

PARISH OF FORTINGAL.

PRESBYTERY OF WEEM, SYNOD OF PERTH.

THE REV. ROBERT MACDONALD, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THIS parish is said, at one period, to have had the name of "Cille-Bhrain," *i. e.* the burial place of Bran, a reputed saint in his day,—of whom little, however, is now known, excepting, that a few places in the parish, as also, in other districts, bear his name; as "Ath-Bhrain" *i. e.* *St Bran's Ford*, upon the river Lyon, near the east end of Fortingal,—"*Breanamh*" *i. e.* *Bran-naomh* "Holy Bran's," *i. e.* burying-ground or cell.

The modern name is "*Feart-a-chill*" *i. e.* Fortingall, the derivation and etymology of which is involved in considerable obscurity. The English term would lead us to conclude that the name is derived from "*Feart Fhionnghail*," Fingal's stronghold. And the many circular "*Forts*" (of which afterwards) in the vicinity, which the uniform tradition of the natives ascribes to the Fingalians, called "*Caistealan-nam Fiann*"—the castles or strongholds of the Fingalians, support this conclusion. Others resolve the name into "*Feart-nan-Gael*," the stronghold of the Gael or Caledonians, and they fix the date of this name to the period when the Romans invaded the country. Situated, however, as the parish is, in the south-west corner of the ancient Caledonian Forest, it might, not inaptly, have obtained its Gaelic name, from "*Feart Choille*," "the stronghold of the Forest."

The derivation of the name, as given by my predecessor, Mr. M'Ara in his report of the parish, from *Feart-nan-gall*, "the works or exploits of strangers," is one to which I am not inclined to accede.

Extent, Boundaries.—The extreme length of the parish from east to west is about 40 miles, and extreme breadth from 30 to 35 miles. But taking the mean length at 35 miles, and mean breadth at 20, the parish will be found to contain 448,000 imperial acres, including about 25,600 acres for lakes, &c. It is bounded on the east by

the parish of Dull, the respective parish churches being six miles distant; on the north-east, by that of Blair-Athole, parish churches twenty-one miles distant; on the north, by the parish of Laggan, Inverness-shire, churches being forty-one miles distant; on the north-west, by the parish of Kilmnivaig, the churches being seventy miles distant; on the west, by the parish of Appin, Argyllshire, churches seventy-four miles distant; on the south-west, by the parish of Glenorchy, churches distant forty-four miles; on the south, by the parishes of Kenmore and Killin, the parish churches being distant six and sixteen miles respectively; and also by a detached portion of the parish of Weem. The parish thus occupies a very considerable portion of the north-west corner of the county of Perth, and south-west angle of the great Caledonian Forest, as already mentioned. Following the boundary line in all its indentations and projections, it is no less than 130 miles in circumference.

It may be necessary here to premise that the parish is naturally divided into three comprehensive districts, viz. Fortingal (properly so called), Rannoch, and Glenlyon: besides the detached district of Bofracks on the south side of the Tay, distant by the high road about ten miles;—all separated from each other by high hills, rivers, and other impediments.

Mountains.—The mountains and hills connected with the parish are almost innumerable. Both on the north and south sides it is bordered by high mountains. There is also a high chain of mountains, which may be said to belong exclusively to the parish, extending its whole length from east to west, and dividing it into two grand divisions, and almost into two equal parts, having the districts of Rannoch to the north, and Glenlyon and Fortingal to the south. This ridge rests upon a base of about seven miles broad; and many of its mountains considerably exceed 3000 feet above the level of the sea. A little detached from this ridge, in the district of Rannoch; is the mountain *Sith-chailinn*, conspicuous as you enter the country by its towering and commanding summit,—a mountain whose name is recorded throughout the scientific world as the scene of observations by Dr Maskelyne, Astronomer Royal, in 1777. “Sith,” by the old Highlanders’ interpretation, means *any hill or mountain disjoined or apart from others*,—“*Sithain*,” a little round hill, is the diminutive of the term;—which hill was invariably haunted, as was supposed, by the “Sith-chean” or “*daime-sith*,” “men of peace,”—whence the name, “*Sith-chailinn*,” given to this hill from its being the supposed place of resort of the

maiden or *queen* of the fairies. Viewing this lofty mountain from the north-west, it appears of a conical figure; but from the south and east, it is the very reverse. It rests upon a long narrow base, rising from the east end with a gentle acclivity, the west end and both sides being very steep, and here and there covered with a surface of stones; but it is marked on the whole with fewer inequalities from base to top, than perhaps any mountain of equal magnitude in the Highlands of Perthshire.

The height of the mountains within or connected with the parish, above the level of the sea, may be reckoned nearly as follows; but perfect accuracy is not to be expected.

