

## NUMBER XV.

## PARISH OF GLENELG,

(COUNTY OF INVERNESS, SYNOD OF GLENELG, AND  
PRESBYTERY OF LOHCARRON),

*By the Rev. Mr COLIN MACIVER, Minister.*

*Origin of the Name.*

**G**LENELG, the ancient and modern name, is supposed to be made up of the Gaelic words, *glen*, signifying a valey, and *seilg*, hunting; or *glen*, a valley, and *elid*, a roe.

*Situation, Extent, and Surface.*—The parish lies in the County of Inverness, Synod to which it gives its name, and presbytery of Lochcarron. It is divided into three districts: 1<sup>st</sup>, Glenelg, where the church and manse are situated, the property of Colonel Macleod of Macleod; 2<sup>d</sup>, Knowdort, separated from Glenelg by an arm of the sea called Lochurn, the property of Macdonells of Glengarry and Scothouse; 3<sup>d</sup>, North-morrer, separated from Know-

dort by another arm of the sea, called Lochneavis, the property of the family of Lovat. The parish may be supposed to extend from N. to S. about 20 miles, and the same number of miles from E. to W. It is bounded on the N. E. and E. by the parish of Glensheal, county of Ross, a ridge of hills making the division; on the S. E. and S. by the out-skirts of the countries of Glengarry and Lochaber; on the S. W. by the fresh water lake called Loch-morrar, this lake dividing the parish of Ardnmorechuan from that of Glenelg; and on the N. W. by the navigable and much frequented sound that separates the island of Sky from the continent of Great Britain.

In the district of Glenelg there are two vallies, through each of which a river runs; the inhabitants reside in separate villages on each side of the rivers; their arable land extending along the banks, and on the declivity of the hills; some of them also dwell on Lochurn-side. In this district the soil is good; part of a deep black loam, and part of a sandy gravel, formerly the bed of the rivers, yielding crops of potatoes and oats, and the hills afford good pasture for cattle. In Knowdort the inhabitants dwell in villages bordering on the sea, along the sides of Lochurn and Lochneavis; here the soil is in general light, yielding crops of barley, oats, and potatoes. The hills, though high, are mostly green to the top, and afford excellent pasture for all kinds of cattle. North-morrar is rocky and mountainous, mostly adapted for cattle.

*Air and Climate.*—The air is moist, the rains being frequent, as the wind mostly blows from the S. and W.; notwithstanding, the people are healthy. The constant but moderate exercise, which is necessary for herding the cattle, and the sea-air enjoyed during the fishing-seasons, are favourable to health. There are at present in the district  
of

of Glenelg 63 persons from the age of 70 to 80, and upwards, as may be seen from the following state of the population, as ascertained in the year 1793.

		<i>Population, &amp;c.</i>	
Males,	- -	635	Weavers and weaver-
Females,	- -	651	esses, - - - - -
		—	25
			Tailors, - - - - -
			8
Total inhabitants,		1286	Clergyman, - - - - -
Supposed to emigrate			Schoolmasters, - - - - -
from the year 1770			2
to 1774,	- -	160	Merchant, - - - - -
Emigrated in 1785,		14	1
Ditto in 1787,	- -	10	Millers, - - - - -
Ditto in 1793,	- -	130	2
Ann. average of births,		38	Innkeeper, - - - - -
Ditto of marriages,		12	1
Heads of families,		178	In the district of Knowdort.
Under 10 years old,		401	Protestants, - - - - -
Between 10 and 20,		232	150
— 20 and 50,		456	Protestant missionary, - - - - -
— 50 and 70,		134	1
From 70 and upwards,		63	Papists, - - - - -
Smiths, - - - - -		2	850
Wrights, - - - - -		2	Priest, - - - - -
			1
			Surgeon, - - - - -
			1
Total inhabitants in Glenelg,	- - - - -		Emigrated from Know-
Ditto in Knowdort,	- - - - -		dort from the year
Ditto in North-morrer,	- - - - -		1770 to 1793,
			800
			Papists in North-morrer,
			460
			Priest, - - - - -
			1
Inhabitants of the whole parish,	- - - - -		1286
Emigrated at different periods from Glenelg, (sup-	- - - - -		1000
posed)	- - - - -		460
Ditto from Knowdort,	- - - - -		—
The return to Dr Webster,	- - - - -		2746
			324
			800
			1816
			<i>Sced-</i>

*Seed-time and Harvest.*—The oats are commonly sown in the latter end of March and beginning of April; immediately thereafter the potatoes are planted, and then the barley. The hay-harvest commences the latter end of July and beginning of August, mostly raised from meadow ground; the barley and oats are cut down in September and October; but owing to the deluges of rain that too often fall about this season of the year, the hay as well as other crops are often not secured till November. Grazing seems to be the only kind of farming for which this country is adapted; from necessity, and not choice, agriculture is carried on; the frequent rains, together with the inundations of the rivers, prove so destructive as to render the crops sometimes insipid and useless; but the price of meal, which is considerably advanced since the late corn-bill passed in Parliament, will still urge them to continue their old method of farming with all its disadvantages, it being impossible to purchase the quantity required at such exorbitant prices. In the most favourable seasons, the crops raised are barely sufficient for the maintenance of their families during three-fourths of the year; and in summer, the supplies from other markets are always scanty and precarious, owing to the tedious navigation from the east of Scotland, and the impracticability of land-carriage over a hilly district, more than 50 computed miles in length.

