle are small, and no attention is paid to their improvement. My own cows are a kind of cross, considerably larger than any in the parish; but they are not so hardy, require considerably more food and attention, and are not so easily fattened as the pure Shetland breed.

The character of our husbandry is very slovenly, there being only four ploughs in Fetlar, and one in North Yell. The infield rotation in Fetlar is varied; 1. potatoes, bear with manure above, lea, two crops of oats, then potatoes; 2. potatoes, oats, bear with manure below, oats, then potatoes; 3. potatoes, two crops of oats, bear with manure below, then potatoes.

The first rotation is accounted the best; and when the bear comes after potatoes, the ground is neither ploughed nor dug, but scratched with a harrow after sowing, and the manure spread above.

*Outfield Rotation.*—Oats and lea alternately. The oats are found to be more fertile in this way, especially when manured.

In North Yell, the land is cropped every year. Rotation—bear, oats, potatoes; but the land must be manured every year, except to potatoes, which are always planted in infield ground. The small gray oat is generally used, and this, from never changing the seed, has degenerated so far as to be little larger than rye-grass seeds. Potato oats, and other kinds of white oats have been tried by a few, but they seldom ripen, and are more liable to be shaken than the gray oats, though in good ground they grow very luxuriantly. Barley has been tried in a few places, and in good years has succeeded tolerably. Wheat has also been tried in North Yell, with indifferent success. We want enclosures to protect, and sun to ripen it.

Very few outsets have been made in Fetlar; a good many in North Yell. By these, a considerable quantity of hill ground has been brought in, to the great displeasure of those who occupy the rental land, as they curtail their hill pasture, and thereby render their farms less valuable, though they pay the same rents as before

the outsets were made. We have no system of draining, irrigation, or embanking, by which either the old or the new lands can be properly improved. Indeed, there is no encouragement for improvement,—all except a very few being tenants at will on a rack-rent, their farm-buildings in general most wretched, and no enclosures except paltry ring-fences of turf. Where any improvement is made, a neighbour, envying the industrious tenant, goes to the laird, and offers a shilling or two per merk more rent, when the improver must either pay this additional rent, or flit at next term.

Mr Jerom Johnson, a small udaller, who had been a considerable time in the army; at Gibraltar, Minorca, and with General Abercromby in Egypt, on his return home, more than five and twenty years ago, made great improvement on his kail-yard, converting it into a neat, small garden, where he cultivates currant bushes, and other shrubs, flowers, turnip, onions, pease, carrots, and tobacco. He claims the honour of being the first who introduced field turnip into Fetlar.

Mr George Lyle has, of late years, rented a small spot, of formerly barren ground, between two and three acres, which he has enclosed, and in which he cultivates with success, Scots oats and barley, field and garden turnip, cabbage, greens, and pease, though he holds a lease of only seven years. This shows what might be done, if landlords would give encouragement by granting leases, and giving proper accommodation to their tenants.

*Quarries.*—Some years ago, there was a quarry of chromate of iron wrought in this island; but it is exhausted, and no other has since been opened. Wherever houses are to be built, quarries are opened in their neighbourhood, and the necessary quantity of stones taken for the purpose required,—after which, they are deserted.

*Fisheries.*—The fisheries are a most important branch of our statistics. If prosecuted with vigour, they would prove to us an inexhaustible mine of wealth. But in this, as in most other branches of our economy, we are far behind in the race of improvement. Our boats are too small, and our means too limited, to enable us to make the proper exertions. Nevertheless, we are doing something; and, being well situated for the prosecution both of ling and herring-fishing, it is hoped that in time we may make



greater progress. The ling-fishing has been long carried on, and formerly to greater advantage than of late years. The grievous catastrophe of 1832 seems greatly to have damped the spirit of our fishermen. The ling-fishing is carried on from Funzie, on the east side of Fetlar, and from Gloup, on the north side of Yell, the former open to the Eastern, the latter to the Northern Ocean. But there are various other stations, in both parishes, where herrings are cured.

Though innumerable shoals of herrings yearly traverse our seas, and though our neighbours, the Dutch, have for centuries been battenning on our wealth, it is but of very late years that Shetland has begun to avail herself of her own stores. There is not a more commodious station for the herring-fishing in the whole of Shetland, than the Island of Fetlar. About the end of June or beginning of July, the herrings set into our bays, and continue with us till the middle of October. Some suppose that they remain all the winter, but this I will not affirm. Blow from whatever airth the wind may, the boats have shelter, for the fish surround the whole island. Boats from other parishes fish herrings in our bays, and are often obliged, by stress of weather, to land in our island, and sell their fish to any curer that will buy them, and at any price he chooses to give.

There are three herring-curing stations in Fetlar, viz. Urie, Strand, and Aithbanks, and two in North Yell, Cullivoe, and Bayanne: the North Yell boats coming out every evening to our shores, and returning in the morning when the weather permits.

Formerly, it was the custom in Fetlar for every tenant to keep up one-sixth of a boat for the ling-fishing, furnishing lines and other materials himself, and to give his fish to the landlord or tacksman at a certain rate. For a few years back, the mode here has been for the fish-curers to give boats and lines free to the fishermen, and to receive their fish at a reduced price.

In North Yell, most of the tenants still keep up boats and lines for themselves, giving their landlords or tacksmen their fish at the current price; but they are prohibited from selling their fish to any but the landlord or his tacksman. In the herring-fishing, again, the Fetlar men furnish their own boats and nets, and are obliged to deliver their herrings to the tacksmen at the current price. The North Yell men generally use their own boats, re-

ceive nets from the landlord or his tacksman, giving the half of the produce for the use of the nets, and selling the other half to him—the landlord, or tacksman, and no other, for the current price.

The following statement of the fishing in Fetlar and North Yell, may not be uninteresting.

Fetlar Fishing.  
1834.

LING.						HERRINGS.										
No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Cwts. of Fish caught.	No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Crans of Herrings.	No. of Nets.*				
2	19	6	7	0	6	12	90	2	21	0	9	0	5	15	184½	30
5	19	0	7	6	6	36	329	8	19	0	7	6	5	40	301½	56
4	19	0	7	0	6	30	297	10	19	0	7	0	—	52	330	90
3	18	0	6	6	6	18		4	19	6	7	0	4	16	90	32
3	13	0	5	6	4	12	75	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
17	—	—	—	—	—	96	651	21	—	—	—	—	—	128	106	126

Fetlar Fishing.  
1835.

LING.						HERRING										
No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Cwts. of Fish caught.	No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Crans of Herrings caught.	No. of Nets.*				
2	19	6	7	0	6	12	90	3	21	0	9	0	5	15	184½	30
6	19	0	7	6	6	36	329	8	19	0	7	6	5	40	301½	56
5	19	0	7	0	6	30	297	10	19	0	7	0	—	52	330	90
2	18	0	6	6	6	12		4	19	6	7	0	4	16	90	32
4	13	0	5	6	4	16	54	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
19	—	—	—	—	—	106	770	25	—	—	—	—	—	128	905½	251

North Yell Fishing.  
1834.

LING.						HERRING.												
No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Cwts. of Fish caught.	No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Crans of Herrings caught.	No. of Nets.*						
8	19	&	20	7	6	6	48	550	13	19	&	20	7	6	4	52	1066	104
2	19	0	7	4	6	12	68	3	19	0	7	4	4	12	195	18		
1	19	6	6	6	6	6	34	14	18	0	7	0	4	56	1120	112		
1	18	6	6	0	6	6	14	1	19	8	6	10	4	4	74	9		
6	19	0	7	0	6	36	572	1	18	6	6	6	4	4	67½	6		
2	18	0	6	0	5	10		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
1	19	8	6	10	6	6	53	32	—	—	—	—	—	128	2522½	251		
1	17	0	6	4	6	6		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
3	18	6	6	6	6	18	70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
25	—	—	—	—	—	148	1361	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		

\* Shortest net 32 yards long, by twelve score meshes deep. Longest net 50 yards long, by fifteen score meshes deep. For these five or six past years, the herring-fishing has miserably failed: many of the small adventurers have been ruined, while those of great capital have suffered much. The ling, cod, and seath fishing has succeeded tolerably.

1835.

No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Cwt. of Fish caught.	No. of Boats.	Feet of Keel.	Feet of Beam.	Men in each.	Total Men.	Cwt. of Herring caught.	No. of Nets.
8	19 & 20	7 6	6	48	595	16	19 & 20	7 6	4	64	454	128
8	19 0	7 4	6	18	160	4	19 0	7 4	4	16	59	24
1	19 6	8 6	6	6	40	15	18 0	7 0	4	60	315	120
1	18 6	6 0	6	6	18	2	19 8	6 10	4	8	53	16
6	19 0	7 0	6	36	609	1	18 6	6 6	4	4	18	8
2	18 0	6 0	5	10								
1	19 8	6 10	6	6	47½	38				152	899	296
3	18 6	6 6	6	18	94½							
25				148	1559							

## V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Market-Towns.*—The nearest market-town is Lerwick, the capital of Shetland, distant from thirty to forty miles by sea, of a dangerous navigation; boats are frequently lost in the passage.

*Means of Communication.*—There is no post-office in Fetlar. Our letters often lie weeks on the way. In North Yell, there is a country post-office, which has communication with Lerwick twice a-week. We have no turnpike roads—no roads of any kind—not even sheep tracks, but must guide our way by *meaths* from hill to hill, and from *toon* to *toon*. No public carriages, no railroads or bridges; no canals, no harbours, but some open roadsteads, as Tresta Voe, Strandwick and Urie, in Fetlar; Basta Voe and Cullivoe in North Yell. Of these, Basta Voe and Cullivoe are pretty safe; the others very unsafe, except in the height of summer.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—In both parishes, the churches are situated close upon the sea-shore,—that of Fetlar at betwixt four and five miles distance from the farthest extremity of the island south-east; that of North Yell, at betwixt five and six miles from the farthest extremity south.

The church of Fetlar was rebuilt in 1790, and is much too small for the accommodation of the parish, having legal sitting, communion forms included, for only 267 persons. The examinable persons in the parish are 553. The communicants at last sacrament, in May last, were 372, all parishioners of Fetlar.

The church of North Yell was built in 1832; and, notwithstanding the repeated remonstrances of the minister, for which he subjected himself to much obloquy and ill-will, it is too small, having legal accommodation only for 327, including sacramental

\* Shortest net 32 yards long, by twelve score meshes deep. Longest net 50 yards g, by fifteen score meshes deep.

forms. The examinable persons are 614; and the communicants at last sacrament, the Sabbath after Fetlar, 399, all parishioners of North Yell. The communion forms are the only free sittings.

The manse was built in 1756, out of the vacant stipend; repaired in 1805, again in 1824, and again in 1833. Still, it is very uncomfortable, exceedingly damp, being built in a morass. Hence the walls draw water like a syphon. Neither books, nor clothes, nor provisions will keep in it; and, although a good deal of money has been expended on it, the minister has neither comfort nor proper accommodation in it.

The glebe consists of 12 merks, and would let for L. 9.

The stipend is L. 180, including communion elements. Were taxes, and expense of travelling to his church in North Yell, and to Presbyteries, to be deducted, the minister's clear yearly income would not amount to L. 150.

There is one chapel in Fetlar belonging to the Methodists.

It may be said that all the families in both parishes attend the Established Church, there being no families that I know, the whole members of which are Methodists; but there are individuals to the number of from 20 to 30 in Fetlar, and from 10 to 15 in North Yell, that are connected with the Methodists. In good weather, the Established Church is generally thronged; on sacramental occasions, crowded almost to suffocation.

The church collections in Fetlar last year, including communion, amounted to L.6, 1s. 8d.; in North Yell, L.6, 15s. 9d.

*Education.*—There is one parochial school in North Yell, and one private; one Society school in Fetlar, two private. The branches taught in the parochial and Society's schools are, reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and navigation. The parochial schoolmaster has the minimum salary; the Society schoolmaster L.15. Their emoluments from scholars are small, not more than L. 8 at most.

From an account taken as accurately as possible by the minister in December 1834, it was found that there were in

	Fetlar.	North Yell.
Males under 5 learning to read,	6	4
Females do.	10	2
Males between 5 and 15 taught or learning,	103	76
Females do.	91	63
Males between 5 and 15 taught to write or learning,	36	20
Females do.	17	6
Persons above 15 who cannot read,	17	16
write,	275	284

The reason that North Yell is behind Fetlar in education is

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that Fetlar has had a Society school established in it, for a considerable number of years; and it is only eight years since the parish school has been fixed in North Yell. The people in neither parish are so much alive to the benefits of education as could be wished.

There are, on the west side of Fetlar, two schools for children who are not able to attend at the Society's school,—one taught by a woman permanently through the year; the other by a lad during the winter quarter. Each of them has from 20 to 30 scholars. There is, besides, an old man who has 5 or 6 children attending him; his number seldom amounting to 10.

North Yell, though it has the advantage of the parish school, and a good teacher, is not so well provided with the means of education. The parish school is situated near the north end of the parish, and is convenient only for the inhabitants of the north, leaving those of the south quite destitute. Some years ago, a subscription was entered into for building a school and school-house for the accommodation of that destitute quarter; but, though the minister subscribed L. 5, 5s. from his own family, the whole subscriptions did not amount to L. 19. The expense would have been more than four times the sum raised; so the scheme was dropped; and as the people are neither richer nor more willing now, it need not be resumed. On a visit to that quarter lately, I found that upwards of 130 scholars betwixt five and eighteen might attend a school, were there one in the neighbourhood. Nothing has been done to supply this deficiency, and nothing can be done by the parish on account of its poverty. Unless subscriptions can be obtained in the south for a school and school-house, the parish must still suffer.

*Library.*—There is a parochial library in Fetlar, containing 200 volumes, mostly religious. There are about thirty subscribers at 1s. a-year. In North Yell, there is also a small one; but it is falling off.

*Poor.*—Our poor are quartered on the several districts of the parish, being maintained by the inhabitants of those districts, and receiving a small sum annually for clothing from the poor's fund. There are only 13 in Fetlar receiving out of the poor's funds, and 7 or 8 in North Yell.

*Public-Houses.*—There are two houses in Fetlar licensed to sell spirits, and as many in North Yell.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Since the last Statistical Account was written there has been

a considerable increase in the number of inhabitants. The parishes are susceptible of much improvement, were a better system of husbandry introduced,—were farms enlarged, and nineteen years leases granted. But the people are rather of a rambling turn; do not like to be confined to one place; are often flitting from mere caprice; frequently remove to Lerwick, where they think they will be free of *voar* and harvest labour; and, after having spent, in Lerwick, what little they have saved here, return destitute, and are glad to get a bit of land, probably much inferior to what they possessed years before.

Since the above was written, a fearful increase of destitution has taken place. The three or four years of famine preceding the last harvest have completely impoverished almost every family in the two parishes, and the poor have increased far beyond the means in our power to relieve them. In the years of famine, the parish poor had more good meal supplied them, than they could ever before command; for the stores sent us by the benevolence of our brethren in Scotland and England (though the portion given to our poor was very scanty in comparison) were regularly doled out to them, and gave them a more abundant supply than they could have received from their own country produce, even in the best years. But now, since this source has been closed up, and those by whom they used to be maintained can hardly maintain themselves, I know not what is to become of them. Our rich heritors are non-resident, and, though written to repeatedly, have not responded very satisfactorily to our calls; and the resident small heritors have enough to do with themselves.

In addition to the temporal wants of these parishes, they suffer much from spiritual destitution.

From the difficulties of travelling, the parish of North Yell must often be without sermon for many weeks; and in the most favourable circumstances there can be sermon there only once a fortnight. From the poverty of the parish nothing can be done to remedy this evil; and, unless the Committee on the Royal Bounty will place an ordained minister in North Yell to take the spiritual charge of that parish, it must still continue in that neglected state.

*Revised June 1841.*

# PARISH OF UNST.

PRESBYTERY OF BURRAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JAMES INGRAM, A. M. MINISTER.

THE REV. JOHN INGRAM, A. M. *Assistant and Successor.*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Boundaries, &c.*—THE island of Unst, of which this parish consists, lies in north latitude  $60^{\circ} 45'$ ; west longitude  $50'$ . Its length from south to north is 12 miles, and its mean breadth three miles. Its form approaches to an oblong square, and it contains upwards of 36 square miles or 24,000 acres. It is separated from the island of Yell by Blumel Sound, on the south-west, a rapid tide-way of about a mile in breadth; and from Fetlar, on the south side, by a sound four miles broad. It has the German Ocean on the east and north, and the Atlantic on its west coast.

*Topographical Appearances.*—A considerable proportion of its surface is dry and level, when compared with many other parts of Zetland; and although it has not yet the advantage of turnpike roads, one can ride from one end of it to the other without meeting any obstructions. Hills of a moderate height diversify its scenery. Valleyfield, nearly 700 feet in height, runs along the western coast, and forms a strong barrier against the fierce assaults of the Atlantic, which, notwithstanding, dashes its huge billows against it with such fury, during a north-west gale, that foam and spray are thrown over it, into the valley on its eastern side, and strongly impregnate with salt every green herb. This hill terminates in a long projecting headland, called Hermanness (from a hero who is said to have landed, in days of old, on these shores), the most northern point of the island, and of her Majesty's dominions. On the east side of this hill, is a valley, extending from Uyea Sound in the south, to Burrafrith in the north, almost the whole length of the island; and in it there is a continued chain of lochs, which empty themselves,—one part of them, into the sea at Uyea Sound,—the other part, at Burrafrith. The lochs in the south division, from their dimensions, are called the small waters. The loch of Watly, the first in the northern chain,

is one mile long; the next to it is the Loch of Cliff, three miles long. An arm of the latter runs towards the east, on the north side of the hill of Crucifield, for nearly a mile, and is called the Loch of Quoyhouse. Saxa Vord, a hill of 938 feet in height, on the east side of the bay of Burrafirth, rises abruptly from the sea, and its bluff round-head, showing itself considerably above every other point of land in its neighbourhood, makes a very conspicuous mark for fishermen, along the whole eastern coast. Crucifield runs from west to east, at right angles with Valleyfield, and separated from it by the loch of Cliff, and terminates in its eastern extremity in two conical points called Hoogs, one of them, much higher than the other, and supposed to have been anciently a place where courts of law were held, and where criminals were executed. This hill lies nearly across the middle of the island, and separates the Mid from the North parish. A little to the south-east of Crucifield is a high headland, called the Keen of Hammer, (query? the Celtic *Cean*), which forms one side of the north entrance to Balta Sound. The Vord Hill, on the south side of the voe or harbour, stretches along the east coast. Valleyfield and Saxa Vord, and the hills connected with them, are covered with peat-moss, an article most useful in this northern climate, where no coal has yet been discovered. To the eastward of the valley which runs along the base of Valleyfield, and following the course of the Loch of Cliff, and turning off by the Loch of Quoyhouse, all that section of the island to the south and east (excepting some small spots in the south-east extremity), is completely denuded of moss, and has a bare stony appearance. Notwithstanding, it yields excellent pasture for the native horses and sheep, which thrive remarkably well upon it. This section is composed principally of serpentine, hornblende, and diallage rocks. The hills to the north and west are chiefly composed of gneiss.

*Caves.*—There are a variety of caves round the coast, but not worthy of notice. Under a very high and precipitous rock, which forms the north-eastern base of Saxa Vord, a noted haunt of kittiwakes and other aquatic birds, there is a grand natural arch, having sufficient breadth and depth of water to admit a boat to be rowed through it; it is 300 feet in length, and of considerable height.

*Sea Coast.*—Captain Thomas of the Investigator, who has been employed for some years in surveying the coasts of Zetland, has been very particular in his survey of this island, both along its coast and in the interior. When his chart appears, it will furnish



all the information that can be wished for, as to the form and extent of the coast, &c. The shores of Unst, like every other part of Zetland, are deeply indented by numerous bays and creeks, some of which are low and sandy. The intervening headlands, especially in the north-east, north, and west coasts, are bold, high, precipitous rocks. The principal bays are, Burrafirth, on the north; Norwick, and Haroldswick, and Sandwick, on the east; Watswick and Wick, on the south-west; and Woodwick, on the west side. None of these are safe harbours. Burrafirth and Norwick are two deep sandy bays, quite open towards the sea. Both have a very romantic appearance, and a considerable extent of good land on their shores, and are much admired by strangers who occasionally visit this island. The only safe harbours are, Balta Sound, on the east coast, about the middle of the island, completely covered from the sea by the grazing island of Balta, the property of Thomas Edmondston, Esq. of Bunes, whose manor house is situated near the bottom of the Voe, or harbour; and Uyea Sound, on the south, covered by the island of Uyea, (about a mile and a half long, and one mile in breadth, an appendage of this parish, and the property of Thomas Leisk, Esq.) The grazing islands of Haaf Grunie and Huna, and the holms of Ska, Burrafirth, Woodwick, Newgord, Heogaland, and Weatherholm, belong to the proprietors of Unst, and lie along its shores, affording pasture for a considerable number of black-cattle and sheep.

*Hydrography.*—The streams of tide off some of the extreme points, especially off Hermanness, Ska, and Lambaness, are so rapid and turbulent, that it is extremely dangerous, and often impossible for boats to cross them, even in moderate weather, and it not unfrequently happens that they perish in the attempt.

Perennial springs of excellent fresh water are most copious and abundant in every part of the island; but there is nothing remarkable either in their situation or character.

*Geology.*—The chief rocks in this island are, gneiss, serpentine, diallage rock, and chlorite slate. Besides these the following may also be enumerated, viz. talc slate, protogine, limestone, quartz rock, hornblende rock, and mica slate. The most important ore is the chrome ore, or chromate of iron.\*

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owners, in the order of the ex-

\* A beautiful mineral, the *Hydromagnesite* of Professor Jameson, was discovered by Dr Hibbert in considerable veins in serpentine at Swinacess.

tent of their property, are, William Mouat, Esq. of Garth, proprietor of nearly one-half of the parish; Thomas Edmondston, Esq. of Bunes; the Right Honourable Lord Dundas; James Ogilvy, Esq. of Greenwell; Thomas Leisk, Esq. of Uyea; and Gilbert Spence, Esq. of Hammer. There are twenty-three other small proprietors, possessing from 20 down to 3 merks of land.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers are of very modern date. The first entry is made in October 1776. No doubt, records must have existed, at a much more remote period; but after the most diligent inquiry, not the least vestige of them can now be traced.

*Antiquities.*—Around the island, and so situated, that the one can be seen from the next in order, is a continued line of ruinous buildings, called Pict's houses, or castles, or burghs,—round towers, open in the top, with massy walls, built of large stones. Some of them stand in the midst of small lochs; some on projecting headlands on the margin of the sea; and others on level ground, and surrounded by two or three ditches or moats. According to tradition, they were used as watch-towers, for the purpose of communicating, by means of smoke, intelligence of the approach of an enemy; and this could be speedily done over all Zetland. At Muness, in the south-east quarter, there is a ruinous feudal castle, now the property of William Mouat, Esq. of Garth, which bears over the main entrance the date 1598, together with the following inscription:

List ye to know this building quha began,  
Laurance the Bruce, he was that worthy man,  
Quha earnestlie his ayris and affspring prayis,  
To help and not to hurt this wark always.

This Laurence Bruce is said to have been of the family of Culmalindie, in Perthshire, and to have fled hither, in consequence of having slain a neighbour in an affray. The castle is an oblong square, 60 feet by 18 within the wall, and 24 in height. At each of the four angles, is a tower. Two of these are hanging; the other two rise from the ground. On the hill of Crucifield, are some concentric circles of earth and stone, with eminences raised in the middle, where, perhaps, in the days of Paganism, the priest of Odin had performed his unholy rites. . . . Two ancient obelisks, or standing stones, are to be seen, the one near Greenwell, a rude, unshapely mass; the other near Uyea Sound, higher and

more tapering, but without any inscription or traditionary story. Each is supposed to commemorate the site of a battle when some renowned warrior fell.

The ruins or some vestige of an ancient chapel, are found at every turning. No fewer than twenty-four, at some remote period, have been standing in this parish. One of them, called the Cross Kirk, or St Cruz, in the neighbourhood of Haroldswick, is still accounted a holy place, and occasional pilgrimages are made to it by some of the older inhabitants, whose minds are not yet emancipated from the Popish superstitions of their ancestors. There are six burying-places in the parish, around the ruins of so many old kirks, viz. at Norwick, Haroldswick, Balliasta, Sandwick, Wick, and Uyea. The Rev. William Archibald, who officiated as clergyman of this parish, from the year 1735 to 1785, preached, by rotation, in three of these kirks for many years, viz. at Haroldswick, Balliasta, and Wick. The manse, then at Norwick, was one mile to the northward of Haroldswick, four to the northward of Balliasta, and nine miles to the northward of Wick. A number of stone urns were found in the island of Uyea some years ago, filled with bones and ashes, and deposited beneath a heap of stones and earth. They are supposed to be of Scandinavian origin.

*Modern Buildings.*—A very neat new church forms a very conspicuous object, as seen from a vessel entering the Voe or harbour of Balta Sound, and, with the exception of the school-house, this is the only public building in the parish. Of private buildings a considerable number has been reared within these few years. Mr Edmondston has built a new manor-house at Buness, and two other dwelling-houses in his vicinity; and at Uyea Sound, Mr Mouat has built a lodge for his own accommodation, when he visits that part of his property which lies in Unst; and a range of neat houses along the shores of the harbour, for dwelling-houses; a shop for merchandise; warehouses; and workahops for a blacksmith, boat-carpenters, and a cooper. The water-mills for grinding corn are the same as they have been for centuries, exceedingly simple, but answering the purpose very well. Every neighbourhood has its own mill, and every farmer is his own miller. The mills are minutely described in the old Statistical Account.

### III.—POPULATION.

There is reason to believe that this island had a numerous po-

pulation at a very remote period. The vestiges of houses and stone-fences, now in ruins, and grown over with grass, or buried in moss, are no indistinct indications of this. In former days, the inhabitants had but little intercourse with other countries, and had to depend chiefly on their own resources; the healing art was little known amongst them,—perhaps not one medical practitioner in the land. In 1729, and again in 1740, the small-pox appeared in Zetland in such a virulent form, and made such havock, almost depopulating some districts, that they are yet spoken of under the name of the mortal pox. Accordingly, we find, that, subsequent to that time, the population was very low; for, in the year 1755, it consisted only of 1368 souls. From that period, the increase has been steady and rapid. In 1780, it had risen to 1853; in 1790, to 1988; and in 1831, to 2909 souls.

Vaccination, which has been resorted to ever since the year 1800, may be assigned as one cause of this great increase. Another cause may be found in the very favourable seasons this country has enjoyed during the last thirty years. There has been no failure of crops; the fishing has been successful; and trade has greatly improved.

There are six proprietors of land of the value of L. 50 and upwards per annum.

Much has been said, and much has been written, by men very superficially acquainted with the state of the country, about the wretchedness, the enslaved, and oppressed state of the peasantry. They have had all their information from hearsay, and have not given themselves the trouble to inquire after the truth, where they might have had it impartially stated to them; and the consequence has been, that they have been greatly imposed upon, and they, in their turn, have imposed upon others. They who have lived long amongst the people, and are intimately acquainted with their ways and means, and have seen the comforts they enjoy, can bear the most ample testimony to the fact, that there are but few of Her Majesty's subjects, of the same class, who are treated in a more kindly and indulgent manner by their superiors; who enjoy so much liberty; who pass through life with so little labour or care; or who have more reason to be contented with the situation and circumstances a kind Providence has assigned them. They do not live in affluence; but they seldom want the necessaries, and they have many of the luxuries of life, with one-half of

the toil that people of their class are doomed to undergo, in more genial climes.\*

The inhabitants of Unst are remarked for being naturally a shrewd observing people, acute and discerning; and although they have not, until lately, had the advantage of schools, which highly-favoured Scotland has long enjoyed, yet many of them are well informed, can read well, and write an excellent hand, and keep accounts; and, in respect of general knowledge, they may compete with those who have had superior opportunities. Their moral and religious character is far from being so high as it could be wished to be. They are just what people generally are in the same circumstances,—some good, some bad; but, in general, they appear to have a thirst for religious knowledge; and it is hoped, there are many amongst them who truly fear God.

Smuggling was for a long time carried on in this place to a great extent, and was no doubt attended by the evils which naturally accompany that illegal traffic. It has scarcely been heard of, for these last twenty years.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—There are about 2000 imperial acres of arable land in the parish, most part of it yearly under crop. Nearly an equal quantity of meadow and grass land, connected with the arable, remains uncultivated. The meadows produce a considerable quantity of good natural hay; and on the grass grounds, milch cows are pastured during the summer. The whole of the meadow and grass ground might be broken up, and with proper management, converted into good corn land, and much of it has, within these few years past, been cultivated, and made to produce very tolerable crops, by some of the more industrious tenantry. But the greater part of the farmers being also fishermen, little attention comparatively is paid to agriculture. Indeed, the pursuits of fishing and farming seem to be incompatible with one another, in the same persons. The soil is, in many places, excellent. Under a better climate and more skilful management, it would yield the best of crops; and even with all the disadvantages of climate, and the slovenly manner in which it is cultivated, it yields heavy crops of black oats, bear, and potatoes; the latter not inferior to those produced in the best districts of Scotland. Some gentlemen

\* Since this Account was drawn up, the circumstances of the people have been sadly altered. A general failure of the crops, for five or six years in succession, has reduced them to great poverty, and it must be long, even under the most favourable circumstances, before they can regain their former state.

in this island, who have turned their attention to the subject, have raised very fair crops of Angus oats, and have proved that as good turnips, and rye-grass, and clover can be grown here as in any part of the kingdom, and that the climate and soil are peculiarly adapted for such crops. They have vastly improved the appearance of the farms under their own immediate management, and made them look like oases in the midst of a barren desert.

Most of the farms are, to this day, lying run-rig, and, according to the old system, consist of outfield and infield. The outfield seldom receives any manure. It is turned over with the spade every alternate year, for, since the reduction of the size of the farms, ploughs amongst the tenantry have been wholly laid aside; yet, notwithstanding of this treatment, the outfield land yields a fair average crop of black oats. The infield, or ground nearest the farm-house, is yearly manured, and on it they raise fine crops of bear and potatoes. If the farms were brought into a more compact form, and enclosed, a few of the more active and intelligent might be induced to sow turnips, and rye-grass, and clover, and thus produce an abundance of nutritious winter provender for their cattle, of which, under the present management, there is often great scarcity.

None of the tenants, or but few of them, have leases, not that the land-owners are unwilling to grant them; such is not the case, but because they are not disposed to take them. Many of them are so restless and fond of change, that they do not choose to bind themselves to remain for a fixed time in one place, and this is often the cause of much annoyance and loss to the proprietors of the soil, for it is not to be supposed that such tenants will take much trouble about the improvement of their land. It is seldom that the land-owners warn a tenant to remove, if he is honest and industrious, and there are many of the most substantial and respectable of the tenantry, who are now in the same houses and on the same farms which their fathers and grandfathers occupied before them, and some of them, by their industry, have doubled the ancient extent of their arable land.

Many of the tenants have comfortable houses, built solely at the expense of the proprietors, at a cost not under three years rent of the land they occupy.

As the extent of the commons or hills and unenclosed ground has never been ascertained by any actual survey, it can only be stated conjecturally. The truth, however, is not exceeded, when

we say that there are 20,000 acres lying in those commons, of which at least 2000 may be capable of improvement; but as they belong to several different owners, and are undivided, a grievous obstacle is thus in the way of those who might be inclined to make the trial.

*Rent, Wages, &c.*—The land is let for a fixed money rent. The average rent of arable land is about 18s. Sterling per merk, which, arable meadow, and grass, may contain nearly two imperial acres. The tenants have the privilege of keeping as many cattle, horses, and sheep on the common as they please, without any additional rent being demanded.

The summer grazing of a cow or ox is from 8s. to 10s. Sterling, and much the same sum is demanded for winter fodder. Young cattle, sheep, and horses pasture on the open common, and cost the owners nothing.

There are but few families in the parish, who require the assistance of a man-servant in the management of their farms. For the purpose of accommodating a more numerous body of fishermen, the farms are now made much smaller than in former times. They consist, on an average, of about six imperial acres arable, with a due proportion of meadow and grass land; and there are generally more people in each house, than are necessary for the work of such farms; but as the young people can be maintained by their parents at home, and as they are very fond of liberty, they care not much about going to service. In the spring time, every individual who can lift a spade, old and young, male and female, is set to work in the fields, and they very easily and in a short time turn up the soil, and accomplish the labours of the season. Young men are more inclined to go to the Greenland fishing, or to prosecute the ling-fishing at home, than to engage in agricultural labours. When the gentry can prevail on a man to undertake the work of their farms, he is paid about L. 6 Sterling per annum and maintained. A woman servant is paid for farm-work, or the management of the dairy, from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2 per annum, and is maintained, and receives various perquisites besides, which will make up her fee to L. 1 more. Neither men nor women do half of the work that is required at the hands of servants in the south, nor is their labour so productive.

Labourers and artisans seldom want employment, and are well paid, and when they are sober and economical they save money, as living to them is comparatively cheap. A good stone-mason

receives from 2s. 6d. to 3s. a day; inferior workmen, 2s.; and day labourers, 1s. a day. A house-carpenter can earn 2s. 6d.; a boat's carpenter, as much; a tailor, 2s.; and a shoemaker, 1s. 6d. a day. The rates at Lerwick may be somewhat different, and in some cases higher.

*Live-stock.*—The breed of sheep, black-cattle, and horses, with a few exceptions, which cannot be mentioned as improvements, is much the same as it has been for time immemorial. The native breed is most suitable for the country and climate, and under proper management, would be by far the most valuable. The cows, for their size, are excellent milkers, and their milk is of the very richest quality. The sheep, when attended to properly, carry remarkably fine wool, and their mutton is highly prized for its delicacy and flavour. But, what is the concern of a great number is the concern of nobody, and as the cattle go at large and feed promiscuously on the commons, no attention is paid to their breed, and, the consequence is, they are degenerating fast. This is remarkably the case with the fine, lively, sagacious, and active breed of native ponies. They are now much smaller in size than they were thirty years ago, entirely owing to the fact, that all the best and stoutest are exported, and stallions of the most puny size are allowed to go at large.

*Quarries and Mines.*—Chromate of iron, discovered on this island by Professor Jameson, and afterwards found in large quantities by Dr Hibbert, in the course of his mineralogical survey, has been raised and carried to market in its crude state in considerable quantity, for which a very fair price was at first realized; but of late, it has been discovered in Norway and in other places, and the free importation of it being allowed, the price now offered is very low. There are also limestone quarries at Cliff and in the neighbourhood of Balliasta. The tenants of those districts are allowed to work the quarries, and to manufacture the stone into lime on their own account. The lime is usually sold at the rate of one shilling per barrel, and becomes a source of considerable emolument to those who engage in the work.

*Fisheries.*—This is the most important branch of industry in Zetland, and which the men prosecute with much spirit and skill; and although often exposed to the most imminent danger, on a rough and boisterous sea, and although many valuable lives are often lost in this hazardous pursuit, (as was the case in 1832, when seventeen boats with their crews, five of them belonging to this pa-



rish, were overtaken by a dreadful storm, and buried in the sea,) yet, with undaunted courage, they launch out in their small open skiffs, to a distance of thirty or forty miles from the shore, and appear to be more in their element when so employed, than in any other occupation. Their boats are now built somewhat larger than they were in former days. They measure from 18 to 22 feet in length of keel, with six men in each, and they carry from 60 to 100 ground lines, each 42 fathoms in length, with hooks fastened to them by a smaller line, of about 3 feet in length, and at the distance of 5 fathoms from each other. The boats and lines are either furnished by the fishermen, at their own expense, or hired out to them, by the land-owners, or others, who purchase their fish in a green state, and cure them for the market. When the fishing is successful, they may average from 80 to 100 cwt., for which they receive, from 5s. to 6s., and sometimes as high as 7s. per cwt. Ling, cod, and tusk, and seath or coal-fish, were long the only fish which were considered marketable, and of these great numbers were caught, salted and dried, and sent to Spain, Ireland, and to Leith, and sold at from L. 12 to L. 22 per ton, for ling and tusk; and from L. 9. to L. 12 for cod and seath. Immense shoals of herrings, annually, visit the coasts of Zetland, and every summer for a long series of years, the Dutch have fitted out a great number of busses, which have appeared in swarms, in the harbours and along the shores of Zetland, and remained in the undisturbed possession of the herring fishery, to the great emolument of their country. It never entered into the minds of the Zetlanders, that they might with the greatest ease come in for a share of their gains, until within these few years, when some public-spirited gentlemen have exerted themselves to rouse their countrymen to a sense of their own interests, and to engage in that lucrative branch of industry. The herring-fishery is now fairly begun, and promises to be a source of great additional wealth to the people. The land-owners, in general, furnish nets, which they either hire out to the fishermen, or advance to them, at prime cost, to be paid for from the proceeds of the fish, within a time limited by agreement. They also provide casks, and salt, and take upon themselves the whole expense and risk of curing, and sending the herrings to market. The fishermen are paid so much per cran, and as there is a good deal of competition, they are sure of the highest price that can be afforded. The amount of fish cured and marked by the fishery officer in the year 1831 was as under :

Amount of ling, tusk, and cod-fish exported from Unst, which may be considered a fair average, 190 tons at L. 17,	L. 3230	0	0
Seath or coal-fish, 20 tons at L. 9,	180	0	0
840 barrels of herring would nett,	504	0	0
Add to this fish of all kinds used by the inhabitants as food, at an average less than 4d., per diem, each person,	2000	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total,	L. 5914	0	0

*Produce of Land.*—The amount of produce raised annually in this parish, consisting of corn, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, hay, grazing of cattle, sheep, and horses, and swine, together with fowls, eggs, &c. may be averaged at L. 4 Sterling per acre, or merk of cultivated ground, or somewhat above L. 8000 Sterling per annum.