	Feet		Feet
1. Sith-chailinn, (as ascertained),	3564	8. Sgur-cháirie,	3400
2. Beinn-gharbhlagain,	3044	9. Garbh-mheall,	3280
3. Beinn-udlamain,	3520	10. Meal-Buidhe,	3480
4. Sgur-ghaibhre,	3140	11. Meal Ghaordie,	3480
5. Carn-dearg,	3140	12. Beinn-chreachinn,	3860
6. Cruach—confines of Argyle,	2790	13. Beinn-Sheagarnich,	3890
7. Carn-a-mairce—Glenlyon,	3390		

Besides these, there are many other mountains of considerable magnitude, interspersed here and there, which have the effect of diversifying the character of the scene. From the top of the hill of Comrie, head of Rannoch, there is a very grand and extensive prospect. A spectator finds himself situated in the centre of a vast amphitheatre, 40 miles by 20. The river Gaur meanders by, and Loch-Rannoch, 12 miles long, with its bosky banks, expands below. Of this vast and picturesque amphitheatre, the range of mountains which intersects the parish from east to west, and the mountains of Glenorchy form the south side—the rugged peaks of the “Black mount” and Buachaille Eitibh, the west,—the mountains of Lochaber and Badenoch, the north-west and north;—and on the east “Sith-chailin” and “Beinn-a-chualaich” upon opposite sides,—rear their summits like vast pillars, as if to guard the only seeming ingress to the grand expanse.

Valleys—Glenlyon.—This district or valley extends in a westerly direction from the head of Fortingal, to near the stage-house of Tyn-drum, upon the western military road,—a distance of from 32 to 35 miles. A considerable part of the head of the glen is now but thinly peopled, being occupied by extensive sheep-graziers, one of whom possesses a tract of upwards of 15 miles in length, and numbers above 8000 sheep. The glen is very narrow; what may be termed its general level ground by the river's side, being seldom above a furlong broad; and the mountains often encroaching so far from opposite sides, as even in some places to confine the

PERTH.

L I

struggling river to a bed of not much more than eight yards broad. It is evident that, at one time, there were several lakes in the glen, especially in the lower parts of it; but as the river, in the course of ages, wore a deeper channel through rocks and eminences, they disappeared. The only one now remaining is that at the head of the glen, "Lochlyon," which is the source of the river of that name. To this circumstance may, perhaps, be attributed the name "Glenlyon," *Gleann-Linne*, i. e. the glen of the lakes, or pools. Others derive the name from "*Glen-lighe-amhuinn*," "the glen of the flooding river," a name highly characteristic.

Tradition also bears that a battle was fought in this glen betwixt the M'IVORS, the first inhabitants of the glen, after the Fingalians, (at which period it was called *Gleann-Fasach*, "the deserted Glen,") and Stewart of Garth, commonly called the *Cuilean Curta*, i. e. "the fierce wolf," in which the M'IVORS were defeated, and the few that survived expelled the district; and that the Stewarts, on their return from the pursuit, washed their arms, &c. in the river. From the *tinge* thus given to the water, it was called *Gleann liamhuinn*, the tinged river. Various places in the glen take their names from circumstances connected with the battle fought on this occasion, viz. *Laggan-a-chatha*, "the hollow of the battle"—*Leachd-nan-cuaran*, the stone of the sandals, it being customary for each man, preparatory to the engagement, to cast off one of his buskins,—so that, on their return, the number amissing might be easily ascertained.

Immediately previous to its assuming its present name, tradition bears that it was called *Gleann-duibhe*, the Glen of the black water:—and during the Fingalian period it was called *Crom-ghleann-nan-clach*"—the crooked glen of the stones;—not, however, because more stony than many other glens in the Highlands, but on account of the many circular castles and forts in several parts of the glen, built entirely of dry stones: and which the people affirm to have been the residences of Fingal and his heroes,—

Bha da chaisteal dheug eig Fionn
Ann an Crom-ghleann-nan clach, &c.

"Fingal had twelve castles in the crooked glen of the stones."

For pasturage, Glenlyon is exceeded by few, if any glens, in the Highlands of Perthshire. Its sides are, in general, green to the very top of the mountains. The acclivity of the north side is almost always abrupt; and consequently, the distance to the summit of the ridge is shorter than on the south side, exceeding in no part five miles, and often falling short of this; whereas the latter sometimes exceeds six

miles Many places of the glen have no sunshine for a long period of the winter season : several farm villages are deprived of it from the middle of October to the middle of February.

The dells which branch out from the sides of Glenlyon are very numerous : some of them extensive, being upwards of 4 miles long ; each augmenting the Lyon with its limpid stream,—which in time of thaw or rain comes down with irresistible impetuosity. One of these streams, *Allt-da-ghob*, proceeding from a small glen of that name, is a fine natural curiosity. When viewed from Chest-hill, the opposite side of the river, in a swollen state, it rushes from a height of between 400 and 500 feet down a precipice, into a chasm so deep as to be entirely hid from the eye : it appears a second and a third time, bursting over perpendicular rocks, in a solid body, and is immediately lost in the bottom of the same, or in a similar invisible chasm : and on every successive appearance, it bursts again upon the view, as if sprung from the solid rock, or bowels of the mountain. Leaving its confinement, it at last gushes down a precipice of 200 feet in a sheet as white as snow, till it reaches the level ground and joins the Lyon.