*Black Cattle and Sheep.*—The cows in this parish are of a good kind, well shaped and piled, and being seldom housed, very hardy; and those reared on the larger farms are perhaps equal to most stocks on the west coast, particular attention being paid by the farmers in keeping handsome and proper bulls; but they justly complain, that the prices fetched are not equal to the expence and pains taken in rearing them: such cattle, when sold in parcels, give from

L. 3,

L. 3, 10 s. to L. 4 Sterling; and those sold by the lower class of tenants fetch from two to three guineas each. The estate of Scothouse, as also a great part of Glengarry's property, together with one farm on Macleod's estate, are mostly laid out in sheep-walks; the sheep are of the black-faced kind, and are thought to be good, as the wedders of three years old, reared on two of the farms, have hitherto given from 15 s. to 16 s. each at an average. The white wool fells from 6 s. to 8 s. and the tared wool from 4 s. to 6 s. the stone. The quantity sold is supposed to be upwards of 1500 stones, Greenock, Dumbarton, and Liverpool, being the ports to which it is carried, and some of it also disposed of to the country people. Emigration is thought to be owing in a great measure to the introduction of sheep, as one man often rents a farm where formerly many families lived comfortably; and if the rage for this mode of farming goes on with the same rapidity it has done for some years back, it is to be apprehended emigration will still increase. But this is not solely the cause; the high rents demanded by landlords, the increase of population, and the flattering accounts received from their friends in America, do also contribute to the evil.

*Fish*.—Skate, ling, and cod are to be got along the coast of the parish, but sythe or pollock is caught in the greatest abundance, which in summer is chiefly the support of the poor people. The herring-fishing deserves to be particularly mentioned, as in Lochurn they make their appearance so early as July, and continue from that period to the middle of autumn. Here the busses from the frith of Clyde commonly assemble first, besides a vast number of boats, which croud together from the neighbouring parishes and isles adjacent. It is computed for some years back 30,000 barrels have been annually caught in this loch; but the want of  
salt

salt prevents the natives from turning to advantage this bounty of Providence, which from their local situation they might otherwise do; at present, they are content with fishing a barrel or two to help the maintenance of their families. Certainly it must be an impolitic law that imposes so high a duty on one of the most necessary articles of consumption in life.

*Birds, and wild Animals.*—The migratory birds are, the swallow, the cuckoo, the field-fare, and wood-cock. The birds of prey are the eagle, the raven, and grey crow, with three species of the hawk, and two of the kite. The game birds are, the tarmargan, grouse, black-cock, snipe, heath-hen, with a few partridge. The aquatic birds are such as are common on the west coast. The deer and roe still frequent the hills and woods on Lochurn-side; the mountain hare, together with the fox, the badger, and weasel, are natives of this country; and the amphibious animals are the seal and otter.

*Tides.*—The tides run very strong, both in Lochurn and Lochneavis; but the most remarkable current in this parish, or perhaps in all the west coast, is to be seen at *Kylereea*, the name of the sound that separates Sky from the main land; at spring-tides it runs so rapidly as to render it impossible for any vessel to pass through with a fresh breeze, and the wind never so favourable. Mackenzie, in his char., reckons its velocity equal to nine notes an hour. Over this sound the black cattle annually driven to market from Sky, and part of the Long-island are made to swim; and though the current is so very strong, yet few accidents happen. The number cannot be exactly ascertained, but in general they may be reckoned about 2000.

*Antiquities.*

*Antiquities.*—There have been many castles or round towers in this parish, two of which are yet pretty entire, and are much visited by travellers. There are various opinions respecting the use they were intended for; but the one given by the late learned Dr Macpherson of Slate, in his *Antiquities of Scotland*, seems to be the most probable. There is also situated on an eminence above the manse the remains of an old fortification, of which Mr Pennant takes notice in his *Tour*; besides, there is still to be seen on the top of a rock, not far from the sea, the foundation of an old building made up of stone and lime, and yet there is no tradition concerning it. There are some tumuli or barrows; one of them being opened up not many years ago, there was found in it an urn, containing as is supposed the ashes of some ancient warrior.