*Manufactures.*—Articles of woollen hosiery, chiefly consisting of stockings and gloves, are the principal manufacture in this parish. They are knit by the females, and are highly prized for their softness and the beauty of their texture. The demand for Zetland hosiery is not nearly so great now as formerly; yet the quantity sold is still very considerable. Stockings vary in price from 1s. to 10s. per pair, (a few pairs of extraordinary fineness are sold for L. 2 per pair), and gloves from 1s. to 10s., or even sometimes as high as 15s. per pair. The only other manufacture of any account is a coarse kind of woollen cloth, which is dyed blue, black, or red, according to fancy, and constitutes a considerable part of the daily wear of both men and women.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The only market-town in Zetland is Lerwick, at least forty miles distant from this parish by sea. Cattle are driven by land to be sold there, at very considerable expense, and with great toil, through bleak swampy mossy hills, without any trace of a road or bridge, and they have also to be transported in boats, over two sounds or arms of the sea, where the tide runs with extreme rapidity, and renders the passage uncertain and dangerous. When the inhabitants are disposed to sell any other part of their produce at Lerwick, they carry it thither in their own boats, and bring back with them such necessaries as their families stand in need of, and they can afford to purchase. Until about the year 1820, this was the only mode of communication betwixt Unst and Lerwick, where the general post-office is established, and all letters and newspapers coming from the southward had to remain there, to wait any opportunity that might occur, unless when it was found expedient to dispatch an express, at a considerable expense. To remedy this inconveni-

ence experienced by all, some gentlemen residing in Lerwick, in the year 1820, entered into an agreement to engage a man to travel as post betwixt Lerwick and this place, and to call at several intermediate stations, and to carry all such letters and papers as might be committed to his charge. People residing in the country parishes have some agent, or friend in Lerwick, who receives their letters from the general post-office, and puts them into the hands of the person who is appointed to make up the mail for the landward districts, where there are receiving-houses conveniently situated. This plan has been found to answer extremely well. The post travels twice a-week, and greatly adds to the comfort of this remote parish and other parts of the country.\*

Fences in general are of a very inferior kind. A ring fence, of turf and stone intermingled, about three feet high, surrounds townships, of from 80 to 100 merks of land, often belonging to different proprietors. Within this fence there are from 12 to 40 small farms, for the most part lying run-rig; and the consequence of this mode of division is, that the tenants cannot, if they had the inclination, raise crops of ryegrass and turnips, because it is not in their power to protect them from the cattle. The land-owners have good sufficient stone fences around their own farms, and they have them also subdivided into enclosures of six or seven acres each, and are thus enabled to have a judicious rotation of crops. They are now beginning to see the inconvenience to their tenants of the old system, and are having their farms laid in one spot, with the view, it is hoped, of enclosing them. Indeed, the work of enclosing has been going on, in a very spirited manner, for the last three years; and although this cannot be converted into an agricultural country—the pursuits of the people, as fishermen, the variability of the climate, and the want of good markets for any extra produce, being insurmountable obstacles in the way,—yet there is good hope that such improvements may be effected, as will meet the demands of an increasing population, and enable the people to procure for themselves many additional comforts.

Balta Sound, on the middle of the east coast, and Uyea Sound, at the south end of the island, (already mentioned,) are much frequented harbours, and as good, and of as easy access, as any in the kingdom. It is much to be regretted, that there is no lighthouse to direct distressed mariners to their entrance. Such a work is as necessary on the north, as it has been found to be on the south extremity of

\* There is now a Government penny post, established in place of this private arrangement.—1841.

Zetland. Many a vessel tossed on the north sea, and in dark and stormy nights ready to be dashed against our rocks, would hail with joy the appearance of a light, by which they might be guided to a safe place of refuge—and many valuable lives, and many a valuable cargo would thus be saved. There are two places where such an erection might be made, for the benefit of all vessels coming from the north and east, viz. Lambaness, a long projecting headland which forms the north side of the bay of Norwick in Unst, and Strandiburgh in the Island of Fetlar.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is as nearly as possible in the middle of the island, distant six miles from the northern and southern extremities, and one and a-half from the eastern and western. It was built from the foundation, at a small distance from the old church of Balliasta in 1825. It is a handsome, substantial, well-finished, and commodious place of worship, and does great honour to the heritors who erected it, at the expense of about L. 2000 Sterling. It has accommodation for 1200 souls, with a sufficient number of free sittings for the poor. There is at present no manse in the parish. The incumbent lives in a house of his own, and receives an allowance from the heritors in lieu of a manse, and with this arrangement all concerned are well satisfied.

The glebe is at Norwick, about four miles to the northward of the church. It consists of 14 imperial acres of very good land, and, although let to a tenant considerably lower, is worth L.9 Sterling per annum.

The tithes are valued, and the stipend, which is paid by the heritors, including communion elements, amounts to L.249 Sterling.

A small chapel was lately built by a few Independents, and another by the Wesleyan Methodists near Norwick. They have no stated ministers, but are occasionally visited by some preachers of their own persuasion, who are paid by their respective Societies.

About 487 families, comprehending an examinable population of nearly 1900 souls, attend the Established Church, two-thirds of which it is found to accommodate sufficiently, on all ordinary occasions. The people, in general, attend well. When the weather is favourable, the church is full. The number of communicants is generally from 1150 to 1200. The number of Independents in this parish, is 15; of Wesleyan Methodists, 25.

Church collections average about L. 30 per annum.

*Education.*—There are only two schools in this parish,—a  
S HETLAND.

rochial school near the church, and a school on the General Assembly's scheme at Norwick. The branches taught at these schools are, English, reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and navigation. The parochial schoolmaster's salary is the maximum. The school fees are about L. 6 per annum : but the school being situated in a very populous district, a more efficient schoolmaster would double that amount. The Assembly's schoolmaster has L.25 Sterling of salary ; and his school fees may vary from L.10 to L. 12.

There are no persons in the parish from six to fifteen years of age, who cannot read a little. But there are still a few aged people who cannot read.

The north and mid parishes of this ministry are now well supplied with schools, which are within reach of the whole population, and well attended, the Assembly's school especially, which is full to overflowing, and is accounted by the people a great blessing. Yet there is still a large part of the population in a most deplorable state for the want of schools. The south-east, south, and south-west parts of the island, with a population of at least 1200 souls, are at the distance of from four to six miles from the parish school, separated from the mid-parish, where it is situated, by a long dreary hill ; and the people have no means for the education of their children, unless when they can occasionally engage some young man, during the winter quarter, who has been educated at the parochial or Assembly's school, to undertake the charge.

Two additional schools, one at the south-east, and another at the south-west part of the parish, are greatly wanted, and loudly called for. The people about Uyea Sound, and Sandwick and Muness, are, many of them, exceedingly anxious about the education of their children. In that district, were a school established, 100 children could easily attend it ; and surely in the present enlightened times, it is sad to think that so many young creatures should be deprived of the means of instruction.\*

*Library.*—In the year 1823, a parochial library was established, under the direction of the present incumbent. It is supported by a subscription of 1s. yearly, paid by each member ; and as many

\* Since this was written, a school-house has been built in the proposed locality, chiefly at the expense of the late William Mouat, Esq. of Garth, by whose lamented death the cause of education in these islands has been deprived of one of its warmest and most generous friends. A salary has been granted and a teacher appointed by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. The people on the west side of the island are still lamentably destitute of the means of education for their children.

of the parishioners as choose, have it in their power to become members at any time. It has succeeded very well, and consists of about 300 volumes of religious and historical books.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—There are about 70 poor people constantly on the roll. They receive from 5s. to 10s. per annum, to help to purchase clothes. They are lodged and victualled by a certain number of the people, fixed upon by the kirk-session, who keep them in their houses a certain number of days, in rotation, in proportion to the number of merks of land they occupy; and they are generally well treated. Some of the poor have small houses built for them by their friends, in which they live, and the people amongst whom they are quartered\* send in to them part of such provisions as they have for themselves, and, in this respect, they shew much kindness, for we seldom hear that the poor are in want of necessary food.

The ordinary church collections amount to about L. 30 per annum, and a demand for an extraordinary contribution does not frequently occur. But when it does, and a collection is called for in aid of any individual case of distress, it is as liberal as could be looked for, considering the circumstances of the people, and no other mode of procuring funds for the support of the poor has hitherto been found necessary. It is, however, much to be regretted, that there appears no disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial relief. So far from considering it degrading, they express the greatest earnestness to have their names placed upon the roll, when they have the slightest pretence for making the request, and when a "quarter" becomes vacant, by the death of a pauper, there are always immediate applications for it. It is hoped, that, as the minds of the people become more enlarged by a Christian education, they will assume a more independent spirit.

*Public-Houses, &c.*—There is no house in this parish which can be properly called an inn; but the kindness and hospitality of the people are such, that a stranger can never be at a loss, and there are two houses in the neighbourhood of Uyea Sound, kept by shop-keepers, where wayfaring men will find very comfortable lodgings. There are seven licensed retailers of spirits, ale and porter, in this island. Some of these are of too respectable characters, to allow of any improprieties in their houses; but there are others who retail liquors, and some of them without license, who are a nuisance in their neigh-

\* That district or number of houses, fixed upon by the kirk-session, for the maintenance of a pauper, is called a "quarter."

bourhood, and who use every art to engage the young men in drinking to the great injury of their morals, and the waste of their substance. The population, with a few exceptions, is in general sober, yet the quantity of ardent spirits exhausted in the parish, was some years ago very great, equalling in value one-half of the rent of the island. There is now a great change. The institution of a Temperance Society in November 1831, has produced a very happy effect. The quantity of liquors now exhausted in the parish, is less than the half of what it formerly was.\*

*Fuel.*—Peats from the hills of Valleyfield and Saxa Vord, are the only article of fuel used by the tenantry, and are procured by many at no small labour and expense, especially on the east side of the island, where peat-moss is completely exhausted. Besides the labour of cutting and drying them, the people are obliged to employ from eight to ten horses, for the space of five or six weeks, every summer, to carry them home, and these must be attended by a person to put on the loads, and one or two boys to drive the horses. Most of the gentry use a considerable quantity of English coal.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Very considerable changes have taken place here, since the last Statistical Account was published, some of which have been glanced at in the course of the foregoing observations. The farms are now smaller, and more adapted for a population of fishermen, whose avocations allow them but little time for farm-work, and who have but very little inclination for it. They are, however, sufficiently large to supply them with meal, potatoes, cabbages, &c.; and to enable them to keep a sufficient number of milch cows, horses, sheep, and some pigs; and they have at all times an abundant supply of the best fish, both for family use and for the market. Favourable seasons and successful fishings have placed many of them in easy circumstances, and enabled them to indulge in the luxury of tea, formerly little known among them, but now used in the greater number of families twice every day.

In consequence of the reduction of the size of the farms, ploughs have entirely disappeared from amongst the tenantry. That implement of husbandry is now only employed on the farms of the

\* Since this statement was drawn up, a society has been formed in this parish, based on the principle of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors, and which already numbers upwards of 350 members. Two of the most extensive spirit-dealers in the parish have wholly abandoned the traffic, from conscientious convictions of its impropriety; and it is hoped the rest will soon be led to adopt the same course.

gentry, and is of the same construction with the ploughs used in the south country. The old Zetland plough has now yielded to the spade, and is nowhere to be seen.

In this island, far removed from a market-town, great or rapid improvements in agriculture are not to be expected. It is well adapted for a population whose chief employment is fishing, and who hold their small farms as cheap places of abode, and for furnishing them with various comforts, which they could not have, if they had only their fishing to depend upon. Yet improvements are silently going on, and considerable quantities of ground are, from year to year, added to the old arable land. If the commons were divided, and the improvable parts inclosed, from time to time, as the population increases, portions of them would be willingly taken at a low rent and cultivated by tenants; and this is the only way in which improvements could be prudently made in this place. To attempt speculations in agriculture here, on a large scale, would be the height of folly.

*Revised May 1841.*

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## PARISH OF NESTING.

PRESBYTERY OF BURRAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN M'GOWAN, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE parish consists of the three parishes of Nesting, Lunasting, and Whalsay; and to these are annexed the detached islands of Skerries.

*Extent.*—If the whole land of the parish were thrown together, its average length would be from 18 to 20 miles, and average breadth 4.

*Boundaries.*—Nesting is bounded on the east by the Island of Whalsay, with the Skerrie Islands adjacent; by Catfirth Voe on the south; and by Delting on the west.

*Geology.*—The predominating rock in this parish is gneiss. Primitive limestone, mica-slate, syenite, and granite veins occur in subordinate quantity. In the out Skerries there are beds of primitive limestone associated with gneiss.



## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—There are registers of births and marriages, but not of deaths. These registers were very irregularly kept till 1827; and the Dissenters do not register, except those who have been married and baptised by the parochial minister.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners are, Robert Bruce, Esq. Simbister, and Miss Robina Hunter of Lunna. These possess nearly the whole parish.

*Mansion-House.*—A splendid house and offices have been built in Whalsay by Mr Bruce of Simbister. The building is of granite, and cost L. 20,000. The stone was imported across the Sound of Whalsay.

## III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	-	1941
1811,	-	1866
1821,	-	2005
1831,	-	2108

The population of the three parishes is supposed to be at present 2250.

During the last three years, only one case of illegitimate birth occurred.

This parish contains a greater number of inhabitants, in proportion to the rental land, than any other in Shetland, owing to the exertions of the two principal heritors in making outsets, or new settlements, on grounds formerly uncultivated.

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

The extent of arable land in the parish is supposed to be about 1000 acres. All the rest is waste or in pasture. The whole land is undivided, and common to the tenants of the two principal proprietors. No wood.

*Rent.*—The average rent of land per merk is L. 1. No progress in the wretched agriculture of the parish, has been made during the last fifty years. The people direct their sole attention to fishing, and consider the cultivation of the lands as only a secondary object.

*Fisheries.*—The inhabitants adventure in what we call the great fisheries of ling, cod, and tusk; but the principal part of their subsistence arises from the small fishing of piltock and sillock, which, except in very extraordinary years, they can pursue at no expense, and with great advantage, all the year round.

There are fourteen or sixteen herring boats belonging to Mr Bruce, and about seven to Mr Hunter. Mr Bruce's average

fishing amounts to 2000 barrels per annum, and Mr Hunter's is in proportion. Ling and cod, and tusk-fishing, called the Haaf Fishery, commences in the beginning of June, and continues till July and August. The produce is sent to Leith. The greater part of the male population is concerned in fishing;—and many men go to the Greenland whale fishery. \*

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are three churches, viz. at Nesting, Whalsay, and Lunnasting. The church at Nesting is made for the accommodation of the whole population at sacrament. Skerries Church is sixteen miles distant from the mainland, and the minister preaches there only once a-year. Whalsay is visited by him eleven times in the year, and Lunnasting eleven times also. It was intended that the Whalsay church should have been endowed as a Parliamentary church; but, unfortunately, this advantage was not obtained. Lunnasting Church has been newly repaired, and the seating is good. Whalsay Church has been newly roofed; but the seating is not good or comfortable.

The parish church of Nesting was built in 1794, and is in a tolerable state of repair.

The whole population belongs to the Established Church, except thirty individuals, who are Methodists, Baptists, or Independents.

Stipend L. 150; of which sum L. 69 are received from Exchequer. The extent of the glebe is twelve merks and a-half.

The manse was built in 1770. It was lately repaired, but again needs repair.

*Education.*—There is one parochial, and two adventure schools. Three more are required. Education is, in this parish, at the lowest ebb. The parish schoolmaster's salary is L. 25 per annum, and his fees do not exceed L. 2 or L. 3.

*Poor.*—Average number of paupers yearly on the permanent roll for the three years 1835–36–37, 25. Average yearly amount of church collections for these years, L. 14, 2s. 1d. Mortcloth dues, &c. L. 1, 8s.

\* Seventeen boats perished in 1832; seven of which belonged to Nesting. About L. 3000 were raised in Scotland and in London for relief of the widows; each widow receiving L. 3: each child under fourteen, 10s; and parents depending on sons, L. 2. This allowance they have got annually since 1832, and will get till 1843.

June 1841.

# PARISH OF DELTING.

PRESBYTERY OF BURRAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN PATON, MINISTER.\*

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name, Situation, and Extent.*—THE name seems to be of Danish or Norwegian origin. The parish is bounded on the west by Northmaving, from which it is divided by a long narrow voe, called Sulom Voe; on the east, by Nesting and Lunnasting; on the north, by Yell Sound, which separates it from Yell; and on the south, by Weesdale and Sandsting. It is difficult to state, with any degree of precision, the length or breadth of this parish, as it is much intersected by narrow voes, and no part of it is above two miles from the sea. The appearance of the county is hilly, bleak, and barren.

The air is moist, but not unhealthy.

There are some small lakes or lochs in the parish, but nothing deserving the name of river.

*Geology.*—The prevailing rocks in this parish are gneiss and syenite: subordinate are beds of limestone and of hornblende rocks.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Parochial Registers.*—There is a register of births and marriages, and a record of the acts of the kirk-session. The latter commences in 1709, and was regularly kept till 1719,—from which time till 1751 there is a blank. From 1751, this record was again regularly kept till 1781. Since 1821 the entries have been quite regular. The register of marriages and births commences in 1751, but was not properly kept till within the last twenty years.

*Land-owners.*—The principal land-owners at present are, Earl of Shetland; Arthur Gifford of Busta; Captain C. Mowat of Garth; Mrs William Mowat; Miss Hunter of Lunna; Representatives of R. Hoseason; and William Angus of Toft. No valuation ever existed in Shetland. Public charges are paid according to an arbitrary arrangement of old standing, and peculiar to this county.

\* From notes furnished by the schoolmaster at Brae, Delting.

*Mansion-Houses.*—The mansion-houses in the parish are those of Busta, Garth, Ullhouse, and Mossbank.

*Antiquities.*—Of antiquities the parish has little to boast. Of the Pictish castles mentioned in the old Account there are no remains, except that of Brough, at Yell Sound side, which is much dilapidated. The others, at Burranness in Firthsvoe, and Burra-voe in Bustavoe, have been entirely demolished, and levelled with the ground,—the foundations being occupied for booths or store-houses and stations for curing fish. But there are two relics of antiquity not mentioned in the old Account. One of these is the remains of a wet-dock or harbour at Burra-voe, which, from its proximity to the Pictish castle that stood there, must have been built as a place of security for such small craft as belonged to it. The other is a stone, (a block of granite  $10\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, circumference near the top 18 feet, at the base 16 feet,) commonly called the standing-stone of Busta. It has evidently been set up by the hands of man.

In the rocky banks of Culsterness, there is a cave of some extent, and moderate height, containing an outer and inner apartment, and of very difficult access, said to have been in former times a hiding-place. There is another cave at the side of the loch of Trondavoe, of less extent, which appears to have been made by art, for what purpose cannot now be ascertained; but it is supposed to have been a place, which, in times long past, was used by sheep-stealers, in which to deposit their stolen sheep.

### III.—POPULATION.

In this parish there are neither towns nor villages.

The population amounted in 1811, to	.	1624
1821,	.	1818
1831,	.	2070
1841,	.	2087

During the last three years, there was only one illegitimate birth.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The land is not estimated by acres, but by *merk-land*, an old Norwegian or Danish denomination, the quantity designated by which is not now understood; but, generally speaking, this measure may be estimated as containing about two-thirds of a Scotch acre. Upon this reckoning, the parish may contain about 1000 acres under cultivation; and the pasture ground enclosed and attached to these 1000 acres, may be as much more.

There is no wood of any description in the parish.

*Rent.*—The rent may be pretty fairly taken, on an average,

at L. 1 per merk-land. The real rent, as nearly as can be ascertained, is about L.1000.

There have been improvements lately made in draining, instead of the old system of leaving an open ditch between each rig, which caused a great waste of surface. In several places, these ditches are filled with stones, covered over, and the land brought into a proper state. There have also been introduced into this parish twenty ploughs, (commonly called Scotch ploughs, I suppose to distinguish them from the plough formerly used in the parish, which had only one stilt,) and thirteen carts. A few years ago, there were only two carts in the parish.

*Fisheries.*—The fishings are of ling, cod, and herring. Last year, 523 barrels of herrings, and 60 tons of ling, cod, tusk, and saith, were cured in the parish; but a much greater quantity were taken by the fishermen belonging to it. In the month of May, all the fishermen belonging to the parish repair to the fishing-stations in Northmavine and Papa-Stour, for the purpose of prosecuting the ling and cod fishing, upon which they principally depend for the payment of their rents. Besides the above, the coal fish (commonly called sillock and piltock) are taken extensively in the parish; from which, the inhabitants derive support for their families, and occasionally make considerable quantities of oil.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The number of families belonging to the Established Church is 374; there are 17 families Methodists; and 3 Independents. The stipend amounts to L. 150. The extent of the glebe is nine merk-land; yearly value L.10. The manse was built in 1751; completely repaired and enlarged (at the expense of at least L. 500) between the years 1819 and 1821. Its present condition is not good.

*Education.*—There are four schools in the parish. Two more are very greatly required. The salary of the parochial teacher is L.25, 13s. 3½d. His fees may amount to L.3 per annum; and he receives L.2, 2s. 9d. in lieu of garden ground.

*Poor.*—The average number of persons receiving aid during the last three years is 25. Average sum allotted to each, 5s. 3½d. The average annual amount of contributions for last three years, L.9, 17s. 6½d. Of this sum L.6, 11s. on an average were annually divided among the poor. The remainder was expended on the interment of paupers, and other casualties.

May 1841.

# UNITED PARISHES OF TINGWALL, WHITENESS, & WEESDALE.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN TURNBULL, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Boundaries.*—THIS parish, consisting of the united parishes of Tingwall, Whiteness, and Weesdale, is bounded on the north, by the sea, and the parishes of Nesting and Delting; on the west, by the sea, and the parish of Sandsting; on the south, by the sea and Quarff; on the east, by Lerwick and Gulberwick. Lerwick was disjoined from Tingwall, and erected into a separate parish, in 1701. Sound and Gulberwick were disjoined from Tingwall in 1722, and annexed to the parish of Lerwick.

*Extent.*—Tingwall is in length, from north to south, from 12 to 14 miles. Whiteness lies to the west of Tingwall, and is in length from 5 to 6 miles. Weesdale is to the north-west of Whiteness, and from 6 to 7 miles in length.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Ancient Remains.*—There are many tumuli, where the Scandinavians had buried their dead. In those which were lately opened, earthen urns of various sizes were discovered, containing calcined bones. Steinbartes or stone axes, called here thunder-bolts, are frequently found, also arrow-heads. There are also the remains of a very great many Roman Catholic chapels.

Tingwall was formerly an archdeaconry. Most of the church lands in it were made over by Sir Jerome Cheyne, the Popish Archdeacon of Tingwall, to his nephew, and remained in the family, without, I believe, ever being challenged.

In 1592, when Presbyterianism was established in Scotland, Tingwall was the seat of, and gave name to, the Shetland Presbytery; the meetings of which were afterwards removed to Scaloway.

While the Shetland Islands remained under the Danish crown the Foud or chief magistrate resided here.

At a small holm in the Loch of Tingwall, the assize was held, and the judgments of the other courts (Gula Thing) were revised.\* On a hill at a little distance, is the place where the last sentence of the law was inflicted on the condemned. After these islands came under the Scottish Crown, this court was removed to Scalloway. The last who suffered there, were Barbara Tulloch, and her daughter, Ellen King, who were condemned for the crime of witchcraft, and put to death in a cruel manner in the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Scalloway is the only village in the parish. It was anciently the capital of Shetland, and a burgh. The name is said to signify the harbour beside the mansion houses,—*Scalla* signifying house, and *way*, or more properly *vie*, a roadstead. Some suppose it to have been *Scallavick*, the little harbour. In this village most of the Shetland gentlemen had residences. And even in the recollection of some old people, the Sinclairs of House, (descendants of the St Clairs of Caithness,) Mitchells of Westshore, Scotts of Giblesta, Umphrays of Asta and Berry, Mitchells of Girsta, Dicks of Fracafield, Dicks of Warmadale, Mowbrays, &c. had houses in Scalloway. The only gentleman in the village now is Mr Scott of Scalloway. The castle of Scalloway, a fine old ruin, stands to the east of the village. It was built in 1600, by Earl Patrick Stewart. Great oppressions and heavy burdens were imposed upon the people during the erection of this edifice. The village has increased much of late, and is chiefly supported by the fishing.

*Ancient History.*—St Ninian is said to have introduced Christianity into Shetland; but it did not generally prevail until 995. These islands were in a very unsettled state (being frequently taken by Scotch pirates, and retaken by the Danes,) until King Harold, in 776, took possession of Shetland, Orkney, and the Western Isles. Hacon Adlestain introduced the Gula Thing law into Shetland. After King Harold was slain at Stamford Bridge, in 1067, his son visited Shetland, &c. and, with the consent of Adlebert, Archbishop of Bremen, established bishops in all these islands. After his return to Norway, in 1672, he granted to the merchants of his new city of Bergen the sole right of trading with the islands, excepting that 360 cwts. of wool were annually exported for the use of the Archbishop of Bremen and his clergy.

\* Island Law, as the highest courts were held in islands.

In 1269, King Henry of England entered into a commercial treaty with King Magnus Lagabetter of Norway. Englishmen were sent to inquire into the state of the islands, their extent, produce, &c. It is supposed they also divided the land into merks.

In 1271, Shetland was separated from Orkney, and united to Faroe. They had had the same Foud and Lagamand who resided at Scalloway. They had between them nine bishops.\*

By a treaty of 1470, Shetland was pledged to the Crown of Scotland; and from that period, the original inhabitants were most grievously oppressed by tyrants, from time to time, sent over by the Scottish Crown. At the time of the transfer, all the property in Shetland was held by Udal tenure, (descending from father to son without any written documents,) paid no fees, and owned no superior. About 1664, Douglas of Spynie, factor for Lord Grandison, compelled many of the simple udallers to take out feu-charters for their lands. Very few of the descendants of the Norwegians now possess lands in Shetland. There are still a few in Dunrossness and Cunningsburgh. For a century before the islands were transferred to the Scottish Crown, the St Clairs of Caithness possessed a very large share of the Shetland property, which their descendants enjoyed until a late period.

In 1530, the islanders were so oppressed by James, Earl of Moray, that, simple and yielding as they were, they rose in arms against his factor, and the Crown was compelled to revoke the charter granted to him of the lands belonging to it in Shetland.

In 1561, Queen Mary, importuned by Lord Robert Stewart, her natural brother, made a grant to him of all the Crown lands in Orkney and Shetland. After her unfortunate connexion with Bothwell, she revoked the grant given to Lord Robert Stewart, and conferred it on her husband. On Bothwell's forfeiture, the lands again reverted to the Crown, and Lord Robert Stewart gained possession of them; but, owing to his cruelty to the inhabitants, he was deprived of them, and confined for six months in the palace of Linlithgow. But, in 1581, his interest at Court procured for him a new grant of the Earldom; he was also appointed Justiciar, with power to convoke and dissolve the Law-taings. He forfeited the grant in 1585.

In 1587, Sir John Maitland obtained a grant of the islands, revenues, &c.; but, having resigned, Lord Robert Stewart prevail-

\* For much of the above information I am indebted to the Rev. Mr Schroter of Faroe.



ed on King James to confer them on him; and, in 1600, Earl Patrick obtained a new grant of them, lived at Scalloway, built the castle, and grievously oppressed the inhabitants, doing all in his power to prevent their complaints reaching the ears of Government. In 1608, however, they made known their grievances to Parliament, which, in 1612, revoked the charter, and annexed the Lordship to the Crown. Two years afterwards, Earl Patrick, who justly merited punishment for his cruelty to the Shetlanders, was put to death for high treason. He had the power of life and death over the inhabitants of these islands, fined them, and confiscated their property at his pleasure. He assessed the country in money, provisions, and personal labour. He also feued lands he had seized from the poor udallers; and these, with scatt and other burdens then imposed, together with the Crown lands, form the revenue of the Earldom in Shetland.

In 1614, Sir James Stewart of Ochiltree farmed the Crown property; but he being also guilty of the greatest oppression was deprived of it.

In 1624, Sir George Hay was appointed Farmer-General and Steward of the islands. He, too, oppressed the poor Shetlanders; and the lordship was again annexed to the Crown by act of Parliament.

In the reign of Charles I. the Earl of Morton obtained a wadset of the Lordship of Shetland and Earldom of Orkney for the sum of L.30,000, said to have been advanced his Majesty by him. This deed was ratified by act of Parliament. No attention was paid to it during the Commonwealth; but, at the Restoration, Viscount Grandison, as trustee for the Morton family, obtained a grant of the property and revenues belonging to the Crown in Shetland and Orkney.

In 1641, the alleged debt due the Earl of Morton was discharged, and the Lordship of Shetland and Earldom of Orkney were to remain inseparably annexed to the Crown. During the reign of Queen Anne, however, on account of the active part taken by James Earl of Morton in bringing about the Union between England and Scotland, he obtained a new grant in the form of a wadset, redeemable for the old sum of L.30,000.

In 1742, the Earl of Morton obtained an irredeemable right to the lands, on condition of improving the islands. He was to drain marshes, build harbours, promote the fisheries, and improve the

agriculture. These conditions, however, have never been fulfilled.

In 1776, Lord Morton sold his lands and casualties in Shetland to Sir Laurence Dundas, the ancestor of the present Earl of Zetland, for the sum of L.66,000.

*Burdens.*—There were many burdens imposed on Shetland, such as scatt, wattle, sheep, and oxpenny. Although it is maintained that scatt was the Danish land-tax, yet, until lately, it was never levied, when the lands were not under cultivation; but, in a process before the Court of Session in 1829, this casual payment was made a feu. Scatt varies on the merk from 4d. to 1s. 6d., those farms or rooms having a right to a large common paying more than those not having such a privilege. The scatt was formerly paid in butter and oil. The Shetland proprietors have also to pay the British land tax. The wattle was a tax imposed on every family, paid in barley to the foud or bailie. It is said to have had its origin from presents made to a pious lady, sent over by the Bishop of Orkney to bless the pastures, in order to the increase of the flocks. It is now included in the scatt. Sheep and oxpenny had their origin from a certain number of sheep and oxen furnished for the governor's table from every parish.\* It was also paid in butter and oil. It, too, is now included in the scatt. The feus were also paid in butter. All these butter payments were made in merks and lispunds. The lispund was formerly 15 lbs.; but, in a process lately before the Court of Session, it was made 30 lbs. Tron, or 32 lbs. Avoirdupois.†

By a late act of Parliament, the Earl of Zetland (then Lord Dundas) obtained leave to dispose of his feus, scatt, &c., which have almost all been bought up by the Shetland heritors.

*Land Rent.*—The land mails or rents were anciently paid in woodmail,‡ afterwards converted into money and butter. The merks land were rated at 6 penny, 12 penny, &c. The 12 penny paid 16s. and 16 lbs. butter. The tenant also paid the teinds in kind, now converted into money.§ They also paid one fowl for every house or reek “to feed his Majesty's hawks.” This claim

\* First granted as a compliment to Bothwell, when he took refuge in Shetland after his marriage with Queen Mary.

† See Pundler process.

‡ Woodmail, or mill, (cloth payment) was a strong woollen cloth made in Shetland, valued at 2s. per gilding. There are six cuttles or Scotch ells in one gilding.

§ The Bishop of Orkney formerly drew one-half of all the corn teind in Shetland, except in the parish of Tingwall, the Archdeacon having the whole of the teinds parsonage and vicarage.

has again been set up by her Majesty's Falconer for Scotland, but resisted by the Shetland gentlemen, and a process in regard to it is now depending before the Court of Session. Formerly, when leases were granted, a sum was advanced by the lessee, termed a *grassum*, or entry money, in order that the lands might be kept at their old rent. In addition to the land rent, every tenant was obliged to pay one fowl per merk to his landlord, to deliver his fish to him at a certain price; and whatever produce of his farm he had to dispose of, had first to be offered to him. The landlord in return always supported his tenant in years of scarcity. Rents are now paid in money.

Until lately, great attention was paid to the division of scathold. The bailie, or chief magistrate, went along the marches, accompanied by some of the most respectable people of each parish, who were well acquainted with the division, and with them some young boys, on whom they bestowed a good flogging at particular places, in order that they might remember the marches; after which, they received some little reward. I have heard some old people who were present, describe what took place at these ridings of the marches, called "riding the Hagra."

They also paid great attention to the sheep-flocks, which constituted their chief wealth. They had large stone inclosures in all their pastures. They made a coarse warm cloth of the wool, which is still done by those who have any sheep. In 1797, the sheep-flock in this parish was computed at 10,000. It does not now amount to 1000. The want of them is very much felt.

### III.—POPULATION.

Population in 1755, .	1412
1806, .	1997
1821, .	2309
1831, .	2797
1836, .	3188

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Soil and Produce.*—This parish lies in parallel straths, from north-east to south-west. The soil is generally a light-brown, black loam, or moorish. Each strath has a bed of primitive blue limestone, interspersed with quartz. The subsoil of most of the peaty ground, has a crust of iron ore impervious to water, and which at first resists the plough. After some years' cultivation, however, this ferruginous substance yields to the plough. The subsoil can then be turned up and mixed with the moss, greatly improving the soil. I have not found the iron ore so hurtful to vegetation as might have been supposed. But wherever there is a chalybeate

spring, it requires to be drained; for when it runs over the soil, it renders it unproductive. The subsoil of most of the meadows is blue till, mixed with small stones. This is even found under the beds of marl. The hills on the east side of Tingwall parish are composed of clay slate, and micaceous schistus, and appear capable of cultivation; those on the west side do not appear so capable. Whenever the moss on them is cut, the whole surface is covered with large stones of coarse granite and gneiss.

Near Rova Head, on the north-east part of Tingwall parish, Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart. has discovered a field of fine blue slate, which promises to be of great benefit to the country; the gray slate, in use at present, soon splitting when exposed to sun and air.

In some of the meadows, there are quantities of fine shell marl, which answers well as a manure, especially for green crops.

The want of inclosures is much felt: cattle injuring the crops, and poaching the land in the winter time. In some places, however, there are good stone inclosures.

An improved system of agriculture has been introduced, and in many places a regular rotation of crops followed. The common rotation is, *1st* year, turnips and potatoes; *2d*, big barley, with grass seeds; *3d*, hay; *4th*, pasture; *5th*, oats. The potato is cultivated to a large extent, and in ordinary seasons, Lerwick and Scalloway are supplied from Tingwall parish. The potatoes are planted in drills, horse-hoed, and when taken up, put into pits during winter. Turnips grow well. The red and green tops and Swedish are tried; but the yellow are preferred. The barley in use is the four and six-sided big. The two-sided has been tried, but does not answer. It is some weeks later in ripening, not so productive, and more easily injured by the wind. Wheat and rye have been attempted, but do not answer, owing to the want of sun. Pease do well, unless when we are visited by early frosts, but are little cultivated. Flax and hemp have also been reared, and grow luxuriantly, but the people do not know how to manage them when pulled.

The old one-sided plough is still in use. In some parts, the Rotheram, or Small's plough is in more general use, drawn by two horses; if they are small, assisted by two oxen. Close carts are also much used. The land is in many places cultivated by the spade.

The method of making hay is much improved. It is in general

spread out as soon as mown, and before night put up in cocks. This method is continued for a few days, when it is led home, by which means the natural juices and nutritious properties are preserved, as well as the fine smell. A little salt is often mixed with it, when building.

*Meadows.*—The meadows and boggy land arise from springs of water issuing from higher land and running through crevices in the limestone. These meadows produce a quantity of coarse grass, which is made into hay for fodder for the cattle in winter. From these wet grounds, as well as from stagnant waters, there arises a mildew, whenever a slight frost takes place, especially on the fall of a north wind during the summer or autumn seasons. This exhalation or ground-fog is frequently seen to arise from these bogs like the smoke of so many fires, until, uniting, it forms one dense cloud over all the damp ground. It instantly destroys vegetation. The potato crop, in particular, is ruined whenever it reaches it. Not only do the stems soon wither, but the poisonous matter seems to descend into the bulbs, which renders them so unpalatable, that some seasons even the swine will not eat them. For the last four years, the crops in all our valleys, at a little distance from the sea, have been ruined by early frosts, accompanied by mildews. The crops within the vortex of the cloud on the lower ground, are often completely destroyed, while the upper part of the same field remains unharmed. The oats and barley, under the influence of the mildew, assume a dirty white appearance.

The advantages of draining are fully experienced. It is carried on in a very sufficient manner by Mr Hay, on his property at Laxfirth and other places. But it is not to be expected that tenants, without either capital or leases, are to follow his example. And until bogs are drained, and the stagnant water carried off, the saving of the crops must always remain precarious.

Considerable quantities of waste land have lately been brought into cultivation; some by the tenants themselves. It was formerly the practice for the landlord to mark out a piece on the common, and assign it to a tenant, who, on condition of bringing it under crop, had it for seven years rent free. But it was seldom the tenant could drain, trench, and inclose it properly.