The cascades that dash down everywhere, on the sides of the mountains, in a rainy day, are almost innumerable. In a single mile, many of these may be seen,—in places where there is no running stream at other times, rushing from a height of no less than 1000 feet high, parallel to each other, till they arrive at the flat ground. A stranger, wondering from whence they had their rise, would at once conclude that they sprung from the rock, or bowels of the mountains, and that he even observed the spot from whence each issued forth.

The upper part of Glenlyon is very elevated :—The lower part may be about 100 feet above the level of Lochtay.

Glenmore.—Situated between Rannoch and Fortingal, and immediately to the south of *Sith-chailinn*, is a considerable valley of this name. At one period, it formed no small portion of the old forest of *Sith-chailinn*, no trace of which is now remaining, save such innumerable roots of trees as the natives were and are yet occasionally in the habit of digging from under ground, for fuel and light,—the roots of the *fir* affording a flame which far surpasses the brilliancy of gas.* Numerous trunks of oak are also found on such occasions. They are of a blackish colour, and of a

* See Gen. Stewart's Sketches.

softish texture, but harden on exposure to the air. The country people were accustomed to split these and sell them at markets, as *strakes* for scythe-sharpening,—a purpose to which they are found well adapted.

Passing over a great number of minor vales, such as Glen-mullin, Glen-da-ghob—the vale of Lochs, of Glenlyon, Glenmeran, Glen-duibh, Glen-comrie, Glen-sasun, Glen-caillich, we shall now advert to that of Fortingal.

Fortingal.—This interesting vale, from which the parish takes its name, is about 6 miles long. The river Lyon meanders through it. The base or level ground is, for the most part, fully half a mile broad. A stranger, stationed at the village of Fortingal, would at once fancy there was no ingress or egress from or to the district. There are, however, three egresses,—one, on the south to the turnpike road on Loch Tay side, Breadalbane; a second, to the north-west through Glenlyon, by and through the remarkable pass, narrow defiles, and romantic scenery of the wood of Chesthill, to which, in the opinion of many, the far-famed pass of Killachrankie is, in point of defence and security against the incursions of a foreign foe, ranked inferior. The third is to the eastward, meeting the Crieff and Inverness turnpike road at Coshville, Appin of Menzies. It is a fact worthy of notice, that, except in the detached district of Bolfracks, there is not a foot of toll road in this extensive parish: yet the country is well accommodated by statute labour roads, kept in very good condition.

Like Glenlyon, Fortingal is surrounded with mountains. Although not equally calculated with those of Glenlyon to raise wonder and awe by their “cloud-capt” summits, their precipitous fronts, and foaming torrents, bursting down their deep furrowed sides,—still it is a beautiful and naturally a picturesque vale, finely sheltered from the northern blast, and adorned with a number of gentlemen’s seats, viz. that of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell of Garth, Bart., the hero of the Burmese war, and lately Governor of New Brunswick,—which was formerly the property of Major-General Stewart of Garth, author of “Sketches of the Highlands,” &c. and late Governor of St Lucia, where he died,—a name dear to philanthropy, and never to be mentioned but with respect; also that of Mr Menzies of Chesthill, and that of Mr Garden Campbell of Troup and Glenlyon;—all of which are embosomed in wood and environed with verdant fields.

Fortingal is fronted on the south by *Druim-Fhinn*, Drum-

mond Hill, which intercepts from the district the view of Taymouth Castle, the seat of the noble Marquess of Breadalbane. From a point on the east end of this hill, where a strong fortification is still extant, called *Dun-mac Tuail*, the stronghold or fortress of Tuail, a natural son of the King of Denmark, who, as tradition bears, figured much in this quarter during the Fingalian period,—there is to be seen one of the grandest views imaginable, of the whole district between Killin and Dunkeld.

Fortingal is bounded on the west by the hills of Cudares,—green to the very top; and by the pass of Chesthill: on the north, by Sith-chailinn and contiguous hills: and on the east, by Appin of Menzies;—forming altogether a grand natural amphitheatre, not so extensive, to be sure, as the one to be seen in Rannoch, but, at the same time, comprehending as beautiful and fertile a vale as is to be met with in any part of the Highlands of Perthshire.

Bolfracks.—This is a district of about sixteen ploughs of land, the only detached part of the parish, situated on the south side of the Tay, and containing a population of nearly 200 souls, who, from the distance, are precluded from receiving benefit at their parish church, and participate of Gospel ordinances in other parishes, viz. Weem, Kenmore, and Dull, from each of which they are some miles distant. This population is all connected with the Established Church, two individuals only excepted.

In this district is an extensive quarry of that beautiful stone, of which the splendid edifice Taymouth Castle is built.

