NUMBER XXXII.

PARISH of KIRKMICHAEL.

(COUNTY of BANFF, SYNOD of MORAY, PRESBYTERY of ABERNETHY.)

By the Rev. Mr. JOHN GRANT.

Name, Extent, Surface, &c.

IN Monkiſh hiſtory, this pariſh derives its eccleſiaſtic name from St. Michael, to whom the chapel, where now the kirk ſtands, was anciently dedicated. If this account be true, it may be obſerved, that the tutelary patron, ever ſince the period of his election, has paid little regard to the morality of his clients. In the Gaelic, the vernacular idiom, it is called Strath-āth-fhin, from "Strath," a dale, "āth," a ford, and "Fin," the hero Fingal, ſo highly celebrated in the Poems of Oſſian. It is generally written Strath-avan, avan being the appellative for a river; but the former etymon approaches much nearer to the provincial pronunciation.

tion. It is further confirmed by a ſtanza, which is ſtill recited by the old people of the country.

Chaidh mo bheans bhatha',
Ain uiſg āth-fhin, nan clachan ſleamhuin;
'S bho chaidh mo bheans' bhatha',
Bheirmeid āth-fhin, ainm an amhuin.

"On the limpid water of the ſlippery ſtones, has my wife been drowned, and ſince my wife has there been drowned, henceforth its name ſhall be the water of Fingal." It is the tradition of the country, that in one of Fingal's excurſions, in purſuit of the deer of the mountains, after having croſſed the river, he was followed by his wife, who being carried down by the violence of the ſtream, ſunk, and was drowned. To commemorate this melancholy event, in which the hero was tenderly intereſted, he uttered the above ſtanza. Since that period, the water, which was formerly called An-uiſge-geal, or the White Water, in alluſion to its tranſparency, aſſumed by an eaſy tranſition, the name of the ford or river of Fingal.

The pariſh of Kirkmichael* is divided into 10 little diſtricts,

* It is preſumable, from its deſolated ſituation, the natural barriers by which it is ſeparated from the circumjacent countries, the detached hills, and numerous ſtreams, by which it is interſected, that the pariſh of Kirkmichael has not been inhabited till of a late period. Several old people, now alive, remember the firſt culture of a ſpace of ground within its precincts, that may contain, at preſent, a tenth part of the whole population. To this circumſtance, and the coldneſs of the climate, it has been owing, that the poſſeſſion of the property has undergone ſo few changes. The firſt proprietor, as far as can be traced back by the light of authentic records, ſeems to have been Macduff, Thane of Fife. In a charter, where he makes a gift of the contiguous pariſh of Inveraven, it is ſaid, "Malcolmus de Fife, ſalutem. Sciant præſentes, me dediſſe, et hac carta confirmaſſe, Deo et Epiſcopo Moravienſi, eccleſiam beati Peteri de Inveraven,

tricts, called Davochs *. Several antiquaries have miſtaken the etymon of Davoch; but the word is evidently derived from Daimh, oxen, and Ach, field. In its original acceptation, it imports as much land as can be ploughed by 8 oxen. In the Regiam Majeſtatem, it is clearly defined †.

 This

Inveraven, quam Bricius tenuit, et cum omni parochia totius Strathaven, cum decimis et oblationibus, in perpetuam Eleemoſynam." This gift was made in the 13th century; and, upon the decline of the ancient family of Macduff, the property was transferred to Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan, of the Royal Family. In 1482, Sir Walter Stewart, grandſon of the Earl of Buchan, in the illegitimate line, reſigned it to King James the III. By King James the III., it was given to the Earl of Huntly. In 1492, this gift is confirmed by King James the IV., in favour of Alexander, Lord Gordon, Maſter of Huntly. This noble family have continued the proprietors of the pariſh of Kirkmichael ever ſince. So that during a period of near 500 years, the obſervation of a Greek poet, juſtified by general experience, upon the fluctuations of property, can ſcarcely be applied to this diſtrict.

Αγρος Αχαιμενιδω γενομην ποτε, νυν δε Μενιππου
Και παλιν εξ ετερου, βησομαι εις ετερον.

* One of theſe belongs to that reſpectable character, Sir James Grant; the other 9 are the property of his Grace the Duke of Gordon, a nobleman not more diſtinguiſhed by his great and opulent fortune, than for the antiquity of his family, his ſplendid hoſpitality, his patriotiſm and humanity. What the poet Buchanan applied to one of his anceſtors, may, with equal propriety, ſubſtituting the paſt for the preſent, be applied to his Grace:

Dives opum, luxuque carens, domus hoſpita cunctis,
Pacis amans pectus, fortis ad arma manus.

It is obſerved by an eminent hiſtorian, that Charles V., was not more conſpicuous for his own good ſenſe, than for that proof which he exhibited of it, in the choice of his miniſtry. This obſervation will apply to his Grace, in its full latitude; as the gentlemen, to whom his Grace has intruſted the management of his buſineſs, have acquired an eſteem, to which candour, integrity, and affability have juſtly entitled them. In this character Mr. Tod is too well known to require the feeble panegyric of the writer of this Statiſtical Account.

† "Davata," ſays that writer, "apud priſcos Scotos, quod continet quatuor aratra terræ, quorum unumquodque trahitur octo bobus. Alii quatuor aratra duplicata

This pariſh lies at the weſtern extremity of the county of Banff, from which it is diſtant between 30 and 40 computed miles. On every ſide, there are natural barriers which ſeparate it from the ſurrounding countries; from the pariſh of Strath-don, toward the S., by Leach'-mhic-ghothin, the declivity of the ſmith's ſon; from the pariſh of Cromdale toward the N. by Beinn Chromdal, the hill of the winding dale. Theſe are two long branches of hills, that, running in an eaſterly direction, project from the northern trunk of the Grampian mountains *. From the pariſh of Abernethy toward the W., it is ſeparated by moors and hills, that connect Cromdale hill with Glenavon; from the pariſh of Inveravan, by moors, and hills, and narrow defiles. The length between the extreme points that are habitable, may be about 10 computed miles. The breadth is unequal. Where it tapers at the extremities, in ſome places, it is leſs than a mile; between the verges that bound the middle, it may be about

plicia intelligunt, quæ ſunt octo ſimplicia: ſed ſervari debet uſus, et conſuetudo locorum. In nonnullis libris hoc legitur bavata terræ contra fidem veterum codicum authenticorum. Bavata autem terræ continet tredecem acras, cujus octava pars comprehendit unam acram, dimidium acræ, et octavam partem acræ." This paſſage ſhows, that in ancient times, in the Highlands, a ſmall portion of land was cultivated, in compariſon of the preſent. A davoch of the ordinary extent of theſe diſtricts, would now require, at leaſt, three times as many cattle to labour it, as were formerly employed according to the above paſſage from the Regiam Majeſtatem. Hence, it may be inferred, that the population has increaſed in proportion.

* Grampian, from Gràmt and Beinn. Gràmt, like the ἀγαθὸς of the Greeks, has two oppoſite meanings. In ſome fragments aſcribed to Oſſian, it ſignifies beautiful. This meaning, now, is obſolete, and it ſignifies deformed, ugly, &c. The old Caledonians, as theſe mountains abounded in game, and connecting beauty with utility, might have given the name in the former ſenſe. Mr. Henry Saville, and Mr. Lhuyd, two eminent antiquaries, call them Gràmt Beinn, from which comes the ſoft inflected Grampian of the Romans.

about 3 computed miles. In its ſhape, it reſembles an irregular oblong oval.

Cairn-gorm, or the Blue Mountain, one of the high, though perhaps not the higheſt of thoſe lofty mountains that ſtud the Grampian deſert, riſes 4050 feet above the level of the ſea; and Loch-avon not more than a mile from the foot of the Cairn-gorm *, 1750 feet. At the ſouthern extremity of the pariſh, there is a cataract falling from a height of 18 feet. From this cataract to Lochavon, the ſource of the river, there are 8 computed miles; between the manſe of Kirkmichael, which lies within 2 miles of the northern extremity of the pariſh, and the above cataract, there are 7 computed miles. As the ſource of the river there, is ſituated ſo near the cultivated part of the country, it may be inferred, that the ſituation of the whole ground is very conſiderably elevated above the ſurface of the ſea †. The face of the country,

* For the height of this mountain and Lochavon, the writer is obliged to James Hay, Eſq. of Gordon Caſtle, a gentleman of much knowledge, whoſe ſkill in obſerving, and whoſe accuracy in deſcribing natural appearances, are well known to the Linnæan Society in London.

† Cloſe by Lochavon, there is a large ſtone called Clach dhian, from clach, a ſtone, and dhian, protection, or refuge. It has been a cavity within, capable of containing 13 armed men, according to the figure made uſe of in deſcribing it. One corner of it riſes 6 feet 4 inches in height. The breadth of it may be about 12 feet. Plain within, it riſes on the outſide from the ſeveral verges of the roof, into a kind of irregular protuberance of an oblong form. In times of licence and depredation, it afforded a retreat to freebooters.

Clach-bhan, from clach, a ſtone, and bean, a woman, is another ſtone ſituated upon the ſummit of a hill, called Meal-a-ghaneimh, from meal, a knoll or mound, and gaineimh, ſand. On one ſide, it meaſures 20 feet in height. On the other ſide, it is lower and of a ſloping form. In the face of it, 2 ſeats have been excavated, reſembling that of an armed chair. Till of late, this ſtone uſed to be viſited by pregnant women, not only of this, but from diſtant countries, impreſſed with the ſuperſtitious idea, that by ſitting in theſe ſeats, the pains of travail would become eaſy to them, and other obſtetrical aſſiſtance rendered unneceſſary.

try, in general, exhibits a bleak and gloomy appearance. In croſſing the centre of it, few cheering objects attract the eye of the traveller. From detached hills covered with heath, and deſtitute of verdure, where here and there a lonely tree marks the depredations of time, he naturally turns with averſion. But, ſhould he happen to paſs after a heavy fall of rain, when the numerous brooks that interſect the country pour their troubled ſtreams into the roaring Avon, he muſt commiſerate the condition of the inhabitants, at ſuch a ſeaſon, precluded from the reſt of the world, and even from enjoying the ſociety of each other. Frequently in winter, the ſnow lies ſo deep, that the communication between it and other countries, becomes almoſt impracticable. The banks of the Avon, however, are pleaſant enough, and in different places tufted with groves of birch, mixed with ſome alder. This being the largeſt ſtream that waters the country, from its ſource to where it falls into the Spey (the Tueſſis * of Antoninus's Itinerary), it flows over a ſpace of 24 or 25 miles, including its windings. In the pariſh, there are 2 other leſſer ſtreams, beſides a variety of brooks; the one called Conlas, from cuthin, narrow, and glas, green, and the other, ailnac, from eil, a rock, and nidh, to waſh.

Climate.—From its elevated ſituation, the numerous brooks by which it is interſected, and its vicinity to the Grampian mountains, it might naturally be expected, that the atmoſphere of this country has little to recommend it. Of this, the inhabitants have ſufficient experience. Their winters are always cold and ſevere, while their ſummers are ſeldom warm and

* Tueſſis, from Tuath, north, and uiſg, water, by way of eminence, being the largeſt river in the N. of Scotland, it was afterward called Spey, from Spadha, a long ſtride, in alluſion to the length of its courſe.

and genial. The diſorders conſequently to which they are ſubject, may, in a great meaſure, be attributed to their climate. Theſe, for the moſt part, are coughs, conſumptions, and affections of the lungs, by which many of thoſe advanced in life are cut off, and frequently ſeverals of thoſe who die at an earlier period. In ſummer and autumn, what the Medical Faculty call nervous fevers, chiefly prevail, and frequently prove fatal. Theſe are the common diſorders.