It has been the practice here, as in all other parishes of Shetland, to cut up the best soil in the common, carrying it home either for manure, or to spread under the cattle in the byre. By

this destructive practice, the best pasture in the country is not only injured, but in many places completely destroyed. This system has been put a stop to by some of the heritors; but unless they will all unite, the evil will not cease. It is distressing thus to see the best pasture completely destroyed; and no sooner does the grass begin to spring than the ground is immediately robbed of its new surface; and this continues until the whole soil is either carried away by the tenants, or washed away by the winter rains.

*Roads.*—Roads are now so good in some places, that carts can drive on them. But they are yet in their infancy; and the want of them is a great bar to all improvements. There are excellent roads about Laxfirth and to the northward, but the middle of the parish has been sadly neglected. The soil being open, and carts and horses constantly traversing them, the roads that are, are so broken up during winter, that people cannot go to church with any comfort. These observations refer to Tingwall only; for in Whiteness and Weesdale, there can scarcely be said to be any made roads.

*Fisheries.*—The Shetlanders subsist chiefly by fishing, without which few could pay their rents. The inhabitants in the southern parts of this parish begin their spring fishing in February, venturing out to sea whenever the weather permits, often risking their lives. A few salt their own fish, and dispose of them, when ready for the market, on their own account. The price of cod in general is 4s. per cwt. for wet fish; price of ling, 6s. : two cwt. and rather less than a-half of wet make one of dry fish. The summer fishing begins about the end of April, and ends about the 12th of August. It is carried on in sloops of from twenty to forty tons. More than one-half of the fish caught goes to the men; most of whom about Scalloway have shares in the vessels. Some of them are sole owners.

The people in these parishes are under no obligation to fish to their landlords, or to dispose of any of their product to them. They are at liberty to employ themselves in any way they please. There was formerly a bounty on Shetland fish, and also on the vessels engaged in the fishing, of L. 1 per registered ton.

For some years past, the herring-fishing has been extensively carried on. The people deliver their herrings at about 7s. per cran. I have known one of our boats take 297 crans in a season. In 1835, above 15,000 barrels were shipped from Scalloway alone. For the three last years, this fishing has not been successful; and

the crops having also failed, the people are in a very reduced state. In such circumstances, rents can hardly be paid either for lands or houses. Yet, with a very few exceptions, no tenant has been turned out of his possession by his landlord. The rents are at present all paid in money. There are 1637 merks land in this ministry. The rental is about L.2000. The arable ground will measure rather more than 2500 acres.

*Exports and Imports.*—It is impossible to separate the exports and imports of this parish from the rest of Shetland. Some of the exports of these islands, as extracted from the Custom-House books, are as follows:—

Year 1823.	Year 1824.	Year 1825.
Fish, tons, 1866	1284	1575
Oil, barrels, 740	950	1243
Beef, barrels, 140		438
Oxen,	367	1250
Sheep,	69	76
Kelp, tons, 260		442
Ponies,	92	140
Butter, barrels,	106	119
Chromate of iron, tons		180

The following are some of the imports; oatmeal, 2152½ bolls; tobacco, 4788 lbs.; spirits, 14,830 gallons; coffee, 1419 lbs.; snuff, 1073 lbs.; tea, 17,983.

The late Mr Mouat of Garth states, that, in 1831, there were in Shetland 25,000 acres cultivated land,—400,000, uncultivated,—the rental being from L. 26,000 to L. 28,000. He reckons the gross proceeds of lands, fishery, trade, &c. to be L. 300,000 per annum.\*

*Lakes.*—There are many lakes in this parish, abounding with fish. The principal ones are the lakes of Tingwall, Asta, and Girlsta in Tingwall; and the lake of Strom in Whiteness. In a small holm in Tingwall lake, the Grand Foud held his Court. Girlsta lake is celebrated by Torfæus. He says, it was called Geirhildar-vatn, from the daughter of Floke, a northern pirate, having been lost in it. † In the lake of Strom, there are the remains of a small castle, said to have been inhabited by a son of the Earl of Orkney, who was afterwards slain, by order of his father, at the standing-stone of Tingwall. ‡

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Harbours.*—This parish is better provided with harbours than any in Shetland. To the north, are Deal's Voe, Laxfirth Voe,

\* See Peterkin's Letter to George Traill, Esq. M. P.

† See Hibbert, pp. 268 and 641.

‡ See Hibbert, p. 460.

Wadbrister Voe, and Catfrith Voe. To the west, Weesdale Voe, Binnaness Voe, and Whiteness Voe. To the south, Scalloway Voe, and Cliffsound. And to the west of Scalloway, there is a cluster of islands belonging to this parish, within all of which there is fine anchorage.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are at present two churches,—one at Tingwall, built in 1788, after a long litigation before the Court of Session,—and one at Whiteness for the united parishes of Whiteness and Weesdale, at which there is a missionary on the Royal Bounty. It stands by the loch of Strom, near to the ancient fortification already noticed, part of which was taken down to help to build the former church. The present church is a new one. The old church was dedicated to St Ola. Near to this, lived Sinclair of Strom, famous for his bravery in defending the rights of the udallers against the Government in 1530. In this contest, the Earl of Caithness was slain. There was formerly a church at Weesdale dedicated to “Our Lady.” It was much (sometimes still is) frequented by people from every corner of Shetland, who, by casting in an offering of money at the shrine of “Our Lady,” believed they would be delivered from any trouble they laboured under. There is a tradition regarding the building of it, still firmly believed by the superstitious of the islanders. Two wealthy ladies, sisters, having encountered a storm off the coast of Shetland, vowed to “Our Lady,” that, if she would bring them safe to land, they would erect a church to her on the first spot they reached. They landed at Weesdale, and immediately commenced building the church. And each morning, when the masons came to work, they found as many stones ready quarried as they required during the day. One of the elders of the church, who lately lived in that neighbourhood, used regularly to gather up the offerings, which he put into the poor’s box. A church is building at Scalloway, for the village and its neighbourhood, the walls of which will be finished in a few months.

*Stipend.*—Tingwall is celebrated for its process of augmentation. The Court of Session declaring that they had no power to augment the stipends of the clergy, the incumbent, the Rev. William Mitchell, appealed to the House of Lords, who gave a decision favourable to the clergy. The Court of Session then augmented it to L.578, 13s. Scots, and 108 lispunds of butter, with L.40 for communion elements. It at present amounts to L.254,



14s. 3d., with 20 lispunds butter, and L.8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

*Education.*—The parochial school is placed about the middle of Tingwall. There are three schools supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, one in Weesdale, one in Whiteness, and one at Scalloway. In the island of Trondra, there is one of the General Assembly's schools: and there is another at Laxfirth, where Mr Hay has built a commodious school and dwelling-house. Owing to the parish being so intersected by voes, there are many children who can attend none of these schools.

*Poor.*—There is a great proportion of poor, especially in Tingwall parish, and there are no funds for their support but the Sabbath-day collection, to which the absentee heritors have contributed nothing, at least for the last thirty-three years.

June 1841.

## PARISH OF NORTHMAVING.

PRESBYTERY OF BURRAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. WILLIAM STEVENSON, MINISTER.

### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—Some suppose that the name Northmavine signifies North Main, *i. e.* the north part of the Mainland of Zetland. Others imagine, that as the neck of land which divides this parish from that of Delting is called Maven, and as the whole parish lies to the north of it, it has thence derived its name.

*Extent, &c.*—It is a very extensive parish, being 8 miles broad from east to west, and 16 miles long from north to south. The sea is its boundary on all sides, except where it is joined to the parish of Delting by the neck of land referred to above, and which is only about an hundred yards broad.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The figure of the parish approaches near to that of a triangle, and its surface is very irregular. It is covered with hills, but none of these are of great elevation; except Rona's Hill, which, in the former Statistical Account, is said to be 3944 feet above the level of the sea; but, lately, it

wa ascertained to be only about 1500 feet. It is the highest hill in Zetland; and from its summit, under a clear and serene sky, which very seldom happens even in the finest summer weather, a most extensive and beautiful prospect is presented to the view.

The coast is very irregular, and intersected by a vast number of voes or bays. The shores for the most part are high and precipitous, except where banks of sand or gravel are formed, and composed of rocks of the hardest description. Other materials would not long endure the fury of the winter's storm.

Around the parish, there are many excellent bays or voes. The principal, the most extensive, and beautiful, is St Magnus Bay, from which many voes run into the interior of the land, where the largest vessels may ride at anchor in the most tempestuous weather, in perfect safety. Upon the west side of the parish, there is Mangaster Voe, Hammer's Voe, Gunister Voe, and Urafirth Voe; but Hillswick is most frequented by vessels, as it is considered a very safe harbour. Upon the south and east side, there is Sullom Voe, which is said to be eight miles long, and Gluss Voe, and Collafirth Voe, and others. Upon the north side of the parish, there is Rona's Voe, and Hamnavoe; the former is said to be six miles long, and is narrow; the latter is an excellent place for vessels riding at anchor: but the entrance to it is very small.

This parish is also surrounded by a great number of small islands or holms, and pillars or rocks, situated near the shore, and which are very picturesque objects, when viewed from a distance. There are the Isle of Eagleshey, the Isle of Niben, the Isle of Gunister, the Isle of Stennes, Gluss Isle, the Isle of Uyea and Fetheland, and the Island of Lamma, and some others. None of these are inhabited at present; and the pasture of most of them is considered excellent, and is famed for producing the richest beef and mutton. And upon the most of them, sheep and cattle are kept in winter as well as summer, without shelter, or receiving fodder of any kind, even in the most inclement seasons.

Here, also, many curious rocks may be seen. The most remarkable is one situated at the back of Hillswick Ness, and called the Drongs. This immense rock rises, almost quite perpendicular, to the height of an hundred feet from the water, and at a distance has the appearance of a vessel under sail. Near to this are two very high pillars, of the same kind of rock with the Drongs, and with the stupendous crags upon the shore. And it is not improbable that these have all been at one time unit-

ed together, but have been separated, not by volcanic eruptions, but by the billows of the ocean, which nothing almost can resist, during the winter storms. There is another rock, called Dorholm, from a lofty and spacious arch passing through its centre, and which has the appearance of a door in certain directions. The height of this rock is 76 feet from the water, and the height of the arch is said to be 54 feet. To the north of this, there is a rock called the Maiden Skerry, which is very near, but completely detached from the shore, and on which, it is reported, the foot of man has never trod. Two miles farther north, there is a rock of very great height, called the Osse Skerry, through which also there is a very large arch, which may be seen at an immense distance. Near to Fetheland, there is also a number of very high rocks, called the Ramnastacks. All these rocks and holms, and others that could be mentioned, differ in their appearance from one another, and stand forth amid the waters of the ocean; consequently they are excellent sea-marks to mariners in search of a harbour or place of safety.

*Meteorology.*—The temperature of the atmosphere is very variable, and very moist. Sometimes, however, the barometer remains stationary for several days and weeks, and then the weather is uncommonly fine. I have seen the barometer as high as 31, and as low as 28, in a tremendous gale of wind from the west. The barometer always rises when the wind is northerly, even although it rains heavily. And when it falls suddenly, a very heavy sea may be expected, or a gale of wind.

Rains are frequent, and sometimes very heavy. Some seasons, however, are very dry; the peat-banks are rent asunder, and the grass and crops are injured, even although, in summer evenings, there may be thick fogs and heavy dews to refresh the soil.

The winds are very variable, and the prevailing wind is westerly. During the winter season, when storms and tempests prevail, the wind often changes from one direction to another, suddenly and unexpectedly. Houses are unroofed, crops destroyed, and boats and other property lost; and every season, shipwrecks take place.

The climate is considered mild and temperate. The summer season is very seldom disagreeably or oppressively hot, an equality in the atmosphere being preserved by the surrounding waters. The winter, sometimes, also is very mild, at other times the cold and frost are intense. But although the climate is very damp, it is not considered by any means unhealthy; and warm clothing is

an indispensable article of dress. Rheumatism and asthma are very common complaints among the people; but perhaps these may be attributed as much to the low, miserable, and uncomfortable dwellings in which they live, as to the dampness of the climate. Fever of a very infectious nature sometimes occurs; but it is commonly confined to two or three families in the same neighbourhood, as no intercourse whatever takes place with persons so affected, and thus they sometimes die a miserable death for want of cleanliness, proper treatment, and medical attendance. Pulmonary complaints are also to be met with, but are not common. That the climate is, by no means, injurious to health, may be inferred from the fact, that, in 1831, there were thirty-nine persons in this parish, and chiefly women, upwards of eighty years of age. Some of them were above ninety years, and one woman died lately said to have been an hundred years old.

*Hydrography.*—This parish is nearly surrounded by the sea, and voes run into the interior, almost in every direction. Many excellent springs are to be found. Very near to the top of Rona's Hill, there are several powerful springs, which send forth an immense quantity of water, in a short space of time. And as these springs are more elevated than the tops of the highest hills in these islands, where must their source or origin be? No medicinal springs, I believe, have hitherto been found. Lochs or lakes, some of considerable extent and depth, are very numerous in this parish, amounting, it has been said, to upwards of an hundred, and many of them abounding with most excellent trout.

*Geology.*—The direction of the strata of rocks, in this parish, is from east to west; and innumerable are the veins or dikes and fissures that cut across the strata, and more or less derange and alter their original position. The mountains and hills are chiefly composed of granite, syenite, syenitic greenstone, gneiss, diallage rock, porphyry, &c. Old red sandstone and limestone, of a coarse description, are also to be found in different parts of the parish. No fossil organic remains, or petrifications, whether belonging to the animal or vegetable kingdom, have ever been found, that I have heard of; neither are there any ores containing copper, lead, &c. Chromate of iron has been found in certain situations, but not of the best quality; also Scotch pebbles or agates, and garnets.

Peat moss, for the most part, is the only soil that covers the solid rocks referred to above. Along the shore, in favoured spots, the soil is of a light and sandy description, which in good seasons

bears excellent crops ; in other places, it is of a clayey or loamy nature, which also produces well. The soil, in general, is very thin, even where it is thickened by the application of other earths by manual labour ; and it is naturally wet, but draining would be a tedious and expensive operation, as the subsoil is so very hard and impenetrable.

*Zoology.*—In this parish, there are some birds which are considered rare. There are several kinds of gulls ; the Bonxie or Skua gull is the most rare. Rona's hill, Foula, and island of Unst are the only three situations in Zetland where it is to be found. It is a beautiful and powerful bird, and is said to have many a hard battle with the eagle, which is also an inhabitant of Rona's hill. There are also many varieties of wild ducks frequenting the voes and lochs, at all seasons of the year ; and also different kinds of geese, such as the ember-geese, or great northern diver, and the rain-geese or red-throated diver. Hawks, snipes, plovers, curlews &c. are often met with. Large flocks of swans are sometimes observed flying about, but do not take up their residence here.

In this parish, a great number of cattle are reared every season and sold, and also ponies. Some of these are very small, for which sometimes high prices have been obtained. The real Shetland breed of sheep is hardly now to be found in this parish, except on Rona's hill, as it has been crossed by the Cheviot, or black-faced breed ; and some think that it would have been better, had such breeds never been introduced into the country, as the real Shetland breed is much hardier, and stands the climate better, and the food which nature has here provided is coarse, and not very nutritious.

Most of the lochs abound with salmon-trout, and great numbers are caught every season. Sea-trout is also very abundant, and of a large size. The spawning season is in the month of October ; but it is thought by some, that they spawn two or three times in the year.

Many varieties of shell-fish are found here, such as oysters, spouts, mussels, cockles, and lobsters of a large size. These, in seasons of scarcity, afford food to the people, but are seldom or never used, so long as they are able to obtain fish.

*Botany.*—No rare plants, I believe, are to be found in this parish. A few are found of a medicinal description ; some are also used for dyeing cloth. There are no forests or plantations in this country ; but the experiment has never been made, (and the pro-

prietors have no inclination or desire to try the experiment,) whether large plantations of different kinds of trees, properly walled or fenced, to prevent cattle and sheep from injuring and destroying them, would succeed or not. Some situations in this parish appear favourable for the attempt. In certain places trunks and branches of trees are found imbedded in the moss.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The chief land-owner is Arthur Gifford, Esq. of Busta, to whom the greatest part of the parish belongs. The other proprietors are, Earl Zetland; Henry Cheyne, Esq. of Tangwick; Arthur Cheyne, Esq. of Ollaberry; and Mrs Ogilvy of Gas-saburgh.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers, for a few years, have been kept well and accurately; but the old records are far from being perfect or voluminous, and are not of a very early date. At the commencement of the ministry of Dr Jack, in the year 1765, new session-books were obtained, and ever since they have been more or less regularly kept, according to the qualifications and ability of the session-clerk.

*Antiquities.*—A huge granite stone appears to have been raised upon the top of an hill in this neighbourhood, having a circle of smaller stones around the bottom. What deed it commemorates, or whether it was raised for a religious purpose, none now can tell. There are the ruins of several religious houses in this parish. The church at Ollaberry has been in ruins, for many years; also the church at North Roe. The remains of a very large Pict's house on the west side of the parish are still visible. It appears to have been a very strong building, and house of refuge or defence, being surrounded by water. On the top of Rona's hill, an ancient watch-house, as it is called, is still visible, built of a few large flat stones; it might have held six or seven persons.

Ancient arms have been found several times. A few of the people are in possession of the ancient battle-axe, which is carefully concealed in some part of the house, and superstitiously preserved, and it is commonly called a thunderbolt. The writer of this paper has one in his possession, which was obtained from a parishioner, as a great favour. It is quite entire, and composed of a very hard grey stone,—such a species of stone as is not to be found in this part of the country. An ancient sword was also found, several years ago, by accident, and is at present in possession, it is believed, of the Antiquarian Society in Edinburgh.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population of this parish in 1755, amounted to 1009. In 1784, it had increased to 1657. And in 1831, it was very near 2500. The number of males was 1091, and the number of females 1295. This great increase of population is to be attributed to the dividing of the arable lands into smaller portions, for the accommodation of those employed in the fishing, and the taking of small farms from the undivided common, for a similar purpose. The population is altogether a rural population. The yearly average of births for the last seven years is 60, and of marriages 14; but of deaths, it is impossible to say, as there are five different burial-places in the parish, and no register of such has ever been kept.

In this parish, there are only two persons or families of independent fortune residing, and there are only two proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards.

At present, there are 400 families in the parish, and about the same number of inhabited houses. None are uninhabited, and a few are now building.

The circumstances of a vast number of families are so poor and miserable, that cleanliness cannot be observed. On Sunday, however, they appear at church clean, and well-dressed. In former times, their every-day dress was a coarse cloth of their own manufacture made of wool; now Scotch and English cloth is generally used.

The people may be said to be generally of an intellectual character; and, considering the opportunities they enjoy, they may be also called a moral and a religious people.

### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture.*—This parish is supposed to contain 60,000 acres of land; but, as only a small fractional part of the surface has ever been measured, it is very difficult to say how many acres are cultivated, or occasionally in tillage,—perhaps 6000 acres. The remainder has never been cultivated, and is in a state of undivided common; and it is difficult to say what number of acres, with the profitable application of capital, could be added to the cultivated land of the parish. Many suppose, that the only profitable way to apply capital, in cultivating waste lands in Zetland, is to turn these lands into permanent pasture, by sowing natural grasses for the rearing and feeding of cattle and sheep.

The state of husbandry, with respect to cultivation and reclaiming waste lands, is low indeed, except in a very few cases. Even

those who are considered good farmers among the people, know nothing about draining, or the process of fallowing. Indeed, fallowing is impossible,—for all the land that the poor people have, must be turned over from year to year, for the support of their families,—it is so very small. Perhaps there are not a dozen of fields in the whole parish properly drained; and no lands here have undergone the process of irrigation.

There is, however, a number of impediments which prevent the land from being cultivated and improved as it might be, in this country. Very few of the farmers have money or capital, and none are willing to lay out in the improvement of the soil, to pay the expense of keeping servants for that purpose, or purchase the necessary implements of husbandry. Very few of the farmers have leases. They are all, for the most part, tenants at will. They may be removed by the landlord or proprietor, when he pleases, and they may remove themselves from the lands, when they think proper. As they cannot tell, therefore, how long they may occupy the lands, they have no spirit or desire for improvement, as they may in a short time be possessed by another. Another impediment is the want of good enclosures and good roads. As they are, in general, tenants at will, and have no leases, they are very careless about making good enclosures. There are very few stone fences. For the most part, the fences are built of turf, and it requires one of no ordinary kind to prevent the Zetland sheep from molesting and destroying the crops in their season. Every year, the poor people sustain a loss, more or less severe, on this account; and those who have bad fences, require to keep a number of dogs for the protection of their property. Again, the ling and herring-fishery is another impediment. With a few exceptions, every farmer is a fisherman, and every fisherman a farmer. During the summer season, therefore, when the men are at sea, the crops, cattle, &c. are left to the care and management of women and children, who, I dare say, do the best they can. But it is to be supposed, that, if a division of these two employments could be effected in some way or other, the land would be improved and cultivated to better advantage, than it has hitherto been.

The Shetland spade is almost the only instrument of husbandry used by the people, and three or four or five persons turn over the earth, or peat as they call it, at the same time, and they make more progress than a stranger would suppose; but they commonly turn it over down hill, so that the earth falls from the spade very



easily. And the consequence is, that at the bottom of every plot of ground or ridge, the earth, and always the best, has accumulated to a considerable depth. Ploughing is, at present, very little used, and perhaps, as the farms are divided into smaller portions, may get into disuse, almost altogether. When the former Statistical Account was written, there were twenty-six ploughs in the parish; at present, there are only twelve, and these are drawn by oxen or horses, or both, as the people can get them for hire, or are able to rear them and keep them for themselves.

*Live-stock.*—The sheep and cattle reared or bred are, for the most part, of the pure Zetland breed; but little or no attention whatever is paid to their improvement. Some of the Scotch kinds have occasionally been introduced, but were found not to answer well, as they are too tender or soft for the climate. The hardier the breed, the better for Zetland. The breed of horses, it is said, has fallen off very much, for some years past; and the reason is, that the best of the horses are always sold, and only those of an inferior description kept for breeding; and things will never improve till the proprietors interfere and enact a law, which they can very easily do, that the best horses shall always be kept; and this would, ultimately, be greatly for the interest of both landlord and tenant.

*Fishing.*—Fishing is the chief occupation of the people, during the summer season, and almost all depend on this, and not on the produce of the soil, for the payment of rent and other burdens. And various kinds of fishing are carried on, in this parish. Cod-fishing is, at present, almost given up, as it has been a complete failure for some years. Herring-fishing has commenced, but it has not hitherto been attended with much success; but, perhaps, this may arise from not having boats of a proper size and construction, and nets of the proper dimensions and depth. Ling-fishing has been carried on for a great many years, with the most complete success, and much wealth has been obtained by it. The boats, however, are now very much reduced in number from what they were once; and this is to be attributed to the scarcity of fish, the lowness of the price, and the great expense with which the fishing is attended.

In this parish, there are a great number of excellent stations for pursuing the ling-fishing.—Stenness, Hamnavoe, Uyea, and Fetland. At these stations, the crews and boats assemble about the end of May, if the weather is favourable, and remain till the beginning of August. In former times, the boats fished near the

shore, and fish were found in abundance. Now, the fish have left the shore, and the boats must sail or pull out to sea forty or fifty miles, to reach the fishing-ground; and, if the weather is fine, they remain two or perhaps three nights. During all this time, the fare of the crews is very simple: water or bland, a little spirits, and oaten cake. Seldom a season passes but some meet a watery grave, and leave widows and orphans behind.

*Produce.*—The average gross amount of raw produce raised in the parish, as nearly as can be ascertained, is as follows:—

Produce of grain of all kinds, - - -	L.3000	0	0
Potatoes, turnips, and cabbages, - - -	1000	0	0
Meadow hay, - - -	100	0	0
Ling, cod, tusk, and herrings, - - -	3560	0	0
Beef, hides, and tallow, - - -	600	0	0
Butter and oil, - - -	100	0	0
Shetland stockings and gloves, - - -	60	0	0
Calf, otter, sheep, and seal skins, - - -	10	0	0
Total yearly value of raw produce, - - -	L.8430	0	0

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The situation of the parish church is very inconvenient for the greater part of the population. It is distant from one extremity of the parish twelve miles, from another eight miles, from another four miles; and it stands within 60 fathoms of the edge of the sea. It was built in the year 1733, and was repaired in the year 1764; and in the year 1825 the interior was completely renewed. It has accommodation for about 600 persons, and 70 sittings are set apart for the poor.

The present manse was built about the year 1768, and repaired in 1790. In the year 1821, it also received very extensive repairs internally, so that it is amongst the most comfortable manses in the country. The glebe contains many acres of land, but how many I know not, as it has never been all measured. It is not valuable, however, according to its extent, as it is situated in four different parts of the parish, all at a considerable distance from each other. The present value is about L. 15. The stipend is L. 150.

There are a Methodist chapel and an Independent chapel, which are together attended by about 100 members. The Established Church is generally well attended, and the average number of communicants is 800; the number of families about 350.

Since my induction in 1830, no collections have been made for religious or charitable purposes except once. The people in ge-

neral are very poor, and all that can be collected on Sundays in the year is not sufficient for the maintenance and support of those upon the poor's roll. There are no Societies established for religious purposes.

*Education.*—At present, there are five schools in the parish: one parochial school, one Society school, and three supported by individual subscriptions only, for three or four months in the winter season. The branches of education generally taught in each, are, reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, book-keeping, and navigation.

The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is L.25, 3s. 4d., but he has not as yet obtained the legal accommodations; and the amount of school-fees is very small, about L. 4. The salary of the Society schoolmaster is L. 15, and the fees and perquisites amount to L. 1. The salaries of the other schoolmasters are from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2 a quarter; and they lodge with the parents of the children.

It is believed that there are none from six to fifteen years of age, who cannot read tolerably well. There are many, however, who cannot write, particularly among the females, although some of these also are able to produce very good specimens.

Three additional and permanent schools are absolutely necessary to give the scattered population of this parish even the elements of education. Those schools which are open in the winter season for three or four months, are attended with very little benefit to the children, as they commonly lose in the summer what is gained in the winter. And there are three situations in this parish, distant each six and ten miles from the parochial school, where, if qualified and respectable teachers were obtained, they would be attended by sixty or seventy scholars. And as the people themselves, being so very poor, are unable to provide proper accommodations for a qualified teacher, or give him a suitable provision, they must wait patiently till the eye of the charitable and benevolent is bent towards them, and the hand opened to their relief.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—There are, at present, 60 persons receiving parochial aid, and the sum allotted to each per year is from 3s. to 10s. according to age, poverty, and other circumstances. The money thus given is to provide clothing only, as the poor, for the most part, have a certain quarter or district of the parish assigned them to obtain a livelihood; and they usually go from

house to house, according to their fancy or inclination, in order to obtain a lodging and the necessaries of life.

The annual amount of funds for the relief of the poor is about L. 24. The yearly collections at the church door is about L. 8, and the sacramental collection is about L. 10. Besides, the funds are increased to a small extent, by interest received from a small sum deposited in the bank, and money on loan.

There is no other regular mode of procuring funds for the support of the poor, than those now mentioned. But should misfortune befall a family, the elders are sometimes employed in their several districts to obtain what they can from the charitable for their relief. In this, they sometimes succeed very well, and collect in small sums, from L. 3 to L. 4, which afford a seasonable relief, not only to the afflicted, but also to the poor funds, which are kept very low on account of the numerous applications for support.

It does not appear that there is a disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial relief, neither do they consider it as degrading. A few are to be found, however, who, in the most miserable circumstances, would rather starve, than seek the least support from any person. Others, again, are not ashamed to seek support from the funds, for their friends,—who ought to feel ashamed, when they consider their own circumstances. Their application is generally resisted.

*Fairs.*—In this parish, there are three fairs or markets held every year, at which cattle and horses are bought and sold. In the month of May, there is a sale of milk cows, young cattle, and horses; and again, in the month of November, for fat cattle and horses. These sales are attended by a great number of people, and by some from a very great distance.

*Fuel.*—Peat is the fuel that is used by all in the parish, and the cutting, curing, and flitting home, are, in some cases, attended with considerable expense. In two or three genteel families, Scotch or English coal is occasionally used.

June 1841.

## PARISH OF MID AND SOUTH YELL.

FRESBYTERY OF BURRAVOE, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JAMES ROBERTSON, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS parish is formed by the junction of the Mid and South parishes of the Island of Yell, (formerly written Zell,) one of the three islands in the Shetland group, commonly called the North Isles. North Yell, the third parish into which Yell is divided, being joined to Fetlar, *quoad sacra*, constitutes a portion of another ministry. To the ministry of Mid and South Yell are joined the Islands of Samphrey and Bigga, both situated to the westward of, and distant from, the mainland of Yell about a mile and a-half. The former contains six families, the latter, until within the last few years, when it has been converted into a grazing island, was generally occupied by eight tenants. It may be remarked, that the tenants of Bigga are paid the one-half to the incumbent of Yell, the other half to the minister of Delting. To Mid and South Yell is also attached the Island of Hasesussey, situated about a mile from its east coast, and occupied at present by six families.

*Situation, Extent.*—The south extremity of this parish lies in  $60^{\circ} 40'$ , and its most northern in about  $60^{\circ} 51'$  of north latitude. It reaches from  $18'$  to  $32'$  west, making its extreme length somewhat more than 13 miles, and its extreme breadth nearly 7.

*Boundaries.*—On the east side, it is bounded by Colgrave Sound, which separates it from Fetlar; on the south, by Lunnafirth, which runs between it and the parish of Lunnasting; on the west, by Yell Sound, on the opposite shores of which are the parishes of Delting and Northmavine. Colgrave Sound averages three miles in breadth, Lunnafirth four, and Yell Sound six miles. In Yell Sound, the current is perhaps the strongest of any on the north coast of Shetland, its rapidity at spring-tides being eight or nine miles an hour.

The Island of Yell lies in a direction nearly north-east by

north, along the east side from the Ness of Burravoe to Burra-ness in North Yell, when it acquires an inclination of about  $12^{\circ}$  in a more northerly direction. From the Brough of Cuppasetter, situated on the south-west corner of the island, to the "Rock of the Birreir," a distance which embraces nearly one-half of its west coast, the line is also north-east by north. After passing this rock, the coast takes a more easterly direction, inclining thereto from  $17^{\circ}$  to  $20^{\circ}$ ; thus reducing the north end of the island to nearly one-half of its south end and middle breadths. Two ranges of hills, of from 200 to 400 feet in height, extend almost the whole length of the island, and in a direction nearly parallel to each other. These are occasionally intersected by others, running in a direction east and west; and between which, are two excellent harbours, viz. Midyellvoe and Bastavoe, this last mentioned, being in North Yell.

Mid Yell voes, formed by the Ness of Lussetter on its south side, and the Head of Hindigarth on its north, runs about a mile and a-half west, on a bed of clay and shell sand, affording easy access to vessels of any tonnage, and of sufficient extent to moor a fleet of an hundred sail, in from six to ten fathoms water.

Another inlet, called Whalefirth voe, approaches to that of Mid Yell voe from a north-west direction, so as nearly to form a junction with it; there being but a few hundred yards between the pools at high water. As the intervening space consists entirely of peat-moss resting on a substratum of blue clay, a canal might be cut at a very trifling expense, which the influx and reflux of the sea would in a short time convert into a channel, through which boats could pass at any time of the tide. Were a communication between the seas on the east and west side of Yell thus opened up, there can be little doubt that the value of a locality in the vicinity of either of the voes just mentioned, would be considerably increased from the additional quantity and variety of fish that would be thereby introduced into them, and the facility afforded to all the inhabitants of that district, of prosecuting the various kinds of fishing, on whatever side of the island their endeavours were likely to be attended with the greatest success.

Along the whole of the east side of Yell, the land is moderately low, and in many places sandy, and there is scarcely more than a mile of coast, where a boat cannot land in ordinary weather. On the south side of the island, there are also the two good harbours of Burravoe and Hamnavoe, about a mile distant from each other,

But on the west side, after advancing about eight miles to the northward, the shore becomes bold and precipitous; so that from Westsandwick to Gloup, the most northern point in the island, there are only two places on a coast stretching upwards of eleven miles, where a landing can be effected, namely, Whalefirthvoe, already mentioned, and the dale of Lumbister, and at this last place only when the weather is fine, it being, apparently, a mere track worn in the soft stone by the action of a stream of water which passes over it.

Although situated nearly in the sixty-first degree of north latitude, the air in winter, uniformly moist, is temperate to a degree to which those accustomed to the cold prevalent at that season in the interior of Great Britain are altogether strangers, and snow in consequence seldom lies above a day or two at a time.

In a note taken at the manse of Yell, December 24th 1832, occur the following remarks: "The turnips are this day as green as they were at Michaelmas. The rye-grass among bear-stubble measures from eight to ten inches of green blade; and among the year old rye grass, is the daisy everywhere seen in bloom." To these general remarks in reference to the mildness of Shetland winters, the history of those of 1835-36, 1836-37, and of 1837-38, forms a striking contrast. In each of the two first mentioned winters, there were three different falls of snow, the average duration of which was eleven days, while, during the last mentioned, the snow which fell on 6th January had not entirely disappeared by 1st of April. At no time, however, during this period was the thermometer observed to range lower than  $11^{\circ}$  below the freezing point. Thus  $21^{\circ}$  may be stated as the greatest degree of cold ever known in Yell, and  $69^{\circ}$  as the highest range ever attained by the thermometer in summer. The westerly are the prevailing winds; and during the months of October, November, and December, there frequently occur tremendous thunder storms, most generally at night. This fact, as well as some others which might be mentioned, would seem to establish an identity between the electric fluid and the aurora borealis, which, from the month of October to March, is seen almost every clear night, moving from one quarter of the heavens to the other, in all its shapes and shades of endless variety.

As might be expected from the prevailing moisture of the climate, rheumatism is a common complaint among all classes. And from the same cause, perhaps, in connexion with the circumstance

of there being but few families of the labouring classes altogether free from a constitutional taint of scrofula, those who are carried off by pulmonary complaints are more numerous than are the victims of any other single disease. For the cure of this fatal disorder nothing, even at the present day, is deemed so effectual as the Royal touch! And as a substitute for the actual living finger of royalty, a few crowns and half-crowns of the coinage of the first Charles, carefully handed down from father to son, have been effectual both here, and in every other parish in Shetland, towards removing this disease, and that to an extent which may appear somewhat incredible to many whose minds, in reference to the healing virtue still inherent in royalty, may be in a more sophisticated state, than those of her Majesty's subjects in this latitude. Be this as it may, there are few localities in Shetland in which a living evidence is not to be found of one said to have been "cured by the coin," and who would instantly be pointed at as a sufficient evidence to warrant confidence in its efficacy, should it happen that a doubt at any time rested thereon.

*Hydrography.*—All the springs fall under the denomination of perennial, and the temperature of those least affected in quantity by the summer drought, is from 44° to 45°, their water being not unfrequently impregnated with iron.

*Geology.*—In Yell the prevailing strata are gneiss and micaeous rocks, traversed by veins of granite, and occasionally having masses of quartz and whinstone imbedded in them. The direction of the strata is nearly north and south, their dip being from 35° to 90°.

The only ore ever found in Yell is that of iron; and in no known instance, has it been found in a shape different from bog iron ore. In Yell, as well as in several other parishes in Shetland, and in such situations as the banks of burns, or that of the sea side, there is frequently to be met with under a mass of peat moss, sometimes not less than 10 feet deep, and immediately above the prevailing rock, a layer of fine-rich loam, from one to two feet thick, on the top of which are always found the remains of wood, generally birch and occasionally oak.

The soil throughout Yell partakes, more or less, of the quality of moss, mixed either with clay or particles of the decayed rock, on which it rests; and in no instance is it found to be sandy, unless where sand has been thrown up by the violence of the sea during winter, and carried over it by the action of the winds.

*Per  
Lanc*



Such is the depth of peat moss in the interior of Yell, that, if equally distributed over the surface thereof, it would afford a covering of not less than three feet in thickness to the whole island.

*Zoology.*—It has sometimes been doubted whether salmon are to be found on the coast, or in the lochs in Shetland. This doubt admits of an easy solution, as no fewer than twenty-one were caught, at one drag of a net on the sands of Vatsetter in this parish in 1831. All that have been caught here are of a small size, none having been seen exceeding nine and a half pounds. This, however, is not to be wondered at, when the destructive habits of the seal, in reference to this fish, are taken into account, —half a score of which have been seen guarding the creek, through which the fish had to pass before getting into fresh water, which they generally attempt from 20th July to the middle of August. The sea-trout, which are most abundant here, are somewhat later in their habits, and never seek to get into fresh water before the middle of August or beginning of September.

As a shell-fish, important in an economical point of view, the common cockle ought not to be overlooked in the statistics of Yell; for often, in times of scarcity, has it been the means of saving the lives of hundreds of its inhabitants. As an example of the extent to which the cockle was sought after, during the scarcity which prevailed in 1837, it may be mentioned, that, in the month of May of that year, 115 barrels of cockle-shells were collected from 10 families, who had been reduced to the necessity of living on the fish thereof during the preceding spring: And at that time, there were more than 50 families in the parish,—from whom a proportionate quantity could have been obtained.

Yell, like other districts, the inhabitants of which live by fishing, has often been, nay, it may be said, yearly is exposed to sad disasters from loss of life at sea. But of all the recorded misfortunes of this kind, none can be compared with that which occurred in the month of July 1832. On that occasion, four boats were lost, and of their whole crews, which numbered thirty men, only three were saved. These were almost all men in the prime of life, and left behind them 23 widows, and 61 fatherless children under fourteen years of age, to mourn their untimely fate.