Rannoch.—According to some, this name is derived from *Rai-neach*, *Ferns*; but, though abounding with this plant, the district is not more “ferny” than others. The name is rather to be derived from “Rath,” water, “*Ratheanach*,” watery—(the *th* being silent in the Gaelic term,)—a meaning very descriptive of the country, especially when Bun-rannoch is covered over with back water, which it frequently is during a thaw after a great fall of snow on the surrounding mountains. Rannoch then appears as if it were one continued sheet of water. We have the term in the names of many waters, as *Uisge-rath*, a considerable stream which pours its water into the head of *Lochtreig*, parish of Kilmanivaig;—*Caol-rath*, a mountain-stream at the head of *Badenoch*, parish of Laggan;—also *Caol-rath*, the sound separating the isle of Skye from the main-land. The district of Rannoch is collateral, and runs parallel with Glenlyon, extending from the northern base of Sith-chailinn, on the east, in a wester-

ly direction upwards of 30 miles, about 18 miles of which are interspersed with gentlemen's seats, viz. that of General Robertson of Strowan, chief of the clan Robertson, or "*Clann Donnachidh*," as they are called, at Mount Alexander; a seat of Sir Neil Menzies, Bart. of that Ilk, at Rannoch-Lodge, holding a valuable property contiguous, consisting of upwards of 70,000 acres Scotch measure; a seat of Lord Grantley's, eldest son of the late Baron Norton of the Exchequer, whose name is yet mentioned with every mark of respect by the natives;—that of Stewart of Bunnannoch; that of Messrs Stewart of Crossmount and Lassintullich; and that of Colonel John M'Donald of Dalchosnie, 92d Highland Regiment.

The breadth of Rannoch from north to south, is in several places nearly 20 miles; the distance from the lake to the top of the surrounding mountains, on the north, is from 12 to 13 miles. On the south, from 5 to 6 miles—the hilly part is generally a wild tract of moors and deep bogs, mostly covered with heath, with here and there, in a sequestered glen, by the side of a lake or at the foot of a mountain, a green spot, where a number of huts or "bothies," called (in Scotch) shealings, are to be met with, to which the natives were, and I believe still are, in some places, in the habit of retiring during the summer months, with their cattle for pasture,—although the sheep-system has, of late years, a good deal superseded this exhilarating and healthy practice.

At the head of Rannoch, on the estate of Robertson of Strowan, there is a tract of flat land upwards of 4 miles square, consisting of moss, swamps, and bogs, a wild of little value, affording but an indifferent pasturage; even during the summer half-year. The Commissioners upon the forfeited Estates, after 1745–6, observing several parts of this tract level or with a gentle slope, thought to convert them into arable land, and thus, in their estimation, benefit a country where the land capable of cultivation bears a very minute proportion to the waste; they accordingly divided a flat of several hundred acres into four or five portions by deep ditches, digged and burnt the moss; but, after carrying on their labours for several seasons, they at last discovered that where nature does little or nothing, art seldom succeeds; and therefore they were obliged to relinquish the design. The parallel ditches still point out the place, and the labours of the Commissioners.

Caves.—There are several caves in the parish, which do not appear to have ever been properly explored; consequently, little is known of their extent and internal structure. Old people point out

the cliffs and dales where formerly extensive caves existed, capable of containing some dozens of men under arms—which can no longer be discovered, probably because the earth and sand and even rocks have fallen in, and thus for ever closed them up. They were principally formed by nature, but improved by art; and they were remarkable on account of the events of history connected with them, and the heroes who, in troublesome times, took shelter in them,—such as Gille-Bride, or Bredus of the cave, Sir William Wallace, King Robert the Bruce, Ranald Og, chief of Keppoch. This last, a firm supporter of the royal cause under Montrose, was, after the defeat at Philiphaugh in 1645, and the butchery at Dunaverty in 1647, obliged to seek shelter in the caves of Rannoch, several of which bear his name to this day.

There is a very remarkable cave near the south-west angle of *Sith-chailinn*, at the “Shealing,” called *Tom-a-mhorair*, or the Earl’s eminence. Some miles to the east, there is an opening in the face of a rock, which is believed to be the termination thereof. Several stories are told and believed by the credulous, relating to this cave;—that the inside thereof is full of chambers or separate apartments, and that, as soon as a person advances a few yards, he comes to a door, which, the moment he enters, closes, as it opened, of its own accord, and prevents his returning.

Leapa’-dionadh, or Sheltering Beds.—In several places, there occur the caverns known by this name. They do not extend, like caves, under ground,—being only hollows under the shelves of rocks or precipices where one might rest without being observed, and notice any danger or emergency. Several of them bear the names of those who, in consequence of having offended the law, or flying from some hostile party, betook themselves to these lonely retreats. One or two of them may be noticed. In the north side of Glencomrie, in the district of Rannoch, in a rocky precipice, is *Leaba Dhonnacha Dhuibh-a-mhonaidh*, i. e. the Bed of Black Duncan of the Mountain,—a Cameron belonging to that district, and one of Prince Charles Edward Stuart’s heroes. After the battle of Culloden, he often lay concealed in his cavern viewing the soldiers in quest of him, passing and repassing at the foot of the rock, not more than twenty yards distant from him. This man was remarkable for agility and swiftness of foot. While Prince Charles was besieging Stirling Castle, Donnacha Dubh was sent upon some important business to Fort William. Duncan is said to have performed the journey on foot, eighty-eight miles, in one

day,—a task which few pedestrians of this generation, or probably of his own, could achieve.