Soil, Springs, Natural Hiſtory, &c.—As the face of this country riſes into hills, or ſinks into valleys, as it ſlopes into declivities, or extends into plains, the ſoil accordingly varies. Along the banks of the Avon, and the brooks, it generally conſiſts of a mixture of ſand and black earth; in the more elevated plains, of a pretty fertile black mould, on the ſloping declivities, of a kind of reddiſh earth and gravel; the nearer it approaches the ſummits of the hills, it is mixed with moſs and gravel. In ſome few places, it is deep and clayey. In the pariſh, there are ſeveral ſprings of mineral waters: One in particular, is much frequented by people troubled with the ſtone, or labouring under ſtomachic complaints. Some medical gentlemen, who have made the experiment, aſſert that it is ſuperior to the celebrated wells of Pananich on Deeſide. It has been obſerved, that the hills of this country are covered with heath, and deſtitute of wood; yet, in the interſtices of the heath, there grows a rank graſs, and a plant called Canach an Shleibh, or the mountain down, on which cattle and ſheep feed in ſummer, and grow tolerably fat. The foreſt of Glenavon which is 11 miles in length, and between 3 and 4 in breadth, contains many green ſpots, and during 4 months of the ſummer and autumn ſeaſons, affords paſture for a 1000 head of cattle. This foreſt is the property of his Grace the Duke of Gordon. Further, toward

the S., and forming a diviſion of the foreſt of Glenavon, lies Glenbuilg, alſo the property of the Duke of Gordon. Glenbuilg will be about 5 miles in length, and between 2 and 3 in breadth. If no part of it were laid under ſheep, it might afford paſturage for 500 or 600 head of cattle.

The long and narrow defile that bounds the ſouthern extremity of the pariſh, and contiguous to the Avon, exhibits a beautiful and picturesque appearance. It is every where covered with graſs, the ever-green juniper, and the fragrant birch. From the beginning of April, till the middle of November, ſheep and goats, in numerous flocks, are conſtantly ſeen feeding on its pendent ſides. In many of the Grampian mountains are found, precious ſtones of a variety of colours. But whatever may be their ſpecific difference, they are all denominated by the well known name of Cairn-gorm ſtones, that being the mountain in which they have been found in the greateſt abundance. Some of them are beautifully poliſhed by the hand of nature, while others are rude and ſhapeleſs. They are ranked by naturaliſts in the claſs of topazes *.

Population,

* Limeſtone is ſo plenty, that there is ſcarcely a farm in the whole pariſh above a mile and a half's diſtance from a quarry of it. Freeſtone is alſo found, but of a ſoft and friable quality. A ſlate quarry has been opened many years ago, and occaſionally wrought; the ſtone is of a greyiſh colour. It is hard and durable, and ſupplies the neighbouring countries in that article, particularly Strathſpey. So little tenacious is his Grace the Duke of Gordon of his right of property, that he allows every perſon to uſe theſe quarries at pleaſure, free from all reſtraint. Two marl pits have been diſcovered, but lying on the diſtant ſkirts of the pariſh. Farmers have not availed themſelves of the marl as a manure; there are few, however, who uſe not lime for this purpoſe. In the year 1736, an iron mine was opened in the hill Leach-mhic-ghothin, which ſeparates this pariſh from Strathdon, by a branch of the York-Building Company, then reſiding in Strathſpey. It was continued to be wrought till 1739, when, by a derangement in their affairs, they left that country. Since that period, it has been totally abandoned. This mine alſo, is the property of the Duke of Gordon.

Population, &c.—According to Dr. Webſter's report, the population in 1755, was 1288. No ſeſſional records are now in exiſtence belonging to this pariſh, previous to the 1725, when the incumbent before the laſt was admitted. Ever ſince, it has not been poſſible to keep them with accuracy. Diſſenters, of whatever denomination, watch the opportunity of encroaching upon the prerogative of the Eſtabliſhed Church. As the third, then, of the people of this pariſh are Roman Catholics, the prieſt generally takes the liberty of ſharing in the functions that belong to the Proteſtant clergyman *.

By the moſt accurate inquiry, it has been found that this pariſh contains 1276 inhabitants, young and old, and of both ſexes. Of theſe, 384 are Roman Catholics: all the individuals of each profeſſion are included, in 253 families, containing, at an average, 5 perſons to a family, with 265 chil-

* From this circumſtance, it muſt happen, that there will be ſeveral marriages and baptiſms unknown to the ſeſſion, and conſequently cannot have place in its records. Hitherto, the preſent incumbent has not checked this encroachment, from his averſion to every kind of illiberal intolerance; but, on the contrary, allowed the Roman Catholic prieſt to uſe every liberty, as if toleration had extended to this country. He allows him to marry and baptize, impoſe penalties, and exact them among his own people, in the ſame manner as if he were of the Eſtabliſhed Church. The writer of this ſtatiſtical article mentions this circumſtance, as he thinks it ought to be an invariable rule of conduct to practiſe that divine precept, in doing to others, as we would wiſh others do unto us. Some years ago, too, the taxes impoſed upon deaths, marriages, and baptiſms, made them be conſidered as a kind of contraband goods, and for that reaſon, many of them were as much as poſſible concealed from publick view, that they might elude an impoſition, which they called tyrannical and oppreſſive. Though in a different language, this novelty, to their experience, incited the people frequently to utter the indignant ſentiment of Bajaculus, general of the Anſibarii, as mentioned by Tacitus, "Deeſſe," ſays he, "terra in qua vivamus, in qua moriamur, non poteſt." To the operations of theſe cauſes, it muſt be imputed, that ſo little ſatisfactory light, reſpecting the population, can be derived from the mutilated records of the ſeſſion of Kirkmichael.

dren under 8 years of age *. During the 4 laſt years, according to a late ſurvey, there have been born, at an average, annually, 32 children, in the proportion of 21 males to 19 females. Old women are found to be more numerous than old men, in the proportion of 3 to 2. In this period, 10 have died of each; two men at the age of 95 and 86 years; and two women at the age of 93 and 95 years. During the ſame period, 14, at an average, have died annually. There is juſt now living, two men 88 years each, and three women, 87, 89, and 91, each. The average of marriages for the laſt 4 years, has been 6 annually.—By a pretty accurate calculation, the total of black cattle in the pariſh, amounts to 1400, with 7050 ſheep, 310 goats, and 303 horſes. No other domeſticated animals are reared, except ſome poultry, and a few geeſe.

Acres, Rent, &c.—The whole pariſh, excluſive of the foreſt of Glenavon, Glenbuilg, and the hill paſture belonging to the davoch of Delnabo, the property of Sir James Grant, contains 29,500 acres, of which little more than 1550 are arable. The whole rent may be about 1100 l. Sterling; but to a certain extent of graſs following each farm, no rent is affixed.

Eccleſiaſtical State, Schools, Poor, &c.—The glebe, manſe, and garden, occupy a ſpace ot between 9 and 10 acres, ſituated on an eminence, and hanging upon the ſloping ſides. A part of the ſoil is poor, and a part tolerably fertile. The value

* By conſulting the ſeſſion records for the years 1749, 1750, and 1751, when the records appear to have been kept with more than uſual accuracy, in the firſt of theſe periods, there were born 14 males, and 14 females; in the ſecond, 23 males, and 20 females; and, in the third, 16 males, and 16 females.

value of it may be about 6 l. *. The church was built in 1747, and has been never ſince repaired. As a houſe of worſhip, it would appear to a ſtranger to be totally deſerted. A few broken windows mark the ſable walls: the glaſs is broken, and gives free acceſs to the winds from all the cardinal points. Were the people enthuſiaſts, a little current of air might be neceſſary to cool them; but in their preſent diſpoſition, they frequently complain of the inroads of the cold, to diſturb them in their ſober meditations; yet they never expreſs a wiſh to remove the inconvenience. Their apathy is the more extraordinary, as his Grace the Duke of Gordon, is ever ready to liſten to the repreſentations of his people, and never refuſes to grant them a juſt and equitable requeſt. Sir James Grant is patron of the pariſh. From 1717, till 1786, the ſtipend of this pariſh was no more than 47 l. 4 s. 5½ d. Sterling. During the latter of theſe years, his Grace the Duke of Gordon, informed of the ſmallneſs of the living, was pleaſed to beſtow upon the preſent incumbent, without the painful feeling of ſolicitation, a gratuitous augmentation; and this at a time when the Court of Seſſion were inimical to ſuch claims. The ſtipend, at preſent, is 68 l. 6 s. 8 d. Sterling, with 10 l. Sterling, allowed by his Grace for a houſe. It will not be deemed a digreſſion, to mention that his Grace gave a farm to the preſent incumbent, at a moderate rent, when an advanced one, and a fine of 20 guineas were offered by others.—There are 2 ſchools; a Society one at Tammtoul,

* No graſs is annexed, except a ſhare of the common hill paſturage. It lies at the diſtance of 3 computed miles from the moſs, to which there is a bad road, riſing into aſcents, and falling into declivities. In rainy weather, a kind of gully contiguous to it, becomes impaſſable, which frequently prevents the miniſter from getting home his fuel in the proper ſeaſon. Owing to this circumſtance, he is generally ill ſupplied, and obliged to accommodate himſelf at ſome diſtance in the neighbourhood, at a conſiderable expenſe.

with a salary of 13 l. 10 s., and a parochial one at Tamchlaggan, with a salary of 8 l. 6 s. 8 d.—No funds appropriated for the relief of the poor, have been hitherto established in this parish. Three years ago, the trifling sum of 5 l. Sterling, was bequeathed by an old woman; and, without exaggeration, few parishes stand more in need of the charitable contributions of the well disposed. The number of the old and infirm at present on the list, amounts to 32 persons; while the annual collection, distributed last week, came to no more than 42 s. 6½ d. Sterling. In this large treasure, designed to be incorruptible, beyond the power of moths and rust, there were 1 s., 5 sixpences, 443 d., and 50 farthings *.

The price of provisions in this country has been different, at different times. In the reign of King William, it is well known

* In the years 1782 and 1783, the incumbent felt experimentally, the wretched condition of the poor here, and from the neighbouring countries. Though his own income was only, at that time, 47 l. 4 s. 5⅓ d.; yet, of this pittance, he expended, at a moderate calculation, 7 l. Sterling, each of these years, in charity. Preaching that virtue to others, the forlorn urged their claims to him for the practice of his doctrine; nor were their claims, proportionate to his abilities, refused. During the above years, his Grace the Duke of Gordon extended a humane concern to the distresses of the inhabitants, by supplying them in meal and seed-corn, at a moderate price. No person, as far as the writer of this statistical article knows, died of want, though, it may be presumed, that a portion of aliment unusually scanty, might prove the ultimate cause of the death of several. As the poor are peculiarly under the protection of providence, and left as a tax upon the affluence and luxury of their more fortunate brethren of mankind, it were to be wished, that in parishes where there are no funds, where the contributions are small, proprietors would be pleased to bestow some little annual sum, under proper restrictions, to afford them relief. Such charity might contribute to secure themselves a property in a more permanent country, and better climate than the present, where, even according to Homer,

Ου νιφετος, ουτ αρ χειμων πολυς ουτε ποτ ομβρος
Αλλ αιει Ζεφυροιο λιγυπνειοντας αητας
Ωκεανος ανιησιν αναψυχειν ανθρωπους.

known that a famine prevailed over the whole kingdom, and continued during ſeveral years. Either agriculture, at that time, muſt have been imperfectly underſtood, or the calamity muſt have been ſevere, when a boll of meal coſt 1 l 6 s. 8 d. Sterling. The year 1709, is alſo noted for a dearth, and winter, uncommonly rigorous over every part of Europe *.

Among

* In France, it is deſcribed by a Poet of the time, as blaſting trees, and affecting even the vine.

" ——— hinc," ſays he, " noſtros et nux et oliva per agros
Interiit, brumæque truci vix reſtitit ilex."

The effects were felt in this country, and victual roſe in proportion; the boll of meal coſt 1 l. 3s. Sterling. There are many ſtill alive, who remember the year 1740. The froſts came in September, and the ſnow fell ſo deep in October, that the corn continued buried under it, till January and February following. At that period, the boll of meal roſe to the exorbitant price of 30s. the boll: and to increaſe the miſery of the people, thoſe who ſold it, frequently mixed it with lime, which to many proved fatal. To ſupport life, the people over the Highlands, in general, were obliged frequently to let blood from their cattle, a practice now that is never uſed in this country. About 30 years ago, the ſeaſons being favourable, the boll of meal ſold at the low price of 6s. 8d. During the laſt 20 years, the average price, excluſive of 1782 and 1783, has been about 16 s. Sterling. The price of black cattle and ſheep, for 8 years backward, has been, upon the whole, high; cows and calves have ſold for 5 l., 6 l., and 7 l. each; ſheep and lambs for 10 s. and 12 s. each; oxen for 5 l. and 7 l. each, ſometimes 8 l. For the 3 laſt years, the prices have abated near a third. Poultry ſell for 6 d. and 7 d. each, and pullets for 2 d. and 3 d. each; eggs ſell at 2 d. and 3½ d. the dozen. The difference between the prices of theſe articles at preſent, and in ancient times, cannot be accurately aſcertained; but before the year 1745, which forms a remarkable æra in the Highlands, oxen ſold for 2 l. and 50 s.; cows, with their calves, for 25 s., and 20 s., and 30 s.; and ſheep, with their lambs, 2 s. 6 d., and 3 s. 6 d.; and other articles in proportion.