#### II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

*Land-owners.*—The principal landlords in the Mid and South Yell are, John Ogilvy, Esq. of Gossaburgh and Quarff, and Ro-

bert Bruce, Esq. of Burravoe, both resident ; and, with the exception of Charles Ogilvy, Esq. of Seafield, and Captain C. Mouat of Garth, who are non-resident, there is not another, of all the 28 heritors connected with the parish, whose income therefrom amounts to L. 50.

*Parochial Registers.*—The parochial registers extend no farther back than to the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, though kept with tolerable accuracy, contain but little, and that little, perhaps, of still less importance.

*Antiquities.*—In so far as can now be traced, no religious houses have, at any time, existed in this parish ; and beyond a few Pictish buildings, and some traces of the dwellings of the Shetland aborigines, in which last have been found some stone adzes and knives, with drinking-cups, lamps, and hammers of the same materials,—there is little now existing either to excite the inquiry of the antiquary, or to speak to its present inhabitants of the deeds of other years.

### III.—POPULATION.

The population is exclusively rural, and amounts to 1853.

Of these, there are under 15 years of age,	.	701	
between 15 and 30,	.	556	
30 and 50,	.	360	
50 and 70,	.	246	
above 70 years of age,	.	89	
The average number of births in seven years has been	.	42	
marriages,	.	11.6	
Of bachelors and widowers above 50 years of age, there are	.	12	
Unmarried women upwards of 45 years of age,	.	69	

There are 2 fatuous individuals, and 7 in a state of lameness throughout the parish.

Besides the two principal resident heritors, there is not another of independent fortune in the parish.

The inhabitants are, in general, a quiet and orderly class of people ; but although acts of gross and open immorality would be branded by common consent, yet it must be confessed, that other immoralities are practised to an extent which calls forth an admission from all quarters, that some remedial steps ought to be taken. The less flagrant immoralities now alluded to can, perhaps, be traced to no cause so directly, as to the want of an early training of the young to the observance of moral and religious duties, by means of the discipline of public schools,—a tuition to which the inhabitants of Yell have been but little accustomed. For until within the last sixteen years, such a thing as a parochial school was unknown within its bounds ; and when established in

1822, it was placed in a district to which not one-eighth part of the parishioners could have access. Without investigating minutely the other causes that may have co-operated, to prevent attendance on the parochial school, it appears that, for a series of years, the quarterly average number of scholars has not exceeded ten, if it has reached that number.

To give any thing like efficiency to the means of education throughout this widely extended ministry, four additional schools would be required. Were the means of obtaining an early and a solid education extended to a people certainly not void of natural abilities, nor of acuteness to discern in what direction their interest lies, a stimulus would be given thereby to industry and activity in those departments of labour in which they are engaged, and in a practical knowledge of which, they no doubt rank behind those who are similarly employed elsewhere; while the moral and religious aspect of society could not fail to be improved.

To the moral and religious improvement of the parishioners, the two principal resident heritors have not been inattentive. By Mr Bruce of Burravoe, a disposition has been granted to the minister for the time being, of six acres of ground for a glebe to an assistant minister in South Yell, with a right of pasturage on the common during summer to as many cattle as the straw raised on that ground, can fodder in winter. By Mr Ogilvy of Quarff, assurance has been given of his readiness to provide the necessary accommodations for a teacher, so as to secure a salary of L.25 per annum, at present promised to the parish by the Assembly's Committee. Neither of these can be considered slight benefactions, when the heavy assessments of late made on the heritors of this parish, in order to repair the machinery of the parochial economy therewith connected, are taken into view. For, at the end of December 1838, the heritors, in building two churches capable respectively of accommodating 500 and 380 sitters, and in repairing the manse, contributed upwards of L.1800 since 1831, and that from a rental which certainly does not exceed L.1300!

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

The industry of the inhabitants is alternately directed towards the cultivating of their crofts, and prosecuting the small, great line, or herring-fishing; in which all, with the exception of a few shopkeepers, and handicraftsmen, are exclusively engaged.

The number of statute acres is 37,000, of which about 4000 are enclosed; 1500 of these last are at present, or have been cul-

tivated; and the remaining 33,000 acres are in pasture, to which the tenants renting the arable and enclosed lands have a common right of pasture effeiring to their respective rents. Perhaps the half of the enclosed grass grounds might be profitably cultivated with a view to improving them as pasture; while almost the whole of the unenclosed common might be rendered more valuable by a regular system of surface draining, which, wherever attempted, has had the effect of ameliorating both the soil and grass. But a want of capital is the great bar to improvements of this or any other description; and, with the exception of what has been done by Mr Bruce of Burravoe, and by Mr Ogilvy of Quarff, little has this remote district been benefited by the modern discoveries in agriculture.

No attention has hitherto been paid to the selection of proper breeding stock, either from the native black-cattle, sheep, or horses. This is the more to be regretted, because the native are the animals best adapted to the climate and food, and because no other description of cattle bred in Shetland will ever be so much sought after for the south country market. No animal, in proportion to its size of bone, has ever been known to carry a greater weight of fat; and compared with it, our present mongrel breeds are an ugly gaunt-looking race, utterly unfit for Shetland keep, and assuredly never to be sought after by those who know the points which characterize a good animal.\*

*Produce.*—Perhaps the average gross amount of product may be thus stated:

Value of bear and oats raised,	L 2300	0	0
900 tons potatoes, at L.1, 5s.	1125	0	0
meadow hay,	150	0	0
grazing 1800 cattle, at 3s. 6d.	315	0	0
200 do. sold at L.2, 10s.	300	0	0
grazing 10,000 sheep, at 8d.	323	6	8
wool of do. at 1s. each,	500	0	0
500 old sheep sold or used, 5s.	125	0	0
1000 lambs at 1s. sold or used,	62	12	0
300 horses grazed summer and winter, at 10s.	150	0	0
20 do. sold, at L.2, 10s.	50	0	0
250 swine killed, at 10s.	125	0	0
ling, tusk. and cod caught,	500	0	0
herrings do.	600	0	0
small fish caught for family use, and oil sold from same,	360	0	0
Amount of masons' wages, at 2s., wrights', at 2s. 6d, and labourers', 1s.	140	0	0
seamen's wages in the Greenland and merchant vessels,	450	0	0
	L.7575	18	8

\* Since the above was written the price of black-cattle has risen 50 per cent., owing to the great facility of transport now afforded by steam.—June 23, 1841.

## V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

The site of the parish kirk of Mid Yell is as well selected for the convenience of the parishioners as can be in a parish, the inhabitants of which are so widely scattered,—four-fifths thereof being within a distance of four miles, the remainder being from four to six miles distant.

The South Yell kirk, now in progress, is rather better situated, since, with the exception of fifteen families, at about four miles distance, none of the other families in that parish are distant more than three miles. In a parish, however, the surface of which is, in winter, one continued mossy swamp, and over which there is neither road nor bridge, it is only in fine weather, that any thing like good attendance can be either given by, or expected from, those at more than two miles distance from church.

There is a small meeting-house built by the Wesleyan Methodists in South Yell, and capable of containing 200 hearers. Connected with this chapel, there are about fifty members; besides which, there are eight in the Independent communion in Mid Yell. Deducting these, the remaining 1795 may be considered as attending the Established Church, and of whom the average number of communicants are 500.

For several years past, there has been a missionary on the Royal Bounty in South Yell; and it is expected, if a grant be given for the extension of the Church, in those parishes where the teinds are exhausted, a salary will be allowed for an additional minister in South Yell.

The manse was rebuilt, and new offices built, under the inspection of the late minister, at an expense to the heritors of L. 380, in the year 1807. The sum for which decret was granted against them, was L. 430; but of this sum, L. 50 are still due the representatives of the late Mr Finlayson, by those now representing the then proprietors of Sound. In 1833, the manse was repaired, and new byre built, and the other offices repaired, which, together, have been estimated, by competent judges, to amount in value to one-third of the accommodations originally afforded by heritors, under the superintendence of the late minister. These repairs are represented by heritors to have cost upwards of L. 300, under the special superintendence of one of their own number.

The stipend of Mid and South Yell is about L. 143, paid by the heritors, the remainder being received from the Exchequer.

The glebe, on which the present incumbent has sunk, in im-

provements, upwards of L. 190, may be considered to a future minister worth L. 30 per annum; but it cannot be said to be worth to its present occupant, more than L. 16 yearly.

The annual collections average in amount L. 10, which is generally divided among 30 paupers. But in Yell, as in most other parishes in Shetland, the system prevails of assigning the most indigent, what is called a quarter, the inhabitants of which either make the pauper itinerate among them, or contribute a proportion of food towards his or her support, effecting to the quantity of land rented by each tenant in that quarter. There is, generally speaking, but little disposition among the poor to refrain from seeking parochial aid.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Spade husbandry is that universally adopted by the tenant here: it can be got executed, by those having occasion to employ labourers, at the rate of 8s. the statute acre; supposing one man employed for every two women, the former at 1s. and the latter at 6d. a-day. This is unquestionably the cheapest, the most efficient in producing a return, and, in the majority of localities in Yell, the only mode of culture that can be adopted, on account of the steepness, the unevenness of the surface on the rocks, with which the land is not unfrequently interspersed.

Considerable addition has been made to the cultivated land, in the memory of the present generation; and, in many instances, it has been more than doubled. About 1790, and even at a later period, when the population did not exceed two-thirds of the present number, it was considered a favourable year indeed, when the produce of the harvest enabled the people to subsist, until the next year's seed was put into the ground. Now, on the contrary, with the exception of 1835-36-37, which may be ranked as years of famine, no active and provident tenant has, for more than twenty years past, found it necessary to buy meal for his family before the beginning of August.

The tenants have an utter aversion, generally speaking, to take leases, from a mistaken notion, that it is the landlord, and not the tenant, who is thereby benefited. And even when they do enter into leases, they have been known to object to make improvements, which, before the expiry of their tacks, would have remunerated them tenfold for all their labour,—so little are the advantages arising from this kind of covenant between landlord and tenant understood here.

Perhaps the greatest drawback to the improvement of Yell, and it may be of Shetland generally, and which, more than any thing else, operates as a drag on the resources of the landlord, is the small portions into which the land is let off to accommodate the present overgrown fishing population. For as each tenant, whether paying L. 1, 5s. or L. 5, must have a house to live in, built at an original cost of L. 15, and, upon an average, not lasting more than twenty-five years, the heritor who has an income of L. 400 a-year, has at least an hundred houses on the property from which he draws this rent. Hence he is under the necessity of building four new houses annually, at an original cost of L. 60, and is exposed to the daily annoyance and expense of keeping the remaining ninety-six in a state of habitable repair, which the occupants, being tenants at will, never consider themselves obliged to do.

Until this system can be got rid of, which, it is likely, will be attempted, when the divisions of the commons, now in progress, are completed, there is but a slender prospect either of the tenant bettering his circumstances, or of the landlord increasing the value of his estate.

That 33,000 acres of pasture, 1500 acres of arable, and 2500 acres of inclosed grass land, should only produce an average rent of scarcely 8d. per acre, can only be attributed to the distance at which they are situated from a market for their produce. But it is hoped that the now regularly established communication weekly, by steam, between Shetland and the coast of Scotland, will tend to open up a ready market for the various kinds of stock, excite attention to the selecting and improving the native Shetland breeds, whether of black-cattle, sheep, or horses, and in the end greatly improve the circumstances both of landlord and tenant.

*Drawn up 1838—Revised June 1841.*

# PARISH OF DUNROSSNESS.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. DAVID THOMSON, MINISTER.

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## I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THIS parish occupies the greater part of the southern peninsula of Shetland. It includes the parishes of Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, now annexed to it; also the Fair Isle.

*Mineralogy.*—There was an attempt made to work a mine of copper on Fitfill, some specimens of the ore having been sent to the southward, and having attracted the attention of a mining company. Some shafts were also sunk at Sand-lodge, in Sandwick parish. But these attempts, not proving successful, have been abandoned for many years.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There was a temporary residence in this parish for the Earls of Orkney, when they came to the country; but the castle of Sculloway was their principal dwelling.

*Parochial Registers.*—Parochial registers are kept, of the baptisms and marriages of persons connected with the Established Church; but Dissenters do not register their baptisms; and only their marriages are proclaimed in the Established Church.

## III.—POPULATION.

Amount in 1801,	-	3201
1811,	-	3498
1821,	-	3798
1831,	-	4405

## IV.—INDUSTRY.

Dunrossness is fertile in the production of bear or big, and black oats; considerable quantities of both, and also of potatoes of good quality, are annually carried to Lerwick, and sold to the inhabitants there, at reasonable prices. The standard weight of the lispund, of Norwegian origin, is 32 lbs. English; but it is the custom to give 36 lbs. or more.



No natural crops of clover and rye-grass spring here, except on a small spot at Sumburgh.

The island of Colsay carries a good number of sheep of the English breed : and until the scab invaded the island of St Nianians, it carried a considerable number of sheep of a large kind. It is at present devoted to the grazing of cattle.

There has happened a very heavy loss in this parish, of a snug estate that belonged to Alexander Sinclair, Esq. of Brow, all the most valuable part thereof having been blown over with sand, and only some small patches, called outsets or pendicles, now remaining. A part of the estate of Sumburgh, which was surrounded with sand, like an oasis in a desert, and which carried a good flock of sheep, is now also so much overspread with sand, that it has not one upon it. And a small inlet, which could formerly admit small craft, is now filling up very fast by sand blowing from the waste.

*Fishing.*—Mr Bruce of Sumburgh's tenants are allowed to cure their own fish, which are delivered to him at a certain stipulated price, in their marketable state, and of course his lands are let at an advanced price. But other heritors who have the fish given them by their tenants in a green or uncured state, let their lands at an inferior price.

A herring-fishing has, for some years past, been carried on, partly in Dunrossness, but chiefly in the parishes of Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, where a number of large boats have been fitted out at great expense. This fishing was begun by the tenants of Mr Bruce of Sumburgh, under his patronage ; and by his residing at Sand Lodge, in the vicinity of the herring stations, he has given them great encouragement. Three or four brigs or sloops arrive annually at Levenwick bay, from Rothsay, and receive the herrings as they are caught, at a stipulated price per cran. Mr Bruce of Bigtown is, with his tenants, embarked in a similar enterprise.

Except at Quendale, Bigtown, and Sumburgh, where ploughs are used, the tenants, having but small portions of land, cultivate their ground with small spades. In Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, a few ploughs are used, drawn by small horses.

Very little kelp is manufactured in this parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Some years ago, there was a very handsome, substantial, and expensive light-house, erected on the summit of Sumburgh Head, the most southerly promontory in Shetland. The tower is ele-

gant, and the mansions of the keepers very neat. The expense, I believe, was about L. 40,000. It is visited annually by Robert Stevenson, Esq. civil-engineer; and a yacht comes twice in the year, with stores.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are some persons of the Baptist persuasion here, but immersion seems not to be generally attractive: and there are, also, a good number in both parishes, of Wesleyan Methodists.

The stipend, by decret of valuation, is L. 200, besides a sum for communion elements; and the glebe is reckoned good, the soil being of excellent quality: it contains 13 acres of arable ground, and 14 or 15 acres of meadow; but the pasture is not valuable.

*Education.*—This parish is much in want of proper schools for the education of the rising generation, there being, besides the parochial, only some private ones kept by young men, employed by the parents at their own expense, and that only for a part of the year,—they betaking themselves to the fishing in summer, as what they earn from teaching does not compensate them. The parochial school is stationed in the parish of Sandwick. In Cunningsburgh, there are a school appointed by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and a Sabbath evening school. There are few or none of the people who cannot read.

*Libraries.*—There are two parochial libraries, instituted lately, one in Cunningsburgh, and the other in Sandwick parish. There is also one in Dunrossness.

*Fuel.*—No large tracks of moss are here. Had that been the case, peats would not have needed to be transported from a great distance to the southern extremity of the parish, a distance of four or five miles, upon small ponies, by which great expense is incurred.

*Fair Island.*—This island is about 3 miles long and 2 broad. It lies about midway betwixt Orkney and Shetland. On the north-east corner of the island, there is a small harbour; but vessels do not frequent it. There is a large peninsula called Bounness, which feeds a considerable flock of sheep of the south country breed, and is fenced with a high stone dike across the isthmus. The houses are all on the southern part of the island. To the north part of the cultivated ground, there is a fence of feal, which shuts it in and protects it from sheep. The names of the towns or hamlets are, Shirva, Leogh, Bousta, Gelah, Seutter, and Taing. By

the census taken this year, (1841,) there were 35 inhabited houses, occupied by about 35 families : and there were 119 males and 113 females,—in all 232. A number of years ago, a few families removed to Orkney,—the island being rather overstocked with inhabitants. There are 96 merks of land in the island, besides a few outsets not long occupied. The people had found the prosecution of the ling and tusk-fishing at a distance from the land, not profitable; and they now confine themselves to the catching of seath, that being not so dangerous and expensive an operation as the former. Of this about forty tons, in the dried state, have been generally transported to the Leith market; which, during the existence of the Government bounty, together with the oil produced, brought a good return. No fish is disposed of to straggling vessels that may appear on the coast, the fishermen being bound to deliver their products to the tacksman. What feu-duty is now paid from the island to Lord Dundas I am not aware; but, instead of L. 34 Scotch, formerly paid to the minister as teinds, L. 14, 0s. 10d. Sterling has been awarded by decret of the Court, as his proportion of L. 200, the stipend of the ministry at present. There remain some unexhausted teinds, which will raise the stipend to nearly L. 300 per annum, when a fresh augmentation shall take place.

The number of boats has considerably increased since the time of the last Statistical Account; and they all lie on the south side of the island, in a creek, where a good many of the cod-fishing sloops belonging to the mainland take shelter, when the weather is unfavourable.

The people are sober and industrious; and most vigorous and expert rowers. The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge has granted a salary to a schoolmaster for his exertions in conducting the Sabbath evening school in this island.

*June 1841*

UNITED PARISHES OF  
SANDSTING AND AITHSTING.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN BRYDEN, MINISTER.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

THOUGH the Islands of Hialtland, variously named Hethland, Schetland, Shotland, Shetland, or Zetland, were assigned in wadsett to the Crown of Scotland nearly five hundred years ago, little more is known of them, generally speaking, than if they had remained, to the present day, a pertinent of the Crown of Denmark.

That the present inhabitants are of Scandinavian origin, many circumstances tend to prove. The historian, Torphæus, asserts, that these islands were discovered about three hundred and eighty-five years before the birth of our Saviour; but that they might have been inhabited from a much earlier period.

When Harold Harfagre, King of Norway, landed in Shetland in 875, he found "Papæ;" but these might have presided over the worship of Odin, and directed the rites paid to the Scandinavian god. It is probable that the Christian religion was not attempted to be introduced among the natives till about the beginning of the tenth century; and even then, its progress was very slow. For the Earls, who ruled with despotic sway, and who seldom acknowledged any superior, longer than they could renounce their allegiance with impunity, uniformly opposed the introduction of Christianity; till a circumstance took place, about the middle of the tenth century, which brought about its reception and establishment. The King of Norway happening to touch at the islands, invited the reigning Earl and his family on board of his ship, with the determination, it would appear, of converting him and his people to the Christian faith, by argument or force. The invitation being accepted, the King gave the Earl his choice, either to embrace the Christian religion, and be baptised, and thus secure his friendship, or to have his Earldom wrested from him,

SHETLAND.

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and himself and family put to the sword. The Earl, for a time, hesitated as to the choice he should make; but, seeing the sword about to be plunged into the breast of his son, parental tenderness overcame his scruples; he renounced the worship of Odin, professed himself a Christian, and was baptised. His people soon after followed his example.

Shetland, while subject to the Danish government, was governed, in all civil matters, by a judge called "the Grand Foude;" and hence the country was designated by the name of a "Foudrie." This Foudrie was divided into a number of small districts, over each of which was appointed a subordinate foude, or magistrate. To him was committed the power of judging and deciding in cases of smaller moment, of keeping the peace and of regulating weights and measures. In the discharge of these duties, he was assisted by inferior officers, called "Ranselmen," and "Lawrightmen." Whoever considered themselves aggrieved by the decision of the local foude and his officers, had the power of appeal to the Grand Foude, who, at his "lawting," assisted by the "Udalmen," made laws, and determined in all cases of life and death.

After the islands were annexed to the Crown of Scotland in 1470, in the reign of James III., their government was usually bestowed on some Court favourite, who made the most of their precarious possession, and whose sway was generally marked with cruelty and oppression. Though these rulers were frequently changed, the poor islanders for a long time benefited little by any change which took place. And, while writhing under the yoke of the oppressor, the knowledge that they were deprived of the means of redress, rendered that yoke still more galling. Even when subject to a milder sway, the acts of former oppressors continued to be felt; and many exactions, equally unjust in themselves, and contrary to express stipulations, were made, and continued to be made; these, by prescription, having now become legal demands.

*Name.*—These united parishes seem to have taken their name from the two bailiwicks or courts of justice held in them; the one on the Ting or Taing, (a neck of land jutting into the sea, in the vicinity of Sand), hence Sand's Ting; the other similarly situated near Aith; hence Aith's Ting.

Under the chief foude or judge, there were inferior foudes or judges, whose province seems to have been, to hold their courts in places situated at a distance from the principal foudry, or high court, to which appeals were carried. The appointment

of sheriff put an end to these courts; but, it must be admitted, that the municipal regulations by which their proceedings were conducted, were well calculated for preserving good order in the islands.

*Situation, Boundary, and Extent.*—These united parishes are situated in latitude  $60^{\circ} 30'$ , and form the bounds of one ministry. They lie nearly in the middle of the mainland of Shetland, and are bounded on the east, by that part of the parish of Tingwall, called Wiesdale; on the south and south-west, by the Atlantic Ocean; on the north-west, by the parish of Walls; on the north, by a large arm of the sea called the Minn, or Swarback's Minn, separating them from Muckle Roe, an island belonging to the parish of Delting; and, on the north-east, they march with Delting on the Mainland. As no regular survey of the parishes has been made, or actual measurement of their extent taken, their dimensions cannot be stated with perfect accuracy; but their length may be fairly estimated at 10 miles, and their breadth at 8 miles.

*Topographical Appearances.*—These parishes are of an oblong figure, and their greatest length is from north to south, or rather from north north-west to south south east. They abound in knolls, or rising grounds; but there are no hills of any considerable height in them, neither is there, in any one place, any considerable extent of low level land. The cultivated lands are generally bounded on the one side by the sea, while the occupiers of lands, which are farther inland, have an easy access to the sea, none of them being more distant from it than a mile. All the rising grounds are covered with heather, interspersed with patches of green, on a mossy soil, while the nesses or peninsulas are generally green. The parishes abound in moss, which, in many places, is very deep, and which affords abundance of excellent fuel for the people, though it yields not much good pasture for the cattle. The shore on the west side, where it is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, is bold, and in the rocks are many caves, to which the wild pigeons resort.

*Climate.*—A great deal of rain falls, and the air is generally very damp. Notwithstanding, however, the excess of moisture, the country cannot by any means be considered as unhealthy. Though the deep moss, which is the general soil in these parishes, may emit copious exhalations, these do not appear to carry with them any contagious miasmata. But when these exhalations are condensed and converted into hoar-frost, they often do very serious damage

to the crops. If the corns are filling, and the potato haulms are green, they never recover.

Heavy and long-continued rains frequently fall in every season of the year, but more especially in winter and spring. The heaviest rains are from the south and south-west. Yet, while the climate is justly characterised as variable and uncertain, the best proof that these changes are not prejudicial to the health is, that many of the inhabitants enjoy this blessing almost uninterruptedly till an advanced age. I may mention that there are eighteen persons now living in the parish, whose united ages amount to 1552.

*Voes or Bays.*—The principal voes or bays on the north-west and west are, Gruting, Airs of Selivoe, and Olla's Voes, which lead in between the south point of the Island of Vaila, in the parish of Walls, and the well known land-mark, the burgh of Culswick. The entrance is narrow, but deep; and within, there is nothing to fear,—these three voes or bays being completely landlocked. They are also very extensive, capable of affording anchorage to ships of any burthen and in any number.

Several miles to the southward and eastward, along a bold shore, are the two voes of Skeld. The more westerly voe opens to the south, and in it vessels seldom come to an anchor. The entrance to the more easterly voe is narrow, but inside it enlarges into a fine bason with excellent anchorage.

By rounding a pretty high headland a little farther east, the entrance into Selivoe and Sand-Voe opens. These voes are separated from each other by a small island called Kirk-holm, and a neck of land called Kirk-ness. The more westerly is Selivoe, (which, in the Norwegian language, signifies Herring-voe), which extends a considerable way inland. In any part of it, a vessel may ride in perfect safety. Not even a swell from the ocean is felt here; and if the anchors and cables are good, the bottom being a stiff blue clay, blow high, blow low, nothing is to be feared.

Sand-Voe, on the contrary, is so very open to the south-west, and the ground so very loose, that no vessel would anchor in it unless in fine summer weather, and would hardly risk lying in it over night.

Leaving Selivoe, crossing the mouth of Sand-Voe, and passing through a narrow sound between the peninsula Foreness, and the small island Foreholm, Sandsound-Voe opens on the left, and winds in a northerly direction between five and six miles inland.

It takes different names according to the different places bordering on it; such as Sandsound-Voe, Tresta-Voe, Bixter-Voe, &c.

Entering in from the west, through St Magnus's Bay, and on the north part of Aithsting, is the voe or bay of West Burrafirth, opening to the north, an unsafe harbour, and seldom taken by any vessel. Proceeding east, round the Nien or Ness of Brindister, a fine voe opens called the Voe of Brindister, from a village of that name near its mouth. As it extends inland several miles in a south-westerly direction, it takes the name of Unifirth-Voe, from a village of that name situated on its west bank. It is here studded with several small green holms or islands, and its shores yield the richest, and, for the same extent, the greatest quantity of sea weed for kelp, which is perhaps in the country.

In proceeding a little farther east, and rounding a pretty high headland called the Ness of Nunsburgh, the Voe of Clousta opens, running inland about one mile and a-half in a southerly and south-easterly direction. This, as well as the Voe of Brindister, affords excellent anchorage, and in both, vessels can ride in the greatest safety. The west end of the Island of Vementry, with some small grazing holms, lie outside, and in a great measure cover the entrance into this voe. A vessel leaving Clousta Voe and sailing east, must steer outside of the Island of Vementry and through the Minn or Swarback's Minn. There is a passage inside of the island, that is, between the island and the mainland; but it is too narrow and shallow unless for boats.

A little farther east, is the Island of Papa Little; passing between it and a part of the mainland called Aithsness, Aith's-Voe opens to the southward, and East Burrafirth-Voe due east. Aith's-Voe is a very extensive inland harbour, while East Burrafirth-Voe is very small. Both, however, are perfectly safe.

These are the principal voes or harbours in Sandsting and Aithsting. They are excellent in themselves, but their situation renders them comparatively of little benefit either to the public or to individuals. Several of them, however, abound with the largest and finest oysters which are to be found in the kingdom. There are also many mussel scaaps or beds in them, which are used as bait for the small fishing; and in the deeper parts of the voes, is to be found a large mussel called a yoag, which is used as bait by vessels in the cod-fishing.

*Islands.*—The principal islands are, Vementry and Papa Little. There are several other small islands or holms, which are capable



of grazing one or two cows during the summer, or a few sheep; and some of them yielding grass barely sufficient for supporting an eil-mark\* sheep for a few months, in the summer and harvest.

Vementry is a large island, green on the east end, and covered with heather on the west. It is considered a rich island, and is capable of grazing about twenty score of sheep, besides a proportion of black-cattle. It is at present stocked with a heavy breed of sheep, generally of the white-faced kind. It yields a yearly rent to the proprietor, Mr Gifford of Busta, of upwards of L. 60 Sterling. About one hundred years ago, it was purchased, stocked with fifteen score of sheep, for L. 30 Sterling; a striking proof how much money has been depreciated, while lands and produce have risen in value. There are three merks of rental land in the island, which was formerly cropped, but which, for these few years back, have been mostly converted into pasture. The greater part of the sheep stock are in steelbow.† The island pays of stipend to the minister, 16s. 6d. Sterling.

The Island of Papa Little is neither so rich in quality, nor so extensive as Vementry. It also consists of three merks of rental land, which is cropped by the tenant. It will carry about ten score of sheep, which, till lately, were of the native breed, but are now begun to be crossed with the white and black-faced kinds. But the tenant is of opinion that the island, owing to the want of a sufficiency of good food, is incapable of carrying a heavy breed of sheep. The rental land is of a very good quality, but the pasture ground has a very parched appearance, consisting principally of stunted heather. In addition to the sheep stock, the tenant keeps about fifteen head of black-cattle, young and old. The island was some time since held in steelbow, but it now pays a yearly rent of L. 20 to the proprietor, Sir Arthur Nicolson. It pays of stipend to the minister, 13s. 6d. per annum. The sheep in Vementry and Papa Little are free from the scab.

*Springs.*—There are innumerable springs in the parish, of pure and wholesome water, and also many which have passed over bog-iron, and which are strongly impregnated with its tint and taste.

*Lochs.*—There are no fewer than 140 lochs in the parish,

\* Eil-mark, a beast which no dike will turn, and which cannot be kept out of the corn.

† Steelbow; that is, the tenant receives a certain number of sheep, cows, or horses, for the use and profits of which he pays a certain sum per head yearly, and at the expiry of his lease is bound to leave an equal number.

some of which are of very considerable extent. They are generally skirted with green, and several of them are studded with islets or holms, on which numerous wild fowls build their nests. The water is very dark-coloured, owing to the mossy nature of the soil through which the rivulets run, which feed the lochs.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—Quartzose gneiss abounds in the hill of Russness, on the east side of the voe of Sandsound, and to the southward of a village of that name. It contains a great quantity of quartz and of light-coloured mica. The line of bearing may be stated on an average from south  $12^{\circ}$  west, to north  $12^{\circ}$  east. The dip is to the west, at angles most frequently from  $70^{\circ}$  and upwards. The position of the strata is sometimes vertical.

The rocks in Foreness (a peninsula to the southward of Innersand, and lying between Sand-voe and Sandsound-voe,) partake of the common description of gneiss, the felspar being in excess, the other ingredients being present, and the strata traversed by small veins of granite.

At Berfield, (a little above Sandsound, on the east side of the voe,) talc takes the place of mica, not only in the gneiss, but also in the granitic veins.

A little to the northward of Innersand, on the west side of the voe of Sandsound, a quarry of chromate of iron was opened some years ago. But though several tons of it have at different times been sent to market, the quality of it, and the returns made, did not warrant a continued working of it. I have seen several large imbedded masses of chromate of iron at Garden, in Aithsting. These are the only places in the parish, where it has been discovered. A little to the north of the chromate quarry, limestone makes its appearance.

At a burn called Tactagill, about a mile to the eastward of Tresta, which is situated on the eastern bank of a continuation of Sandsound-voe, here called Tresta-voe, a great quantity of porcelain earth, of a yellowish white colour, is to be found. Rocks of gneiss, of which white quartz is one of the component parts, blended with talc and felspar, extend from Reawickness to Kirkness, and the west shore of Bixter-voe, being a continuation of Sandsound voe. The directions of the strata are from south  $15^{\circ}$  west, to north  $15^{\circ}$  east, and from south  $20^{\circ}$  west, to north  $20^{\circ}$  east. Several interstrata of limestone make their appearance, in a line of direction nearly parallel to that of the strata among which they occur. Limestone appears in Kirkholm, Kirkness, (both on

the east side of Selivoe,) and on the west side of Bixter voe. The predominating rocks, in a line from Reawick, along the west bank of Selivoe to the west bank of Bixter voe, are red granite, which comprehends all Sandsting to the west. It contains veins of quartz, and, of course, very red felspar.

The quartz rock of Aithsting is of a bluish grey colour, and presents something of a wedge-like shape. The two bounding lines diverging from a point in the island of Papa Little, are continued in a direction of south  $60^{\circ}$  west, to the westward; whilst the other extends in a straight line south  $32^{\circ}$  west, to the head of Bixter-voe, when it first comes in contact with the granite of Sandsting. The quartz admits into its composition so much felspar, that in decomposed specimens, where this ingredient is particularly demonstrated, it is sufficiently distinguished from the sandstone of newer formations, which it otherwise resembles. Siliceous matter is, however, the prevalent substance. In the vicinity of Aithsness, it contains small sparing portions of clayslate, by which it becomes the grauwacke of some authors. At Papa Little, Aithsness, Clousta-voe, Nunsburgh, and West Burrafirth, the rock is, in several places, varied by the presence of small angular portions of red felspar, and passes into felspar porphyry. At Aithsness, it contains greenstone as well as limestone, in the form of thin beds or veins. It is also impregnated with much ferruginous, in the shape of an oxide. In some places, are to be observed veins of sparry iron-ore.

The quartz rock generally consists of minute grains firmly united together, and possessing semicrystalline forms. In this respect it differs from a particular variety of sandstone found on the east side of the island, where the texture is much looser, and where the grains show numerous marks of attrition. South of the hill of Aithsness, and at a few other places, the particles of quartz diminish so much in size, that the rock appears of a compact structure.

The stratification of the quartz rock seems remarkably connected with the partial occurrence of mica, whilst its line of direction does not follow that of other mountain masses of Shetland, which have been represented as stretching from south by west, to north by east. On the contrary, it extends from south  $60^{\circ}$  east, to north  $60^{\circ}$  west, from east to west, and from south  $70^{\circ}$  west, to north  $70^{\circ}$  east. The dip is at various points of the compass, while the angle of inclination is, as appears in an horizontal section,

from 40° to 45°. In several places, the quartz is decidedly unstratified, and yields to blows of the hammer equally in various directions; but whether stratified or unstratified, it is resolved by other seams into polyedrous masses of various magnitudes.

At the north voe of Clousta, there occurs, resting on the quartz, a small roundish conglomerated mass of granite, felspar, and quartz, scarcely, perhaps, more than 150 yards in diameter; a gradual transition of one rock into the other being observable at the junction. A few of the conglomerate strata next to those of the quartz, range at a common angle of 45°. But crossing the strata for a few yards only, they gradually acquire an inclination with the horizon of only 10°, and maintaining this position, they are terminated. Now, there is every reason to suppose, that the lower edges of the strata of the conglomerate rock are in contact with the surface formed by the upper edges of quartz. This change of inclination, therefore, from 45° to 10°, can be satisfactorily accounted for, on the supposition that the strata had acquired an addition of new matter in their descent, which may either consist in an increased thickness of the strata, or in an accession of new strata. It is thus that the increased accumulation of matter which the strata may possibly have received in proportion to their depth, would produce an elevation of the uppermost strata.

The quartz rock of Aithsting passes into the granite rock of Sandsting, at the head of Bixter-voe, by gradually losing its homogeneous appearance, and by its ingredients being interspersed in a distinct form of larger grains or concretions, until the rock is at length wholly composed of semicrystalline portions of quartz and felspar. Occasionally, however, an alternation takes place of the two rocks. To the north of Bixter-voe, the quartz rock is contiguous to gneiss; but the junction is, for the most part, much concealed by a deep moss. At Braganess, (to the north-west of Aithsting,) the line of demarcation between the two rocks is perfectly complete, no transition taking place.

The quartz rock is elevated into numerous irregular ridges, not above 600 or 700 feet high, running from east to west, and intersected by valleys.

Much of the surface of the quartz rock is concealed by a deep peat moss; but everywhere, a great display of bog-iron is presented.

The strata of gneiss which, from the island of Papa Little along the north coast of Aithsting, for a distance of upwards of five

miles due west, are so associated with hornblende slate, and intimately combined with the particles of hornblende, that Dr Hibbert has given to the rock the name of hornblendic gneiss. "In most specimens," says he, "which we examine, the hornblende is either openly manifested, or is in such an intimate state of union with the felspar, as to impart to this ingredient of the rock a greenish tinge." The other ingredients of quartz, felspar, and mica are, as in all other varieties of gneiss, described to be found in very different proportions.

The gneiss, at the Nien or Ness of Brindister, is traversed with a vein of granite of very considerable size, being not less than 45 feet broad, and running from south-west by south to north-east by north. At Vementry, the veins of granite are particularly tortuous, and ramify in the most remarkable manner.

Besides granite, veins of quartz, compact felspar, felspar-porphry, greenstone, or sienitic greenstone, are often seen. Thin interstrata, of very pure limestone, are to be seen at Braganess, West Burrafirth, and other places. The granitic veins which traverse them, are often diverted from their course in the most remarkable manner, showing great signs of distortion.

The presence of beds of hornblende slate, or of intermixed particles of hornblende, has a strong tendency to disturb the strata among which they appear. On this account, any general statement of the most prevalent line of direction would be impossible. The direction, which may possibly be the most prevalent, has been found to be from south-west by south to north-east by north. The dip was mostly to the west, at angles from  $50^{\circ}$  to  $70^{\circ}$ .

The relations of the strata are much concealed by the sea. At Vementry and Braganess, the line of direction stretches from the bluish-grey quartz rock, near Aithsness, to the granite of Vementry; consequently, the strata are opposed to the bounding lines of each of these masses, at various angles. More westerly, they only meet, under similar circumstances, the quartz rocks of this district. The invasions which take place, in the form of dikes or veins, from the contiguous mountains of granite, both in the south end of the Island of Meikle Roe and in the west end of Vementry, are very large, and are particularly seen near the junction of the gneiss and granite in the neighbourhood of the dwelling-house in Vementry.