Another of these sheltering beds is in the face of a hill, on the farm of Invervar, Glenlyon. It is 14 feet long, 6 feet broad, and 4½ feet high; and there is a spring of clear water at the end of it. Here, during their cruel proscription, a gentleman of the clan Gregor, commonly called *Jain Buidhe ruadh*, i. e. John of the yellow-reddish hair, concealed himself. He was a man of an extremely handsome figure, possessed some lands in Glenlyon, and resided on the said farm of Invervar. His principal pursuer was Campbell of Lawers, whose emissaries, by flattering promises, prevailed upon M'Gregor's wife to betray him, which she did in the following manner: She desired the pursuers to come to the glen, and wait in ambush in a certain place all night, and, by keeping an eye on the face of the hill upon the north side of the glen about sunrise, she would discover to them her husband's hiding place by coming out of the cavern, and would walk several times backward and forward in front of it. The morning arrived;—and the sun had no sooner illuminated the rugged mountain than the traitress performed her promise; and, upon her husband's remonstrating on the impropriety of her conduct, she expressed her hopes that nobody, at that early hour, would be in the glen to do them injury. So saying she returned to repose beside her devoted husband. M'Gregor, in a short time, happening to raise himself on his elbow, observed his enemies just at hand, started up, and, after upbraiding his wife as false and treacherous, betook himself to the hills; and never again was heard of.

Meteorology.—Our high mountains have sometimes their peaks enveloped in white clouds, containing little or no moisture. This takes place only during the continuance of warm dry weather. At other times, the mountain tops are covered with dense black clouds, containing a good deal of moisture, and discharging a considerable quantity of very small rain; while such places as are not covered with clouds, as well as the valleys below, are entirely free from rain. In wet weather, mists and fogs sometimes form many singular appearances. At such times, if the day clears up and is sultry, the exhalation from the earth becomes so great, as to form thick clouds upon the face of the steep mountains. Sometimes, a great number of these little clouds unite into one, forming a stripe, seemingly resting on the ground, several miles in length, and not a hundred

feet in thickness, half way up the acclivity, and maintaining a perfect level along the face of the hill.

In the end of harvest or beginning of winter, cold fogs, which collect upon marshes, lakes, or rivers, that receive mossy waters, often prevail. They are seen to ascend the bottom of the glens in every direction, seldom, however, reaching farther up the hill than 700 or 800 feet perpendicular; and a spectator upon the top of a high hill or mountain, would almost imagine the strath and low grounds, when thus covered, to be a vast spreading ocean, with the upper parts of the hills as so many islands scattered upon its surface.

Winds are seldom steady here in any quarter, for any considerable time. In the end of spring or beginning of summer, we have sometimes east or north-east winds, perhaps for a month or more together. Our narrow glens and high mountains often give a contrary direction to the wind, especially when it blows across them, north or south. We find, then, in the bottom of the glen or foot of the mountains, the wind blowing straight east or west.

Prognostics of Weather.—It is well known that large rivers and waterfalls sometimes emit certain sounds, even in the calmest weather, resembling those of cataracts or torrents rushing down rocks and precipices,—which sounds are sure indications of the weather. If the sound of the rapid or cataract descend with the stream, it foretells such rainy weather to be at hand, as will swell the brook or river to its margin; whereas, if the sound ascend along the stream, and die away in the distance, it is an omen of the continuance of dry weather.

If, during a storm of frost and snow in winter, the ptarmigan,—the hardest among the feathered tribes of the Grampians,—be repeatedly heard in the face of the mountain, an additional fall of snow may soon be expected.

Our climate has all the vicissitudes experienced in mountainous countries,—especially in the higher parts of the parish, where the atmosphere, when not damp and saturated with moisture (which in some seasons is the case for nearly two-thirds of the year,) is keen, sharp, and chill. In summer, our proximity to the mountains has a contrary effect upon the atmosphere. Their steep fronts reflecting the solar rays, occasion a greater degree of warmth in our narrow glens than is felt in lower and more southern situations; and during the continuance of this warmth, vegetation is very rapid.

The upper parts of the parish are liable, during summer and harvest, to cold dews and fogs, which arise from low and marshy places and mossy soils, often destroying the crops.

In the lower parts, the crops are generally sure and early. Our climate, upon the whole, is healthy. When easterly winds prevail in the end of spring or beginning of summer, catarrhal complaints are common. We have no other epidemical distempers; and often in wet weather and unhealthy seasons, when neighbouring districts are affected with influenzas and other pulmonary complaints, our glens, owing to their hard and gravelly bottoms, are quite healthy.