*Barracks.*—In the year 1722, shortly after the battle of Glenheal, Government thought it necessary to erect a small fortification on the west coast; and pitched on a spot of ground in this parish as a proper situation, being in the direct line from Fort Augustus to the island of Sky. From that period till after the 1745, there were commonly one or two companies of foot quartered there; but since, a smaller command was deemed sufficient; and for 20 years back there have been only a serjeant or corporal, with a few privates. Of the house that was formerly appropriated for the use of the soldiers, the skeleton only remains, but the officers barracks are still habitable.

*Church.*—The living of this parish is L. 55 : 17 : 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ; 46 bolls of oat-meal, 9 stons of Dutch weight to the boll, which at an average may be valued at L. 41, 8s. and 12 bolls bear, at the conversion of 10 merks Scots *per* boll, besides a small farm annexed to the church, which may be valued,

valued, including the glebe, at L. 12; so that the value of the whole living amounts to L. 115 : 18 : 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The present minister was admitted in the year 1782, is married, and has five children, three sons and two daughters. His predecessors in office were Messrs Donald Macleod, Murdoch Macleod, and John Morrison. The church is situated near the sea, and is in tolerable good order. The manse, by being built on an eminence, is much exposed to the westerly winds; and though repaired in the year 1785, is far from being at present in a sufficient state. Colonel Macleod of Macleod is patron of the parish.

*School.*—The school-house stands at the distance of a short mile from the church. During the summer, the number of scholars that attend may be about 45. The salary is 300 merks Scots, paid by the Laird of Macleod and the tenants of his estate; the other districts were never cessed with any proportion; the emoluments arising to the school-master are trifling, so that his income will not much exceed L. 20 Sterling. It is melancholy to think, that in every part of Scotland so little attention should be paid to the most useful members of society. In this district there is a school, solely at the expence of the inhabitants, who send their children to it; the number of boys and girls that attend are 38. In Knowdort, there is one of the Society schools; the teacher has a salary of L. 12 Sterling allowed him; and scholars are from 30 to 40 in number.

*Poor.*—The number of poor on the roll of this parish at present is 31; they seldom or ever travel to beg elsewhere; are supported chiefly by the inhabitants, only in summer they receive a small supply in meal from the funds collected upon Sundays, which at an average come to L. 7 or L. 8 Sterling a-year.

*Fuel.*—The fuel made use of in this parish is peats, which are seldom good, owing to the rainy seasons, and the moor being at a distance from their dwelling-houses, so much time, labour, and expence is lost in securing them, that it is a matter of doubt whether coals be not cheaper. Though they have not yet availed themselves of the liberality of Parliament in taking the duty off coal, it is probable they will soon find it their interest to import it.

*Character of the Inhabitants.*—The tacksmen of this parish are very respectable, both with regard to information and propriety of conduct, they live comfortably, and are hospitable to strangers; the lower class of tenants are sober and strictly honest, and by no means deficient in charity to the poor. If a manufacture for coarse cloths on a small scale was established in a village lately planned out by the Laird of Macleod, it could not fail of succeeding and employing many idle hands. The raw materials are to be had in the parish, and can be conveyed by water from each shepherd's storehouse at an easy expence. A net-manufacture might be carried on with advantage also; the spinning of the hemp and twining of the yarn would employ the old, and the making of the nets promote industry among the young; very little capital would be requisite for both branches. In this village there are at present upwards of 120 souls.

*Miscellaneous Observations.*—The valued rent of the parish is L. 3565 Scotch; the land-rent cannot be ascertained, but must exceed considerably L. 2000. As there are no markets for provisions, their prices cannot be exactly known; every family kill for themselves what butcher meat is requisite. Men servants maintained in the family receive *per annum* from L. 2 to L. 3 for wages; the wo-

men from 10 s. to L. 1, besides shoes, and other casualties. Wrights receive 1 s. *per* day, and their victuals; a tailor is paid *per* piece, besides his victuals. The roads are bad; Government proposed, after the year 1745, to make a military road from Fort Augustus to Bannockburn barracks in this parish, and to build bridges over the rivers and burns, so as to render it passable for the troops and other travellers. The bridges were first erected by contractors, who made choice of those parts over the waters where materials could be had at the cheapest rate; by this means the roads were unavoidably lengthened, and carried over steep and high precipices, up and down hill. This made the charge more troublesome and vexatious to the military who laboured at the roads, that in no place or part was the road made sufficient, or of proper dimensions. Provost Brown of Elgin was employed in summer 1792 to survey this road, attended by a country gentleman, well acquainted with the proper line to be followed; and as he has given in his report, it is hoped Government will soon see this necessary measure put in execution. As this line of road is the shortest from the metropolis to the island of Sky and the Long Island, and many bridges being already built, by which much expence might be saved, it must appear the more eligible to have this line continued. From its present situation it is impossible to ride it; by this means travellers are necessitated to freight vessels from Argyleshire at an enormous expence. A stage-house in the middle of the hill would be highly proper and necessary.