I have frequently found, on the shore, pieces of pumice stone, which, from its small specific gravity, readily floats on the water:

these specimens, it is probable, were driven here from the volcanic rocks of Iceland.

I have also picked up, at different times, several *Molucca* beans, the production of the West Indies; and have seen some of the larger ones of them converted into snuff-boxes, having a top of lead or pewter affixed to them.\*

The soil, in a very few places, is sandy; in some, clay; in others, a light brown mould; but, in the greater part of the parish, it consists of a deep black moss. In cold seasons, particularly in the month of May and beginning of June, the grub worm often does great damage to the corns, by destroying the roots. In 1829, I sowed a small quantity of buck wheat on the glebe, which presented a very fine appearance, till it was in blossom, when the grub attacked it, and did not leave a single stalk.

*Zoology.*—The fresh water lakes abound with that species of trout usually known by the name of the burn-trout, some of which I have caught weighing upwards of six pounds. The sea-trout and the burn-trout enter the burns to spawn in August or September, according to the time when the rains have swelled the burns. If the weather has been fine, and falls of rain, it is very interesting to observe the anxiety which the trouts manifest to fulfil their destination. They leap about the mouth of the burn, where it empties itself into the sea, and show distinctly that they know their particular season; and, in their eagerness to gain this end, they frequently run into shallow water, and are taken.

Trouts are often taken by setting a net across the mouth of the burn, where it empties itself into the sea, at the time of the tide of flood; and, when it has ebbed sufficiently, they are an easy prey,—being either entangled in the net, or left without the means of escape. There is another method which is often had recourse to for the same purpose, viz. “the hovie.” The hovie is made of the stalks of the dock, wide at the one end, and narrow at the other. A dike is built across the burn, leaving an open space in the middle sufficient to admit the wider end of the hovie. After the hovie is firmly placed in this open space, a person, with a stick in his hand, wades down the burn, and drives the trouts before him. Having entered the hovie and reached its narrow end, they cannot turn to get out again.

In most of the friths or voes, there are haddocks, whittings, cod-

\* In my account of the Geology and Mineralogy of Sandsting and Aithsting, I acknowledge my obligations to Dr Hibbert.

lings, flounders, halibut, skate, mackerel, and herrings in summer and harvest, and the cole-fish or seath, with its numerous fry called sillocks and piltocks. The sillocks do not exceed six inches in length the first year, and are known by this name till they have drunk of the first tide of summer, after which they take the name of piltocks, and will be found from ten to twelve inches long. When two years old, they are called bilyia piltocks; when three years old, steven piltocks; and afterwards they are known by the name of seath. The seath-fishing is not prosecuted in this parish.

Shell-fish of every kind are to be found in the voes or friths; oysters, large mussel or yoag, common mussel, spouts or razor-fish, cockles, smisslings, cullicks, welks, buckies, limpets, crabs, lobsters, harps, &c.

*Botany.*—Under this head I may observe, that wherever the moss is so deep as to admit of peats being taken, roots and branches of the birch and hazel have very frequently been dug up. The mountain-ash or rowan-tree, the hazel, the honeysuckle, the hip-brier, and willow, are natives in many of the islets or holms in the fresh water lochs. In any other situations, I believe, they could not exist; for horses, cows, and sheep, browse upon and destroy every thing that comes in their way, when they are hard pressed for food. And this may be the reason why plants of this description, and, perhaps, others have disappeared from the common range of pasture. That trees will grow and attain a considerable size, if properly sheltered and defended from man and beast, I have abundant proof. In my garden a native mountain-ash has attained to such an height, that crows have built a nest in it. And a bower or elder tree also grows in my garden, graced with a crow's nest. In the garden at Sand, formerly the seat of Sir John Mitchell of Westshore, there are plane, ash, elder, rowan, and hawthorn-trees, of considerable size. It may be remarked, that, if plantations are ever attempted, they must be on a large scale, so that the plants may afford shelter to each other; and they must also be protected by a wall, which could not only defend from the encroachments of cattle, but which would also be proof against the inroads of man. For a shrub of the size of a walking-stick, a flail-tree, or a fishing-rod, would prove a temptation too strong for the moral courage of a Shetlander to resist.

The apple-tree blossoms, and carries fruit; but I have never seen it come to perfection. It is different, however, with the smaller fruits. The gooseberry, the black, red, and white cur-

rants, thrive well, and in good seasons come to perfection, and are particularly fine-flavoured. Strawberries in the gardens, and craw-berries on the hills, ripen well and are abundant. Rhubarb, mint, and every kind of vegetable usually raised in the kitchen-garden, are raised here in perfection.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

### *Land-owners.*—

	Merks.
The Right Hon. Lord Dundas is patron of the parish, and proprietor of	65
Andrew Grierson of Quendale, . . . . .	241 $\frac{1}{2}$
John Scott of Scalloway, . . . . .	204 $\frac{1}{2}$
Arthur Gifford of Busta, . . . . .	87 $\frac{1}{2}$
James Greig of Garderhouse, . . . . .	60 $\frac{1}{2}$
Andrew Umphray of Reawick, . . . . .	49 $\frac{1}{2}$
Smith of Greenland, . . . . .	10
Andrew Irvine of Lerwick, . . . . .	9
Thomas Henry of Burrastow, . . . . .	9
James Mitchell, Sandsound, . . . . .	4
Sir Arthur Nicolson of Lochend, . . . . .	3
John Cheyne of Tanwick, . . . . .	3
Robert Doull of Fogregirth, . . . . .	3
Laurence Redland, Wester Skeld, . . . . .	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Andrew Redland, Scarvister, . . . . .	2
Dr James Scott, . . . . .	17
Anthony Doull, Brindister, . . . . .	6
Glebe, . . . . .	9 merks
Total merks,	777

There are no resident heritors, unless Robert Doull, James Mitchell, Laurence Redland, Andrew Redland, and Anthony Doull, Brindister.

*Parochial Registers.*—The acts or minutes of session commence in 1733, and are contained in one volume. They appear to have been regularly kept from that period, till about 1765; but between the death or demission of one minister and the admission of another, little care seems to have been taken of the register; so that now, it is in a very shattered and imperfect state.

*Antiquities.*—The small island, called Kirk-holm, in the mouth of Selivoe, presents every appearance of having at one time been put in a state of defence. A breast-work of earth round the most accessible parts of the island, *i. e.* on the west, north, and part of the east sides, is still visible; and the foundations of nine houses, for the accommodation of those who may have fortified themselves in it, can also be traced. Two of the houses, which have been erected at the north end of the holm, stood north and south, with their door towards the west, and measure each 38 feet long by 12 feet broad inside. At a distance of 42 feet to the southward, is the foundation of another house of 23 feet long



by 10 feet wide, standing east and west, with the door towards the north; and at a distance of 42 feet to the southward of this last-mentioned house, is the first of six houses more, which six houses stand parallel to each other, and in the direction of east and west, with their doors towards the north. All the houses are separated from each other; but the intermediate space between them appears to have been no more than sufficient to have admitted one person. The doors have been 3 feet wide.

As there are no springs of water in the holm, a tank or reservoir appears to have been formed for the reception of rain-water, or of water brought from the adjoining ness.\*

There are five burying places in the parish, viz. at Sand, West Skeld and Gruting in Sandsting, and at Twatt and Aith in Aithsting. Though at two of them only, viz. Sand and Twatt, is it certain that churches have been built, yet it is more than probable that, while the Roman Catholic religion flourished in the islands, there have been churches or chapels in the immediate neighbourhood of them all. In addition to the church or chapel and burying-ground at West Skeld, there are the ruins of a burgh or fort. From the ruins which still appear, we are warranted to infer, that it was a place of very considerable dimensions; but what these were, or in what form the burgh itself was constructed, cannot now be ascertained. It was built of blocks of red granite, without cement. In the eighth century, and while defended by a band of brave and trusty warriors, we may suppose it affording protection to the lives, and the goods and gear of the udalmen around; but in the nineteenth century, its venerable ruins may be

\* Tradition says, that in 1588, one of the Spanish Armada was lost in what is called the deeps or haddock-sand, a few miles to the southward, that the crew took shelter in the holm, and that they fortified themselves in it, till they should know the reception they were likely to receive from the natives. This tradition is supported by the fact, that a particular spot where the fishermen set their lines, and where the ship is said to have foundered, is known to the present time by the name of the ship. Tradition farther says that, in gratitude for their preservation, and the friendly reception they met with, the crew built a church at Sand, about a mile and a half from the holm, and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. It appears to have been a very neat and substantial building, with a chancel or choir on the east end, separated from the body of the church by an arch extending from one side to the other. There does not appear to have been any hewn stones made use of in the building; but such stones as had the plainest and smoothest surface were placed on the outer and inner sides of the walls,—the heart of the wall filled with boulder or round stones, and cement, apparently of burnt shells, and of thin consistence, and all the empty spaces completely filled up. The roof was thatched. After the Reformation extended itself to Sandsting about 1600, the kirk at Sand was converted into a Protestant church. Between 1760 and 1770, this church was allowed to fall into a state of great disrepair. What the lairds, or the people, or both, in the first instance preserved, the fury of the ocean has been fast destroying. The chancel or choir is nearly washed away.

seen stuck up in the walls of the dwelling-houses, office-houses, yard dikes, &c. of fifteen families in the village.

About a mile to the westward of the two Culswicks, and on the summit of a precipitous cliff of red granite, of several hundred feet in height, stands a burgh, or rather the ruins of a burgh, which still, though recently demolished, presents the appearance of having been in former days a place of very great strength.\*

A burgh, built on a low neck of land, and formerly surrounded by the sea, is to be seen immediately below the present dwelling-houses of Nunnsburgh.

Another burgh stands in the middle of the voe of East Burra-firth, a few hundred yards from its mouth, and opposite the dwelling-houses. Whether this burgh was built on an islet or a foundation forced for it, I cannot say. The voe is not deep where it stands, and there is no spare space around it.

There are several other ruins in the parish; but, as all of them are to be met with on the tops of rising grounds only, the most probable conjecture regarding them is, that they have been watch-towers: and this conjecture is supported by the name given to the particular spots which these ruins occupy,—for instance, “the wart” (which, no doubt, is a corruption of ward) of Reawick; “the wart” of Brouland, &c.

In his notices of Shetland, Mr Pennant observes, “that the Norwegians had anciently their ward-madher or watchman, a sort of sentinel who stood on the top of a vord-hill, and challenged all who came in sight.” We know that it is customary with foreigners to change *v* into *v*,—thus, ward, vard or vord, Shetlandice, wart.

There are several tall unhewn stones standing in different parts of the parish.† The purpose of these cannot be stated with certainty.

\* See description of this burgh by Dr Hibbert.

† I may mention the tradition respecting two standing stones in the neighbourhood of West Skeld, which will show how little credit is to be given to tradition when unsupported by some collateral evidence. These two stones are said to be the metamorphosis of two wizards or giants, who were on their way to plunder and murder the inhabitants of West Skeld; but, not having calculated their time with sufficient accuracy, before they could accomplish their purpose, or retrace their steps to their dark abodes, the first rays of the morning sun appeared, and they were immediately transformed, and remain to the present time in the shape of two tall moss-grown stones of ten feet in height. All the ancient buildings which have been erected, and large stones which have been raised upright, about which there is no particular tradition, are uniformly ascribed to the agency of the Picts, or Peclits, as they are called, or to evil spirits.

Since writing my account of the antiquities of the parish, I have been put in pos-

*Barrows or Tumuli.*—In several parts of the parish, there are the remains of several barrows or tumuli, probably of Scandinavian origin, some of which I have opened, but could not congratulate myself on my researches, they having been opened before. In some, I have found bones partly consumed by fire, pieces of charred wood, and parts of the urn in which the bones had been deposited. The urns appeared to have been rudely wrought out of a coarse sandstone, and others out of a soft stone called kleber. In some cases, there is every reason to believe that the body had been burned at the spot where the ashes had been collected, and placed in the urn; because the stones which were found to surround the urn, over which the tumulus was raised, had been subjected to the action of a strong fire. In other cases, the urns have been placed on a dry piece of ground, covered with a flat stone, and a little earth thrown over them. Of this latter description I have one in my possession, which I found under the foundation of the glebe dike. It measures 12 inches over the mouth, 10 inches over the bottom, and is 10 inches deep. It contained a quantity of half-burnt bones, and was covered with a pretty heavy stone, flat on the side next to the urn. Unfortunately, it was partly broken before I discovered it. There is, however, enough remaining to show its shape and workmanship.

I have discovered two other urns on the glebe, filled with a black unctuous earth, but so much decayed, that no part of them could be lifted. Out of one of them I removed the earth, and found, lying at right angles in the bottom, four pieces of broken stone axes.\*

session of a quern or hand-mill, dug out of the ruins of the burgh at Easter Skeld. It is 18 inches in diameter, and  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in thickness. It appears to have been formed in the same way as the hand-mills now are, or rather it has been the model by which they have been made. It has groups or grooves cut for the sile to rest in, and an hole for the handle. I have recovered the half only of the under stone, the dimensions of which have exceeded a little those of the upper stone. They are both made of the same kind of stone (micaceous schistus) as the millstones now in use are made of.

\* I subjoin Dr Hibbert's description of these instruments, and then add the observations I have to offer:—

“The ancient weapons of war discovered in Shetland are of stone. That such were used by the Teutonic tribes of Europe in the eighth century, and probably very long before, is evident from the fragment of a prose-romance written about that period, in the Saxon dialect of the Teutonic. This manuscript, which is preserved in Cassel, was first printed in Eccardi Comment. de rebus Franciæ Orientalis, and it has been reprinted with a Latin and English translation, in an interesting work lately published in Edinburgh, entitled, “Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.” From this very curious document, two or three disjointed passages may be given, by which we may see the reference which is made to the Teutonic burgh, and to the arms contemporary with this early kind of fortress:—‘I heard it related that Hiltibrant and Hatubrant with one mind agreed to go on a warlike expedition. The relatives (sons

*Modern Buildings—Churches.*—From the time of the Reformation till the year 1780, there were two churches in the parish, viz. one

of the same father) made ready their horses, prepared their war-shirts, (shirts of mail), girded on their swords (which were fastened) at the hilt with chains.

“well give now, (turn thou this to good) wielding God, quoth Hiltibrand, whose word is done. I wandered summers and winters sixty out of (my) land; there they detached me among shooting people (archers); never in any burgh, (city, castle), fastened they my legs; (but) now my nearest relation will hew my neck with his bill, (battle-axe) or I entangle his legs, (tie him like a captive.)

“said Hiltibrand.—Good fellow citizens, be judges who it be that this day must quit the field of battle, or who will have both these brunies (hauberks) in his possession.

“Then they first let ashen (spears) fly with rapid force, that they stuck in the shields. Then they thrust together, resounding stone-axes; they wrathfully heaved white shields.”—Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.

These extracts, from a composition of so remote a date as the eighth century, may be considered as illustrative of the general mode of warfare adopted at that time by the Saxon and Scandinavian tribes of Europe, among whom a greater similarity of language and manners then prevailed, than was to be found at a later period. The first of the offensive arms of the Teutones of the eighth century was the Battle-axe. It appears that these axes were constructed of stone. The heroes of the Teutonic romance are said to have “thrust together resounding stone-axes;” these weapons being expressed in the original by the term *Steimbort*, from *Stein*, a stone, and *Barte* or *Barde*, an axe. In Shetland, numbers of stone axes have been discovered, which are wrought from a remarkably compact green porphyry, probably derived from Scandinavia. In a note, the Doctor remarks, “the stone contains, along with quartz, a considerable portion of felspar in its composition. and probably some little magnesian earth; it resembles a rock that I have seen associated with serpentine, as well as a substance that is used in the construction of some of the stone hatchets of the South Sea Islands.” In form, the Shetland *steinbarte*, or stone axe, is of two varieties; it is either single or double edged.

*Single-edged Steinbarte.*—This variety has one cutting-edge, generally of a semilunar outline, and tapering from opposite points to a blunted extremity or beel. In some specimens, both sides are convex; in others, one side only, the other being flattened. All the edges, except the broad sharpened margin, are bluntly rounded off. The single-edged stone axes of Shetland vary much in their dimensions, being from four to eight or ten inches in length; their breadth proportionally differing. When the Shetland *steinbarte* was used in war, its blunt tapering extremity may be supposed to have been introduced within the perforation made into some wooden or bone haft, and afterwards secured by overlapping cords, formed of thongs of leather or of the entrails of some animal; twine of hemp not being then in use. Another kind of *steinbarte* has been said to occur in Shetland, the sharp edge of which describes the segment of a circle, whilst the chord of the outline is thickened like the back of a knife. Probably its blunt edge was fixed within the groove of a wooden or bone handle, so as to form a single-edged cutting instrument.

*Double-edged Steinbarte.*—The blade of this instrument is a stone completely flattened on each of its sides, and not more than the tenth of an inch thick; it is of an oblong shape, having one blunted margin perfectly straight, and when the stone is held in such a position that the dull edge is the uppermost, we have the form of a blade presented, in which the two narrow edges are irregularly rounded off at their angles, so that one edge is much broader than the other. Every part of the margin but that which constitutes the summit of the outline is sharpened; by which means, there is a great addition made to the extent of the cutting edge. The blade is five inches and a-half long, and from three to four broad. Mallet, in his History of Denmark, describes a battle axe of two edges, as used by the ancient Scandinavians, and he adds, that, when it was fixed to a long pole, it constituted a halbert. In reference to this observation, I have supposed a long staff with the extremity so penetrated at one or two inches from the summit, as to form a long groove four inches in length, through which the stone blade with the blunt side kept uppermost, may be drawn half-way, and then secured to its station by means of cross ligatures. The whole would then present the form of a two-edged battle-axe. Antiquaries have remarked that this weapon was probably in use from the earliest period; but since it was in the course of time wielded by the *Trabants*, or those who stood upon guard in the castles of their

at Sand in Sandsting, and another at Twalt in Aithsting. The minister officiated at each every alternate Sabbath. The present kirk was

kings, it was named a halbert, from the Teutonic, *hale*, a court, and *barde*, an axe. In the true spirit, therefore, of archaeological reasoning, it may be pronounced that the blade of this variety of the Shetland steinbarte and the hypothetical handle to which it is fastened, constitute the rude form of the northern halbert.

The blades of steinbartes are very abundantly found in Shetland. Not unfrequently, several of them are discovered buried together, thus indicating a little armoury, from which a number of weapons might be distributed on an emergency, by the hand of some chief to a small band of natives met together, on the alarm of common danger. Assemblages of these weapons have been found in the parishes of Walls, of Delting, and in the Island of Unst. In Northmavine, says Mr Low of Orkney, seven were discovered under ground, disposed in a circular arrangement, with the points of each directed towards the centre of the ring:—it is a pity that the number of these weapons was not nine, corresponding to the nine wounds of a lance in the form of a circle, which the deified Scandinavian hero Odin gave himself, when, by an act of suicide, he showed an example of death to his surrounding followers. At any rate, the circular arrangement of the weapons remains, indicative of a mystical allusion, and that is quite sufficient to provoke an antiquarian inference.

Regarding the people by whom these stone-axes were used, the natives of Shetland have not the least tradition, and this circumstance is a proof of their great antiquity. They are supposed to have dropt from the clouds, endowed with the power of protecting the houses in which they are preserved from the effects of thunder; hence they are commonly named thunder-bolts, &c.—*Iter ii.* Some of the stone-axes, as Dr Hihbert observes, are of green porphyry, but I have seen some of them formed out of a remarkably compact grey-coloured stone. And even the green porphyry in some of them, from a particular chemical action to which they have been exposed, have, in a great measure, lost their distinguishing tint, and become of a whitish grey-colour. I have specimens of the stone axe of various dimensions, from 5½ inches to 6, 8, 10, and 15 inches in length. The cutting edge of the smallest is two inches, and of the largest 3¼ inches broad; and they gradually taper to a point at the opposite extremity. All the specimens in my possession are convex on both sides, but more so on the one side than on the other.

I have some steinbartes of an oval figure, and others of an heart-shape, with the apex considerably shortened, both formed of the two kinds of stone above mentioned. The largest of the oval ones is 8½ inches long, and 4 inches deep. The cutting edge extends to two-thirds of its circumference, and the remaining third is rounded off, apparently for the purpose of holding in the hand. The heart-shaped one has a cutting edge in every part. I have one different in shape from either of these two; it describes almost a semicircle on the one end, and draws towards a point at the other. The semicircle, and as far as the point have cutting edges; the back is half an inch thick, nearly straight, and rounded off. Several stone axes, on removing the surface of the ground, were found lying together, a short time ago, within the dikes of Stoadale.

It has been maintained, that the larger steinbartes were used as warlike weapons. This may have been the case; but that they were inserted in an haft or handle, appears to me very doubtful. From their tapering shape, no thong could have secured them in such a position, and having no neck which the handle might grasp, the act of lifting it to give a blow, would even be sufficient to cause it slip from its place.

Neither is any proof to be deduced from the appearance of the thin and broad-shaped steinbartes, that they ever were used as halberts. To have rendered them efficient as a weapon of war, not only must the haft have been grooved, but there ought also to have been a corresponding groove in the steinbarte, to retain it in its place, something after the manner of dove-tailing in wood. As there are no marks indicating this to have been the case, the steinbarte ought to have been perforated, that it might have been firmly secured in the groove of the handle.

The larger steinbarte may have been used both as an offensive and a defensive weapon; either by throwing it from the hand, or striking with it, when the combatants came to close quarters—and the smaller steinbarte, it is probable, was formerly used for domestic purposes, and held a similar place in the eighth or ninth century, which a knife does in the nineteenth. That they are a very ancient instrument is without

built in 1780, and was intended as a central kirk for the whole ministry. To have been so it ought to have been placed at Æfirth, about two miles farther north. It is seated to accommodate 437 persons, allowing about sixteen inches to each person.

*Mansion-Houses.*—The mansion-houses of proprietors are only three in number, viz. Sand House, Garder House, and Reawick. Sand House was built in 1754 by Sir Andrew Mitchell of West-shore, Bart.\* The house, gardens, &c. have been, for about forty years, the property of the present John Scott, Esq. of Scalloway; but they are fast falling into ruins.

Garder House, a miniature resemblance of Sand House, was built by John Cumming, son of one of the ministers of the parish, about 1760, on four merks of land, rented for many years after at L.4 Sterling per annum. It is now the property of James Greig, Esq. writer in Lerwick.

Reawick is a plain modern building of six rooms, the property of Andrew Umphray, Esq. a minor.

*Mills.*—There are about fifty mills in the parish driven by water, and querns or hand-mills without number.

*Ploughs.*—When my predecessor, the Rev. Patrick Barclay, wrote his Statistical Account of the parish in 1797, there were fourteen ploughs, of a construction peculiar to Shetland, in the parish. There is not one of that description in it now, and they are fast falling into disuse throughout the island.

### III.—POPULATION.

In 1733, the population was	987
1755, . . . . .	911
1775, . . . . .	1223
1792, . . . . .	1285
1801, . . . . .	1493
1811, . . . . .	1617
1821, . . . . .	1884
1831, . . . . .	2177

doubt; for even tradition itself is silent, both as to the time when and the people by whom they were used.

\* At that time it must have been a very elegant house with two wings, and the requisite office-houses. In front, and extending the length of the house, is a flower plot, on each side of which is a garden of considerable extent, which has been tastefully laid out—in a line with the outer walls of the gardens, and towards the head of the voe, is an enclosure of about three acres. The beautiful old castle of Scalloway, built by Earl Patrick Stewart about 1600, was spoiled of much of its ancient grandeur, by having its dressed freestones torn from their place, to supply door and window jambs and lintels, and corner stones for this mansion. But the spoliation of the castle, though its foundation was laid in blood, and every stone of its walls told of oppression, was not permitted to proceed without a fearful warning. While the work of demolition was busily going on, a voice, it is said, was heard to declare, "They might pull down and build up, but the fourth generation should never inhabit!"

No. of males under 7 years of age,	229	No. of females under 7 years of age,	221
from 7 to 15,	192	from 7 to 15,	198
15 to 30,	258	15 to 30,	268
30 to 50,	201	30 to 50,	264
50 to 70,	96	50 to 70,	151
above 70,	39	above 70,	39
Bachelors and widowers above 50,	21		

	1086	1141
The number of births during the last seven years is	191	
deaths	do. do. . . . .	148
marriages	do. do. . . . .	92
fatuous persons,	. . . . .	12
deaf and dumb,	. . . . .	2
families,	. . . . .	425
inhabited houses,	. . . . .	277

No family of distinction or of independent fortune resides in the parish, and of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards,—there are six.

*Character, &c. of the People.*—The people in general are of the middle stature, and well-proportioned, having brown or yellow hair. Their features are rather small than otherwise, of an agreeable expression, and have nothing of that harshness which is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon descent. Both sexes manifest an insatiable curiosity for prying into the concerns of others; and with an acuteness scarcely to be credited, and a perseverance worthy of a better object. When the direct question and sly insinuation have failed, nothing daunted they will renew their efforts, and, if still unsuccessful, they will substitute their own conjectures for the information withheld.

They are hospitable to a proverb, and would share their last morsel with their neighbour, or even with a stranger whom they had never before seen. They have a great volubility of speech, and are no mean adepts in flattery, when they think it will promote their particular views. Though many carry their passion for dress to an unbecoming and even an extravagant length, it gives me much pleasure to bear testimony to their general sobriety of conduct, and attention to the external ordinances of religion. They may, with truth, be said to be a church-going people, and I trust many of them have felt the power of religion, are living under its influence, “and asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.”

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Arable Lands.*—There are 777 merks of arable lands in these united parishes; but the extent of a merk of land cannot now be ascertained. Originally it must have been very small, and have com-

prehended the infield or bear-land only. From the additions made by successive tenants, the merk of land has increased, in many cases, to eight or ten times its original extent. Besides the original arable land, and the successive additions made to it, there are no fewer than one hundred and four "outsetts" in the parishes; that is, when a tenant finds himself unable to pay his former rent, or when a newly married couple can obtain land in no other way, they fix upon some particular spot in the common pasture,—obtain leave from the principal proprietor of the nearest arable lands, and enclose as much ground as they think will support their family; and such an enclosure is called "an outsett." Sometimes, the proprietor builds the dwelling-house and dikes, and charges rent from the time of entry; at other times, the tenant builds these, and sits rent free, for seven or nine years.

*Agriculture.*—Agriculture may justly be said to be in its infancy in the parish; and as long as the landlords continue to reduce the farms to the least possible size, no improvements can be expected. Farms which formerly were possessed by one or two tenants, are now occupied by five or six. There are only three ploughs in the parish,—one on the glebe, drawn by two oxen; one in Reawick, and one in the island of Papa-Little, each drawn by four ponies. The plough used on the glebe is of Small's make; the other two are made in Lerwick, after a pattern by Morton, Leith-walk. The Shetland plough, so minutely described by my predecessor, the Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his Statistical Account of the parish, is not now used. All the lands in the parish, with the exception of those just mentioned, are turned over with a small spade peculiar to the country. The harrows in general use are made of two parallel pieces of wood, about three feet long, with from eight to ten wooden teeth in each piece, and are connected at the ends by a cross bar of eighteen inches long. These are drawn by a man or woman, with a rope tied to each end of one of the parallel pieces or sides. There are some lands in the parish, on which even a wooden harrow has never been used. Instead of which, after the ground is delved, sown, and manured, a besom of heather is procured, and a person sweeps mould, seed, and manure overhead.

*Crops.*—The crops raised are potatoes, oats, and bear or big; and the old distinction of infield and outfield is still continued. On the infield-land bear (having four or six rows of grain on the head) is sowed year after year, if we except as much of it as will grow the one-half of the potatoes the family may require. The



infield, when laboured for a crop of bear, is always well manured, from a compost of cow's dung, earth, and sea-weed, when it can be got, prepared during the previous summer and harvest, and laid on the top and turned under. Dung is very seldom laid on that part of the infield which is laboured for potatoes, from an opinion that the potatoes are softer and more watery when the land has been dunged, than otherwise. By this management, it is evident that the land must be greatly exhausted, and must require a very great addition to the usual quantity of manure, to yield anything like a tolerable crop, the following year. In some places, the infield has been sown with bear, year after year, and has never been known to produce any other crop, or once permitted to lie ley.

The outfield is uniformly laboured to oats, with the exception of as much of it as will grow the remaining quantity of potatoes required for the family. Sometimes, though rarely, a little outfield bear is tried on the land that was laboured to potatoes, the previous year. All the outfield is manured, whether intended for a crop of oats or potatoes; but with this difference, the oats are sowed first, and then the manure is carried and spread, and both are harrowed in together; whereas the manure for the potatoes is spread on the stubble, and delved under. Sometimes, the potatoes are planted in the furrow, and covered with the next seal; and sometimes, the ground is delved first, and the potatoes dibbled in afterwards. The manure for the outfield is composed of cow's dung, earth carried from the hill during the summer or latter part of harvest, and sea-weed, when it can be got. These are laid, in alternate layers, in small heaps over the lands intended to be brought under crop in the spring. When the voar or seed-time arrives, these are delved down and well mixed, as required; and when a piece of ground is delved and sowed, some carry this manure in straw baskets, called "cashies;" others spread it with their hands, and one yokes himself or herself into the harrow. The ground delved in the course of the day is generally sowed, manured, and harrowed in the evening.

*Potatoes.*—In some places, especially in those situated near fresh-water lochs, the potatoes are liable to be injured, and sometimes destroyed, by mildew; but in general, they are a good crop, and much dependence is placed upon them. About a fourth part of the arable lands is cropped with potatoes. There is a great variety of potatoes in the parish; but the best, both as regards quality and quantity, is of a light red colour, streaked with white

The method of cleaning the potato crop is rather imperfect. A little before or about the time the shoots begin to break the clod, the top weeds are turned up with the hand-hoe or spade, which is called "shovelling the potatoes;" and having lain for a few days to allow the weeds to wither, a double draught of the wooden harrow is given to turn up such weeds as may not have been sufficiently exposed. When the stems are advanced about six inches above ground, the hand-hoe is again employed, for choking or laying the earth to in drills. This is the last operation till they are taken up. The return, in ordinary seasons, of the potato crop may be stated at from ten to fifteen, and their price at 1s. 6d. per barrel.

*Oats.*—The oats in general use are the grey-bearded or old Scotch flaver. The grain itself is sweet, but, from the very imperfect way of manufacturing it, the meal is never entirely freed from the black beard and dust. Within these few years, a number of families in the parish have made trial of small quantities of Angus-shire early oats, obtained from the glebe, and they acknowledge that this is superior to the other, both in grain and straw. Notwithstanding these advantages, they refuse to use it as their general crop, from the idea that it is more liable to be shaken by the wind. This I have not found to be the case, though no other kind of oats have been sown on the glebe for many years.

The way in which corn is prepared for meal is this:—every family has a small oblong kiln built in their barn, called a "cinny," which will dry about an half barrel of oats at one time. This kiln is furnished with ribs of wood. These are covered with oat-straw, called "gloy," and the grain laid on the top. In an opening about one foot square, in the end of the kiln, a gentle fire is kept up, till the grain is sufficiently dried. It is then taken off the kiln, put into a straw basket, made for the purpose, called a "skeb," and, while it is warm, well rubbed under the feet. This operation is intended to separate the beard and dust from the grain. It is next winnowed between two doors, or in the open air; put into another straw basket called a "budy," and carried to the mill and ground. When brought home from the mill, two sieves, a coarse and a finer, are made use of, to separate the seeds from the meal; and it is twice sifted over, before it is fit for use. The coarse seeds taken out with the coarse sieve, the first time the meal is sifted, are given to the cows; and the finer seeds taken out with the finer sieve, the second time it is sifted, are reserved

for sowens. There is another kind of meal, called "burstane," prepared by drying the grain very hard in a pot. This is usually ground on the quern or hand-mill.

The price of seed-oats is from 9d. to 1s. per stone of 17 pounds; and the price of meal is generally from 1s. 6d. to 2s. for the same weight. The merchants, when taking meal in barter for their articles, usually allow 1d. per pound.

*Bear or Big.*—Bear or big is generally cultivated in preference to barley, being esteemed more hardy, and less liable to be shaken. There are two kinds of bear, one having four rows of grain on the stalk, and the other having six. This latter kind is much shorter in the head than the former. Bear is prepared for meal in the same way as oats; but it is allowed to cool, after being taken off the kiln, before it is rubbed. Seed-bear is sold from 10d. to 1s. 3d. per stone of 17 pounds; and bear-meal from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per stone. The manure of the bear-land is always prepared during the previous summer, so that it is allowed to rot for eight or ten months, before it is used; and, instead of being laid on the top of the delved ground, it is delved under.

*Wheat.*—Wheat is a grain which has very seldom been attempted to be raised in the parish. In 1821, a small quantity of spring wheat was sowed on the glebe, which strawed most abundantly, but was light in the grain. The following spring, another trial was made, with seed from the former year's produce; but still a light crop as to grain, though the straw was abundant. More sun, less fog, and a longer summer are required, before wheat crops can be cultivated with any prospect of success.

*Cabbage, &c.*—Cabbage, turnips, carrots, &c. thrive well in the gardens, but have never been cultivated to any extent in the fields. Cabbage are used as food for both man and beast, and considerable quantities of them are raised. Some families plant upwards of 3000. They are all of the late or winter cabbage, and their cultivation is confined entirely to the yards or gardens. Turnips of every description seem to agree well with the soil and climate; but when a few of them are sowed in the fields, they must be taken up when the other crops are taken into the barn-yard. Carrots, &c. come to great perfection, and are particularly well flavoured. The want of enclosures, however, prevents the cultivation of these and other crops, which might be raised with advantage.

*Rotation of Crops.*—Such a thing as a rotation of crops has

never once been thought of, either by landlord or tenant. The want of enclosures, and the small size of farms, are adverse to such a practice.

*Obstacles to Improvement.*—It must appear, from what has already been advanced, that this parish, and the islands in general, are very far behind in agriculture. Both soil and climate present great obstacles to improvement. None of the lands of the parish lie upon limestone, and no lime is used as a manure, either simply or united with other substances. The lands are all laid in run-rig, whether they are the property of one or more proprietors, and this is the cause of much private, as well as open strife among the different possessors. While this system is continued, an insurmountable obstacle is raised against every attempt at improvement. To obviate this, I have suggested to several of the landlords to lay off a certain portion of land to each tenant, in one spot, and to build his house on his own ground, and in a situation the most convenient. If this system was to be adopted, the tenants would soon see the necessity of division dikes between their little farms, and, I am convinced, would soon raise them. The lands also would be better drained, and rendered capable of a more improved system of husbandry. While a spirit of emulation would then be excited, small enclosures would spring up, enriched with a regular succession of healthy and luxuriant crops. If the laird could be prevailed upon to adopt this course, his astonishment at the change that would soon be perceptible would be great.

Among the obstacles to improvement, must not be omitted the present ring-fences. These are, nowhere, efficient; and it is only during the summer and harvest months that they are kept in tolerable repair. As soon as the corns are put into the yard, every "grind" or gate is set open; the dikes, in many cases, pulled down and suffered to continue in that state, till the young corn appears several inches above the ground. In the meantime, cows, horses, and sheep, are allowed to pasture at freedom, and swine root up and destroy what years of the best husbandry could hardly repair. There is little labour spent in draining; and the few drains that are, being only surface drains, are filled up in winter, and the lands, of course, become a complete mire; so that, were it not the great quantity of new earth yearly carried from the hill or common, and formed into a compost with cow's dung and sea-weed, and laid plentifully on the land, no crops could be expected.

The farms, in most cases, are very small, not exceeding three

or four acres, and therefore the tenant cannot be supposed to leave much unlaboured to acquire ley strength. The tenant also holds his small farm by such a precarious tenure, (from one year to another), that little, if any improvement, can be expected from him. And it is no uncommon thing, when a tenant has made all the improvement that could be expected from his slender means, that an offer of additional rent is made to the landlord, and he (the tenant) must either agree to pay the additional rent or remove, without any compensation. Under such a policy on the part of the landlord, spirited exertions in improving the lands can never be expected from the tenant. It may be observed, that the want of leases tends to keep the tenants in a very servile state. The landlord's will becomes the tenant's law, and if a disposition to resist should manifest itself, it is immediately subdued by a threatened warning of removal. Even in the few cases where there are missive tacks, the tenant can hardly be said to sit securely. There are so many ways by which the strong can get the better of the weak, that the saying, "the weakest are always driven to the wall," is verified to a considerable extent here. But perhaps the occupiers of small farms are not arrived at that stage of civilization, when it might be considered proper, or even safe, to trust them with all the immunities a tack would confer.

In some cases "grassums" are taken, the injurious tendency of which has been felt, wherever they are known. They deprive the tenant of the earnings of his toil,—they damp his ardour in improvement, and afford him no additional security; while all that can be acquired in this small way, will "bulk little in a holed pocket!"

The houses, in general, are mere huts; and if the landlord puts up a dwelling-house once,—tenant after tenant must be content to occupy it as he finds it, or to repair or build anew to himself. Few, if any of the landlords, build any of the office-houses; and the tenant always builds and keeps in repair, such as that repair is, the dikes around his farm. The great object of the landlord is to get his rent for his land, which, in many cases, it must be confessed, he has considerable difficulty in obtaining; but, at the same time, he cramps not the labour of the tenant with any restrictions, as to management, and leaves him at full liberty to employ, as the implements of his husbandry, the plough, the spade, or the snout of the swine.