From a conſideration of the circumſtances of the Highlands, which, previous to the 1745, were in ſome meaſure ſtationary, it may be preſumed, that during a conſiderable time, theſe were the ſtandard prices; but the ſpirit of commerce introduced into the S. of Scotland, operates with extended influence,

and

Among other grievances, it muſt not be omitted, that the inhabitants in this, and the contiguous diſtricts, deſcant with melancholy declamation, on the heavy and increaſing taxation impoſed by Government. Salt, leather, and iron, whether it be, in order to increaſe the revenue, they are, as it were, farmed out, and have become a kind of monoply, or that an additional tax is laid upon them; whatever be the cauſe, they bitterly complain of the unuſual and exorbitant prices of theſe articles. It is pleaſant to hear them obſerve, that from the tax upon leather, in particular, they will derive one advantage: it will diminiſh the number of beggars, by confining them in winter to their booths to die at leiſure, without the trouble of expoſing them, as the Scythian Alani did their infirm,

and makes the prices vary here, according to the changes and fluctuations which it produces.

Male ſervants receive 3l. Sterling, in the half year, the period for which they uſually engage; boys, 20s. and 30s.; and maids, 20s. and 25s. Sterling, in the half year. The price of day's labour, to men, is 8d., 10d., and 1s.; and to women 6d., and ſometimes 8d. In theſe, their meat is ſometimes included, but in harveſt, theſe wages are given, excluſive of their victuals. The advanced price of labour, is one of the grievances of which farmers chiefly complain. They feel, from experience, that, in point of eaſe, comfort, and independence, the condition of ſervants, is more eligible than that of their maſters. The ſhort term of engagement, wages immoderately high, inſpire them with a pride, inſolence, and indifference, that would frequently require a meek and patient ſpirit to brook. Nice in the choice of their food to ſqueamiſhneſs, it muſt neither fall ſhort, nor exceed that exact proportion of cookery, which their appetites can reliſh. Care too muſt be taken, that no offence ſhall be offered them. They muſt ſleep in the morning as long, and go to bed at night as ſoon, as their pleaſure dictates. Expoſtulations are oppoſed by rudeneſs. If their behaviour is diſagreeable, their maſters are at liberty to provide themſelves with others, againſt the firſt term. And ſeldom do they fail to give ſcope for this liberty. When the term arrives, then, like birds of paſſage, they change their reſidence, or migrate to diſtant countries. In the preſent period of their hiſtory, in this and the neighbouring countries, they ſeem to be the only claſs of ſubjects who enjoy the moſt, and abuſe the freedom of the Engliſh Conſtitution.

firm, to the frozen blasts of their bleak mountains. Of every tax imposed, as felt from experience, the seller is ever sure to avail himself, by exacting double in the price paid by the purchaser. May not then the question be put, whether Politicians, and the sharp-eyed Arguses of the state, should not make provision against this species of fraud. The rent of land is no doubt considerably augmented, but still not beyond a just proportion to its productions. But when all the burdens under which the farmer labours are put together, the exactions of Government, advanced price of labour, augmented rents, short leases, and considerable fines, it must be acknowledged, that the condition of the farmer is far from being eligible; and that what Virgil said of that profession, in his own time, cannot be asserted at present.

O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint *.

Village, &c.—Tammtoul is the only village within the precincts of this parish. It is inhabited by 37 families, without a single

* It is the lot, however, of the generality of this class of men, in most parts of the Highlands of Scotland, to be better acquainted with the reverse of the description. To go into their houses, and take a view of their contents, seats covered with dust, children pale and emaciated, parents ill clothed with care-furrowed countenances, exhibits a striking picture of Bythinian Phineus, as described by Apollonius Rhodius, whose victuals the harpies continually devoured, and left the miserable owner to hunger and despair.

Αρπυιαι στοματος χ'ειρων τ'απο γαμφηλῃσι
Συνεχεως ηρπαζον.

But in equity, moderation, and humanity, his Grace the Duke of *Gordon*, is as much distinguished from many of the other proprietors in the Highlands, as by his great and opulent fortune. From that rage which now prevails for colonizing the country with sheep, his Grace is happily exempted, and is determined at the expiration of the present leases, to discourage a practice, that, by an unrestrained license, would soon depopulate the country of its ancient inhabitants.

a ſingle manufacture, by which ſuch a number of people might be ſuppoſed to be able to acquire a ſubſiſtence. The Duke of Gordon leaves them at full liberty, each to purſue the occupation moſt agreeable to them. No monopolies are eſtabliſhed here; no reſtraints upon the induſtry of the community. All of them ſell whiſky, and all of them drink it. When diſengaged from this buſineſs, the women ſpin yarn, kiſs their inamoratos, or dance to the diſcordant ſounds of an old fiddle. The men, when not participating in the amuſements of the women, ſell ſmall articles of merchandiſe, or let themſelves occaſionally for days labour, and by theſe means earn a ſcanty ſubſiſtence for themſelves and families. In moulding human nature, the effects of habit are wonderful. This village, to them, has more than the charms of a Theſſalian Tempe. Abſent from it, they are ſeized with the mal de pais; and never did a Laplander long more ardently for his ſnow-clad mountains, than they ſicken to reviſit the barren moor of their turf-thatched hovels. Here the Roman Catholic prieſt has got an elegant meeting-houſe, and the Proteſtant clergyman, the reverſe of it; yet, to an expiring mode of worſhip, it would be illiberal to envy this tranſient ſuperiority, in a country where a ſucceſſion of ages has witneſſed its abſurdities. A ſchool is ſtationed at this village, attended by 40 or 50 little recreants, all promiſing to be very like their parents *.

Antiquities,

* In perſonal reſpect and fortune, at the head of the inhabitants, muſt be ranked, Mrs. M'Kenzie, of the beſt inn, at the ſign of the horns. This heroine began her career of celebrity, in the accommodating diſpoſition of an eaſy virtue, at the age of 14, in the year 1745. That year ſaw her in a regiment in Flanders, careſſing and careſſed. Superior to the little prejudices of her ſex, ſhe relinquiſhed the firſt object of her affection, and attached herſelf to a noble perſonage high in the military department. After a campaign or two ſpent in acquiring a knowledge of man, and the world, Scotland ſaw her again; but wearied

Antiquities, Eminent Men, &c.—No croſſes, no obeliſks, no remains of antiquity have been hitherto diſcovered in this pariſh. That it was ever viſited by the Romans, is not probable. In that expedition, in which Severus loſt 50,000 men, as recorded by the abbreviator of Dio Caſſius, no veſtige exiſts that any part of his army purſued their rout through the mountains and defiles of Strath-ath-fhin: no marks of encampments are to be ſeen; there is no tradition, that either Roman urns, or Roman coins have been ever diſcovered. In the year 1715, a ſmall fort was erected in the ſouthern extremity, but ſoon after, it was abandoned, and now lies in ruins *.

wearied of the inactivity of rural retirement, ſhe then married, and made her huſband enliſt in the Royal Highlanders, at the commencement of the war in 1756. With him ſhe navigated the Atlantic, and ſallied forth on American ground in queſt of adventures, equally prepared to meet her friends, or encounter her enemies, in the fields of Venus or Mars, as occaſion offered. At the concluſion of that war, ſhe reviſited her native country. After a variety of viciſſitudes in Germany, France, Holland, England, Ireland, Scotland, America, and the Weſt Indies, her anchor is now moored on dry land in the village of Tammtoul. It might be imagined, that ſuch extremes of climate, ſuch diſcordant modes of living, ſuch aſcents and declivities, ſo many rugged paths, ſo many ſevere bruiſes, as ſhe muſt have experienced in her progreſs through life, would have impaired her health, eſpecially when it is conſidered, that ſhe added 24 children to the aggregate of general births, beſides ſome homunculi that ſtopped ſhort in their paſſage. Wonderful, however, as it may appear, at this moment ſhe is as fit for her uſual active life as ever; and except 2 or 3 grey hairs vegetating from a mole upon one of her cheeks, that formerly ſet off a high ruddy complexion, ſhe ſtill retains all the apparent freſhneſs and vigour of youth.

* The great road that paſſes through the country, to facilitate the march of the troops between Perth and Fort-George, was not made till the year 1754: and now the ſtages are ſo bad, that few travel it. The roads here, in general, are wretched beyond deſcription; and yet the people, in terms of the ſtatute, are annually called out to work at them. This only can be imputed to their indolence, their want of the neceſſary implements, and the ignorance, or indifference

As far as tradition can be depended upon, no battle, nor ſkirmiſh of conſequence, ever happened in this country. The only one mentioned, was fought between Macdonald of the Iſles, and an Alexander Stewart, chief of that name. The former, with the greateſt part of his men, was killed, and from the carnage of that day, the place is ſtill called Blar nan Mairbh, the moſs or field of the dead *.

If any perſons of eminence were ever born in this diſtrict, time has ſwept them from its annals. But, if ſuch there have been, Mr. George Gordon of Foddaletter, is juſtly entitled to be ranked in the number. This gentleman's abilities roſe beyond that mediocrity, which ſometimes acquires celebrity without the poſſeſſion of merit. As a chymiſt and botaniſt, his knowledge was conſiderable; and this knowledge he applied to the extenſion of the uſeful arts. At an early period of life, he diſcovered, that by a certain preparation, the excreſcence of the ſtones and rocks of the mountains, forms a beautiful

difference of the perſons appointed to ſuperintend them. No good roads can be expected according to the preſent mode of management. To effect this, a commutation is abſolutely neceſſary. On the river Ath-fhin, there is a bridge, where it is croſſed by the great road. Two other bridges, one at Delvoran, and one at Delnacairn, a little E. of the kirk, would prove eſſentially uſeful, as they would facilitate the water-courſe, which at preſent is frequently interrupted, and render the communication ſafe and commodious. Another upon Ailnac at Delnabo, and one upon Conlaſs at Ruthven, would alſo be very neceſſary.

* Caſual rencounters have frequently happened. Manſlaughter, murder, and robbery, at a period not very remote, form a diſtinguiſhing feature in the character of the Highlanders. But from the detail of ſuch ſcenes of barbarity, the human mind turns away with horror. One inſtance, however, it may not be improper to mention: In the year 1575, ſoon after the eſtabliſhment of the Reformation in Scotland, a prieſt who had refuſed to marry the uncle to the niece, was ſeized by the ruffian and his party, laid upon a faggot, bound to a ſtone, and in this manner burnt to death. The remembrance of this atrocious deed is ſtill preſerved in the name of the ſtone, which to this day, is called Clach-an-ſhagairt, or the Prieſt's ſtone.

beautiful purple dye. It is called in the Gaelic, crottal, from crot, a bunch, and eil, a rock. He erected a manufacture of it at Leith. At that place, in 1765, the inventor died, much regretted; while his mind was teeming with various and original projects for the improvement of his country *.