Hydrography.—No mineral waters of any consequence have yet been discovered in this parish. On the south side of Sith-chailinn, there is a spring of clear water, allowed by the common people to be nephritic and diuretic, and persons labouring under complaints of gravel or stone drink plentifully of it. From time immemorial, young people of both sexes, sometimes to the number of several hundreds, on the morning of the first Sabbath of May O. S., have been in the habit of repairing to the mountain to quaff the spring. They come from all the surrounding districts, Rannoch, Foss, Appin, Fortingal, and Glenlyon, often a distance of nine or ten miles. It is reckoned particularly lucky to get the first draught, or what is called the cream of the spring. Often, the crystalline dew of Sith-chailinn is qualified by some other dew of a more exhilarating nature.

Lochs.—These are both numerous and extensive, amounting to four or five large, and eight smaller ones,—besides about fifteen pools of considerable size, scattered over the moors.

Loch Rannoch.—This lake is about 12 miles long, and its average breadth may be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Its depth has never been exactly ascertained; but there is every reason to believe, that in the greater part of it, especially in the east end, it is from 60 to 85 fathoms, as 50 fathoms were at one period tried and found short. The lake extends nearly due east and west. In common frost, it freezes for a few miles at the west end, and it is there crossed, in time of hard frost, from side to side, by the country people, without apprehension. But the oldest inhabitant living does not remember, nor has heard of its being frozen from end to end, except twice, the last occasion being in the beginning of the year 1809.*

There are two small islands situate in the upper end of the lake. The east and larger one is wholly artificial, resting upon

* It was also frozen all over in winter 1820.

large beams of wood fixed to each other. This island was sometimes used as a place of safety in cases of emergency; at other times, as a place of confinement for such as rebelled against or offended the chief. To this retreat, there is a road from a point on the south side,—which road is always covered with three or four feet of water, is very narrow, and has a great depth on both sides of it.

The scenery of Loch Rannoch is grand and picturesque, especially when viewed from near the east end, whence you behold a vast body of water which covers the whole level between the hills. The whole south side, from the very margin of the lake to half way up the face of the mountains, seems one continued forest of native birch and pine, known by the name of the “black wood of Rannoch,” hiding in its bosom here and there, as you go along, several beautiful farm villages and gentlemen’s seats. The north side, also, presents alternately extensive woods and well cultivated spots.

On both sides of the lake, the hills retire—gradually leaving an immense expanse open to the view of the beholder. Above the first tier, the highest mountains present to the eye, their dusky summits; and the snowy peaks of Glenetive and Glencoe, are seen in the west, at the distance of 40 miles, as if piercing the highest clouds.

Loch Erochd.—This lake extends from the head of Rannoch in a north-easterly direction towards the stage-house of Dalwhinnie, fully 16 miles. Its mean breadth may be reckoned one mile. A great portion of it belongs to this parish; the rest to the parish of Laggan, Inverness-shire. It is surrounded on both sides by craggy, steep, and lofty mountains, of dreary appearance; but beautiful spots are seen here and there, on which shooting quarters have been erected, and where game of all kinds are to be met with in great abundance. Notwithstanding its elevated situation its water never freezes.*

* Before leaving Loch Erochd, it may not be improper to notice a very old but vague tradition prevalent, regarding the circumstance of its original formation. The tradition, old beyond the memory of several generations back, bears that the whole space now covered with the waters of the lake, was once an inhabited district, and formed a parish called the parish of *Peardail*; that, in the course of one night, after the inhabitants had retired to rest, the flood-gates of some great subterranean body of water were thrown open by some fearful convulsion of nature, and the whole district or parish of *Peardail* was thus inundated, and the population, with their cattle, houses and fields, overwhelmed by this sudden and awful catastrophe.

The tradition also bears, that, for a long period of years, the church, and other remarkable houses and objects were distinctly to be seen on a clear summer’s day, under the water. On the confines of this lake, Prince Charles Edward Stuart took shelter for some time, after the battle of Culloden.

Lochgarry.—This lake is situated at the distance of nearly seven miles to the north-east of Loch Rannoch, extending, nearly due north about 4 miles, to the confines of the parish. It is about half a mile broad.

Loch Laoidean lies about eight miles west from the head of Loch Rannoch, and is about 6 miles long, stretching westward towards Argyleshire. Its breadth is about half a mile. It is a beautiful sheet of water, with many little bosky creeks and promontories, and studded with several finely wooded islands. There is one near the west end, called the Island of Yew, where the red-deer often take shelter, and the noble eagle, undisturbed, builds her nest, and rears her young. It readily freezes.

Loch Lyon is situated at the head of the glen of that name, and extends upwards of three miles south-west. Its breadth is not above half a mile. It is a beautiful and romantic little lake.