The climate and situation present formidable barriers to any thing like extensive improvement. The former can never be de-

pended on for twenty-four hours together, and the latter is very damp, unsheltered, and, in many places, liable to be blasted both by mildew and sea-spray; so that the most promising crops, in one hour, may be destroyed for both man and beast.

*Woods.*—There is a tradition that this country was, at one time, covered with wood; and this tradition is supported by the circumstance, that pieces of wood are found imbedded very deep in the moss. I have found some branches of the birch, from six to eight feet long, about ten feet under the surface to the northward of the glebe. In different parts of the parish, there are to be found the creeping willow, the honeysuckle, the mountain-ash or rowan-tree, and the hip brier. The crawberry on the hills is very common, and in ordinary seasons comes to perfection. There are a few plants of the blaeberry which, in some seasons, blossom, but seldom carry fruit. Gooseberries and currants (red, white, and black,) in favourable seasons, ripen well in the gardens.

*Cows.*—An occupier of three merks of land will keep four milk cows, and in some cases six; and in some very favourable situations, from twelve to sixteen. The young cattle pasture on the hills or common scathold from the end of May till the beginning of November. On the hills or common scathold, an unlimited privilege of pasture is allowed; and a tenant who, during the summer months, can keep from four to six milk cows, will, during the winter, fodder from twelve to fifteen head of cattle, young and old. The milk cows pasture on the grass inside of the town in summer till twelve o'clock, when they are milked and driven to the hill; and in the evening, are again taken inside of the town, where they feed a few hours, are milked, and put into the byre during the night. The young cattle, when they are driven to the hill in the end of May, are never allowed to enter within the town dikes till about the month of November, when they are taken in and set to the band for the winter. It is a practice too prevalent, indeed I may say, general, to lay on more cattle than can be well supported; and the consequence is, that part of the stock is frequently lost for want of food, and part of it is barely able to walk. It is evident that, by laying on too much stock, the people are great losers, as they can neither bring an adequate price for their cattle, if sold at Whitsunday, owing to the miserable condition in which they are, nor does the milk yielded repay even the expense of their half-starved keeping; the summer being well spent before the cattle have thrown off their winter coat, and assumed any thing like a decent appearance.

The cows, when compared with those of a more southern latitude, are small; but, when on good keeping, give much more milk than could be expected from their size. Some of those on the glebe give about five quarts in the morning, three at mid-day, and five in the evening. The general food of the cows in winter consists of a small "hallow" or "wap" of straw between two, night and morning; and if they are confined to the house by bad weather, they get as much at noon. The cows in calf, in addition to their stated diet, as above, get a few cabbage or potatoes cut down and mixed with a little bear-chaff or coarse seeds; and frequently, in room of these, a little meadow hay. All the cows are horned, and of every colour; but no attention whatever is paid to the rearing of a proper breed. Though the cold, bleak, and unsheltered pastures, and the want of a sufficiency of food, stint the animal in its growth and alter its form; yet much good would result from the lairds taking an active interest in the concerns of their tenants, by offering small premiums for the best stock in general, or the best bull; or by not allowing any animal to be kept as a breeder, which had not previously been approved of.

The weight of a cow, when fed for slaughter, may be from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cwts. Cattle bought for slaughter are not considered a good bargain, if the beef exceeds  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. or 2d. per lb. A cow in calf, at Whitsunday, if she can be recommended as a good one, will sell for L.3 Sterling, and sometimes a little more. A farrow cow at the same season, Whitsunday, will sell from L.1, 10s. to L.2, 5s. Sterling; but at Martinmas they may be purchased cheaper. Allowing on an average only three milk cows to each family, there will be in the parish not fewer than 1122.

Those who keep four or more cows on their farms, churn once every day during summer; but the quantity of butter obtained is not in proportion to the frequent churning. The cream is never gathered and churned. When the operation of churning is advanced to a certain stage, an heated stone is dropped into the churn, by which means the labour is shortened, and an addition made to the quantity, though not to the quality, of the butter. Part of the curd thus becomes incorporated with the butter, and presents a spotted (white and yellow) appearance. By very few, indeed, it must be acknowledged, is any attention paid to the dairy. This may arise partly from a portion of the rents being made payable in butter, and partly from want of proper milk-houses, and

due attention to the milk-vessels. So that one of the old country acts would require sometimes still to be enforced, which ordains, "That no butter be rendered for payment of land rent, or for sale, but such as is cleau from hairs and claud, and other dirt." The lairds, as part of their land rent, and the tenants, for their own use, consume the greater part of the butter that is made in the parish; and the little that is sold will bring from 5d. to 6d. per pound of sixteen ounces.

Into the butter-milk, or "bleddick," is poured a quantity of boiling water, by which means the curd is separated from the serum. The former, called "kirn," is supped with sweet milk; the latter, called "bland," is used as drink, and is sometimes kept for several months, when it acquires a strong acidity.

*Ponies.*—The Shetland poney is now so generally known as to require no particular description. It is of every colour, white, black, brown, grey, dun, cream, chesnut, and piebald, and of every size, from 28 to 44 inches. There are a great many of them kept in the parish, but very little work is performed with them. Few bring home even their peats with them, preferring the old practice of bearing them home on their own backs in a "casie."\* Ponies are sometimes employed in carrying feals from the hill, to mix with cow's dung for composts; but are kept principally for storing. It is a rare occurrence to see an individual riding to church. In good keeping, it is well known that many of the Shetland ponies are of high mettle. "When the shelty is in his winter or spring garb, it is difficult to suppose that his progenitors were the same animals which travellers have described as prancing over the arid tracks of Arabia;—the long shaggy hair with which he is clothed has more the appearance of a polar dress, or of some arctic livery, specially dispensed to the quadruped retainers of the genius of Hialtland."† Instead of the sleek skin and handsome appearance which he displays with so much spirit in the summer months, in winter he is covered with a shaggy coat,—his symmetry disappears, and all his motions are dull and languid. Notwithstanding all the privations he undergoes, he frequently lives to a great age. I have seen some upwards of thirty years old, and even at that age capable of performing a pretty long journey. No attention is paid to the breed. On the contrary, if one is remarkable for proportion or size, as it will fetch the best price, it is the one which

\* *Casie*, a straw basket used for carrying peats, manure, &c.

† Hibbert's Zetland.



is first sold. The poney is subject to few diseases. The most common are gravel and spavin.

They vary in price from L. 1, 10s. to L. 6 Sterling. If proper attention was paid to the breed, I am convinced there would be found nowhere a finer race of animals. A considerable number of them are yearly exported to Scotland and England. Formerly, Orkney men were wont to come over and barter linen for ponies; but none of them have been in the practice of doing so for many years. Between Orkney and Shetland there is less communication now, than there is between Shetland and any other part of Great Britain.

*Sheep.*—The number of sheep kept in the parish is very great; but what that number is, it is impossible to say. As every tenant exercises an unlimited privilege of pasturage on the hills or scathold, unless the few who drive their sheep into the same "cruive" or "pund," no other person can possibly know the number of sheep belonging to each individual.

The native breed of sheep is very small, being in weight about 20 or 24 lbs. of mutton, and carrying a fleece of from 1 to 1½ lbs. of wool. They are of the small-tailed race, and it is very rare to see an ewe with horns. They are of various colours, viz. white, black, grey, "catmogged," brown or "moorit," black and white, in equal proportions, or "Shilah," and piebald. Every neighbourhood has a particular pasture or scathold, on which their sheep feed, and each person knows his own sheep by their "lug-mark." That is, one has a hole in the ear, another a "rift" or slit, another a "crook" or piece taken out of the ear, behind or before, &c. The same is the case throughout the parish, and no two persons in the parish are allowed to "lug-mark" their sheep in one way. Every neighbourhood has also a "cruive" or pund, into which they drive their sheep, for the purpose of smearing them, taking of the wool, marking the lambs, and keeping them tame. When a stray sheep is found, the person who finds it takes care of it for a year and a day, and if, after due proclamation at different churches, the owner is not discovered, it is sold, one-half of the price going to the persons who found it, and the other half to the poor of the parish in which it was found. Those whose sheep pasture promiscuously are called "Scat-brither;" and those who have a few sheep pasturing in any place when they reside at a distance from it, or perhaps not in this parish, are called "out-scat holders."

The native breed of sheep in several places are beginning to be crossed with black and white-faced rams. Where the pasture is sound, either of the crosses answers very well, as both mutton and wool are improved in quantity; but, wherever the pasture is deep and wet, they are invariably found not to be so hardy, or to thrive so well as the original breed. Such of the lambs as are strong, whether of the native or crossed breed, are allowed to follow the ewes during the winter; but those that are not considered strong enough to stand the winter out, are taken into the house and fed till about Whitsunday, when they are again driven to the hill. Some build small houses for the purpose of keeping their lambs in during the night, and in which they feed them, night and morning, with hay or cabbage, and occasionally with a few coarse seeds and cut potatoes; but the more general practice is to keep them around the fire in the dwelling-house. No shelter is provided for the sheep to which they might resort when inclement weather sets in; and no provision is made for their support, when snow and frost prevent them from obtaining their ordinary scanty fare.

When food is not to be obtained on the hills, instinct seems to direct them to another quarter. I have seen them when the tide began to ebb, hastening to the sea-shore, feeding upon the seaweed growing on the rock or cast upon the beach, and when it began to flow, returning to the hills again.

An ewe for slaughter will sell for 4s. or 5s.; a wedder from 6s. to 8s.; a ram lamb for 1s. 6d. to 2s.; and a ewe lamb, of the middling size, from 2s. to 2s. 6d. The cross-breed sell considerably higher, but their mutton is neither so delicate nor their wool so soft. The wool is of various prices, from 6d. to 1s. 3d. per lb. of sixteen ounces. It is not shorn, as in other places, but torn from the sheep's back by an operation called "rooing." For the most part, two, and sometimes more persons pull the wool from the poor animal at one time. Sometimes, this is done with little trouble and as little pain; but at other times, it may be said to be indeed a painful operation.\*

\* It would appear, as Dr Edmonston, in his *History of Zetland*, remarks, that the sheep-flocks must have been much greater, at an early period than they are now. In a translation from the original Danish, in the *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, Antiquarian Society, are these words, "Observe, that in the year of our Lord 1323, the 25th day of July, did Giasfaldr Ivarson of Hialtland, pay to the Reverend Lord Audfin, the Lord Bishop of Bergen, and Swein Sigurdeon, Comptroller of the King's household, the tenths due to the Pope, viz. 22 cwt. of wool, less than 16 pounds, according to the standard of Hialtland, being 36 span Hialtland weight of wool."

The rams are generally let to the ewes about the beginning of December.

The principal diseases to which the sheep are liable, are the Vincer, the Rot or green-sickness, the Sturdy, the Liver complaint, the Water or Quarquabus, the Blindness, and the Scab.\*

*Swine.*—Every family keeps one, and many families keep two swine, which they feed and kill about Candlemas, for their own use. Several also keep herds of swine, which are sent to the hill or common pasture during the summer, and are again admitted into the farms, as soon as the potatoes are reaped, to dig up and to turn down, in short, to commit every species of destruction at pleasure. When driven to the hill for the summer, they have no other food than such as they can procure for themselves, and consequently the best parts of the pasture are rooted up and destroyed. Roots of plants and earth-worms constitute the principal food: but occasionally birds' nests afford a savoury morsel; but still more, a young lamb or a weak sheep. The native breed of swine is very small, with a long nose very cartilaginous, and small ears standing upright; and when he puts on his winter covering, a more ugly animal can hardly be conceived to exist. He has a profusion of long stiff bristles, and underneath a close coat of coarse wool. Of his bristles and wool a very strong and elastic rope is made, which is used for tethering horses and cows. Notwithstanding his revolting appearance, when well fed, he would disgrace no board. He is very delicate pork.

A great improvement in the breed, both in appearance and size, has lately been introduced by means of swine brought to the islands by some of the Greenland ships. A young swine, fifteen days old, and of the native breed, costs from 1s. to 1s. 3d.; and one of the same age, but of the improved breed, from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 8d. A full grown swine, that is, one of from one to two years old, and of the native breed, when fed, costs 8s. or 10s.; but some of the improved breed have sold as high as from L. 1 to L. 1, 10s. The usual selling price of pork, when fresh, is 2d. per pound.

A young swine is here known by the name of a runny or grice; one fed about the fireside, a patty; one with young, a silik; and a boar is called a gaat.

They are liable to a complaint called the gricifer, which deprives them of the use of their hinder legs. They very seldom if ever recover of it.

\* A particular description of these diseases will be found in the manuscript.

*Rent of Lands.*—The rents of the lands in the parish are made up of so many different items, that it is almost impossible to ascertain their exact amount. These consist of cashies, fowls, day-works, butter, bear, schoolmaster's salary, teinds, seat-rent in church, scatt, land-rent, and, in some cases, fishing profits. But, including outsets, they may be fairly stated at L. 1, 10s. Sterling per merk, which will make a total rental of the parish of L. 1165, 10s. Sterling.

*Rate of Wages.*—The Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his Statistical Account, has stated, that “men servants get from L.15 to L.18 Scotch,” that is, from L.1, 5s. to L.1, 10s. Sterling, “for three-fourths of the year.” In summer they are employed in the ling-fishing, and the boys on beaches. The men get from L.12 to L.24 Scotch; boys from L.6 to L.10. Women servants get from L. 12 to L. 8, sometimes less, when they get liberty to spin and knit stockings, for their own behoof and emolument, at leisure hours. The yarn is generally spun at night, when they would be otherwise idle; and, when carrying dung, or travelling on the road, they are always knitting. Their service to the master is often very inconsiderable. Artificers are seldom paid by the day, and are always maintained by the employer. A mason has from 10d. to 1s. 2d. a-day; his servants, 6d.; wright, 10d.; tailor, shoemaker, and boat-builder, are paid by the piece, and generally earn 8d. or 10d.” The wages usually given to a man for about ten weeks on the ling-fishing is from L.2 to L.2, 10s. with victuals; and for a boy to assist in curing fish on a beach, with his victuals, 10s. or 12s. Sterling; and without victuals, about L.1. When he gets his food, he is bound to do any kind of work required, when not employed with the fish. The wages of a man-servant, for farm-work, is from 12s. to L.1 Sterling for three months; women servants generally get 8s. for three months. The usual term of service is three months. The servants are in no respect improved, since my predecessor wrote; neither will there ever be good servants, while the present system is pursued. They do not consider the obligation as mutual, but regard it as lying altogether on the side of the person who employs them. And when there is occasion to reprove them for having done wrong, the frequent answer is, “I have no occasion to serve; I can go home.”

The wages of a mason, with his victuals, 1s.; and without victuals, 1s. 6d; a wright with his victuals, 1s.; and without victuals, 1s. 6d;

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a tailor with his victuals, 1s. per day. Making a pair of shoes for a woman, 10d. ; for a man, 1s. and 1s. 2d. Boat-builder, 1s. for every foot of keel in small boats ; but when larger, the price advances. A slater charges about L. 1, 5s. per rood, or 2s. per day, without food.

The wages of a man for farm-work, in spring or harvest, is 6d. a-day with victuals ; and a woman's wages 4d.

Very few of the servants take any interest in their masters' service. With the greater part of them, the principal concern seems to be, to work as little as possible, and that not always in the best manner ; while meal-time and pay-day are well attended to.

The usual charge for grazing an ox or cow, for about six months in summer, is from 6s. to 8s. ; the owner of the animal providing a tether. A young cow or ox foddered during the six winter months, costs about 5s. ; and a cow in calf, for the same time, from 8s. to 10s. Nothing is paid for foddering a farrow cow, her milk being considered to pay daily for the fodder she eats. When a cow in calf is given out, on the condition that the calf is to be reared, the person who receives her keeps her till Michaelmas, and then returns her, the calf remaining, which is afterwards considered " havers" property ; that is, the calf itself and its store to belong in equal portions to the owner of the cow and the person who reared the calf ; and when sold, the price to be equally divided.

*Fisheries.*—The fisheries consist of ling, cod, and herring. The ling-fishing is carried on in boats of about 18 feet of keel, and manned with six men. This fishing, twenty-five years ago, was much more extensive than it is now. At that time, thirty-six boats of the above description were engaged in it ; now, there are only eight. The boats fish from the island of Papa Stour, as being much nearer the " haaf," or fishing ground. And before they commence fishing, perhaps eight or ten days, they repair to the island, and put in order the huts which are to shelter them, when on shore, during the fishing season. Fishermen are allowed by law to build huts for their accommodation, while prosecuting the fishing, on any unenclosed or uncultivated land, at a distance of not more than 100 yards above high water-mark. These huts are very rudely built ; and the wood, pones, or divots, which form their roof, must be transported to the island. The usual practice is to carry home the roofs of the huts, when the fishing-season is over.

The usual time for commencing the ling-fishing is from the middle of May to the beginning of June, and it continues till Lammas.

When the men leave their homes on Monday morning, they carry with them a haddock-line, about 900 fathoms long, baited with mussels, which they set on their way to the fishing station, that they may procure bait for their long lines. Haddocks are always preferred as bait for the ling, when they can be procured. But when these are not to be got, they take the young seath, called piltocks, which generally abound about the shores in summer; and if these should fail, they bait their hooks with a piece of cod, tusk, or ling. The boats leave their stations for the haaf about ten o'clock A. M., and reach the fishing-ground about six o'clock P. M., during which time they will have run from forty-five to fifty miles, so that the highest land is only as a speck in the horizon, or as the fishermen express it, like a whilly\* on the water. Every boat is furnished with a fleet of tows or lines, which may be thus described, one tow, bught, or line, fifty fathoms; sixteen tows, bughts, or line, one packie; six packies one fleet. A fleet of tows, then; is the number of lines which a boat carries. Every fleet of tows has four buoy ropes, of from 90 to 100 fathoms each, to which are attached stones of about 16 lbs. weight, called kappie or bolta stanes, to sink the lines, and keep them steady at the bottom. But besides these, every line has a sinking stone to itself, about 2 lbs. weight, called a bighter. The four buoy-ropes are provided with sheep skin buoys. The hooks are made fast to a piece of line about four feet long, called a toum, and these are made fast to the tows, at a distance from each other of five fathoms; so that on a fleet of tows, there are 960 hooks. The fishermen having arrived at the spot where they intend to set their lines, one man cuts the bait to the proper size, which is called sneezing the bait; and two men bait alternate hooks, while the others row the boat in the direction the lines are intended to be laid. When the last buoy is put over the side of the boat, the men remain by it about three or four hours, if the weather be favourable, before they begin to haul in their lines. If the weather threatens, they commence immediately to haul in, and always do so by beginning at the last buoy. One man hauls the lines, another strikes the fish as they come to the surface, with a clip † or huggie staff, and takes into the boat, cavils ‡ the fish, and

\* "Whilly," the smallest size of boat.

† "Clip or huggie staff," a large iron hook fixed on a short wooden handle.

‡ "Cavil," to take the fish off the hook.

snoods\* the hooks, and a third man guts and takes off the heads. The other three andow or shough† the boat.

When the men come ashore in the afternoon of the following day, with eight score of ling, they consider they have made a good haul. This would average 16 cwt., for which they are allowed 5s. per cwt. They seldom make more than two trips to the haaf in the week; but when there is an appearance of fine weather, after hauling their lines, they bait their hooks, and set a second time. When the fish are landed, the fishermen have no more concern with them. They are split, salted, and dried at their landlord's expense. As soon as the boat arrives at the beach, one man goes to the lodge or hut, kindles a fire, and acts as cook; while the others land the fish, and see them weighed.

There is only one proprietor in the parish, whose lands are let on a fishing tenure. His tenants man seven boats, and caught, last year, about eight tons of dried ling, which sold for L.18 Sterling per ton. The boat and materials are divided into six shares, one of which the landlord, for the most part, holds, putting in a feed man, to whom he gives two lispunds of meal, and L.2 Sterling. The provisions which each fisherman takes with him for the season, are two lispunds of meal, two ankers of potatoes, a pork-ham, or a smoke-dried sheep, and an half lispund of dried bear. Of this, when knocked in a stone trough, which is carried to the fishing station with their other necessaries, they make broth. They have very little spirits either at sea or ashore, being precluded from the use of that article by the high duty to which it is liable. Their usual drink is water, unless when they carry with them from their houses on Monday morning, a small cask or jar with bland.

Johnsmas (24th June, O. S.) is regarded by the fishermen as an holiday. Again, before striking their tents at Lammas, and bidding adieu to the busy, bustling, perilous occupations of the summer, the fishermen who have been accustomed to associate together during the season, meet and take a parting cup, when the usual toast on the occasion is, "Lord! open the mouth of the grey fish, and haud thy hand about the corn." This meeting is known by the name of the fishermen's foy. After this, having nothing more to detain them, their huts are unroofed, bag and baggage are bundled into the boat, and wafted on the wings of a favourable breeze, they hasten to enjoy the smiles of their wives, and the innocent

\* "Snood," to wrap the toum round the hook, so that the line may not be raveled.

† "Andow or shough," to row the boat stern foremost.

prattle of their bairns, and in them forget for a time the toils and privations of a fisherman's calling.

*Cod-fishing.*—The cod-fishing is prosecuted in sloops of from 18 to 40 tons burden, of which there are eight in the parish, making a tonnage of 224 tons. They carry from nine to twelve men each, who hire the sloop for the fishing season, which begins at Whitsunday and ends at Lammas. The owner of the sloop receives as hire, the half of all the fish caught, and oil made from their livers, and is bound to put and keep the sloop in a sea-worthy state. He also cures the fish, and the men pay for the curing of their half, at the rate of 2s. Sterling per cwt., which is deducted when accounts are settled at the end of the season. It is always understood that the owner of the sloop is to have the preference, on equal terms, to the purchase of the men's share of fish and oil. Sometimes, a few men purchase a small sloop in partnership, and fish with her, taking in the additional men required, either as sharesmen, or giving them a fee, and sometimes giving them half share and half fee. All that is required to the prosecution of the cod-fishing in a sloop, are two lines, about 100 fathoms, a lead of 3 or 4 lbs., with a scob, that is, an iron rod bent, two feet and a half long, passing through the upper end of the lead, to each end of which rod is affixed a short toam and hook, baited with the large muscle or yoag. The weekly supply of bait is from 1600 to 2200. The usual price paid to the persons who dredge the bait is from 4d. to 6d. per 100, the expense of which is divided between the owner and men. The quantity of cod caught in a season varies from 5 to 18 tons, and the price paid in the country, for sometime, may be said to have been stationary at L.10 per ton.

The men, for provisions, have 8 lbs. of oatmeal baked into cakes weekly, and two-thirds of a barrel of potatoes, and a supply of smoked pork or mutton for the season, and as much fresh fish as they choose to make ready. The fish heads and small fish are carried home for the weekly supply of their families.

The men are bound to bend the rigging and sails, and ballast the sloop before going to sea; and when the fishing is over, unrig and dry ropes and sails, heave the ballast, clean the vessel, and draw up and secure her for the winter. The fish livers are now melted into oil, and divided between owner and men.

*Herring-fishing.*—The attention of the British Government seems to have been directed, at an early period, to the fishing



and curing of herrings. Bounties were held out as a stimulus to engage in this trade ; but while, on the one hand, it was patronized and apparently encouraged, the restrictions laid on the outfit of the vessels to be employed in it, not only cramped the energies of the fisherman, but even deterred him from prosecuting a fishing which, he plainly foresaw, would involve him in difficulty and debt. The consequence has been, that never, till very lately, has any attempt been made unless in the dead water in the voes, to set an herring net. Mr James Garrick in Reawick, was the first in this parish who set a spirited example in the herring-fishing. He purchased a few second-hand boats from Wick, each of which carried about twenty nets, and with these was very successful. The herrings caught are of an inferior quality, being mostly spent, and the season being too far advanced before the fishing commences. The cod-fishing is carried on till Lammas, and the herring-fishing does not begin till after the middle of August. Last year, upwards of 700 barrels of herrings were caught. The general price given for herrings when boat and nets belong to the fishermen is 6s. 6d. per cran. But when boat and nets are provided and kept in repair, for these the owner retains the half, and pays the fishermen 2s. 6d. per cran for their half. In this case, the fishermen incur no expense and no risk. This fishing continues about six weeks, and during that time, some of the boats have caught 180 crans.

*Manufactures.*—Formerly, a great quantity of kelp was manufactured in the parish, perhaps not less than 130 tons. But since barilla was introduced, kelp has declined so much in value, that the price obtained cannot now pay for the making of it.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

There is no market-town nearer than Lerwick, which is distant about sixteen miles, with two arms of the sea intervening. No post-office ; and when a letter is to be sent or received, a person must be sent expressly for the purpose to Lerwick, the post-town, to whom is paid from 1s. 6d. to 2s. Sterling, according to the state of the weather. There is nothing resembling a road in the parish, unless a piece which I made some years ago, through the glebe, and carried on about half a mile towards the kirk. But there is a decided disinclination to walk on the road, because it wears the rive-lins too fast, and because a road would imply a restriction to a particular path ; whereas the Shetlander's delight is to range uncontrolled, and "to wander as free as the wind on his mountains." The fences are very inefficient, and being built, for the most part,

of feals, and intended to last for a part of the year only, they may be mentioned as one of the obstacles to improvement.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is very inconveniently situated, as before observed; and a considerable proportion of the population is distant from it about seven miles of marshy road, and many of them impeded by arms of the sea. The kirk is seated for 487 persons; and no free sittings allowed.

The manse was built in 1817; a very insufficient and inconvenient house,—so much so, that when the presbytery and heritors met to have it declared free, an heavy fall of rain having taken place during the previous night, stepping-stones were laid along the passages and lobby, that they might not wet their feet. Two years after, it received a new roof. The ends of the joists have twice been rotted out of the walls, and two floorings laid, since that time. The manse was finished with the very worst description of planted fir from the north of Scotland. The office-houses have stood condemned, by the report of tradesmen, for a number of years.

The glebe is nine merks, and would rent at about L. 12 Sterling. It is not good land; but its hill privileges are extensive and good. The stipend payable from the lands in the parish is L. 115, 9s. 6d., and from Government L. 42, 17s. 2d. Sterling, including L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

There are two Independent meeting-houses; to one of which no preacher is appointed, and the other has not been opened for some years,—the members being so very few, they meet in the preacher's dwelling-house. This individual has the small sum of L. 5 per annum allowed him by the Congregational Union, and acts as factor to one of the principal proprietors. In the other, worship is sometimes conducted by a regular preacher; but for the most part, one or more of the members "divine the word,"\* as they feel disposed. The numbers who are joined with the Independents, may be stated about 40.

There is one Methodist meeting-house, in which sermon is appointed to be once a month, but is not regularly given. The members in communion with the Methodists are between 50 and 60. Both Independents and Methodists have not manifested the greatest desire to promote the religious instruction of the people of Sandsting, because, instead of building their meeting-houses in the

\* A favourite expression of some of their members.

most destitute quarters of the parish, they have placed them within a mile from the Established kirk.

Divine service at the Established kirk is generally well attended; and the average number of communicants may be stated at 500. Neither Independents nor Methodists are increasing in numbers; they are rather declining. Their meetings are pretty well attended in the evenings, or when there happens to be no sermon at the parish kirk.

*Education.*—There are nine schools in the parish, viz. one parochial, one Assembly, two from the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and five supported by individual subscription. The parochial school was built in 1803, and cost L.105 Sterling. The accommodations provided are barely what are appointed by law, in number; but, in quality, would not be considered by any unconcerned person to approach near to it. The school and school-house have thatched roofs, which, by some agreement entered into between the teacher and heritors, the former is bound or has agreed to uphold. For this he is allowed some fractional part of a penny. About one rood of barren mossy ground was set off for a garden, which was valued to the proprietor from whose lands it was taken, at L.6 Sterling, including peat ground. All that it is capable of producing, are a few dwarf cabbages, or a few sheaves of gray-bearded oats. The accommodations for a number of years have been in a state of great disrepair; but the teacher is to blame, in not having applied to the Quarter Sessions to enforce such repairs as competent workmen should declare necessary. The schoolmaster has a salary of L.26 Sterling per annum. Branches of instruction taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping. Stated fees for reading, 1s.; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 1s. 6d.; and book-keeping, 5s. All the fees received would hardly amount to L.1, 10s. per annum.

The five schools supported by individual subscription are at Sand, Aith, Clousta, Culswick, and West Burrafirth. The three former are taught by men who, besides common reading, can instruct their scholars in writing and the first rules of arithmetic. The two latter are taught by women who profess to teach reading only. At these five places schools, on a permanent footing, are much needed; and a small salary, if certain, would secure the services of teachers at these stations, qualified for all the duties which would be required of them. At present, they are supported by the families in the respective quarters; but as soon as the teachers can

turn their labour to better account, the schools are thrown vacant, and, before other teachers can be provided, the children have lost a great part of what they had learned. I may here be allowed to observe, that a school situated in any particular district in the parish can benefit only that particular district in which it is placed. The parish is very extended, and the population is placed, for the most part, around the outskirts of it. For this reason it is that the benefits of a school are confined to those alone who reside in the immediate neighbourhood of it. The people in general manifest an anxiety to have their children educated; and yet, when they have the means in their power, do not improve them to the extent which they might. There are no children arrived at an age capable of being instructed, who cannot read.

*Charitable Institutions.*—A fund was established in 1810, called “The Shetland Fisherman’s Fund,” which had for its object the relief of old and decayed fishermen, and the widows of fishermen. Its supporters at first were the more wealthy in the country, and an yearly payment of 2s., in addition to 2s. paid by every fisherman on his being enrolled a member. Aged fishermen have been receiving from 5s. to 7s., and widows 14s. yearly. It is managed by twelve general directors, one representing each parish, and by parochial committees.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The relief afforded to the poor arises altogether from church-door collections, the amount of which may be stated at L.10 Sterling. Out of this, the average number of poor persons who receive aid is about 25, and the extent of aid afforded to them varies from 3s. to 12s. yearly. Housewives, who are active and industrious, receive occasionally a small sum as a reward for their activity and industry. The small sum allowed to the stated poor would be altogether inadequate for their support if the people did not, in addition to the Sabbath offerings, contribute cheerfully in another way. The kirk-session divides the parish into as many sections as there are poor persons. In each of these, a poor person is stationed, who generally remains in each family one day for every merk of land which they rent, and receive victuals and lodging; while the small pittance received from the session is laid out in the purchase of clothes.

There are more applications for admission to the poor’s roll than can be sustained, and the receiving of parochial aid is considered no degradation.

*Fairs.*—That the people may obtain a more ready sale for their

extra stock of cows and horses, I have sometimes advertised and superintended a sale at Whitsunday and Martinmas, which is the only resemblance to a fair ever held. At both these seasons, a number of persons, from the neighbouring parishes, attend, especially from the parish of Tingwall.

*Ale-houses.*—There are two ale-houses,—one in Sandsting, and the other in Aithsting; but no bad effects are apparent from them. There is no propensity in the people, generally, to indulge to excess in spirituous liquors.

*Fuel.*—Peats are the only fuel used in the parish; and they are abundant. In digging for peats, there is abundant evidence that mountain-ash or rowan-tree, birch, hazel, and willow or saugh, have, at one time, flourished over a great portion of the country.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Neither rye-grass nor clover are cultivated, nor can be raised with any degree of success, till dikes are built, capable of defending from the encroachments of man and beast. Both these plants spring up naturally in many places,—the former called *acre-a-bunk*, and the latter *smorra*. There is a considerable quantity of bog-meadow ground, the grass of which is cut yearly about Lammas, and dried for hay. In general, it is much wasted before it is stacked; from the idea, that if the juices are not, in some measure, washed out before it is put together for the winter, it will take heat and rot. The scythe in use does not exceed fifteen inches, and some are not more than twelve inches in length. It has a straight haft, with one handle, and the mower stands nearly upright. The upper part of the haft rests on the bend of the arm; the left hand holds the handle, and the right hand grasps the haft. Some mowers wield the little instrument very dexterously, and cut down more grass than could be imagined, with such a diminutive tool.

The sickle is of very small dimensions. I have seen the reaper make from thirty-five to forty cuts with it, before the hand was filled with corn. Both scythe and sickle are made in the parish.

*Cottages.*—The cottages are of rather a rude description; and in wet weather, somewhat difficult of access, if there be any desire to keep the feet dry and clean. They are usually built of stone with dry mortar, and over the couples and rafters is laid a covering of pones or divots, and sometimes of flaws. Over these is laid a covering of straw, which is secured by ropes of the same material, or of heather, called “simmins.” The dunghill occu-

pies a place as near the door as possible, that it may be enriched with the general soiling. And frequently before the door of the dwelling-house can be reached, a passage must be made through the byre. For the most part, the furniture is so arranged as to form a but and a ben; but chimneys are little known. Instead of these, some houses have from two to six holes in the roof to admit light and allow the escape of smoke. The better to promote this latter, a piece of feal or divot, or two pieces of board joined at right angles, called a skyle, is placed on the weather side of the hole; and instead of mounting on the roof every time the wind shifts, some have a pole reaching down inside, by which this operation is performed. The order for doing this is "skyle the lum."

When an opening is left for a window, it is sometimes filled up with a bladder, or untanned lambskin freed from the wool, stretched on a frame. In the but or kitchen end of the house, in addition to the family, there are usually two dogs, as many cats, a patty swine, a calf, and some half dozen of caddy lambs.\*

*Value of Land, &c.*—The Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his account of the parish, remarks, that "the superiors formerly had many ways of procuring property in Shetland. Patrick, Earl of Orkney, in a disposition of the lands of Sand to Jerom Umphray, narrates, that he had evicted seven merks of that land from Powl Nicholson in Cullswick for stealing a swine, and that he had evicted six merks from \_\_\_\_\_ in Cullswick for stealing bolts from his Lordship's trood,—probably some piece of wreck which had been drawn into Cullswick. In that same disposition, the Earl grants receipt for the money from Jerom Umphray, at the rate of L. 17, 16s. Scotch," L. 1, 9s. 8d. Sterling, "per merk land, being full land's price at the time." The lands in Sand now rent at as much yearly per merk as the sum above specified to have been their purchase-price in 1600.

About 1700, an island, with fifteen scores of sheep, was purchased for the sum of L. 30 Sterling, the yearly rent of which is now about L. 60 Sterling. In 1633, an ox for slaughter cost L. 1; a fat sheep from 2s. to 2s. 6d. In 1738, a lispund, or 36 lbs. of meal, cost 1s. 8d.; a cow in calf, 17s. 6d.; fee of precentor and session-clerk, 10s.; officer, 5s.; presbytery-officer, 1s. 3d. 1746, dues of proclamation, 6d.; making a grave,

\* Lambs wintered and fed in the house; a lamb which has lost its dam, and is reared on cow's milk, is also called a caddy.

6d. 1748, a cow in calf, L. 1, 3s. 4d.; nursing a child twelve months, 16s. 8d. 1750, front seat in kirk capable of accommodating six or eight persons, 1s. 4d.; beef, mutton, and pork, three-farthings per lb.; a goose, 5d.; and a fowl, 2d. 1758, an ell of Shetland claith or blanketing, 10d. 1779, eggs per dozen, 1d.; and salted tusk, 1d. each. 1780, bed and board in Lerwick per day, 6d.; slater's wages, 1s.; and server, 6d. per day. 1781, woman-servant's wages for six months, 6s. 8d. 1782, a pair of shoes for a woman, 2s. 6d.; for a man, 3s.; voar (three months in spring), fee for a man, 5s. 1783, 100 herrings, 6d.; grazing a cow, 1s. 6d.; making a suit of clothes, 5s. 6d.; butter, (one lispund, or 36lbs.), 7s.; a fat wedder, 2s. 6d.; an ewe, 1s. 6d.; a hen, 2½d.; a cock, 1½d. Most of these articles now cost double of what is stated above.

*Weights and Measures.*—The instrument in general use for weighing is called a “bysmer:” It weighs from one to twenty-four merks. One and one-fourth or half-pound make a merk, and twenty-four merks make one lispund. The lispund weight varies in different parishes, and even in different parts of the same parish, from 32 to 40 lbs. Dr Barry, in his History of Orkney, has given a particular description of the “bysmar,” which I shall here transcribe. “The bysmer is a lever or beam of wood, about three feet long; and from one end to near the middle, it is a cylinder of about three inches diameter, thence it gently tapers to the other end, which is not above one inch in diameter. From the middle, all along this smallest end, it is marked with small iron pins, at unequal distances, which serve to point out the weight, from one merk to twenty-four, or a lispund. The body to be weighed is hung by a hook in the small end of the instrument, which is then suspended by a cord\* around it, held in the hand of the weigher, who shifts it towards the one end or the other, till the article he is weighing equiponderates with the large end, which serves it as a counterpoise; and when they are in equilibrio, the pin nearest the cord points out in the marks the weight of the subject weighed.” Grain and meal manufactured in the parish are weighed, and bought and sold by “bysmer” weight.”

*Measures.*—These are a “can,” by which oil is measured, and which contains one gallon; the anker, or third part of a barrel, by which potatoes are measured; and the ell, by which Shetland “claith” is measured.

\* This cord is tied round the ends of a round piece of wood, about four inches long, and held in the hand, and is called “the snarl.”