* As a contraft to the above gentleman, may be mentioned James an Tuim, or James of the Hill. His real name was Grant, and the nephew of Grant of Carron, a gentleman of property. While a very young man, he committed manflaughter at Elgin. Being rigorouſly proſecuted, he betook himſelf to the hills and woods of this country for ſhelter. From that wandering kind of life to which neceſſity had reduced him, he ſoon became noted for addreſs, ſtratagem, activity, and thoſe talents that are the reſult of the ſchool of adverſity. In conſequence of the ſucceſs attending ſome of his ſolitary adventures, a band of deſperadoes belonging to this parish, attached themſelves to his fortunes; under his conduct, they became the terror of the ſurrounding countries, till at length embracing a wider range, their lawleſs depredations drew the attention of the parliament of Scotland. A conſiderable reward was offered for apprehending him. A gentleman of the name of Macintoſh undertook the atchievement By corrupting the landlord of an inn, which James an Tuim frequented, he expected to accompliſh his purpoſe; but an hour or two before the time concerted for the perfidy, ſuch was the intelligence of the freebooter, that he came with his party to the houſe, forced away the landlord, and hung him to an apple-tree, that marked the march of the contiguous pariſh. There is a letter ſtill extant at Caſtle-Grant, written by the Privy Council, thanking the laird of that name for having apprehended him. Impriſoned in the caſtle of Edinburgh, his wonted preſence of mind did not deſert him.. His wife came to viſit him in his confinement, and brought a kit full of ropes with her, covering the ſurface with butter. By the aid of this machinery, James an Tuim made his eſcape. He went over to Ireland, where having killed one of the moſt formidable freebooters of that country, Lord Antrim, as a reward, procured him a pardon from the Crown; and having returned to this country, he died a natural death. Such frequently is the exit of the profligate, as well as the virtuous, with reſpect to this world. A ſtanza is ſtill recited in this country, deſcriptive of his character, according to the ſtandard of excellence that prevailed at the time.

'Ta mo ghradh 's thar gach duinne
Air Sheimas an Tuim',

Ruidh

Stature, &c.—Many have aſſerted, that in ſize and ſtature, the people of modern times, have decreaſed conſiderably from that of their anceſtors. The calculations of a Mr. Hennan of the French Academy, upon this ſubject, are curious and eccentric. This gentleman aſſerts, that Adam meaſured 123 feet, and Eve 118. To what diminutive dwarfs is the preſent generation dwindled down, in compariſon of theſe venerable prototypes of the human race. If this account were true, the fable of Tithonus ſhould have been realized long ago; and before this period, we muſt have been reduced to a ſize leſs than that of the graſs-hopper. But laying aſide the chimeras of conjecture, every old man in this diſtrict can recollect the time when many of the inhabitants were ſtronger, bigger, and more robuſt than at preſent *. In this and the ſurrounding countries, the mean ſize may be about 5 feet 7 inches.

Ruidh tu, leumè thu, 's dhanſadh tu cruinn;
'S chuireadh tu treun-fhir, a bhar am buinn,
'S cha d' fhailnich riamh d mhiſnach, do
Thappa', na d' luim.

"Above all others, James of the Hill is the object of my affection, expert in running, in leaping, and dancing, and in overcoming the brave in wreſtling. Thou art the object of my ſecret affection." Such accompliſhments, under the direction of an enlightened reaſon, might have converted the freebooter into a hero.

* Some little difference may be accounted for, from the operation of natural cauſes. When the ſeaſons were more favourable, the population leſs crowded, when neither a heavy taxation, augmented rents, nor conſtant labour cruſhed the body, nor enfeebled the mind; there is no abſurdity in ſuppoſing, that in ſuch circumſtances, men might have attained to a fuller growth and developement of ſtature. The tree planted in a kindly ſoil, ſtrikes a ſtronger root, and ſpreads more verdant branches, than that of the deſert, ſtinted in its vegetable nutriment, and aſſailed by the blaſts from the N. And it is remarkable, that in that rank of ſociety, that is, neither on the one hand, oppreſſed by poverty, nor on the other, pampered with luxury, the ſymmetry of the human form, is the moſt beautiful and perfect.

inches. There are 3 individuals in this pariiſh above 6 feet; 13, 5 feet 10 inches; and ſome of them 5 feet 11 inches; there are many who meaſure 5 feet 8 inches in height.

Means of Improvement.—From the geographical view of this country, it will occur to the attentive obſerver, that the condition of the inhabitants appears to admit of little melioration. For the improvements of agriculture and manufactures, the country is ill calculated. Till the country be encloſed, artificial graſs cannot be raiſed; and encloſures would be attended with an expenſe diſproportionate to their circumſtances, as the farms are broken and diſcontiguous; beſides, that to ſucceed in this branch of huſbandry, they would be obliged to diſpenſe with ſheep, at preſent their ſtaple commodity. Upon the ſuppoſition that ſuch a change ſhould happen, as the people are far from the market, graſs would become a drug upon their hands; and to ſubſtitute it in place of ſtraw for provender, would not indemnify them for the expenſe. Such reaſoning may be fallacious, but it is their own, and hitherto has determined them to follow the practice of their anceſtors, to which they have invariably adhered, except in the articles of turnips and potatoes. Of theſe, they raiſe a conſiderable quantity, what may be equal to two months of the annual conſumption of the whole inhabitants.

Manufactures.—In this pariſh, there are 4 mills; the multures of theſe together, will ſcarce amount to 80 bolls of meal, and this quantity multiplied by 32, the proportion paid to each, will make the whole quantity of victual raiſed in the country 2560 bolls. When this number is divided by 1276 individuals, it will be found, that each will have little more to live upon, during the year, than 2 bolls of meal; beſides,

ſides, that from the whole quantity of victual, as mentioned above, foreign beggars ſubtract, at a moderate calculation, 60 bolls. No manufactures of any kind have as yet been eſtabliſhed in this country; and the preſumption is, that a conſiderable time muſt elapſe before ſuch an event can happen *.

Learned Profeſſions.—All retainers to the law, except one ſheriff-officer and three conſtables, if they can be claſſed among that ſpecies of men, feel this country rather cold for their reſidence. Never was the ſolemn brow of a Juſtice of Peace ſeen in the pariſh of Kirkmichael, before laſt autumn. At that time, two gentlemen, natives, were inſtalled in the office. Nor is there any danger like the poor ſhoemaker and tailor, that they will not find ſufficient employment. A ſpirit of litigation, during many years ago, has prevailed among the people. Unfortunately for them, this ſpirit was originally imported by ſtrangers, perſons whom the courteſy of the country dignified with the name of gentlemen, but as much entitled

* Precluded from an eaſy communication with the countries around, living in the midſt of hills and ſcattered defiles, at the diſtance of 40 meaſured miles from the neareſt ſea-port, the ſituation of the people is very unfavourable for ſuch an attempt; beſides that, they have few materials to work upon. Their cattle and ſheep, the ſtaple commodities, are driven to the S., and ſold there, and their wool raw and unwrought, to the low countries of Banff and Morayſhires. Even ſhould that ſpirit of enterpriſe rouſe them, it could not be of long duration. The difficulty of getting fuel where the centre of the country lies far from moſſes, the dearneſs of proviſions where the land ſeldom produces a ſufficiency to ſupport its inhabitants, would dampen their efforts, as they would ſoon experience the manifeſt advantage of others over them, in the competition of the diſtant market. Before the year 1745, that æra of innovation in the Highlands, every one almoſt in this country, like the famous Cruſoe, was his own artiſan. No later than laſt ſummer, a ſhoemaker from Edinburgh, and a tailor from Dundee, were obliged to deſert the country for want of employment. Where there are almoſt no handicraftſmen, there can be no apprentices. In a country ſo remote from that element, there can be no ſeamen.

entitled to that character as a Ruſſian bear. Now, at 2 annual fairs held at the village of Tammtoul, one may ſee the law-fed vampers walking in conſequential ſtate, attended by their clients, while words ſweet as honey from their lips diſtil. But this honey, in the iſſue, never fails to change into gall, to ſome one or other of the contending parties *. Medical gentlemen are ſeldom called to this country. Mountain air, and conſtant exerciſe, render their aid, for the moſt part, unneceſſary; beſides that, the people can ill afford to pay doctors and retainers of the law at the ſame time.

Animals.—The domeſticated animals here, have no peculiarity to diſtinguiſh them from ſuch as may be met with almoſt in every other part of the Highlands. Theſe have been deſcribed already. The wild ones are deer, foxes, badgers, polecats, otters, and hares. In former times the ravenous wolf †, and the bounding chamois, were numerous in the Grampian mountains ‡. As a proof of this, it may not be unacceptable

* The gentlemen of the law may be offended at the ſuggeſtion, but it is much to be deſired, that proprietors would interpoſe their authority, by appointing ſenſible and impartial men to decide upon the differences ariſing among their people. Such, or the like expedient, might preſerve induſtrious families from ruin, and the unwary parents, from the dangerous impoſition of pettyfoggers.

† The laſt ſaid to be killed in this country, was about 150 years ago; yet it is probable that wolves were in Scotland for ſome time after that period, as the laſt killed in Ireland was in 1709.

‡ It has been already mentioned, that the Grampian mountains bound this pariſh toward the W. From this country they ſtretch in a continued range, almoſt without interruption to the Corran of Ard-gothar, where Inverneſsſhire is divided from Argyllſhire, by an arm of the Diu-caledonian ſea. Diu-caledonian is derived from Tail, a body of water, and Cael-doine, the Celtic men. This word the Romans inflected into Caledonia. Mr. Whitaker of Mancheſter, ſays, that diu ſignifies water. In the Caledonian dialect of the Celtic, at preſent, ſuch a word ſignifying water, is not known; yet, ſuch a word may be ſuppoſed

unacceptable to the curious reader, to subjoin a passage from "Barclay de Regno, et Regali potestate," describing a singular kind of hunting feast, with which the Earl of Atholl entertained Mary Queen of Scots *.

In

posed to have existed formerly, as it may still be traced in the name of some rivers. The Caledonian sea, according to the Alexandrian geographer, extended from the Mull of Galloway to Faro Head. Αρκτικης, says he, πλευρας περιγραφης υπερκειται Ωκεανος καλουμενος Δυηκαληδονιος.

* "Anno," says he, "1563, Comes Atholiæ ex regio sanguine princeps, venationem ingenti apparatu et magnis sumptibus, optimæ atque illustrissimæ reginæ Scotiæ exhibuit, cui ego tunc adolescens interfeci. Cujusmodi venationem regiam nostrales appellare solent. Habebat autem comes ad duo millia Scotorum montanorum, quos vos hic Scotos sylvestres appellatis, quibus negotium dedit ut cervos cogerent ex sylvis et montibus Atholiæ, Badenachæ, Marriæ, Moraviæ, aliisque vicinis regionibus; atque ad locum agerent venationi destinatum. Illi vero, ut sunt valde pernices et expediti, ita dies noctesque concursarunt, ut intra bimensis tempus amplius 2000 cervorum, cum damis et capreis unum in locum compulerint: quos reginæ, principibusque in valle considentibus, et cæteris qui una aderant omnibus visendos venandosque proposuerint. Sed ita mihi crede, omnes illi cervi, velut agmine composito incedebant. Hæret enim, hærebitque semper id animo spectaculum meo, ut ducem unum et rectorem cerneres præeuntem, quem alii quoquo iret subsequebantur. Is autem, cervus erat forma præstanti et cornibus, ingens qua ex re non mediocrem animo cepit voluptatem; cepit mox et timorem, ubi ad eam Atholius, qui talibus a pueritia venationibus assueverat, vides inquit ducem illum cornigerum, qui turmam præit? periculum nobis ab illo est. Si enim aliquis eum furor, timorve ab isto montis dorso in hanc planitiem compulerit nostrum sibi quisque prospiciat: nemo certe ab injuria tutus erit: quandoquidem cæteri eum sequentur confertim, et viam, sibi ad hunc, qui a tergo est montem nobis proculcatis statim aperient. Cujus sententiæ veritatem alius illico eventus patefecit. Laxatus enim reginæ jussu atque immissus in lupum insignis admodum atque ferox canis fugientem insequitur, ita cervum illum ductorem exterruit, ut retro unde venerat fugam capesseret: cunctique cum eo regressi eruperunt ea parte, qua montanorum corona arctissimè cingebantur, ipsis vero montanis nihil spei, nihil perfugii reliquum fuit, nisi ut strati in erica pronos se proculcari, aut prætermi paterentur; quorum nonnullos cervi transiliendo vulnerarunt, alterum quoque aut tertium peremerunt, ut statim reginæ nunciatum fuit. Et vero ita glomerati evasissent omnes, ni homines illi venatus peritissimi ipsos è vestigio secuti

arte

In theſe mountains, it is aſſerted by the country people, that there is a ſmall quadruped which they call ſamh. In ſummer mornings it iſſues from its lurking places, emitting a kind of glutinous matter fatal to horſes, if they happen to eat of the graſs upon which it has been depoſited. It is ſomewhat larger than a mole, of a browniſh colour, with a large head diſproportionate to its body. From this deformed appearance, and its noxious quality, the word ſeems to have been transferred to denote a monſter, a cruel miſchievous perſon, who, in the Gaelic language, is uſually called a famhfhear. Other quadrupeds once indigenous to the Grampian mountains are now extinct, and now known only by name; ſuch as the Torc-neimh, or wild boar *, an lon, or the biſon. Lizards, and ſerpents, may be frequently met with, and, of the latter, different ſpecieſes, ſome of them ſtriped and variegated, others black and hairy. It is a curious fact, that goats eat ſerpents, without any prejudice from their bite. Hence, it has paſſed into a proverb, cleas na gaoithr githeadh na nathrach, "like the goat eating the ſerpent," importing a querulous temper in the midſt of plenty. Incredible as this fact may appear, it may not be improbable. Goats are animals that feed much upon plants and herbs; and upon the ſuppoſition that the bite of ſerpents were more poiſonous than what they are known to be in our northern latitudes; yet, by an inſtinct of nature, goats might be led to have re-

arte quadam extremos ab ipſo agmine diſtraxiſſent, qui mox reginæ et nobilium canibus in prædam ceſſere. Confecti autem eo die fuerunt circiter 360 cum 5 lupis et capreis aliquot."