All the lakes, both small and great, are well stored with trout, with one exception, and that the only one requiring a particular description. This is in a hollow on the top of Bein-a-gharlagan, a detached mountain at the head of Rannoch. It is called *Loch-a-mhigé*,—literally *the whey lake*, and is a real curiosity. It is nearly three quarters of a mile round, and apparently very deep, and is probably the crater of an ancient volcano; the mountain itself is circular, presenting on the east side a front almost perpendicular, for a space of nearly 1500 feet.

Rivers.—The Tummel, in Gaelic *Teth-thuil*, signifying the hot or boiling flood or river, bears a name not inapplicable to the stream after it has passed the boundaries of this parish. This river, issuing out of Loch Rannoch, is a deep smooth flowing water for several miles, until it leaves the confines of Rannoch, during which it is called the “Water of Rannoch:” but leaving this district, it becomes quite impetuous, till it enters Foss, where it properly receives its general name,—Tummel.

This river at one period flowed out of the lake at a considerable distance south of its present channel. At that period, or probably prior to it, the level ground on both sides of the river, if not wholly inundated, was at least covered with water for several miles. That the water had a higher elevation is also quite observable at the head of the Loch, where the water-marks show that the lake has receded some hundred yards.

Ganhair, *i. e.* *Gaoir*, signifying loud noise. The rapids and cataracts of this river when swollen are distinctly heard at the

distance of several miles. It has its rise on the south side of Glen-Etive, in the deer-forest of the Marquis of Breadalbane, or Coirreacha-Batha. Augmented in its course by the union of many mountain streams, it becomes a considerable river. It intersects the military road in the Black Mount, 5 miles south of the stage at King's House. After a course of 10 or 12 miles, and forming some lakes in its way, especially Loch Batha, nearly 2 miles long, and upwards of half a mile broad, with fine woody islets,—it expands into the fine lake, Loch Laoidean, already described. Issuing thence, it assumes the name of Gearr-Gamhair, or short Gamhair, for 4 or 5 miles; then it enters an extensive tract of low meadow land, which in time of rain it completely inundates, presenting a lake of several miles in circuit, called Loch Eathach. Leaving this occasional lake, it enters the inhabited parts of Rannoch, under the name of Gamhair, and after a course of 8 miles between Loch Laoidean and Loch Rannoch, it enters the latter by two mouths, leaving a beautiful green islet in the middle.

The Lyon.—The source of the Lyon is the lake of that name. Issuing thence, it immediately receives the waters of Meran from the north. After flowing about ten or twelve miles, it receives the Conait, also from the north. The course of the Lyon, with little variation, is easterly. After flowing upwards of forty miles, and being in its course augmented by innumerable mountain streams and rills, it merges into the Tay below Taymouth Castle.

Erochd issues out of the lake of that name, already described. For the space of a mile or two, it is a slow, deep-running water; then it becomes a torrent, tearing its banks with almost irresistible fury, till it is lost in Loch Rannoch. The course of *Erochd* is about 6 miles.

There are a number of other considerable streams; such as *Uisge Arlair*, *Cam-chriochdain*, *Alt-Eathach*, *Meran*, *Conait*, *Duibhe*, &c. &c.

Cascades.—These, as might be expected, are very numerous, there being hardly a solitary brook in a sequestered glen without its waterfall.

On the confines of the parish the Tummel forms a fine cascade. The rivers *Gamhair* and *Duibhe*, at the head of Rannoch, present very fine and picturesque waterfalls,—that of the former called the falls of *Garbhhdhun*; and of the latter the falls of *Tormòr*. The only cascades on the Lyon are the *Sput-ban*, as you en-

ter the glen; and the fall at Moar, where the river is precipitated from a considerable height into a narrow deep pool. Here, when the river is somewhat swollen, great quantities of salmon are caught.

The Conait, for upwards of a mile before it joins the Lyon, presents a succession of beautiful cascades.

The falls of the Keltney, with its wild and rugged banks and romantic scenery, are also worthy of notice.

Geology and Mineralogy—Lime.—The remarkable bed of limestone which traverses the range of the Grampians in a south-westerly direction from Aberdeenshire to Dumbartonshire, passes through this parish towards the east end. The stone is allowed to be of a superior quality. A fine quarry of blue granite has lately been opened and wrought to advantage on the estate of Mr Menzies of Chesthill.

Several veins of marble are to be met with in the parish, (particularly on the estate of Garth,) of various hues and colours.

Rock crystals, spars, and pebbles, of great variety and brilliancy, are frequently gathered among our mountains.

In Glenlyon, there is a vein of lead glance, which is allowed to be of considerable richness. It was wrought for some time about the beginning of the last century, but was then relinquished from some cause or other, probably the want of roads in the district at that period; and it has never since been resumed. Behind the village of Fortingal, there are also several places where the ore partially appears.

Appearances of slate are visible in several parts, particularly on the east side of Sith-chailin, and also in the hill above Fortingal, the stratum evidently following the direction of the fore-mentioned lime bed.

The soil in the bottom of the low valleys is generally gravelly and dry; farther up the hill sides, it becomes cold, yet affords excellent pasturage for cattle, sheep, &c. Still higher up, it is, in general, bleak moor, producing little grass, and covered with heath, abounding with game of various kinds. The summits are often free of heather, and covered with a thick carpet of beautiful moss.