*Superstitions.*—A considerable number of the people believe in and practise many superstitious rites. The fishermen, when about to proceed to the fishing, think they would have bad luck, if they were to row the boat “withershins” about. They always consider it necessary to turn her with the sun. Neither do they give the same name to most of the things in the boat, and to several on shore, by which they are usually known. But superstitious observances are not confined to the men only, their wives also share in them, and even carry them to a greater extent. These are practised chiefly, in attempting to cure diseases in man and beast, or in taking away the “profits” of their neighbour’s cows; that is, in appropriating, by certain charms, to their own dairy, the milk and butter which should have replenished that of their neighbour. I shall subjoin a few specimens.\*

\* *Wresting Thread.*—When a person has received a sprain, it is customary to apply to an individual practised in casting the “wresting thread.” This is a thread spun from black wool, on which are cast nine knots, and tied round a sprained leg or arm. During the time the operator is putting the thread round the affected limb, he says, but in such a tone of voice as not to be heard by the bystanders, nor even by the person operated upon,

“The Lord rade,  
And the foal slade;  
He lighted,  
And he righted.  
Set joint to joint,  
Bone to bone,  
And sinew to sinew.  
Heal in the Holy Ghost’s name!”

*Ringworm.*—The person afflicted with ringworm takes a little ashes between the forefinger and thumb, three successive mornings, and before having taken any food and holding the ashes to the part affected, says,

“Ringworm! ringworm red!  
Never mayest thou either spread or speed;  
But aye grow less and less,  
And die away among the ase,” (ashes),

at the same time, throwing the little ashes held between the forefinger and thumb into the fire.

*Burn.*—To cure a burn, the following words are used:—

“Here come I to cure a burnt sore;  
If the dead knew what the living endure,  
The burnt sore would burn no more.”

The operator, after having repeated the above, blows his breath three times upon the burnt place. The above is recorded to have been communicated to a daughter who had been burned by the spirit of her deceased mother.

*Fey Folk.*—It is a practice with some to burn the straw on which a corpse has lain, and to examine very narrowly the ashes, from a belief that the print of the individual’s foot, who is next to be carried to the grave, will be discovered. The straw is set on fire, when the body is lifted and the funeral company are leaving the house.

*Elf-shot.*—A notion is prevalent in the parish, that when a cow is suddenly taken ill, she is elf-shot; that is, that a kind of spirits called “trows,” different in their nature from fairies, have discharged a stone arrow at her, and wounded her with it. Though no wound can be seen externally, there are different persons, both males and females, who pretend to feel it in the flesh, and to cure it by repeating certain words over the cow. They also fold a sewing needle in a leaf taken from a particular part of a psalm book, and secure it in the hair of the cow, which is considered, not only



as an infallible cure, but which also serves as a charm against future attacks. This is nearly allied to a practice which was at one time very prevalent, and of which some traces may perhaps still exist, in what would be considered a more civilised part of the world, of wearing a small piece of the branch of the roan-tree, wrapped around with red thread, and sewed into some part of the garments, to guard against the effects of an "evil eye," or witchcraft,

"Roan-tree and red thread  
Will drive the witches a' wud."

When a cow has calved, it is the practice with some, as soon after as possible, to set a cat on her neck and draw it by the tail to the hinder part of the cow; and then to set it on the middle of the cow's back, and draw it down the one side and pull it up the other, tail foremost, that the cow may be preserved while in a weak state, from being carried away by the "trows." This is enclosing the cow, as it were, in a magic circle.

As the trows are said to have a particular relish for what is good, both in meat and drink; so when a cow or sheep happens to turn sick or die, it is firmly believed that they have been shot by an elfin-arrow, and that the real animal has been taken away and something of a trowie breed substituted in its place. And some who have been admitted into the interior of a trow's dwelling, assert that they have beheld their own cow led in to be slaughtered, while, at the same time, their friends on the surface of the earth, saw her fall by an unseen hand or tumble over a precipice. Sometimes, also, the trows require a nurse of their children, for it would appear, they too have a time to be born and a time to die, and therefore females newly confined must needs be watched very narrowly, lest they be carried off to perform the office of wet-nurse to some trowling of gentle blood, who has either lost its mother, or whose station among her own race, exempts her from the drudgery of nursing her own offspring.

There is one place in the parish, called "Trollhouland," a name which indicates the superstitious notions with which it is associated: it signifies "the high laud of the trows." The internal recesses of knolls are considered the favourite residences of the trows, and they are seldom passed without fear and dread by the inhabitants of the upper world. And when, after nightfall, there may be a necessity for passing that way, a live coal is carried to ward off their attacks. For many centuries, the same superstitious belief has prevailed in Norway, that certain places were the favoured haunts of malevolent genii. There is their "Trolhetta;" and in Iceland, "Troladyngiar," and "Trollakyrkia."

*Taking away and recovering Milk and Butter profits.*—That a person may take away and procure for herself the summer profits of her neighbour's cows, it is the practice to go clandestinely and pluck an handful of grass from the roof of the byre, and give it to her own cows, thereby supposing that the milk and butter which should have been her neighbour's, will by this means become hers. And, in order to regain the profits which are supposed to have been taken away, it is usual to milk in private a cow belonging to the person who is suspected of having taken them, and thereby to get them back.

*Neagle.*—There is also a "trow" called a "Neagle," somewhat akin to the water-kelpie of other lands, who makes his appearance about mills, particularly when grinding, in the shape of a beautiful poney. That he may attract the attention of the person who acts the part of the miller, he seizes and holds fast the wheel of the mill; and, as is natural, the miller goes out to examine into the cause of the stoppage; when, to his astonishment, a beautiful poney saddled and bridled, is standing, and ready to be mounted; who but an old miller could let slip such a fair opportunity for a ride? But if he should neglect warnings, and unguardedly put his foot in the stirrup, his fate is sealed. Neither bit or bridle avail him any thing. Off goes the poney, bog or bank arrest not his course, till in the deep sea he throws his rider and himself vanishes in a flash of flame. But some millers are proof against the temptation, having been taught caution by the fate of others; and instead of taking a ride, salute his Neagleship with a fiery brand through the lightning-tree hole, which makes him immediately scamper away.

Such are some of the prevailing superstitious notions, which have no doubt been derived from the early Scandinavian settlers, and which, there is as little doubt, were fostered and made gain of, till the time of the Reformation, by the lower orders of the Roman Catholic clergy. And, if they should still retain a hold, to a certain extent, in the minds of some of the more ignorant, we need not be much surprised. But that those who have received a more liberal education, and consequently should be better able to appreciate the truths of Christianity, should lend their influence to foster such notions, would hardly be credited in the nineteenth century, if facts did

not confirm the allegation against them. The following document, which I obtained possession of at the kirk door before it was made public, and which was issued and signed by four members of the Morton Lodge in Lerwick, requires no comment. Though for certain reasons I withhold names, the authors justly deserve to be held up to general scorn.

"At a meeting held in Morton Lodge, at Lerwick, upon the 18th day of August 1815, it was reported and faithfully declared upon oath, by M. B. in Easting parish in Shetland, that an woollen web, the property of M. B., shirts and other things also of great value belonging to M. B.; as also, many suits of mitches, which belonged to M. B.; all these, as above stated, has been stolen from the green of C. during the first part of this present month. Notice is hereby given, that cruelty forms no part of masonry, yet justice to the injured party must be done, and that if these things so stolen are not returned back before next meeting of masons upon that business, or at furthest, in fifteen days from this date, a calamity of a severe nature may fall on all that parish in which the present crop may be blasted by storm, and the person or persons guilty shall be publicly led throw the parishes in the neighbourhood on day light, and that by evil spirits not seen by others. This paper to be intimated at the kirk door, that none may plead ignorance. Given under our hands at Lerwick, by authority of Morton Lodge."

I shall add one instance more of superstitious belief, which appears to have taken a firm hold of the mind of the Shetlander, at a very early period; and which, like the others above enumerated, still retains its hold, though, perhaps, under some modifications. It is called "casting the heart." It has long been believed, that when a person is emaciated with sickness, his heart is worn away, or taken away by some evil genii. A person skilled in "casting the heart" is sent for, who, with many mystic ceremonies, melts lead, pours it through the bowl of a key or pair of scissors, held over a sieve, which is also placed over a bason of cold water. The lead is melted and poured again and again, till it assumes something like the appearance of an heart, at least the operator strives to convince the patient and his friends that this is the case. It is worn, suspended from the neck, next the skin, that the cure may be completed. The ceremony, as described by Miss Campbell of Lerwick, is as follows:—

"When people are afflicted with consumptive complaints in Zetland, they imagine that the heart of the person so afflicted has been wasted away by the enchantment of the fairies, or witchcraft of some other evil beings. Old women, and sometimes men profess to cure this disease. The patient must undergo the following curious and very ridiculous operation: He is directed to sit upon the bottom of a large cooking pot, turned upon its mouth; a large pewter dish is placed or held upon his head; upon the dish a bason or bowl is set nearly full of cold water; into this water the operator pours some melted lead through the teeth of a common dressing comb. A large key is also employed in this operation. All this is performed with many strange incantations and gesticulations. If the lead falls into a shapeless lump, they declare that the heart and lungs of the patient are completely wasted away; that they will have infinite trouble, and perhaps, after all, will not be able to bring back the heart and lungs to their natural and healthful form. The lead is again melted, and run into the water through the teeth of the comb; it most likely assumes some shape, which the operator assures the spectators is the exact form of the patient's heart in its diseased state. The lead is repeatedly melted, and poured through the comb into the water; every time it is asserted to be more and more like the natural heart and lungs, and the bewitchment, of course, is rendered weaker and weaker. The patient undergoes this three times, with some days between each operation. When the last cast of the lead is over, the operator shows it round, and points out how exactly every part of the heart and lungs are restored to their natural and proper shape. If the patient dies (perhaps his death is hurried on by the fatigue and agitation occasioned by this mummery), his death is ascribed to some oversight in the strict performance of all the relative parts of this casting of the heart. The moon must be at a certain age, and it must be performed at a certain turning of the tide and hour of the night; numberless other things must be attended to. The operator will take anything they please to give, if it should be the half of all their goods and chattels, but he must not touch money. He appoints, however, a particular place, where a Danish coin, worth fivepence current in Zetland, is to be laid (as many as they like—the more the better, no doubt); this money is for the fairies, who come, it is asserted, and take it away; but the poor honest operator must not, and will not finger it, otherwise his trouble would come to nought, and the spell that bound the patient would be firmer than ever.

This operation of casting the heart is performed to this day in some parts of the Zetland Isles, and implicit belief placed in its efficacy. The patient must wear the lead, which has been used, in his bosom, for some time after the operation."—Miss Campbell's Harley Raddington.

Even so late as the beginning of the last century, visitors were frightened to approach the shores of Shetland, for fear of being brought under the influence of the spells of witches and warlocks: And by the old country acts, the ranselmen were enjoined to seek out and bring to condign punishment, all persons who made use of any manner of witchcraft, charms, or any other abominable or devilish superstitions. The signs by which persons might be discovered were, their being devilish, fearful and abominable cursers; takers away of their neighbour's profits; charmers and healers of some, and casters of sickness upon others; and who led damnable and abominable lives, contrary to God's commandments. As long as the islands were subjected to the Pope, in matters of faith, crosses, and benedictions, and amulets and prayers and pilgrimages were sufficient to prevent or to cure all the effects of the black arts. And even after the Reformation had been introduced, it was found no easy matter to shake the general belief in the efficacy of many of the Popish ceremonies; and, hence, many were ready to supply the place of the Catholic priests,—to pretend to cure diseases,—to "tell away pains,"—to counteract the effects of an evil eye or an evil tongue,—and to promise all manner of success in worldly affairs.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE COUNTY OF SHETLAND.\*

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THE Shetland Islands are 90 in number, and extend from north to south 70 miles, and from east to west 54 miles. Of these, 25 are inhabited, the rest are occupied in pasture, some of them being only islets or holms a few square yards in extent. Mainland is the largest, about 55 miles long and 25 broad; on its eastern side, lies Lerwick, a town containing 3000 inhabitants, and the only one in the country. Sumburgh Head, rendered classical by Sir Walter Scott's "Pirate," is the extreme south point of Shetland, and lies in latitude 59' 51" north, and 1' 16" west from Greenwich.

The general appearance of the coast is precipitous and picturesque, constantly diversified by bold promontories, deep bays, and small creeks, and the rocks are broken into the most rugged and fantastic forms by the action of the weather and the surge. The scenery is remarkably varied, chiefly in consequence of the different species of mountain rock of which the islands are composed, wanting, however, in one element of sublimity, great altitude, for although hilly, the country cannot be termed mountainous. Roeness hill is the highest land, 1476 feet in height. Of the mural precipices the highest is that of Foola, 1200 feet above the sea level. In general, they are under 500 feet. The predominating feature of the interior is undulating, bleak, moorland. Many of the vales and much of the land skirting the bays, have rather a fertile and romantic appearance, but the absence of wood, and the paucity of sunshine, are deficiencies which enthusiastic tourists will deprecate.

*Climate, &c.*—The climate is moist and variable, rarely presenting great extremes of temperature, and is, on the whole, mild, and to natives salubrious. The predominant winds are south-west, from which quarter commonly those heavy gales arise, that are in autumn

\* Drawn up by Laurence Edmondston, Esq. M. D.

so ruinous in certain seasons to the crops. North-east winds are next in frequency, and they occur especially in spring. The seasons run very much in cycles: eight or ten may in succession be warm, steady, and favourable, while three or four, as has been seen lately, are cold and stormy. An accurate meteorological journal in my possession, kept during the years 1750-51-52, and 53, by the late Mr Archibald, minister of Unst, shows that the weather then was of the same character that it is now. The aurora-borealis is common, but seldom more brilliant than in more southern regions, and is, for the most part, the precursor or concomitant of south winds. The hissing or rustling sound, said to accompany this meteor, is here generally believed to exist. Thunder and lightning are unfrequent, and are usually followed by more unfavourable weather. Although in this country much depends on foreseeing atmospherical changes, comparatively little attention is paid to prognostics, and the judgment of very few of the fishermen is to be relied on; the individuals that seem to have the greatest facility at guessing are the fish-curers. The arch of the sky is generally low and hazy. When high, and the clouds form cumuli, west and south winds are, as I have observed, present, or near at hand. When low and stratified, east especially, and north.

Whilst the climate is unsettled and sometimes stormy, the coast affords a continued succession of noble harbours, where, by the aid of the excellent Admiralty Chart lately published, the mariner may find a secure asylum. A lighthouse has been erected on the southern extremity of the country; but two or three additional ones are desirable. Wrecks are now comparatively rare. When they occur, the propensity to plunder, common to the inhabitants of most maritime districts, is apt to show itself. It is almost hopeless to convince rude minds, that what is at the mercy of the ocean is to be held sacred as private property; and the very inadequate recompense, which, in too many instances, has been allowed for extreme toil and danger in saving valuable property, strengthens the practice of endeavouring to remunerate themselves. In the case of no owner being found, it would seem to be equitable, as consistent to ancient usage, and it would discourage falsehood and speculation, were the Crown, after the custom's duties had been paid, to waive the claim to its share in favour of the salvors; a reference to the records of the Exchequer would show how trifling would be the sacrifice. Under the existing state of things, every bit of drift-timber that can be discovered is taken possession of by officials, and the fisher-

men are often placed in the alternative of either abstaining from salving or of embezzling it.

*Diseases.*—The most common diseases are catarrh, rheumatism, and dyspepsia. Continued fever also frequently occurs; but acute inflammations and cutaneous diseases are not so common as they were formerly, perhaps owing to a considerable change in the diet of the people. Fewer individuals die in infancy than in most other countries, possibly from the general prevalence of *crusta lactea*, which evidently acts as a natural and beneficial counter-irritant against visceral congestion, but which, when injudiciously interfered with by repellants, often produces fatal internal disease. Instances of great longevity are rare. The women usually live to a greater age, and preserve their faculties better, than the men, it may be from having been less exposed to excessive and desultory labour. It is remarkable that no authentic instance of Asiatic cholera has occurred. A rigorous quarantine was maintained during the prevalence of the pestilence in Scotland; but whether this measure contributed to save the islands from its visitation, is a question that resolves itself into the more general one of the contagious nature of the disease,—a point on which able medical authorities are at issue.

*Geology.*—The rocks are mostly all of what has been called the primitive formation.—Granite, gneiss, mica-slate, clay-slate, limestone, serpentine, and diallage rock; and towards the south end of the country, secondary sandstone, &c. Serpentine forms considerable hills in Unst, the most northerly island of the cluster, and in Fetlar adjacent to it; and in this rock are found imbedded masses and veins of chrome ore, some thousand tons of which have been quarried and sold. The first quarry of this valuable mineral was found by Mr Edmondston of Bunes, on his private property, and he introduced it to the British market. It is exported in its crude state, or partially pulverized and levigated. It is used as a pigment, dye, and alloy, and might perhaps be useful as a medicine. Limestone is found in different situations, and burnt in rude kilns with peat fuel; it is chiefly used as mortar, little being employed in agriculture, though its general introduction would be an important economical improvement. When applied in the state of carbonate, it will act on certain conditions of soil, often to be met with here, more beneficially than when it is caustic, not only by neutralizing acids, but by supplying carbon. Sandstone-slate abounds, and is extensively in demand for roofing; it is

heavy, but on the whole answers well. No coal has ever been met with, nor is it likely, from the geology of the islands, that it will be found; but the great abundance and excellence of peat renders this deficiency the less to be regretted. In the progress of mechanical and chemical improvements, we hope to see peat made available for most of the purposes to which coal is applied, and it has these additional advantages, that it is on the surface, and re-productive.\* The moors that produce it, are, however, very much neglected, to the injury of the present stock of fuel, and the prevention of future accumulation.

*Zoology.*—In zoology, there is nothing very remarkable. Of the wild quadrupeds, the great and small seal, otter, weasel, rabbit, common and great Norway rat, house and field mice, exhaust the list. Different species of whales are occasionally seen. They are such as occur on the Scottish coast, but are not numerous, with the exception of the *ka'an* whale (*Delphinus melas*), hundreds of which are by boats annually driven on shore. They are to be seen in flocks of thousands every summer; and if a little more attention were directed to their history and modes of capture, which it might be easy to point out, they might furnish a valuable annual addition to the regular marine resources of the country, instead of being a merely casual one. The flesh is as nutritious and wholesome as beef, and very similar to it in flavour. The oil (of which each animal, on an average, yields about a barrel) is excellent. The skin can be made into good leather. The offals are powerful manure; and the expense and risk of hunting them are trifling. Formerly, they were used as food here, as they still are by our worthy, intelligent, and substantial neighbours of Faroe, from which country Shetland might receive many useful lessons. The flesh of a congenerous animal is regularly sold and prized in the markets of the Bermudas, and that of the porpoise (a miniature whale) was a favourite dish in English palaces in the fifteenth century; but modern fastidiousness has, it seems, found something revolting in eating whale's flesh, so that in seasons of scarcity, sea weed is resorted to, while it is allowed to rot on the beach. In the case of any of these *ka'an* whales

\* The first sketch of the Geology of the Shetland Islands was that published by Professor Jameson in his *Minerology of the Scottish Isles*: his distinguished pupil, Dr Hibbert, many years afterwards, gave a more ample description, also from actual observation, of the numerous striking and interesting relations of this remote portion of the British empire, in his *Minerology of the Shetland Isles*.

being stranded and killed, the landlords on whose property they were driven, and the Crown or its donatory, exacted and received shares. To this claim the latter had apparently no right, except what might have been derived from ancient usages under the Norwegian rule, and if this were a valid authority in the whale question, it would be so in many others, and confer privileges on the Shetlands, of which Scottish law is unconscious. The landlords, on the other hand, have an obvious right to a share, both in equity and usage, just as a proprietor on the Scottish coast may demand a high rent for a barren rock, which happens to be favourably situated as a site for a lighthouse, or a station for a fishery.

Almost all the British sea-birds are to be met with in Shetland at one season or another; but I am not aware that any are peculiar to it. They are, in some localities, very numerous, and are eagerly sought after by the natives, who are among the most dexterous and intrepid fowlers anywhere to be found. These climbers seldom act in concert with each other, as is done in St Kilda, Faroe, and many other places, but fearlessly and singly scramble amongst precipices where a finger or a toe can hardly find a hold. This practice should be here sternly discouraged. The benefit from it is trifling. It leads to idle and irregular habits, and is often fatal to life. The destruction, too, of these lovely tenants of the precipices, robs the wild grandeur of the scene of one of its most interesting attractions. In defending their nests from rapacious birds, they become also the protectors of the flocks that pasture in their vicinity; and it is singular that proprietors are not more alive to the utility of their preservation. The land-birds are comparatively few in number and species, principally from the absence of woodlands. No attraction for sportsmen, in the shape of grouse or partridge, is to be met with on our damp and lonely moors.

Most of the fishes found on the British coasts are to be met with here. Those in the small lakes and rivulets are the eel, common trout, and sea-trout. I doubt if it can be affirmed that salmon have been caught in Shetland; but when eminent and experienced ichthyologists find it to be a matter of such difficulty to furnish an accurate specific distinction for this fish, it would be presumptuous to assert that it does not occur here. The rivulets are short and shallow, and almost all of them tintured deeply with moss. These circumstances may be the



cause that salmon are at least rare, or of diminished size and modified appearance. Shell-fish are abundant. Oysters of good size and flavour occur in many situations. The limpet is universally used as bait for the young coal-fish. The kullyack (*Macra solida*) is frequent, burrowing in muddy beaches, sheltered from the surf, and is in season early in spring. Eaten raw it resembles the oyster in taste, and by many is thought to be more delicate and digestible. In the department of marine Invertebrata, an inviting field awaits the culture of the naturalist.

*Botany.*—Only two plants, not hitherto observed in Scotland, have been found in Shetland,—the *Pisum maritimum* and an *arenaria*, believed to be the *Norvegica*. Both occur in the island of Unst only, and were discovered in 1837 by a young and promising native botanist. He has since surveyed botanically the most of the islands, and the following is his list of phænogamous plants found in them, which is interesting, as being, I believe, the first attempt at a regular Shetland flora.

Catalogue of the Phænogamous plants and ferns observed in the Shetland Islands, by Mr Thomas Edmondston, Junior.

**MONANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**

*Hippuris vulgaris*  
*Salicornia herbacea*

**DIGYNIA.**

*Callitriche aquatica*

**DIANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**

*Veronica officinalis*  
*beccabunga*  
*anagallis*  
*montana*  
*Pinguicula vulgaris*

**DIGYNIA.**

*Anthoxanthum odoratum*

**TRIANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**

*Iris pseudacorus*  
*Schoenus nigricans*  
*albus*  
*Scirpus lacustris*  
*caespitosus*  
*palustris*  
*Eriophorum vaginatum*  
*polystachion*  
*Nardus stricta*

**DYGYNIA.**

*Alopecurus geniculatus*  
*pratensis*  
*Phalaris arundinacea*

*Phleum pratense*

*Agrostis alba*  
*vulgaris*

*Aira flexuosa*  
*caespitosa*  
*præcox*

*Holcus lanatus*

*Melica cærulea*

*Poa trivialis*  
*pratensis*  
*annua*  
*fluitans*

*Briza media*

*Dactylus glomerata*

*Cynosurus cristatus*

*Festuca ovina*  
*elatior*

*duriuscula*

*Bromus mollis*

*arvensis*

*Avena fatua*

*Arundo phragmites*

*arenaria*

*Lolium perenne*

*Triticum repens*

**TETRANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**

*Scabiosa succisa*

*Asperula odorata*

*Galium boreale*

*saxatile*

*verum*

- Galium palustre*  
*Plantago major*  
   *maritima*  
   *media*  
   *lanceolata*  
   *coronopus*  
*Alchemilla arvensis*  
   *alpina*
- TETRANDRIA. TETRAGYNIA.**  
*Potamogeton natans*  
   *heterophyllum*  
   *lanceolatum*  
*Sagina procumbens*
- PENTANORIA. MONOGYNIA.**  
*Myosotis arvensis*  
   *caespitosus*  
*Fulmonaria maritima*  
*Lycopsis arvensis*  
*Primula vulgaris*  
*Anagallis tenella*  
*Menyanthes trifoliata*  
*Azalea procumbens*  
*Jasione montana*  
*Viola canina*  
   *tricolor*  
*Lonicera perelymenum*  
*Hedera helix*
- DIGYNIA.**  
*Gentiana campestris*  
   *amarella*  
*Daucus carota*  
*Chærophyllum sylvestre*  
*Angelica sylvatica*  
*Ligusticum Sooticum*  
*Carum carui*  
*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*  
*Heracleum sphondylium*
- TETRAGYNIA.**  
*Parnassia palustris*
- PENTAGYNIA.**  
*Statice armeria*  
   *limonium*  
*Linum catharticum*
- HEKAGYNIA.**  
*Drosera rotundifolia*  
   *longifolia*
- HEXANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**  
*Scilla verna*  
   *nutans*  
*Narthecium ossifragum*  
*Juncus effusus*  
   *bifidus*  
   *squarrosus*  
   *uliginosus*
- Juncus triglumis*  
   *campestris*  
   *sylvaticus*
- HEXANDRIA. TRIGYNIA.**  
*Rumex crispus*  
   *acetosa*  
   *acetosella*  
*Triglochin palustre*
- HEPTANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**  
*Trientalis Europæa*
- OCTANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**  
*Epilobium palustre*  
   *angustifolium*  
   *montanum*  
*Vaccinium myrtillus*  
*Calluna vulgaris*  
*Erica tetralix*  
   *cinerea*
- TRIGYNIA.**  
*Polygonum amphibium*  
   *persicaria*  
   *bistorta*  
   *aviculare*
- DECANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**  
*Arbutus uva-ursi*  
   *alpina*
- DIGYNIA.**  
*Saxifraga oppositifolia*
- TRIGYNIA.**  
*Silene maritima*  
   *scaulis*  
   *inflata*  
*Alsine media*  
*Arenaria peploides*  
   *marina*  
   *Norvegica* (Hook.) Nov. sp.  
*Cherleria sedoides*
- PENTAGYNIA.**  
*Sedum telephium*  
   *album*  
*Agrostemma githago*  
*Lychnis dioica*  
   *flos-cuculi*  
*Cerastium vulgatum*  
   *viscosum*  
   *latifolium*  
   *tetrandrum*  
*Spergula arvensis*
- ICOSANDRIA. PENTAGYNIA.**  
*Cratægus Oxycantha*  
*Sorbus aucuparia*  
*Spiræa ulmaria*

**ICOSANDRIA. POLYGYNIA.**

Rosa tomentosa  
 Rubus saxatilis  
 Potentilla anserina  
 Tormentilla officinalis  
 Comarum palustre

**POLYANDRIA. MONOGYNIA.**

Papaver rhæas  
 dubium

**POLYGYNIA.**

Thalictrum alpinum  
 Ranunculus acris  
 flammula  
 repens  
 scaria  
 Caltha palustris

**DYDYNAMIA. GYMNOSPERMIA.**

Lamium purpureum  
 intermedium  
 Galeopsis tetrahit  
 Stachys palustris  
 ambigua  
 Thymus serpyllum  
 Prunella vulgaris

**ANGIOSPERMIA.**

Euphrasia officinalis  
 Pedicularis palustris  
 sylvatica

**TETRADYNAMIA. SILICULOSA.**

Draba incana  
 Thlaspi bursa-pastoris  
 Cochlearia officinalis  
 Bunias cakile

**SILICOUSA.**

Cardamine pratensis  
 petraea  
 Sinapis arvensis  
 Rhabdanthus raphanistrum

**MONADELPHIA. DECANDRIA.**

Geranium molle  
 phaeum

**DIADELPHIA. HEXANDRIA.**

Fumaria parviflora

**OCTANDRIA.**

Polygala vulgaris

**DECANDRIA.**

Ulex Europæus  
 Anthyllus vulneraria  
 Pisum maritimum  
 Lathyrus pratensis  
 Vicia cracca

Trifolium repens  
 pratense  
 Lotus corniculatus

**POLYADELPHIA. POLYANDRIA.**

Hypericum pulchrum  
 perforatum  
 elodes

**SYNGENESIA. ÆQUALIS.**

Sonchus arvensis  
 oleraceus  
 Leontodon taraxacum  
 autumnale  
 Hieracium sylvaticum  
 Arctium lappa  
 Cnicus lanceolatus  
 arvensis  
 Onopordum scanthium

**SUPERFLUA.**

Tanacetum vulgare  
 Artemisia vulgaris  
 Gnaphalium aureum  
 Tussilago farfara  
 petasites  
 Senecio vulgaris  
 jacobæa  
 Solidago Virgaurea  
 Bellis perennis  
 Chrysanthemum leucanthemum  
 inodorum  
 Anthemis cotula  
 Achilles millefolium  
 ptarmica

**FRUSTRANEA.**

Centaurea cyanus

**GYNANDRIA. MONANDRIA.**

Orchis mascula  
 latifolia  
 Satyrium viride

**MONOECIA. MONANDRIA.**

Euphorbia helioscopia

**TRIANDRIA.**

Sparganium natans  
 simplex  
 ramosum

Carex dioica  
 ovalis  
 arenaria  
 recurva  
 binervis  
 ampullacea

**TETRANDRIA.**

Littorella lacustris  
 Urtica dioica

*Myriophyllum spicatum*  
*Betula alba*

DIORCIA. DIANDRIA.  
*Salix fusca*  
*aurita*  
*aquatica*  
*herbacea*

TRIANDRIA.  
*Empetrum nigrum*

OCTANDRIA.  
*Rhodiola rosea*

MONADELPHIA.  
*Juniperus communis*

POLYGAMIA. MONOECIA.  
*Atriplex patula*  
*laciniosa*

CRYPTOGAMIA. FILICES.  
*Polypodium vulgare*

*Aspidium filix mas*  
*filix femina*  
*Scolopendrium vulgare*  
*Osmunda regalis*  
*lunaria*  
*Ophioglossum vulgatum*

LYCOPODIACEA.  
*Lycopodium selago*  
*selaginoides*  
*clavatum*

RQUISETACEA  
*Equisetum arvense*  
*hyemale*  
*palustre*  
*sylvaticum*

EXTINCT.  
*Corylus avellana*  
*Pinus*—(*picea*?)

No indigenous trees are to be seen, if we except a few dwarf bushes of birch, willow, and mountain-ash. In one or two gardens, sycamores and other trees, planted probably a hundred years ago, have attained the height of 40 or 50 feet,—the girth, within three feet of the ground, being above six feet. That trees have formerly grown in abundance in Shetland can hardly, I think, be doubted, from the absence of any appreciable peculiarity in climate or soil fatal to their growth, and from the general diffusion of their remains in the peat moors. Some of those peat trees were of no inconsiderable dimensions; but, for the most part, they are of small size. From this, however, it cannot be fairly inferred that, generally, the native trees were diminutive. Timber must always have been valuable in this country, and the inhabitants would naturally consume all that was of any respectable size,—especially as no spot of ground is six miles from the sea in every direction, and therefore the woods would be easily accessible. But it is the opinion of some, that trees in size and quantity cannot now be reared in Shetland. The experiment, however, has never been fairly made. Let an intelligent and experienced forester, residing long enough in these islands to modify his experience to suit their climate, superintend for a sufficiently long period, and on a scale of adequate magnitude, the culture of various kinds of hardy trees, and then, and not before, can the capabilities of Shetland, with regard to arboriculture, be ascertained. It is to be hoped that some spirited and far-sighted proprietor will ere long put the mat-

ter to the proof. On a question such as this, *a priori* opinions, thrown out at a venture, are entirely to be disregarded. It is a curious fact, for which there is high botanical authority, that cones of the silver fir (*Abies picea*) have been found in some moors in Orkney. This tree is not indigenous to Scotland, but is common in Norway. It may, however, have been planted or its cones sown by some of the energetic and sagacious Norwegian *Yarls*, who so long ruled the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and who were as remarkable for their attention to husbandry and fishing as to politics and war.

*Antiquities.*—These consist of Pictish burghs (so called) and *standing-stones*. The former seem to have been fortified posts erected by the Norse or Saxon rovers,—and the most perfect example of this structure anywhere in existence, is in the small island of Moossa, a few miles south of Lerwick. The remains of these burghs are very numerous throughout Shetland. The *standing-stones* are from twelve to twenty feet high, somewhat conical, and sunk a few feet in the ground. They were probably erected in commemoration of celebrated warriors, as were the "*Bautasteine*" of the Northmen. On some of these stones, old people state that they have observed indistinct and strange-looking inscriptions, probably Runic; but these are no longer visible, nor do I know of any Runic remains in the islands. If the fashion of erecting monuments in honour of modern heroes shall penetrate to Shetland, this simple kind of pillar may be revived, as at once appropriate to the scenery,—economical and enduring. No traces of ancient domestic architecture occur; perhaps the habitations were mostly of wood. Rude concentric circles, formed of turf and stone, are in some situations still to be seen; the circles, three in number, are near each other; the diameter of the outermost 30 feet. These were, most probably, situations where legal justice was administered, *sub pleno Jove*, as was for centuries the fashion of the Norwegians. Tumuli are rather numerous; but nothing novel that I am aware of has been found in any that have been opened. No rocking-stones are to be met with.

The ancient language was a dialect of the Norse, being similar to what is now spoken in the Faroe Islands; but, for more than a century, it has been disused, and is now quite forgotten. From this latter cause, and from the destruction of every ancient record and document that the Earls Stewart and their Scottish retainers could collect, any old ballads or histories which Shetland might have possessed, have been lost. That such did exist can hardly

be questioned ; for the geographical position, and many excellent harbours of this country, rendered it a favourite resort of the heroic sea-kings ; and there are yet extant in Faroe many sagas and poems (in some of which Shetland is mentioned). Those two groups of islands were for a long period united under one government and bishoprick ; but Faroe was fortunately not scourged, as was Shetland, by royal favourites and greedy adventurers, taking advantage of the unsuspecting and defenceless Udallers, unprotected as they were by the Government of Scotland, to which they had been conditionally consigned, and ignorant of its language and its laws.\*

*Population.*—The population, under the Norwegian rule, may fairly be supposed to have fully equalled, in amount, what it now is. There exists, indeed, no documentary proof of this ; but it is a reasonable inference, from what we know of the contemporary state of Norway and its other dependencies, all under the same government and state of society, and inhabited by the same race of people. This argument, which I have elsewhere put forth, might be amply illustrated, did our limits permit. A considerable population may also be inferred from the warlike achievements and great political influence of the Earls of Orkney, of which country Shetland formed an integral part ;—the conclusion drawn by some of a great population, from the remains of numerous churches, appears to be untenable, for these churches were small ; and it was the habit (as it still is in Norway), for the clergyman to have several places of worship in a parish instead of one ; an arrangement apparently wisely adapted to the religious instruction of the people, though demanding a little more activity on the part of the pastor.

A few years ago, the population was 31,000. Since then, it has been, I think, decreasing ; the seasons, latterly, have been disastrous ; and many of the young and able-bodied men have left the country. In many parishes, the women are in proportion to the other sex, as two to one. Under judicious management, however, the islands could probably maintain three times the present number of inhabitants.

To no quarter of the kingdom is emigration less applicable ; there is ample employment at home for the people, and their ha-

\* It is an interesting circumstance, that, according to ancient Norse authority, the celebrated Faeroese hero, Sigmund Bresterson, the confidential friend and companion in arms of the Norwegian Cromwell, Hakon Yarl, and of his successful rival, King Olaf Tryggvason, first introduced Christianity into Shetland and his native islands, near the beginning of the eleventh century.

bits do not render them fit subjects for the measure. The most of the men that leave Shetland enter the merchant navy, and few eventually are heard of. They make good sailors, and their practice at the oar is as near to perfection as this elegant exercise can approach.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—There are twelve parishes in Shetland. The stipends of the clergy absorb about a fifth of the whole rental, and several of them are above the minimum of L. 150. They are all valued at a fixed money rate. The serious consequences of this arrangement, were any important changes to take place in the value of the precious metals, will be at once perceived.

Methodists, Seceders, Independents, and Anabaptists, are to be found, but no Catholics.

*Poor.*—For the support of the poor, each parish is divided into certain districts, and a pauper is appointed to each, who resides a given number of days in, or receives a certain allowance from, each family. Collections at the churches are also regularly made for them. In this way their maintenance is lightly felt. Compulsory assessments would, in Shetland, have most pernicious effects.

The right to a share in Parliamentary representation was first granted to Shetland by the Reform Bill. In conjunction with Orkney, it now elects a county Member. The number of electors is 150.

*Education.*—Education is on the same footing as it is in Scotland in general. Parochial schools are established throughout, assisted by those of the General Assembly. There are few individuals who cannot read; and writing and arithmetic are pretty generally acquired.

*Character of the People.*—The people are not remarkable for size or muscular strength, but chiefly for hardihood and endurance of fatigue; of a temperament rather versatile and sanguine than phlegmatic and persevering; more apt for desultory and adventurous, than for regular and continued exertion; and this in some measure arises, doubtless, from the various and somewhat incompatible occupations on land and water, to which they are early accustomed; and from the lottery-like gains of a fisherman's occupation. Their manner and address are mild and respectful; their enunciation smooth, and the tones somewhat pensive. The language is English, with the Norse accent, and many of its idioms and words. The old names of places are Scandinavian. They are fond of music and dancing, though they exhibit little

proficiency in these accomplishments. The violin is the only instrument in use, and the music is Scottish, with a few rude native melodies. Music and dancing have been recently much discouraged, from a most erroneous notion that they lead to vicious excesses. The effects of such a check to an enjoyment in itself innocent, and to the love of home, fostered by pleasurable associations, can be easily imagined.