* It has been aſſerted by ſome antiquaries, that the bear was never a native of Scotland. It is a fact, however, well vouched, that during the reſidence of the Romans in Britain, bears were ſent from it to Rome and baited there. In an ancient Gaelic Poem aſcribed to Oſſian, the hero Dermid is ſaid to have been killed by a bear on Beinn Ghielleinn in Perthſhire.

courſe to ſuch plants and herbs as are an antidote againſt their bite *.

Wood,

* In confirmation of this ſuppoſition, there is a pleaſant little ſtory told in elegant Latinity, by Vanier the Jeſuit. It will not perhaps be altogether a digreſſion to cite the verſes.

Muſtela didicit quondam monſtrante colonus
Tabificos, quid ruta valet ſerpentis ad ictus,
Illa reluctantem cum forte laceſſeret anguem;
Infectis quoties membris lethale venenum
Hauſerat, ad rutam fugiens, tactuque ſalubri
Occulte medicans, non ſegnior ibat in hoſtem,
Ruſticus excelſo rem demiratus ab agro,
Avulſis, quæ ſola fuit, radicibus herbam
Abſtulit; exanimis cadit heu! muſtela veneno
Turgida nam toto rutam dum quæritat agro,
Intima corda ſubit, jam non medicabile virus.

After this caſual manner, many of the medicaments of modern pharmacy, have been originally diſcovered.

There is alſo a ſmall kind of reptile called bratag, covered with a downy hair, alternately ſpotted into black and white; if cattle happen to eat it, they generally ſwell, and ſometimes die. It has the ſame effect upon ſheep. The birds in this pariſh are of the ſame genus and ſpecies with thoſe of the neighbouring countries; ſuch as muorfowl, partridges, wild duck, crows, magpies wood pigeons, hawks, kites, owls, herons, ſnipes, king's fiſher, ſwallows, ſparrows, blackbird, and thruſh. In the higher hills, are ptarmegans. In the ſteep and abrupt rocks of Glenavon, the eagle builds its eyry; and during the latter end of ſpring, and beginning of ſummer, is very deſtructive to kids, lambs, and fawns. Some of the more adventurous ſhepherds, watching them at this ſeaſon of depredation, frequently ſcale the rugged rocks, where they neſtle, and ſhare with their young in the ſpoil. Till of late years that his ſequeſtered haunts have been diſturbed by the intruſion of more numerous flocks of ſheep, the black cock, or gallus Scoticanus, was wont to hail the dawn of the vernal morning amidſt the heaths of this country. If, like the feathered tribe in Æſop, this fine bird could articulate, he might complain with the Poet, "Nos patriam fugimus, et dulcia linquimus arva." Now he has fled to Strathſpey, where the numerous and extenſive woods afford him a ſecure retreat. The black cock is well deſcribed by Leſlie, in his Hiſtory of Scotland. "Alia avis," ſays he, "eſt etiam in his regionibus numeroſa, ſuperiore minor [the capercoille]

Wood, Shrubs, Herbs, &c.—At a period perhaps not very remote, this country was covered with wood. In the hills and moſſes by which it is bordered, fir-root is found in ſuch abundance, that it ſupplies the inhabitants with a warm and luminous light during the tedious nights of winter. Frequently large trunks of the fir are found at a conſiderable depth below the ſurface. Occupied in this employment, many of the poorer people drive the root to the low country, from which they bring meal, iron, ſalt, and other articles in exchange; and by this mode of induſtry, earn a precarious ſubſiſtence for themſelves and families during the ſummer ſeaſons. No fir-wood, however, at preſent exiſts, except a few ſcattered trees in the ſouthern extremity, upon the banks of the Avon. The only woods to be ſeen, are birch and alder, and theſe covering but a ſmall extent of ground. Till of late, groves of alder, in which were trees of pretty large dimenſions, grew, in ſeveral places along the banks of the river, but now they are almoſt cut down, and will ſoon be totally conſumed. Theſe, with a little hazel, thorns, haw-thorns, holly, willows, and mountain-aſh, are the only ſpecies of wood that ſtill remain. Indigenous ſhrubs of different kinds grow wild in the hills, that carry fruit, ſuch as wild ſtraw-

 berries,

coille] hirſutis pedibus, palpebris rubricantibus; noſtri gallum nigrum teſquorum appellitant." The caper-coille, once a native here, is now totally extinct, and known only by name. He continued in Strathſpey till the year 1745. The laſt ſeen in Scotland, was in the woods of Strathglas, about 32 years ago.

If the ſwallow may be excepted, the cuckoo and lapwing, "tiring its echoes with unvaried cries," are the only migratory birds that pay their annual viſits to this country; and after a ſhort ſtay, wing their flight to more genial climates. The former ſeldom appears before the beginning of May, and often its arrival is announced by cold blaſts from the N., and ſhowers of ſnow, which are conſidered as an auſpicious omen of the approaching ſummer. This temporary rigour of the weather is called by the people, glas-ſhiontachd na cuach, or the heavy ſtorm of the cuckoo.

berries, two kinds of black berries, and two of red berries. In the beginning of harveſt, when theſe fruits are ripe, they are ſought for with avidity by the poorer children, to whom, during the ſeaſon of their maturity, they ſupply a portion of food. It is probable, that formerly, if at any time the labours of the chaſe proved unſucceſsful, even the men and women of ancient Caledonia allayed their hunger by theſe ſpontaneous productions of nature. Dio Caſſius expreſsly aſſerts, that our anceſtors made uſe of a vegetable preparation, by which they repreſſed, for a time, that importunate appetite. Cæſar ſeems to allude to it in his deſcription of the Chara. The ſoft inflected Chara of the Roman, evidently points to the Còr of the Caledonians. Cor ſignifies excellent, ſuperominent, a very expreſſive and appropriate name, if it ſupplied the place of food. It grows a little below the ſurface of the ground, and ſpreads laterally into ſeveral ramifications, carrying larger or ſmaller knobs according to the ſoil, and at irregular diſtances. In ſpring it protrudes a ſmall greeniſh ſtalk, and in ſummer bears a beautiful flower, which changing into pods, contains ſeed, when the root becomes inſipid and loſes its virtue. The country people, even at preſent, are wont to ſteep it among water, where having continued for ſome days, it becomes a pleaſant and nutritive drink. Till of late that the little wood of the kind has been better preſerved, the inhabitants uſed in the month of March to extract a liquid from the birch, called * fion-na-uiſg, a bheatha, which they conſidered as very ſalubrious and conducive to longevity. By an eaſy metaphor, the name has been transferred to denominate that well known ſpirit diſtilled from malt; but a ſpirit of different effects in its conſequence.

It

* The wine or water of the birch, or the water of life, in alluſion to its ſalubrity.

It may not perhaps be improper to obſerve, that a tradition prevails among the Highlanders, that together with theſe, the Picts were acquainted with the art of extracting a delicious beverage from heath, and of an intoxicating quality. Except to make a yellow dye, the uſes of this ſhrub at preſent, are unknown. But there is a probability, that in Auguſt, when it carries a beautiful purple bloom, if it were cropped in ſufficient quantities, what is now conſidered as a fiction, might, by proper ſkill, be realized; for, at that ſeaſon, it emits fragrant and honied effluvia *.

Language.

* The writer of this ſtatiſtical article is not ſo well acquainted with the ſcience of botany, as to be able to enumerate the various plants and herbs that grow in this diſtrict. He believes few uncommon ones are to be met with, unleſs among the Grampian mountains, which might afford a rich field of obſervation to the naturaliſt. The plant called an dubh-chuſach, black footed, or maiden hair, is frequently gathered among the woods and rocks, and uſed as a tea in aſthmatic complaints. Another plant grows in ſeveral parts of the pariſh, and riſes on a ſtalk near 2 feet in height. It ſpreads into ſmall branches, with ſharp-pointed leaves of a pale green, and bears a pretty large berry, red at firſt, but changing into a livid hue as it ripens. Perhaps it may be the ſolanum ſomniferum of the hiſtorian Buchanan, by the aid of which, infuſed in the drink, and mixed with the meat preſented by King Duncan to the Danes, he and his generals gained a deciſive victory over that barbarous people. This berry is ſtill conſidered as poiſonous by the country people, and they cautiouſly abſtain from it.

Modern ſcepticiſm rejects the above paſſage of the hiſtory, and conſiders it as fictitious; but in ancient times when the wants of the inhabitants were few, gratified from the ſpontaneous productions of the field, or the beaſts of the foreſt; as they lived almoſt conſtantly in the open air, climbing rugged mountains, or plunging into woody dales; they muſt neceſſarily acquire a conſiderable knowledge of plants and herbs, together with their various and ſpecific qualities: beſides that agriculture being in a rude ſtate, and many of the preſent domeſticated animals unknown, owing to theſe cauſes, the vegetable race would arrive at a higher degree of perfection, and their virtues would conſequently operate with more energy and effect. In the liſt of plants, muſt be reckoned the ſeamrog, or the wild trefoil, in great eſtimation of old with the Druids. It is ſtill conſidered as an anodyne in the diſeaſes of cattle: from this circumſtance

Language.—The common idiom of this country, is a dialect of the ancient Celtic, which in remote ages pervaded the ſouthern and weſtern regions of Europe; and together with the Gothic, divided this quarter of the globe into two radical and diſtinct languages. Though the latter, owing to the better fortune of the people who ſpoke it, has prevailed over the former, yet may a conſiderable portion of the roots of ſeveral modern languages be traced to a Celtic original. This, however, is not the place for ſuch diſcuſſions. The dialect ſpoken in this country is growing daily more corrupted, by the admiſſion of Anglicifms, and a number of terms unknown to the ſimple arts of the ancient Highlanders. Such is the folly or bad taſte of the people, that they gratify a prepoſterous vanity from this kind of innovation. It may therefore be well ſuppoſed, that the language is upon the decline; that the harmony of its cadence is gradually changing, and the purity of its ſtructure mixing with foreign idioms. The young people ſpeak Gaelic and Engliſh indifferently, and with equal impropriety. Their uncouth articulation of diſcordant words and jarring ſounds, reſembles the muſick of frogs in a Dutch canal, harſh and diſguſting to the Attic ear of a genuine Highlander. Some of the old people ſpeak the Gaelic, and conſequently with a degree of propriety. On ſubjects of common occurrence, they are at no loſs for expreſſion in well choſen and natural language. Hence, it may be inferred, that the pariſh of Kirkmichael ſpoke the ſame dialect of the Celtic that is now ſpoken in Badenoch, making allowance for ſome little difference, in point of pronunciation.

In

circumſtance it has derived its name. Seimh, in the Gaelic, ſignifying pacifick and ſoothing. When gathered, it is plucked by the left hand. The perſon thus employed, muſt be ſilent, and never look back till the buſineſs be finiſhed.

In terms deſcriptive of the objects of nature and local ſituations; in the names of the ſeaſons of the year, of mountains, lakes, brooks, and rivers, their language is as juſt and appropriate as any in the Highlands of Scotland. There are a few words, however, that would ſeem peculiar to themſelves, but which may be traced to the parent Celtic; ſome words are uſed by them metaphorically and not unappoſitely applied; of the latter are brath, ſignifying in the Druidical mythology, fire, particularly the fire of the univerſal conflagration. Brath is uſed in this country to denote a high degree of vehemence and paſſion. Thanig-brath-air—he was ſeized with rage. When they would expreſs the impoſſibility of performing any thing; they ſay, cha neille linn domh a dheanneamh—no age of mine can perform it. Line in its primitive acceptation, ſignifies a generation, but figuratively that period of time in which a generation becomes extinct. Mànè too, in this country, is uſed to denote good fortune. Ata manè an èiſg air—he has the luck of fiſh. From this word, the manes of the Romans have been originally derived. According to Varro, Manus Deus was a propitious deity with the ancient inhabitants of Latium. Armun is another word in uſe among the people here, eſpecially in their ſongs. They borrowed it from the Hebrid Iſles. It is of Norwegian extraction, and uſed as the appellative for a hero, derived from Arminius the celebrated hero of Germany, mentioned by Tacitus. Præliis, ſays that admirable writer, ambiguus, bello non victus.—caniturque, adhuc barbaras apud gentes. In this country they have ſtill many proverbs, and many of them beautiful, both with reſpect to language and ſentiment. The inſertion, however, of one of theſe, at preſent, may be ſufficient. Eiſd, ſay they, ri gaoth non gleann, gus an traogh na 'huiſgachaibh—Liſten to the winds of the hills till the waters

waters aſſuage; importing that paſſion ſhould be reſtrained till the voice of reaſon be heard *.

Superſtitions,

* The ſeveral branches of the Celtic now exiſting in Europe, are a venerable monument of antiquity. Independent of the intrinſic excellence, were all the words contained in them digeſted and formed into a dictionary, it might throw conſiderable light upon the hiſtory of a people, whoſe manners, cuſtoms, arts, and ſciences, the revolution of ages has ſnatched from authentic records. Mr. Gibbon in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, obſerves, that there is room for a very intereſting work, to lay open the connexion between the language and the manners of a people. Few languages are better calculated for this purpoſe than the Celtic. Every one acquainted with it, and endued with a taſte to reliſh its beauties, muſt acknowledge its energy and deſcriptive powers. Equally adapted to melt, or to rouſe, it has a ſtyle appropriated to the various paſſions. Inſtead of conveying feeble ideas, it exhibits lively pictures. Sonorous and impreſſive, when the occaſion requires, it penetrates the inmoſt receſſes of the ſoul. When the Greek and Roman languages were in their infancy, the Celtic lent them its aid; for, many words of the two former are obviouſly derived from the latter. In a period then of ſuch enterpriſe and improvement as the preſent, when philoſophic curioſity explores the remoteſt corners of the globe, to enlarge the circle of human knowledge, it is ſomewhat extraordinary, that a language ſo ancient, and once ſo widely diffuſed, ſhould be conſigned to its fate, without one public effort to preſerve its relicks and tranſmit them to poſterity. To accompliſh ſuch a deſirable object, would not be unworthy of the patronage of the Highland Society of London. As that reſpectable body conſiſts of noblemen and gentlemen of independent fortunes, a ſmall ſhare of the ſuperfluity of their affluence, might be ſucceſsfully employed to arreſt what ſtill remains of the Celtic, and retrieve it from oblivion. Several attempts of this kind have been made, but they have been partial and imperfect. There is ſtill wanting a work to embrace the whole, and which cannot be accompliſhed without the patronage and munificence of the great. If the Empreſs of Ruſſia has ſent learned men to collect and explain the jargons ſpoken by the various tribes of barbarians inhabiting the inhoſpitable Caucaſus, ſhould not ſuch a liberal example engage the attention, and excite the imitation of a more refined and civilized people? A dictionary of the Gaelic is now in contemplation in Argyllſhire, and the letters of its alphabet are divided among an equal number of clergymen; but as theſe gentlemen are confined to a particular county, and conſider their own as the ſtandard dialect of the Highlands, they make little inquiry concerning the modes of ſpeech that prevail in other countries; conſequently many pure and genuine Celtic words muſt

Superſtitions, Ghoſts, Fairies, Genii, &c.—In a ſtatiſtical account, even the weakneſſes of the human mind may afford ſome little entertainment. That fear and ignorance incident to a rude ſtate, have always been productive of opinions, rites, and obſervances which enlightened reaſon diſclaims. But among the vulgar, who have not an opportunity of cultivating this faculty, old prejudices endeared to them by the creed of their anceſtors, will long continue to maintain their influence. It may therefore be eaſily imagined, that this country has its due proportion of that ſuperſtition which generally prevails over the Highlands. Unable to account for the cauſe, they conſider the effects of times and ſeaſons, as certain and infallible. The moon in her increaſe, full growth, and in her wane, are with them the emblems of a riſing, flouriſhing, and declining fortune. At the laſt period of her revolution, they carefully avoid to engage in any buſineſs of importance; but the firſt and the middle they ſeize with avidity, preſaging the moſt auſpicious iſſue to their undertakings. Poor Martinus Scriblerus never more anxiouſly watched the blowing of the weſt wind to ſecure an heir to his genius, than the love-ſick ſwain and his nymph for the coming of the new moon to be nooſed together in matrimony. Should the planet happen to be at the height of her ſplendour when the ceremony is performed, their future life will be a ſcene of feſtivity, and all its paths ſtrewed over with roſe-buds of delight. But when her tapering horns are turned towards the N., paſſion becomes froſt-bound, and ſeldom thaws till the genial ſeaſon again approaches. From the moon, they

muſt eſcape their reſearches, and be loſt to the language; for this reaſon it would be neceſſary that every corner of the Highlands ſhould be ranſacked, and the words peculiar to each, collected and explained. It may further be obſerved, that the Celtic philologiſt ſhould be well ſkilled in the Latin and Greek languages, and perhaps in thoſe of France and Italy.

not only draw prognoſtications of the weather, but according to their creed, alſo diſcover future events. There they are dimly pourtrayed, and ingenious illuſion never fails in the explanation. The veneration paid to this planet, and the opinion of its influences, are obvious from the meaning ſtill affixed to ſome words of the Gaelic language. In Druidic mythology, when the circle of the moon was complete, fortune then promiſed to be the moſt propitious. Agreeably to this idea, rath, which ſignifies in Gaelic, a wheel or circle, is transferred to ſignify fortune. They ſay, "ata rath air," he is fortunate. The wane, when the circle is diminiſhing, and conſequently unlucky, they call mi-rath. Of one that is unfortunate, they ſay, "ata mi-rath air." Deas uil, and Tuath uil, are ſynonimous expreſſions, alluſive to a circular movement obſerved in the Druidic worſhip.

Nor is it to the moon alone that they direct their regards; almoſt every ſeaſon of the year claims a ſhare of their ſuperſtition: Saimh-theine, or Hallow Eve; Beil-teine, or the firſt day of May; and Oidhch' Choille, or the firſt night of January. The rites obſerved at Saimh-theine, and Beil-teine, are well known, and need not be deſcribed. But on the firſt night of January, they obſerve, with anxious attention, the diſpoſition of the atmoſphere. As it is calm or boiſterous; as the wind blows from the S. or the N.; from the E. or the W., they prognoſticate the nature of the weather, till the concluſion of the year. The firſt night of the New Year, when the wind blows from the W., they call dàr-na coille, the night of the fecundation of the trees; and from this circumſtance has been derived the name of that night in the Gaelic * language.

* The opinion of the genial and fertilizing nature of the weſt wind, ſo prevalent in many countries of the Highlands, is one of thoſe opinions that ſeem to have deſcended to them from the Druids. Virgil who was born in the Ciſalpine

guage. Their faith in the above ſigns, is couched in the following verſes:

Gaoth a deas, teas is torradh,
Gaoth a niar, iaſg is bainne,
Gaoth a tuath, fuachd is gailinn,
Gaoth a near, meas air chrannaibh.

"The wind of the S. will be productive of heat and fertility; the wind of the W. of milk and fiſh; the wind from the N. of cold and ſtorm; the wind from the E. of fruit on the trees."

The appearance of the firſt three days of winter is alſo obſerved:

Dorach doirauta' dubh,
Chead tri la do'n gheamthra;
Ge be bheire geil dhe'n chroi,
Cha tugainn 's e gu ſamthra.

 "Dark,

alpine Gaul, and from his ſituation had an opportunity of being well acquainted with the doctrines of that order, has adorned his poetry with ſeveral beautiful alluſions borrowed from their philoſophic ſyſtem. It was the impreſſion of the ſame belief with them, of the impregnating power of the air, that influenced his fancy in that fine paſſage in the Georgicks.

Tum Pater Omnipotens fœcundis imbribus Æther
Conjugis in græmium lætæ deſcendit, et omnes
Magnus alit, magno commixtus corpore fœtus.

In a ſimilar ſtrain of belief, he wrote that paſſage in the Third Georgick, where he deſcribes the effects of the weſt wind in a latitude bordering upon the marvellous.

——————————————— illæ
Ore omnes verſæ in zephyrum, ſtant rupibus altis,
Exceptantque leves auras: et ſæpe ſine ullis
Conjugiis, vento gravidæ———————

" Dark, lurid, and ſtormy, the firſt three days of winter; whoever would deſpair of the cattle, I would not till ſummer."

The ſuperſtitious regard paid to particular times and ſeaſons, is not more prevalent in this country, than the belief in the exiſtence of ghoſts. On the ſequeſtered hill, and in the darkſome valley, frequently does the benighted traveller behold the viſionary ſemblance of his departed friend, perhaps of his enemy. The former addreſſes him in the language of affection; if danger is approaching, he is warned to prepare againſt it, or the means of avoiding it diſcloſed. By the latter, he is attacked with the vehemence of reſentment. The inhabitants of this, and the viſitant from the other world, engage in furious combat. For a while, the victory is in ſuſpenſe. At length the ghoſt is overthrown, and his violence appeaſed: a few traits of his life upon earth are deſcribed. If he ſtole a ploughſhare from his neighbour, the place where it lies concealed is pointed out. His antagoniſt is requeſted to reſtore it to the owner; and if he fails, puniſhment is threatened to follow the breach of promiſe; for, till reſtitution be made, ſo long muſt the miſerable culprit be excluded from the regions of the happy *.

Not

* Theſe illuſions of fancy operate ſometimes with ſuch force, that ſeverals have died in conſequence of them; and ſome have been deprived of their reaſon. Fragments of the ſpeeches of ghoſts are frequently recited; and, like the reſponſes of the Grecian oracles, are generally couched in verſe, eſpecially the moſt ancient fragments. Two of theſe it may not perhaps be improper to cite in the original. The one is an apoſtrophe from a beloved wife, to ſoothe the melancholy of a deſponding huſband.

Na bidhea' (ſays ſhe) ro ghaol, 's na bidhea' fuath,
Agad air fuagh innis thrèud;
Na fmuanaigh air na chaidhe bhuait,
'S chuid nach teachaidh bhuait, gun deid.

" Indulge

Not more firmly eſtabliſhed in this country, is the belief in ghoſts, than that in fairies. The legendary records of fancy, tranſmitted from age to age, have aſſigned their manſions to that claſs of genii, in detached hillocks covered with verdure, ſituated on the banks of purling brooks, or ſurrounded by thickets of wood. Theſe hillocks are called ſioth-dhunan, abbreviated ſioth-anan, from ſioth, peace, and dun, a mound. They derive this name from the practice of the Druids, who were wont occaſionally to retire to green eminences to adminiſter juſtice, eſtabliſh peace, and compoſe differences between contending parties. As that venerable order taught a Saoghl hal, or world beyond the preſent, their followers, when they were no more, fondly imagined, that ſeats, where they exerciſed a virtue ſo beneficial to mankind, were ſtill inhabited by them in their diſembodied ſtate. In the autumnal ſeaſon, when the moon ſhines from a ſerene ſky, often is the wayfaring traveller arreſted by the muſick of the hills, more melodious than the ſtrains of Orpheus, charming the ſhades, and reſtoring his beloved Eurydice to the regions of light.

> Cantu commotæ Erebi, de ſedibus imis,
> Umbræ ibant tenues.