The people are slavishly indulgent, or rather obedient to their children; and this is perhaps one reason why gratitude, filial duty, and reverence for old age are not thought to be among their prominent virtues. Superstitions are prevalent, though they present little novel or interesting. Witchcraft, charms, and apparitions, are firmly believed in; but the idea of fairies is becoming obsolete.

*Benefit Societies.*—Benefit societies are not well adapted to their habits, the advantages to be derived from them appearing too distant and contingent. A Fisherman's Fund, for the relief of widows, orphans, and infirm individuals, was established in 1810. The capital, it is understood, is nearly L. 3000. The members, from death and withdrawal, are now so few, and it has become so unpopular, that its dissolution would be judicious, with due respect, however, to the rights of those having claims on it for relief. This measure has been, indeed, loudly demanded by most of the subscribers for these few years past, when the distribution of the fund amongst them would have been so very seasonable; and it seems difficult to conceive upon what principle it can be expediently or equitably resisted.

*Temperance Societies.*—Temperance societies have been established, but seem supererogatory in a country, on the whole, remarkable for sobriety; their tendency is certainly to produce good, mainly by their indirect effect in leading people seriously to reflect on the imprudence of indulgence in stimulating beverages.

Hospitality is a virtue of which my countrymen may be proud of the reputation. Long may they cherish the sentiment, as just as it is noble, that the visited is more honoured than the visitor. In the majority of cases, the favour lies most truly not on the side of the guest, but on that of the host; and in a country where inns can hardly be said to exist, kindness to strangers becomes a sacred duty, which no temporary inconvenience can cancel.

*Cottars.*—There are few British cottars who have at their command, in ordinary seasons, and with common industry, a greater varie-



ty of food. Fish, flesh, fowl, milk, vegetables they have within their reach; but if they are not perseveringly industrious to gain, they are as little frugal to keep; and hence the extremes of plenty and want too frequently touch each other. The common position of a Shetland tenant may be stated thus: He pays L.5 or L.6 annually to his landlord. For this he has a cottage, in the construction of which there is room for improvement; a cow-house, corn and cabbage yards; 10 or 12 acres of good ground, partly arable, and partly grass and meadow; the right to cut as much peat for fuel, and turf for compost, &c. on the common as he can consume; and pasture as many animals as he pleases on it. Such a farm may produce twenty bolls of bear and oatmeal, and five tons of potatoes; graze, in summer, three to six milk cows, and fodder, in winter, from seven to ten cattle of all ages. He may have as much poultry, and as many geese and pigs, as he can manage; the sea is always near to supply him with fish for food, and sea-weed for manure; the produce of his summer fishing is generally sufficient to pay his rent. The wages of day labour are high, when its efficiency and a comparison with the circumstances of other countries are considered, and an active and faithful workman always has employment. How happens it, then, that he has frequently been brought to the verge of famine, of late years especially? Partly from bad seasons; partly because his desultory habits indispose him to regular and vigorous exertion on his farm; partly because much of his industry is injudiciously applied; and partly because a taste for luxuries, to which his means are not competent, is indulged. An example of this last point may be found in the fact, that about 40,000 lbs. of tea are consumed annually, the value of which would, perhaps, exceed the whole gross rental of the islands. He is too much habituated to imagine, that six months labour in the year should keep him comparatively idle for the remaining six; and, in the direction of his agricultural industry, he has gradually fallen into the practice of trusting to potatoes instead of corn, for his chief food, without providing an extra supply of manure to keep the land in heart; this leads to the relinquishment of the culture of bear, which ripens sooner than oats,—is more productive, and less exposed to damage from the autumnal gales; the land being impoverished yields little fodder and grass; his cattle are reduced in number and plight; he and his family are imperfectly nourished for energetic exertion; and a failure of the potato crop, which, in so variable a

climate, must necessarily often occur, at once brings him to indigence. If he could be induced to provide three times the quantity of manure which he usually does, and which, in most cases, he could do with perfect ease, this alone would make him comparatively independent. His farm is usually taken for three or five years, occasionally by the year; but it is a point of honour and habit with most landlords, (which public opinion properly and vigilantly protects), not to raise his rent or disturb him in his possession, unless for obvious crime or wilful insolvency; and many examples exist, of the same family remaining for several generations on the same farm. He has thus almost all the benefit of a lease, while he himself is perfectly free to remove at short intervals; and this freedom is a real one, from the number of "ley" farms and landlords in competition; so that, while he obeys the laws, and retains his solvency, no subject of Great Britain can enjoy more unrestrained liberty.

His attachment to country is not very strong, an effect which may, in some measure, arise from the love of a wandering life, induced by sailor habits, and which so many of the young men imbibed, by going annually in the whalers to Greenland. This practice has always been reprobated by the more sagacious proprietors and most justly. It is contaminating to the morals of the unsophisticated youth; it dissatisfies them with the regular and simple modes of living in their native country; it employs the period of life, when they should be acquiring the habits and knowledge of fishermen and farmers, in making them only half-sailors, and accustoms them to expenses which their ordinary industry at home cannot support; yet the attempts at salutary restraint here have been stigmatized as arbitrary oppression. This is only one instance, however, amongst many, in which Shetland proprietors have been cruelly traduced as the tyrants of their tenants, unable to appreciate either their rights or their capabilities, or the interests and duties of their own position. It was formerly a common practice, which is still followed in some districts, for the tenant to give his landlord a few days' work every year; this was mutually beneficial, and in a country where regular daily labourers, as a class, are hardly to be found, was necessary. These days' work eventually formed part of the rent, and thus in reality were hired labour. Yet this, too, has been often railed against as unjust exaction, as if a Shetland cottar were above the sphere of day labour, or as if he might practise it for the benefit of any one except his landlord.

The injurious consequences of indulging in such crude declamation, however well meant it may in some instances have been, were severely felt, in destroying confidence between tenant and master; and rendering the former discontented with his lot; and this naturally conducts to a few remarks on the leading causes of the destitution of the last four years, which has claimed and received so much relief from a benevolent British community. The more immediate cause, certainly, was a failure of the crops and fishing,—the more remote, but not less general or efficient, I should suggest, was a departure from the ancient relation between landlord and tenant. A Shetland proprietor holds his lands, it is true, by the same tenure as a Scottish; but to insure fair and adequate returns he must, in most cases, view himself rather as a proprietor in a new colony (with which, in many points, Shetland is assimilated), or, if I may so speak, as the conductor of a complicated manufactory, than simply as a landholder having little other business to transact, besides merely granting leases and receiving rents; he must vigilantly excite and direct the energies of his tenants, —assist them with capital and counsel,—receive, and provide a market for the various produce of their industry,—keep a store containing every necessary article they may require, and carefully attend to the many subordinate arrangements of order and discipline which the peculiarity of their position and co-operative industry may demand. He must be at once landlord, merchant, farmer, fish-curer, and the banker also of his tenants; or, if he is not himself able to undertake all this, he places his lands under the direction of some intelligent and responsible person as tacksman, who, under certain restrictions, manages the property as the owner would do. In either way, a close and kindly connexion between tenant and master subsisted,—the one had all his necessary and reasonable wants provided for, and the other had security for his rents, and each had a near interest in the other's welfare. It was the practice, in working this system, for the tenant to pay a low rent for his farm, and in return to receive a low price for certain parts of his produce, especially fish, and this mode of low reciprocal valuation was obviously more for the benefit of the tenant than the proprietor. Under this system the people prospered and were contented, and it afforded them facility for gradual and solid improvement; but individuals, who either could not or would not see the wisdom of this arrangement, in a certain state of society,—entertaining theoretical views of political economy, suited only to great capital

and high commercial civilization,—were unceasing in their denunciations against the landlords, as injuriously compelling their tenants to deliver to them their produce at a less price than they could obtain in the market, while the countervailing fact was overlooked, of the proportionally low rent paid for the land. This *ad captandum* argument was but too successful; the tenants became dissatisfied; many of them dishonestly eluded the compact by clandestine disposal of much of their produce to others than their masters, while these were paid with low rents,—and at length they demanded to be at liberty to give their labour to the highest bidder, and pay a higher money rent to their landlord as a receipt in full of all his annual claims on them. Several of the lairds, seduced by the specious but spurious simplicity of this free-trade view, annoyed by incessant and unjust charges of ignorance and oppression, or willing to be relieved from irksome details, consented, and the rest were soon compelled to follow, or have their lands untenanted. For a few years, all went on pretty smoothly; but the tenants had now fallen into the hands of a set of small shopkeepers, whose interest was not to secure their rents, or have regard to the permanent prosperity of the tenant, but to exhaust his means in shop advances; a result for which the system, rather than they, was to blame. Thus the tenants fell into habits of profusion and heavy arrears, and bad seasons supervening, the hollowness of the scheme at once became manifest. The shopkeepers (many of whom were also ruined) could not furnish supplies, because the tenants' substance and credit were exhausted; and the landlords, in want of their rents, were little able to relieve them. Some of them did, however, interpose nobly; and, but for their instrumentality, the tenants must in many instances have starved. The eyes of most people are now opened to the necessity of resuming the principle of the old system, which, in some instances, has been done, and already the aspect of things is improving. One main point of this system, as I have already stated, is, that the greater part of the produce of the tenants' industry shall pass under the control of the proprietor, chiefly as a rent security; and to make this have the appearance as well as the reality of mutual justice, the highest market price is allowed for it, while a fair money rent is paid for the lands. Under this mode of management of their property, much detail and active supervision are imposed on the landlords; but there appears to be no alternative of extensive application except that of throwing their lands into pasture, and eject-

ing the population from their native country; and while it may be a question with many, whose opinions are entitled to respect, whether this would be the more profitable plan, it ought only to be had recourse to as a last resource, so long as equity and good feeling are valued as paramount to iron-handed legal right. The proprietors have never been absentees; and if the nature of their possessions be such as to demand on their part industrious and detailed superintendence, they may console themselves with the reflection, that in few parts of the kingdom is there a better field than in this, for substantial improvement and active benevolence, or where the lords of the soil have more ample power for the good of the tenants entrusted by Providence to their care.

*Agriculture.*—The natural soil of Shetland may generally be termed mossy, with those exceptions which the nature and outline of the subjacent rock, and the conditions of exposure produce. Much alluvial soil exists along the shores of the bays, and among the numerous small vales, and a considerable quantity of good land has been made by long culture. The mode of farming which has been from time immemorial in use, was probably introduced by the Norwegian colonists, and is not ill adapted to the circumstances of the country, however much at first sight it may appear to be at variance with the theoretical principles of refined husbandry. The spade, of a light and peculiar construction, is the common instrument for turning over the soil, and it is surprising to observe the rapidity and efficiency with which it performs its work. Many individuals employ the common Scotch plough, to which the ground in general is well suited, and were the farms larger, or co-operation among the occupiers more attended to, its employment might with great advantage be universal. Some new land is annually broken up for cultivation; but an ignorance of sound agricultural principles is here too often apparent, and leads to disappointment and loss.

Carts are little used,—the absence of regular roads, the facility of water carriage, and the inconsiderable quantity of produce requiring transport, render their want the less felt. Ponies with pack saddles are the chief substitute.

The subject of road-making has deservedly attracted attention. In a country so indented by the sea, the employment of small steam-boats, using peats for fuel, might, for some time to come, be suggested as a substitute.

The manures are, farm-yard dung, sea-weed, peat ashes,

and mould, generally mixed together. The labouring season begins in March, and terminates in May. The staple objects of cultivation are bristle-pointed oats, (*Avena strigosa*,) perhaps one of the most valuable of all the varieties of dark oats; bear, (*Hordeum vulgare*,) and potatoes. The common close cabbage has been long cultivated. The seed is sown in the end of June, in small circular inclosures, of about five yards in diameter, in poor ground, and manured with peat ashes alone, for the double purpose of preventing weeds, and premature luxuriant growth, and the plants are set out in rich soil, the succeeding spring. More recently, field turnips, on a small scale, have become general, and their culture ought, by all means, to be encouraged and extended. The soil and climate are very favourable for them. No instance of the fly, that I am aware of, has occurred; and the only enemy to be dreaded is the mountain linnet, (*Fringilla flavirostris*,) which is indeed a formidable one, and is very numerous in Shetland. These birds crop the cotyledonous leaves as they first appear above ground, with the seeds on the top, by which, perhaps, they are first attracted, and in doing this the young plants are torn up. I have often shot them in the very act of depredation, and have counted from 40 to 100 embryo turnips in the crop of one. The remedy is diligent watching for two or three days, after the first appearance of the plant. This bird is rare in the Scottish lowlands; but congenerous species may have there done equal damage to the turnip crops, and the fact have been overlooked. The culture of potatoes is well understood, and is increasing, but yet little more manure is collected, and thus the old arable ground is deteriorated, and the corn crop lessened. This is an abuse which proprietors would do well immediately to check, for it clearly proceeds from ignorance and indolence, and will have extensively injurious effects. A better rotation, or larger stock of manure, should in this case be compulsory on the tenant. The disease of curl in potatoes may be said to be unknown. The habit is, not to remove the tubers from the ground, until quite ripe, indicated by the total decay of the leaves and stem. Inattention to this, and planting in too strongly manured ground, I have long suspected to be the main cause of the failure of potato crops.

The hay is chiefly the produce of natural meadows; but, from the careless mode of management, it becomes malted, instead of being simply dried grass. This is evident from the smell erroneously attributed to the presence of scented vernal grass, and in so

moist a climate as that of Shetland, much nourishing matter, having become soluble by fermentation, may be exhausted. Nothing can be simpler or more certain than hay-making, if the circumstances that produce malting be avoided. A good deal of coarse hay, known by the vernacular name of *Tekk*, is collected. It is composed chiefly of heaths and rushes, cut on the common and dried. Much of this is also used as litter, and it in this way furnishes an excellent ingredient of the manure used for bear. Little attention is paid to the artificial grasses, except by a few intelligent individuals, although rye-grass and clover are peculiarly suited to the country, and would add very largely to its resources. It would be well, if every cottar in Shetland were to follow the example of his relatives in Norway, where, as Von Buch informs us, the peasants of the northern coasts annually collect a large stock of sea-weed, chiefly the *Fucus digitatus*, which, after steeping a day or two in fresh water, is carefully dried and stacked for winter fodder. Cut fresh, and boiled sea-weed is occasionally, but sparingly, given to cattle in spring in these islands, and it is evidently nourishing and wholesome. Proprietors would find it beneficial to keep several pasture inclosures, as well as small islands for rearing and fattening cattle, and for assisting their tenants in the keep of their regular stock, in the event of bad seasons and scanty fodder.

The more general rotation of cropping is, *first*, bear, with the manure spread above after sowing, and it seems as rational, in certain circumstances, thus to top-dress corn as grass. Potatoes come next, then oats simply harrowed in. *Ley*, an essential ingredient in every good Shetland rotation, follows. *Lastly*, oats, and again bear as before.

Clearing the ground of weeds, draining, and opening the sub-soil, are little thought of, and yet in average seasons the crops are good. Harvest usually commences in September. The habit is too general to allow the corn to become dead ripe before cutting, which, in the case of oats, is, in this climate, most hazardous, for the chief danger is from high winds in autumn. It may be affirmed, that, if the principal cereal crop had been bear, or if the oats had been sooner cut, the better half of the corn crop of the last four years might have been saved. It is to be regretted, that, while the most minute details on other points of agriculture are made public, accurate indications of the ripeness of corn crops are left to individual conjecture.

The cattle, horses and sheep, of Shetland, are of races now almost peculiar to it; possessing many of the good points of high breed, they add the invaluable one of hardihood. The cow is small, the four quarters seldom weighing more than 2 cwt.; the quality of her milk is excellent, and its quantity, in relation to her size, abundant, sometimes reaching sixteen imperial quarts a-day. The ox is active, gentle, and docile, and for draught is better suited to the present state of Shetland, than the horse. Both ox and cow are often 14 and 16 years old, before they are fattened for the knife, and yet the beef is observed to be tender, fine-grained, and highly flavoured. Owing to the scantiness of their winter fodder, they are usually very lean, when put to summer grazing; thus, much of the beef is what is termed new. Their food is natural pasture, containing many aromatic plants. The breed is a peculiar one, and the animal having arrived at adult age, the full flavour is attained, different in this from high bred stall-fed cattle, which, though they have reached their full size, have not gained in all respects the maturity of their kind. Much beef is annually salted and exported. A little nitre is generally used in the curing; but it is an injurious addition. Simply strewing a sufficient quantity of bay salt, in largish crystals, between each layer of beef in the cask, applying pressure, and changing the pickle of a saturated strength two or three times, as it becomes foul or bloody, seems to be one of the best modes of curing beef, and which I myself regularly practise. The flesh of cattle killed, when the moon is growing, has been thought to stand curing better than when it is in the wane; and there may be reason in this; a more plethoric and sthenic state may be induced in the animal, and hence a more tonic condition of the muscular fibre, and more vigorous health of the whole system. There are several situations where flocks of brood cows, suckling their calves, and going out, all the year round, could be kept with great advantage; they would require little more looking after than brood mares, and when old they are equally valuable for the butcher as when young. Cattle seem constitutionally hardier than horses. Nature has adapted them to a wider geographical range, while the native country of the horse is limited to a warm and dry climate, and he never can be brought to bear with impunity so great alternations of cold and moisture. The Shetland poney is well known and generally esteemed for hardihood, strength, and spirit, in which he is surpassed by none of his size,



in any country. He does not arrive at perfection, till eight or nine years of age; seldom stands higher than 44 inches, for the most part about 38. The general colour is a dark mouse gray, and he is covered with long woolly hair, till three or four years old. He is singularly free from vice, but is not so docile or sagacious, as high bred horses. His attachment to the locality where he has been born is obstinate, often pining for years of *maladie de pays*, and this instinct, when strongly marked in the lower animals, is not usually accompanied with great sagacity. However, education and chivalry may have ennobled the horse, his title to the brute patrician order seems not an inherent one. The ponies range in herds over the common, in an almost wild state, and have little care or food bestowed on them, unless when engaged in labour, or during long snows; a handful of food is, in this latter case, occasionally given to them, as a condiment to season the sea-weed drifted on the beach, and freshened by snow water, on which they must then sustain themselves. Yet, under these circumstances, continuing sometimes for months together, they preserve their health and plight. If they were stabled, they would lose their hardihood, and the habit of catering for themselves, and their keep would be far more expensive than the actual farming economy of the country could afford. When old, they are never killed, but allowed to live as long as they can.

The sheep is small; not often horned; ears pointed and erect; face, back, and tail short; fine-boned; legs long; naturally wild, active, and hardy, and little liable to disease; the colour generally white; sometimes ferruginous, gray, black, and piebald; the wool very soft and often fine. The more damp and mossy the pasture, the softer is the wool; one of the causes of which probably is, deficient strength and nourishment; another, the astringent nature of the food. Sheep-farming, as a separate object, is now attracting some attention, although it is not likely to be carried on to so much advantage as in the Scottish Highlands. There, the sheep-walks are mountainous and inland, naturally dry, and contain a greater variety of pasture plants congenial to the breeds of sheep suitable for such situations, than can be afforded by the comparatively level and damp moors of Shetland, producing chiefly mat-grass and rushes. A serious casualty affecting the value of a Shetland flock, arises from the constant vicinity of precipices facing the sea, to which sheep are attracted by the tender grass growing amongst them, and great losses, by their falling over the

rocks, are often sustained. In the smaller grazing islands the verdure is luxuriant, consisting chiefly of *festucas*, *plantago*, and *statica*, top-dressed by sea spray and exuviae of sea birds, and in these, even the improved Leicester breed of sheep thrives so well, as to be the most profitable of any.

It is likely that our cattle, horses, and sheep were derived from Norway; and it might not be fanciful to trace them even to the Caucasian range, the original seat of Odin and his people, whence they emigrated into Scandinavia with their families and flocks; at least, there is a marked difference between our breeds of these animals and other well-defined European races. It might be, in many cases, of advantage, not only to preserve in purity, but also to trace the origin of, distinct breeds of animals, to facilitate improvement without crossing; but it is often as difficult to do this, as to determine the native country, in the wild state of certain domestic species. With regard to some of these, domestication may have been originally the rule, and the wild state the exception. No breeds of these three species of animals can, as a general rule, be better adapted to the Shetland Islands than those that are native to them; and, as they are always in great demand, we should do well zealously to cultivate them. All that is necessary is such a sufficiency of food and care as will not encroach too much on their natural habits and hardihood, and a persevering selection of the best animals for breeders; yet, if premiums had been held out for producing change and degeneracy, it is difficult to imagine a course of management better calculated to produce them, than that which has mostly been pursued. A pernicious practice has too much prevailed, of crossing with larger and incongruous breeds from Scotland; and the progeny, as might have been expected, displays all the bad points, with few of the good, of the parents. A natural but rough antidote to these evils is, in some measure, to be found in bad seasons, which fall with fatal severity on the degenerate. One very evident and easy mode of improvement would be, for proprietors to keep males of a good race and mature age, in different districts for general use, and insist on all inferior ones being removed; and it could be easily so arranged that no party could suffer loss. The tenants suppose that every one's business is no one's; and it hence, not unfrequently happens that calves and lambs, especially are wanting, because a sufficient number of bulls and rams are not reared, or those that are reared, are too young, or of a bad stock. The annual loss to the country from this source alone,

is far greater, than many not attending to the subject could imagine.

Hogs are universal; but with very little trouble, the people might keep many more than they do. These also are of a very peculiar breed, small boned, erect ears, woolly next the skin, active, hardy, and easily fed; and the pork is of very delicate flavour. A strong prepossession is by some entertained against their going loose on the common, from an idea that their rooting on it is injurious. This, however, is not always well founded, as might easily be shown. Absolute restriction, however, from turning over the arable ground, should be rigidly enforced. Far from checking their increase, it should be encouraged, as adding greatly to the comforts and resources of the tenants.

Geese are kept by several individuals, but large flocks might be reared by almost every one. Why they are not, it is difficult to say. Perhaps their requiring a little more trouble than is habitual, may be the very sufficient reason.

Land is possessed not by the acre, but the *mark*, as it seems to have been in the parent country, Norway, and others of her colonies. This word signifies, in the Norse dialect, a coin, a weight, a field, and, in the present case, it may be translated as meaning a *share*, or proportional quantity of land. Shetland contains about 14,000 marks; and a proprietor is said to be a laird of so many marks, not acres. All the land, with the exception of the small grazing islands, was anciently divided, as it still remains, into districts of unequal extent, termed *scattalds*, and the boundary lines of each defined and recorded. Each of these contained a certain number of marks, some greater, and others less. The marks or shares in any one scattald are of equal value, though they may be very different, as compared with those of another; for one district containing 200 marks may be less extensive and valuable than another containing 100. In the event of dividing a scattald possessed by several proprietors, each receives his proportion according to the number of marks or shares in it which his rental bears. These scattalds are again subdivided into, 1<sup>st</sup>, enclosed and appropriated, and, 2<sup>d</sup>, unenclosed and unappropriated ground. The former contains the arable, grass, and meadow lands, which bear a very small proportion to the unenclosed or commons. This mode of division into districts or scattalds was, it appears to me, coëval with the settlement of the first Norwegian colonists. Each adventurer with his followers fixed himself in a certain situation, and boundary lines between localities,

occupied by independent possessors, were determined, to prevent collision and encroachment. The division, again, into marks or shares was obviously to facilitate sale and succession. The reader will here observe some curious points of resemblance between ancient Scandinavian, and very recently promulgated principles of colonization. In certain states of society it is expedient that portions of land should be held in community; and, under any circumstances, it is not apparent why joint-stock management should not have place in this as in other species of property. This is, however, not a favourite doctrine in Shetland, for divisions of the commons, without any apparent agricultural object, are yearly taking place. As this process is expensive, and often vexatious, it might be as well previously to consider, whether more beneficial results, with less outlay, might not be obtained by divisions of parts of the commons, or by more prudent *pro indiviso* management of the whole, similar to what formerly was here the practice, and what has long been in operation under the orderly and well-digested system of rule carried on by the mild and paternal government of Denmark in the Farøe Islands.

Property is in the hands of many individuals: a few heritors are comparatively large ones. The Earl of Zetland possesses a considerable entailed estate, which, however, from being much scattered over the country, is of far less value than it otherwise would be. The great benefit of excambions is here most palpable. The value of land would be increased by concentration, management would be simplified and abridged, and the expenses of compulsory divisions diminished. The resident proprietors have been long actively anxious to effect exchanges with this only absentee landlord, on principles of equitable and reciprocal advantage; and it is to be hoped that the present worthy representative of the family will perceive the propriety of removing an impediment to improvement, which has long pressed heavily on the islands.

Long leases have often been proposed as a boon for Shetland peasants, and the landlords are quite disposed to grant them; but it may be time enough to appreciate the value of this suggestion, when the tenants shall be disposed to accept them, which they are not. A more immediate and direct benefit would be produced were the landlords, instead of attending chiefly to the extension of their properties, to employ a part of the time of their tenants for hire, in improving the farms by enclosing, draining, manure-

collecting, spade-trenching, &c. (opening with the mattock the subsoil, but leaving it *in situ*, as I have practised for several years), thus at once permanently raising their value, benefitting the tenants, and inuring them to regular and useful land labour. For instance, at a small expense each cottar could enclose such an extent of ground as might raise so much rye-grass and turnips, from seed of his own growth, as would enable him to keep annually an additional cow, and do ample justice to all the rest of his livestock; and if this simple expedient alone were universal, the rental of the whole country would soon be greatly increased. It may be affirmed, that by this and other simple and economical improvements, on which our limits will not here allow us to enlarge, and by more persevering industry, the lands already under cultivation might be rendered much more productive, without conflicting with the general habits and routine of the people; and such graftings on the old system are confessedly to be preferred to uprooting and expensive innovations, which too often are found to rest on nothing but the love of novelty and generalization.

*Fisheries.*—Cod, ling, tusk, saithe, and herring are the species of fish caught to be cured for sale. Ling and tusk have been long the staple articles of Shetland export. The home of the latter may, in Great Britain, be said to be confined to Shetland, and it is a peculiarly rich and highly-flavoured fish. Both these are fished with long lines in boats of 18 or 19 feet of keel, with a crew of six men. The distance of the fishing ground from the land varies from ten to forty miles. The lines are laid at midnight, the common bait is the young coal-fish, and the season is from the end of May to the middle of August. But the fishing should be continued two months later, and then during the day alone. Cod and ling then draw nearer the shore, and are more numerous and diffused. The favourite bait, herring, is then abundant, and danger is diminished. This autumn fishing will probably be more valued and prosecuted than it yet is. The fish are split, salted in tubs, and dried on the pebbly beaches, which are numerous, and exceedingly well adapted to the purpose from their smoothness, dryness, and admitting of a constant current of cool air below them. The art of fish-curing in this manner is well understood, and the essential principle of *pining* or pressure is in general duly and even scientifically applied. Since the lands, however, have been under the pseudo-free system, and deprived of the beneficial superintendence of the lairds, the curing of

fish has been more slovenly, and their character in the market lowered. The chief season for fishing cod is April and May. For several years, this business has been carried on by numerous small decked vessels of from 20 to 40 tons, with hand lines, and shell-fish bait, and the fishing ground is the south and south-west sides of the coast. The ling, tusk, and cod are also caught by small boats with hand lines at all seasons, but in comparatively limited numbers, and those got in winter are salted in heap till the spring drought arrives. The south and north extremities of the country are the localities where the saithe (*Godus carbonarius*) are caught; but there seems no reason why they should not be sought for with success, around the coast. This is the most abundant and generally diffused fish in Shetland, if we may judge from the exuberant number of the young pervading every part of the shores. From saithe being caught with little hazard near land during summer, requiring small capital, and always selling readily in the home market, it will probably ere long be prosecuted as the most profitable and generally attainable branch of the fishing. The young of different ages and sizes called *sil-lacks* and *piltacks*, are really the staff of life to the inhabitants of these islands, and they are both palatable and nutritious. The supplies of them, during the last four years of scarcity of bread, have been providentially most abundant throughout, and but for this, notwithstanding the liberal charitable donations\* from the south, famine must have occurred. Skate, haddock, halibut, and other kinds of fish are caught for consumption at home; but they are little followed as separate objects of pursuit.

As far as the fishing by boats is concerned, it will be difficult to point out a better mode than the one now in operation. The kind of boat is of the old Norway model improved, it is one of the finest combinations for rowing and sailing, and when not over-masted, (as it always is,) and under skilful and intrepid management, is as safe as an open boat can well be. Boat fishing must, of course, often be hazardous here, as it is everywhere else; but it has still advantages which will not permit its disuse. The losses that occur are mostly from mismanagement, and few accidents happen to boats in which the art of swimming would not be of vital use; yet hardly a single fisherman acquires it, and an object of great moment would be its general introduction. The

\* In this work of benevolence the amiable and meritorious Society of Friends have been conspicuous, as they ever are, in the sacred cause of Christian philanthropy.

use of small drove sails would also be highly advisable. From the increased number of boats, and the practice of going earlier in the season to the fishing, when the ling are spawning, the fishing grounds near the shore had become considerably exhausted. Proprietors, therefore, very prudently have discouraged this practice during the last eight years, and the good effects of this are decidedly showing themselves. In fishing with decked vessels, the sea ground between Shetland and Norway should be carefully explored, and there can be no doubt it would amply remunerate the expense.\*

Herrings have been industriously fished by boats for the last twenty years, from the middle of August till the middle of October; and to the patriotic Sheriff-Substitute, Mr Duncan, is due the credit of first establishing this branch of industry. The employment is, however, attended in these islands with more danger than on the Scottish coasts, from the more stormy and irregular nature of the climate, the numerous boisterous tide-currents, and the smaller extent of land on which, in the event of off shore wind, the boats have to lie; neither do the fish appear to be so abundant or so regular in their movements. Though herrings, as well as other fish, are found in shoals at certain seasons, it does not follow that they so congregate at other periods of the year; the spawning grounds may be viewed as centres; the feeding ones, as circumferences. If they could be fished earlier in the season, the hazard would be less, and the returns might be greater. Sufficient experiments to ascertain this have not yet been made, but, no doubt, soon will be, for capital, enterprise, and intelligence, are not wanting in Shetland, for a judicious development of its marine resources. But enlightened views with regard to fisheries have been far from keeping pace in any country, with other objects of economical research. The experience of the fisherman, the science of the naturalist, the aid of the statesman and the merchant, should all be put in requisition, to explore and enlarge this fertile source of national wealth. Periodicals, in which the fisheries occupied a prominent place, would be of great use, and it is singular that the subject has been so much overlooked in this age of magazines and reviews. A great many erroneous hypotheses, leading to ignorant and pernicious practice, have too long been dominant in our knowledge of the habits and history of fish, of which the theory of the annual

\* Query,—Why has steam never been applied to fishing?

polar migration of the herring is an instance, and it is not to be supposed, that accurate and extensive observation, and cautious inference and analogy devoted to the subject, would fail in eliciting something like scientific principles, and in establishing most interesting and valuable practical results. Of all beings, the rude fisherman is the most superstitious and theoretical, and almost all, we think, we know of the subject is derived from him.

*Trade.*—Much intelligent commercial activity prevails. The exports consist chiefly of salt fish, oil, butter, beef, cattle, ponies, and hosiery; the imports are, it may be supposed, very miscellaneous. A good many merchant vessels of respectable size, some of which have been built in the country, belong to it, and small fishing craft are very numerous. Leith is the great depôt for Shetland produce.

*Manufactures.*—Knitting of various articles of hosiery and kelp making may be said to be the only native ones. They are especially useful as giving employment to that part of the population which would otherwise want profitable occupation; and, moreover, in the case of kelp-making, a substance becomes valuable, which otherwise would be left to waste away on the strand. Kelp was never so important an object in Shetland, as in Orkney and the Hebrides; the shores are not so productive of the materials which afford it, nor is its quality so much prized; but there is, doubtless, much yet to be learned in its chemistry and manufacture. Since the duty on barilla and other substances, in competition with kelp, has been taken off, its preparation has been almost laid aside, and its want is seriously felt. It is difficult to conjecture what other motive, than a reckless adherence to the speculative dogma of Free trade, could have induced the British Legislature to inflict so severe a wound on the industry and resources of the Scottish islands, and which neither equity nor policy can honestly defend; much more oppressive and pernicious monopolies may take shelter under the mask of commercial freedom, than under the protective mantle of a prudent and patriotic government. Free trade is, after all, only relative; it has been imagined and described; but when the globe shall become one vast Utopia, then only can we expect that its *beau idéal* will be realised. Among the advantages which Shetland might hope to derive from Legislative favour, a reduction of the duties on timber generally, and particularly on boats from Norway, would be most valuable, and universally felt. These boats are imported in boards, and are of a class not in use in any



other part of the kingdom ; hence no temptation to smuggling would exist. Another benefit would be a drawback on the duty of a limited quantity of tobacco, tea, and sugar, for the use of the fishermen, in the same manner as it is granted to merchant seamen. The mail-steamer running all the year through would also be a signal boon, as bringing Shetland completely within the vortex of the British market, and no satisfactory reason has yet been given why this advantage, often solicited, has been withheld. The Isles of Man and of the channel enjoy many peculiar and important privileges ; distant colonies are pampered ; and it might not be unreasonable to expect some fostering patronage and commercial indulgence to be extended to the long neglected Shetland Islands.

*March 1840.*

TABLE Showing Ecclesiastical State, &c. of Parishes in the County of Shetland.

Parishes.	Population in 1831.		Ecclesiastical State.				Schools in 1841.		Parochial Schoolmasters' Emolums.			Savings' Banks.				Annual Amount of Contributions to the Poor.		
	Rams. be- longing to Ch. Esh.	Individuals.	Do. Do.	Families of Dissenters or Seceders.	Individuals.	Do. Do.	Amount of Parochial Ministers' stipend.	Schools in 1841.	Salary.	Fees.	Total.	Number.	Amount yearly invested.	Amount withdrawn yearly.	From as- sessment or voluntary contrib. by Heritors.	From Church col- lections.	From Alms, Legacies, Mortcloths, &c.	Total.
Lerwick,	3194	538	...	187	...	L. 150	4	L. 34 4 8	L. 30 0 0	L. 64 4 8	1	...	L. 13	L. 28 0 0	L. 74 0 0	L. 10 0 0	L. 116 18 0	
Bressay,	1609	...	1670	...	...	150	3	25 13 0	...	...	...	...	...	...	21 11 0	11 17 0	...	
Walls,	2315	...	2000	...	...	150	4	25 13 0	5 0 0	30 13 0	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	...	...	
Fetlar and North Yell,	1678	...	1643	...	...	180	5	25 0 0	8 0 0	33 0 0	0	...	...	...	8 17 8	...	...	
Unst,	2909	487	...	...	...	249	2	34 4 8	6 0 0	40 0 0	0	...	...	...	30 0 0	...	...	
Nesting,	2108	...	2070	...	...	150	3	25 0 0	2 0 0	27 0 0	0	...	...	...	14 2 0	1 8 0	...	
Deiting,	2070	374	...	20	...	150	4	25 13 0	3 0 0	28 13 0	0	...	...	...	15 17 9	...	...	
Tingwall,	2797	...	...	...	...	254, &c.	4	25 13 0	8 0 0	34 0 0	0	...	...	...	22 2 9	...	...	
Northmaving,	2500	350	...	...	...	150	5	25 3 0	4 0 0	29 3 0	0	...	...	...	8 0 0	...	24 0 0	
Mid and South Yell,	1812	..	1785	...	...	150	1	26 0 0	5 0 0	31 0 0	0	...	...	...	...	...	10 0 0	
Dunrosness,	4405	...	...	...	...	200	8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 14 11	...	...	
Sandsting,	2177	...	2077	...	...	150	9	26 0 0	1 10 0	27 10 0	0	...	...	...	10 0 0	...	10 0 0	



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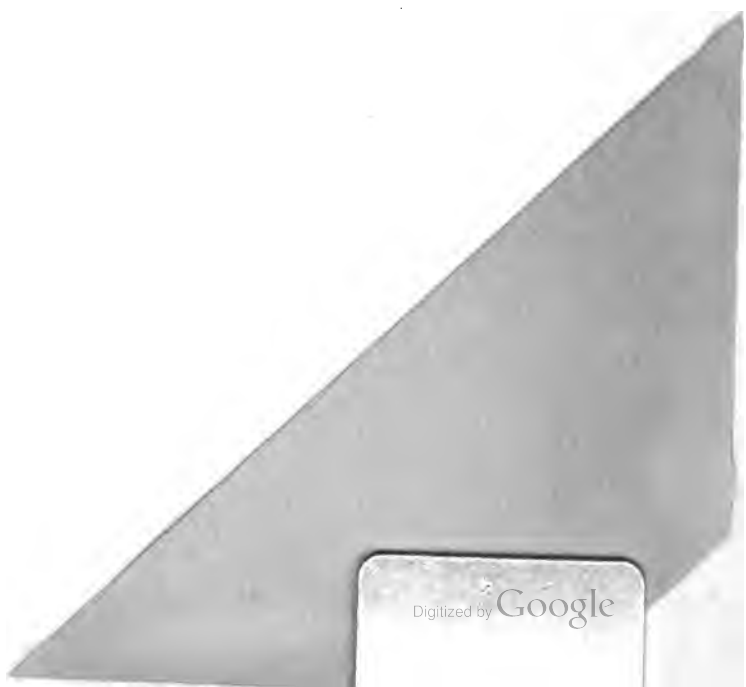




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