Often

" Indulge exceſs neither of joy nor grief toward frail mortals; dwell not on the remembrance of the dead; for theſe that now are, muſt ſoon depart."

The other is a ſtanza deſcriptive of the unembodied ſtate, and ſuppoſed to be uttered by a ghoſt, not unlike that of Patroculus in Homer.

> Ψυχη και ειδωλον ατὰρ φρενες ουκ ενι παμπαν

> Bha mi (ſays he) fad an cein an roir,
> B' eatrom 's bu luainach mo chèim;
> 'N duradan 'n gath na grèine,
> Cha neille connam fein do neart.

" Far diſtant laſt night, was my journey; light and bounding were my ſteps; unſubſtantial as the atom in the beam of the ſun, is the ſtrength of my form."

Often ſtruck with a more ſolemn ſcene, he beholds the viſionary hunters engaged in the chaſe, and purſuing the deer of the clouds, while the hollow rocks in long-ſounding echoes reverberate their cries.

> Chorus æqualis Dryadum *, clamore ſupremos,
> Implerunt montes †.

The

* If one were allowed to indulge in conjecture, and reaſon from analogy, it might be aſſerted with an appearance of probability, that the dryads and hamadryads of the Romans, were the ſame with the druids and druideſſes of the Celtæ. It is univerſally acknowledged, that the dryads of the Greeks and Romans derive their name from the Greek word δρυς, ſignifying an oak, and druid, in the Celtic, from darach, or deni, to which the ſame meaning is affixed. Hamadryad, is evidently derived, from oi', or oigh, a virgin, always aſperated after the prefix article of the oblique caſe in the Celtic. Notwithſtanding the progreſſive increaſe of knowledge and proportional decay of ſuperſtition in the Highlands, theſe genii are ſtill ſuppoſed by many of the people to exiſt in the woods and ſequeſtered valleys of the mountains, where they frequently appear to the lonely traveller, clothed in green, with diſhevelled hair floating over their ſhoulders, and with faces more blooming than the vermil bluſh of a ſummer morning. At night in particular, when fancy aſſimilates to its own preconceived ideas, every appearance, and every ſound, the wandering enthuſiaſt is frequently entertained by their muſick, more melodious than he ever before heard. It is curious to obſerve, how much this agreeable deluſion correſponds with the ſuperſtitious opinion of the Romans, concerning the ſame claſs of genii, repreſented under different names. The Epicurean Lucretius deſcribes the credulity in the following beautiful verſes:

> Hæc loca capripedes ſatyros, nymphaſque tenere
> Finitimi pingunt, et faunos eſſe loquuntur;
> Quorum noctivago ſtrepitu, ludoque jocanti
> Adfirmant volgo taciturna ſilentia rumpi
> Chordarumque ſonos fieri, dulceiſque querelas
> Tibia quas fundit digitis pulſata canentum:

The fauni are derived from the eubates, or faidhin of the Celtæ. Faidh is a prophet; hence is derived the Roman word fari, to prophecy.

† There are ſeveral now living, who aſſert that they have ſeen and heard this aerial hunting; and that they have been ſuddenly ſurrounded by viſionary forms, more numerous than leaves ſtrewed on the ſtreams of Vallumbroſa in November

The ſame credulity that gives air-formed inhabitants to green hillocks and ſolitary groves, has given their portion of genii to rivers and fountains. The preſiding ſpirit of that element, in Celtic mythology, was called Neithe. The primitive of this word, ſignifies to waſh, or purify with water. In the name of ſome rivers, it is ſtill retained, as in the river Neithe of Abernethy in Strathſpey. To this day, fountains are regarded with particular veneration over every part of the Highlands. The ſick who reſort to them for health, addreſs their vows to the preſiding powers, and offer preſents to conciliate their favour. Theſe preſents generally conſiſt of a ſmall piece of money, or a few fragrant flowers. The ſame reverence, in ancient times, ſeems to have been entertained for fountains by every people in Europe. The Romans who extended their worſhip to almoſt every object in nature, did not forget in their ritual, the homage due to fountains. It is to this, Horace alludes in his addreſs to his limpid fountain of Blanduſia.

O fons Blanduſiæ ſplendidior vitro,
Dulci digne mero, non ſine floribus,
Cras donaberis hædo *.

Near

November blaſts, and aſſailed by a multitude of voices, louder than the noiſe of ruſhing waters.

About 50 years ago, a clergyman in the neighbourhood, whoſe faith was more regulated by the ſcepticiſm of philoſophy, than the credulity of ſuperſtition, could not be prevailed upon to yield his aſſent to the opinion of the times. At length, however, he felt from experience, that he doubted what he ought to have believed. One night as he was returning home, at a late hour, from a preſbytery, he was ſeized by the fairies, and carried aloft into the air. Through fields of æther and fleecy clouds he journied many a mile, deſcrying, like Sancho Panza on his Clavileno, the earth far diſtant below him, and no bigger than a nut-ſhell. Being thus ſufficiently convinced of the reality of their exiſtence, they let him down at the door of his own houſe, where he afterward often recited to the wondering circle, the marvellous tale of his adventure.

* Some modern antiquaries have aſſerted, that the Celtic nations never worſhipped

Near the kirk of this pariſh, there is a fountain once highly celebrated, and anciently dedicated to St. Michael. Many a patient have its waters reſtored to health, and many more have atteſted the efficacy of their virtues. But, as the preſiding power is ſometimes capricious, and apt to deſert his charge, it now lies neglected, choked with weeds, unhonoured, and unfrequented. In better days it was not ſo; for the winged guardian under the ſemblance of a fly, was never abſent from his duty. If the ſober matron wiſhed to know the

ſhipped rivers, and had no divinities appropriated to them. Several ancient authorities, however, might be adduced to evince the contrary. Gildas expreſsly ſays, "Ut omittam," talking of the Britons, "montes ipſos, aut colles, aut fluvios, quibus divinus honor a cæco tunc populo cumulabatur." The vulgar in many parts of the Highlands, even at preſent, not only pay a ſacred regard to particular fountains, but are firmly perſuaded that certain lakes are inhabited by ſpirits. In Strathſpey, there is a lake ſtill called Loch-nan Spioradan; the lake of ſpirits. Two of theſe are ſuppoſed frequently to make their appearance, the one under the form of a horſe beautifully capariſoned, with golden trappings. With the bit of his bridle, the anti-conjurer of this pariſh expels jealouſy, and cures other maladies of the mind. The other under that of a bull docile as Jupiter waſting Europa over the Helleſpont. The former is called, an each uiſg, the horſe of the water; the latter, an taru uiſg, the bull of the water. The mhaidan mhare, or mermaid, is another ſpirit ſuppoſed to reſide in the waters. Before the rivers are ſwelled by heavy rains, ſhe is frequently ſeen, and all the attributes of a beautiful virgin aſcribed to that part of her perſon that is viſible. Her figure is enchanting, and her voice melodious as that of the Syrens. But fair as ſhe is, her appearance never fails to announce ſome melancholy accident on her native element. It is always conſidered as a ſure prognoſtication of drowning.

In Celtic mythology to the above named, is added a fourth ſpirit. When the waters are agitated by a violent current of wind, and ſtreams are ſwept from their ſurface and driven before the blaſt, or whirled in circling eddies aloft in the air, the vulgar, to this day, conſider this phenomenon as the effect of the angry ſpirit operating upon that element. They call it by a very expreſſive name, the mariach ſhine, or the rider of the ſtorm. Anvona is alſo reckoned as a divinity of the waters, derived from anſadh, a ſtorm or hurricane, a compound from an, a particle of privation, and ſadh, ſerenity, tranquillity.

the iſſue of her huſband's ailment, or the love-ſick nymph, that of her languiſhing ſwain, they viſited the well of St. Michael. Every movement of the ſympathetic fly was regarded in ſilent awe; and as he appeared cheerful or dejected, the anxious votaries drew their preſages; their breaſts vibriated with correſpondent emotions. Like the Delai Lama of Thibet, or the King of Great Britain, whom a fiction of the Engliſh law ſuppoſes never to die, the guardian fly of the well of St Michael, was believed to be exempted from the laws of mortality. To the eye of ignorance he might ſometimes appear dead, but, agreeably to the Druidic ſyſtem, it was only a tranſmigration into a ſimilar form, which made little alteration on the real identity *.

Among the branches into which the moſs-grown trunk of ſuperſtition divides itſelf, may be reckoned witchcraft and magic. Theſe, though decayed and withered by time, ſtill retain ſome faint traces of their ancient verdure. Even at preſent, witches are ſuppoſed, as of old, to ride on broom-ſticks through the air. In this country, the 12th of May is one of their feſtivals. On the morning of that day, they are frequently ſeen dancing on the ſurface of the water of Avon, bruſhing the dews of the lawn, and milking cows in their fold. Any uncommon ſickneſs is generally attributed to their demoniacal practices. They make fields barren or fer-

* Not later than a fortnight ago, the writer of this account was much entertained, to hear an old man lamenting with regret, the degeneracy of the times; particularly the contempt in which objects of former veneration were held by the unthinking crowd. If the infirmities of years, and the diſtance of his reſidence did not prevent him, he would ſtill pay his devotional viſits to the well of St. Michael. He would clear the bed of its ooze, open a paſſage for the ſtreamlet, plant the borders with fragrant flowers; and once more, as in the days of youth, enjoy the pleaſure of ſeeing the guardian fly ſkim in ſportive circles over the babbling wave, and with its little proboſcis, imbibe the Panacean dews.

tile, raiſe or ſtill whirlwinds, give or take away milk at pleaſure. The force of their incantations is not to be reſiſted, and extends even to the moon in the midſt of her aerial career. It is the good fortune, however, of this country to be provided with an anti-conjurer that defeats both them and their fable patron in their combined efforts. His fame is widely diffuſed, and wherever he goes, *creſcit eundo*. If the ſpouſe is jealous of her huſband, the anti-conjurer is conſulted to reſtore the affections of his bewitched heart. If a near connexion lies confined to the bed of ſickneſs, it is in vain to expect relief without the balſamick medicine of the anti-conjurer. If a perſon happens to be deprived of his ſenſes, the deranged cells of the brain muſt be adjuſted by the magic charms of the anti-conjurer. If a farmer loſes his cattle, the houſes muſt be purified with water ſprinkled by him. In ſearching for the latent miſchief, this gentleman never fails to find little parcels of hetrogeneous ingredients lurking in the walls, conſiſting of the legs of mice, and the wings of bats; all the work of the witches. Few things ſeem too arduous for his abilities; and though, like Paracelſus, he has not as yet boaſted of having diſcovered the Philoſopher's ſtone; yet, by the power of his occult ſcience, he ſtill attracts a little of their gold from the pockets where it lodges; and in this way makes a ſhift to acquire a ſubſiſtence for himſelf and family. What Dryden ſaid of Shakeſpear, may, with propriety, be applied to him:

"Shakeſpear's magic could not copied be;
"Within that circle none durſt move but he."

If the ſhort limits of a ſtatiſtical eſſay permitted, more juſtice might be done to this ſingular character, but, *ex pede Herculem;*

Herculem; the outlines already given, will enable fancy to draw the portrait.

Dreſs.—Since the year 1745, there is a conſiderable change on the dreſs of the people of this diſtrict. By a ſingular kind of policy, as if rebellion lurked in the ſhape and colour of a coat, at the above period, the ancient dreſs was proſcribed and none durſt wear it without running the riſk of a rigorous proſecution. It was conſequently ſuperſeded by the Low Country dreſs. To the ancient braccæ, or truiſh * and belted plaid, ſucceeded ſtrait breeches, and an awkward coat of a uniform colour; ſometimes a long ſurtout dangling down to the heels, encumbring the freedom of motion. The barbarous policy of Edward the Firſt, did not more effectually deſtroy the ſpirit of the indignant Welſh, by the murder of their bards, than the prohibition of their ancient garb, that of the poor Highlanders. In the enthuſiaſm of patriotiſm, Mr. Fraſer of Lovat got the prohibitory act repealed, in order, according to his own emphatic words, "to divert the minds of the people from Tranſatlantic notions." Let metaphyſicians, if they chooſe, trace the connexion. But, though this reſpectable gentleman, with the view of making them good ſubjects, procured liberty to the Highlanders of expoſing their naked poſteriors to the north wind, on their bleak mountains, few have availed themſelves of the privilege. Habit reconciles them to the preſent, and they ſeem to have no deſire of reſuming their ancient garb. The blue bonnet, however, with the exception of ſome round hats, ſtill maintains its ground. Since the year 1745, the women too, like the men, have altered conſiderably in their apparel. Before that period, they wore ſometimes white blankets covering

* Truiſh, from truſà, or dreſs.

their heads, ſometimes their ſhoulders, drawn forward by their hands, ſurrounded on each ſide by a fold. Theſe, as faſhion varied, were ſucceeded by barred plaids, or blankets, where different colours blended, croſſing each other at right angles, ſomewhat diſtant, and bearing a ſquare ſpace in the middle. Wearied of barred plaids, they betook themſelves to Stirling ones, and now duffle cardinals begin to have the aſcendant. Formerly their hair flowed in eaſy ringlets over their ſhoulders; not many years ago, it was bound behind into a cue, now it ſpreads into a protuberance on the forehead, ſupported by cuſhions; ſometimes, it is plain, and ſplit in the middle. But who can deſcribe the caprice of female ornament more various than the changes of the moon!

Manner of Living.—Not more than 50 years ago, their mode of living in this country was different from what it is at preſent. Places that were at that time waſte, are now planted with inhabitants. And though ſheep, upon the whole, be more numerous than formerly; yet they are chiefly the property of thoſe who occupy the out-ſkirts, and to whom the hills and glens lie more convenient. In the centrical places, the farms are enlarged, at leaſt as much as the nature of the ground can admit; conſequently the ſmaller tenants are fewer, and live leſs at their eaſe: but previous to the above period, even cottagers kept a few ſheep, becauſe the hill paſture was a common, and there were few of any deſcription who did not occaſionally feed upon fleſh. But at preſent, unleſs it be at Chriſtmas, or when any little feſtivals are celebrated, the fold is kept ſacred for the market, in order to make money to ſupply the exigencies of the family, and ſatisfy the many demands to which it is expoſed, from bad ſeaſons, precarious crops, and increaſing taxes: beſides that, the luxury of the

times

times has imported into this country, inacceſſible as it is to other improvements, a portion of factitious wants, which muſt be gratified. Fifty years ago, they uſed burnt plates of whiſky, inſtead of that ſpirit, which muſt now be diluted with warm water, and ſweetened with ſugar It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that it is ſeldom they indulge in this beverage; they oftener drink it raw and unmixed. It may eaſily be ſuppoſed that a plant of ſuch univerſal conſumption as tea, ſhould not be unknown to the people of this country. Few of the better families are without it, though ſparingly uſed; and ſome of the old women, even when they cannot afford ſugar, infuſe it in boiling water, and drink it for their headachs. Theſe headachs frequently return, but fortunately by the aid of the grand elixir, they are ſeldom of long duration.

Character, &c.—The character of a people never fails to change with their changing condition. In contemplating them at the extreme points of a period of 70 or 80 years, it would be as difficult to recogniſe their identity, as that of Sir John Cutler's worſted ſtockings, when ſcarcely an atom of the original texture remained. Not further removed than the more diſtant of theſe extremes, the people of this country were generous and hoſpitable. If they were occaſionally ſubject to the foibles, they poſſeſſed the virtues of genuine Highlanders. If they reſented injuries with vehemence and paſſion, their breaſts felt the glow of affection and friendſhip. Attached to their chieftain, they followed his ſtandard wherever it led; and never ſhrunk from danger in the defence of his cauſe: Connected with the freebooters of Lochaber, they imbibed no inconſiderable portion of their ſpirit and manners: Addreſs and ſtratagem marked their enterpriſes: Active abroad

broad, they were indolent at home: Addicted to depredation, they neglected the arts of induſtry and agriculture: Diſengaged from thoſe purſuits that require vigour and exertion, they paſſed the vacant hour in ſocial enjoyment, in ſong and feſtivity, and in liſtening to the tale of other years: Rude in their manners, their boſoms frequently opened to the warm impreſſions of a diſintereſted benevolence. The indigent and the ſtranger found them always ready to ſympathize with their diſtreſs. What Paul the Deacon, in his barbarous Latin, ſaid of the Lombards of Italy, might be applied to them:

Terribilis facies, hirſutaque barba,
Sed corda benigna fuerunt *.

But, in contemplating the nearer extreme of the above period, a different picture appears. The ſpirit of commerce which, in a certain degree has pervaded every corner of the Highlands, with its natural concomitants, avarice and ſelfiſhneſs, has penetrated hither. In the private views of the individual, the intereſts of the community are diſregarded. Cunning has ſupplanted ſincerity, and diſſimulation candour: Profeſſion ſupplies the place of reality, and flattery is uſed as a lure to betray the unwary. Obligations are rewarded by ingratitude; and when the favour is paſt, the benefit is no longer remembered. Oppoſed to intereſt, promiſes ceaſe to be binding; and the moſt ſucceſsful in the arts of deception acquires the eſteem of uncommon merit and abilities. It may therefore be ſuppoſed, that, in a field where the prize is ſo attractive,

* A dreadful countenance, with rough beards, but with hearts benevolent.

tractive, there will be many candidates. To aid them in this career of ambition, it muſt be acknowledged, in alleviation of their bias, that they have had models of imitation not unworthy of the doctrines of a Machiavel. Unfortunately for them, theſe models have been ſtrangers, and of that rank in life who have always the moſt powerful influence in making proſelytes among the vulgar.

Such are the cauſes to which it muſt be imputed, that there is ſo little diſcrimination to be obſerved in the character of the people of this country; for, where one object is purſued, the means of attainment will be generally uniform. Suſpended between barbariſm and civilization, the mind is never ſo ſtrongly influenced by virtue, as it is attracted by the magnetiſm of vice. In this view, however, they are not ſingular from their neighbours. From a combination of cauſes, particularly high taxation, and increaſing commerce, avarice and ſelfiſhneſs muſt neceſſarily conſtitute a prominent feature in the character of many. At the ſame time, there may ſtill be found the uſual proportion of perſons of a different character, conſpicuous for honour and integrity, humane and benevolent, juſt and upright in their tranſactions.

Miſcellaneous Obſervations.—It has been obſerved, that the centrical parts of this country lie at a conſiderable diſtance from moſs, which is yearly diminiſhing in proportion to the conſumption. From the increaſe of population, and as the natural woods are every where decaying, the period is approaching, when the Highlands muſt ſenſibly feel the difficulty of procuring the neceſſary accommodation of fuel. To anticipate ſuch an event, is an object that peculiarly calls for the attention of proprietors. There are few of this deſcription in the Highlands, who are not poſſeſſed of conſiderable

tracks of moor and hill. In this diſtrict, there are at leaſt 18,000 acres that lie barren, and at preſent of little value. This ſpace of ground laid under fir, would contain, at a moderate calculation, 80,000,000 plants, excluſive of the foreſt of Glenavon, and without much injury to the paſture. By converting the waſte ground to this purpoſe, the rent of the proprietors would increaſe, while the farmer would be ſupplied in fuel, and materials for building. Plantations of fir ſo extenſive, may appear an arduous undertaking; but by giving farmers long leaſes, indemnifying them at removal, appropriating a portion of the rent for the purpoſe, and various methods that might be deviſed, it might be ſucceſsfully carried into execution; and when accompliſhed, would be worthy of a great and patriotic proprietor. It has been aſſerted, that moſs grows; but this is a fallacy too obvious to be credited. Being the production of wood and moiſture, it is well known from experience, that when the component ingredients are once exhauſted, the ſubſtance itſelf cannot be reproduced. Upon the formation of moſs, there is a curious fact mentioned by Lord Cromarty, and recorded in the 5th volume of the Abridgement of the Philoſophical Tranſactions *.

No

* In the year 1651, his lordſhip being then 19 years of age, he ſaw a plain in the pariſh of Lochbroom, covered over with a firm ſtanding wood, which was ſo old, that not only the trees had no green leaves, but the bark was totally thrown off, which he was there informed, by the old people, was the univerſal manner in which fir wood terminated, and that in 20 or 30 years the trees would caſt themſelves up by the roots. About 15 years afterwards, he had occaſion to travel that way, and obſerved that there was not a tree, nor the appearance of a root, of any of them; but that, in their place, the whole plain where the wood ſtood, was covered with a flat green moſs, or monaſs. and, on aſking the country people what was become of the wood, he was anſwered, that no one had been at the trouble of carrying it away, but that it had been overturned by the wind; that the trees lay thick over one another; and that the

No complaint ſeems to be more univerſal over the Highlands, nor in this country in particular, than the increaſing inclemency of the ſeaſons. Modern philoſophers attribute this phenomenon to the vaſt ſhoals of ice accumulating in the northern ſeas. But whatever be the cauſe, the opinion of the effect prevails among the people. Since the year 1768, they obſerve, that the ſummers are colder, and productive of greater quantities of rain, than was remembered in the ſame ſpace of time, during any preceding period. The aſſertion, though conjectural, appears to be founded upon probability. Even within theſe 20 laſt years, the beds of brooks and rivers are conſiderably enlarged, and much of the contiguous grounds deſtroyed by the floods. The trouts, that formerly ſwarmed in lakes and rivers, are exceedingly decreaſed. The few migratory birds that viſit the country, are later in their arrival, and ſooner take their departure: The hum of the mountain bee is not ſo frequently heard: even the inſect tribes that fluttered in the air of a warm ſummer, are leſs prolifick than uſual. In Glenavon, of this pariſh, are moſſes, near 3000 feet above the level of the ſea, full of the fir root; where no wood at preſent, owing to the cold, could grow. Some of the higheſt hills in the Grampian deſert, are denominated from the wood which formerly grew upon them, ſuch as beinn a chaorin, the mountain of the ſervice tree. Are theſe then appearances the reſult of a temporary ceſſation, or has nature become more languid in her energies? Such, however, are the aſſertions of the old people, the never-

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the moſs or bog had overgrown the whole timber, which they added, was occaſioned by the moiſture which came down from the high hills, and ſtagnated upon the plain; and that nobody could yet paſs over it, which, however, his lordſhip was ſo incautious as to attempt, and ſlipt up to the arm-pit. Before the year 1699, that whole piece of ground was become a ſolid moſs, where the peaſants dug turf or peat, which, however, was not yet of the beſt ſort.

failing panegyrists of the times that are elapsed. Mr. Hume, and the Abbè du Bois, are of a different opinion, and assert, that in ancient times, the seasons were colder than at present, but the facts adduced by these respectable writers are too vague and remote to overthrow the experience of feeling *.

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* William the Norman, after the conquest of England, surveyed that country, and committed the admeasurement to Doomsday Book, designed to be a permanent record of the nature and value of the soil; that gradation of offices, and those institutions which he embraced in his political scheme. The imitation of a model that might be so conducive to promote the welfare of the great body of the people employed in agriculture, should perhaps, with that variation required by circumstances, be in some measure adopted by all the proprietors in Scotland. It is well known that the value of land must rise or fall, according to the flourishing or declining condition of the state. Reason dictates that it is by this criterion the rents of a landlord ought to be regulated. When at a certain term lands are to be let, and exposed, as it were to a public sale, the highest biddder to have the preference, it must occur, that in such a collision of passions, and jarring interests, as must necessarily arise upon those occasions, the desperate and unprincipled will frequently be preferred to the honest and industrious; besides that, the rents of some farms will be low and moderate, while that of others will be high and exorbitant. To prevent, therefore, this inequality, and to extend distributive justice to every individual, proprietors should not only survey their properties, but also affix a value to the farms, according to the value of the productions at the time, and the probable continuance of that value. Every circumstance of convenience and inconvenience, whether with regard to fuel, the nature of the soil, and the condition of the farm, should likewise be taken under consideration, and a rent proportionate affixed. Judicious men acquainted with the place, and obliged, by proper sanctions, to observe a strict impartiality, would perhaps be the most proper to accomplish such a desirable object. These hints may appear chimeral, but there would be no harm in the experiment; and, if practicable, might prove highly advantageous, both to the proprietor and tenant, by promoting their reciprocal interests. Such a plan, without having recourse to the levelling principle of modern innovations, might have a happy tendency in diffusing the comforts of life more equally, and at the same time, maintain that distinction of ranks so necessary to the existence of society.