Zoology.—The animals which formerly existed among us, but which are now no longer to be met with, were of the quadruped kind, viz. the wild boar and the wolf. The ancient Caledonian *white* cow also inhabited our forests in former times. And many are the places which take their designation from these several ani-

mals, as *Tom-an-tuirc*, i. e. the knoll of the boar;—*Ruighe-a-mhadaidh*, i. e. the haunt of the mastiff or wolf:—*Doire na-bo gile*, the thicket of the white cow.

Of the feathered race we had, at one time, the capercailzie (caper-coille) or great cock of the wood.

In our remote dells and mountains, there are red-deer: and our woods and forests abound with roes and fallow-deer. We have also the common and Alpine hare; the latter of which is always whitish,—and in winter perfectly white. The fox is of the kind peculiar to high mountains; and although there have been regular fox-hunters in this, as in other quarters of the Highlands, for these seventy or eighty years bygone, they have not yet been able to effect its extirpation. We have, besides, badgers, otters, martins, wild-cats, polecats, weasels and other small quadrupeds. The squirrel has lately also made its appearance in our woods and plantations, as also the rabbit; and another intruder, not quite so welcome, the rat, has forced his way into our most sequestered glens, and even to our most retired apartments.

Among our hills are sometimes seen serpents from a foot to three feet in length; but no person has ever been known to have been hurt by them.

The indigenous birds are the great eagle, the kite, the hawk, the raven, the hooded-crow, the rook, the magpie, water-ouzel, &c.

Those belonging to game are the ptarmigan, the red and black grouse, the partridge, and the woodcock: and towards the end of harvest, the snipe, plover, the fieldfare, the pheasant. Among the migratory tribes that annually visit us and bring up their young with us, are, the swallow, the cuckoo, the corncrake, the sea-mew, the curlew.

We have also the wagtail, the stonechatter, the yellow bunting; as also, on our waters, the crane, wild duck, sand-piper, &c.

In severe winters, flocks of wild geese visit our lakes; but upon the first setting in of fresh weather, they take their departure.

Our finest native songsters are the thrush (*mavis*), the lark, blackbird.

In size and symmetry, our black-cattle, and especially our sheep, yield to few or none in the Highlands; and some of our sheep, and cattle generally, fetch the highest prices, when exhibited at the great cattle-markets in the south.

The lakes, not only those which discharge rivers, but even the small pools in the moors, as already observed, are well stored with

fine trout. In Loch Rannoch, the trout vies in size and shape with the salmon itself, although it is universally allowed that salmon never reach that lake,—being intercepted by the falls of the Tummel. The spawning season of the great and small river trout may comprehend from the beginning of October to the middle of November, when the fish descend into their winter-quarters, in the bottom of the deepest pools.

The best spawning stream in Rannoch, or, indeed, in the whole parish, is Ald-Eithach, at the head of that district. The fish wait the first flood, in the end of September or beginning of October, to ascend this stream; and trout (not salmon) of upwards of a yard in length, and weighing above 30lbs., are met with, and killed by the spear and torch. The otter, too, sometimes destroys the very largest of the trout, and they are often found dead in the water. The mode of his attack seems to be, to seize the fish in shallow water, by the breast, close to the gills; for, when found dead, no other part of it seems injured or touched. At the confluence of the Erochd with Loch Rannoch, the finest trout imaginable are caught by the fly or minnow, in the months of December and January.

The only river in the parish which the salmon reaches, is the Lyon, which it ascends as early as the middle of March. Its spawning-time commences about the middle of October, and terminates by the middle of December. In the *Gamhair* and Lyon, and also in many of the smaller streams, there is abundance of that species of shell-fish, or, as it is called, the horse-muscle or pearl oyster, in which beautiful pearls are sometimes found.

Botany.—This parish, from the mountainous nature of it, is fertile in rare botanical productions. On the tops of the highest mountains, the botanist may gather, with the greatest delight, different kinds of plants, such as the various kinds of Lycopodiums, as also that beautiful tribe the Saxifrages; and on some of them, the *Saxifraga reticulata*:—the *Azalea procumbens*, the *Sibbaldia procumbens*, the *Thalictrum alpinum*, the *Epilobium alpinum*, the *Vaccinium uliginosum* the *Vaccinium Vitis-idaea*; and on the tops of some of the hills in the braes of Glenlyon, the *Vaccinium oxycoccos*; also the *Rubus Chamæmorus* the *Arbutus alpina*, the *Dryas octopetala*: and the *Drosera rotundifolia* and *longifolia*, (these two very common), and the *Myosotis rupicola*: also rearing its majestic head among the steepest rocks the *Rhodiola rosea*, and numerous other rare small plants interest-

ing to the naturalist and botanist, and too numerous to be mentioned. But I cannot pass by that beautiful tribe of the vegetable kingdom, the Cryptogamia, without remarking the great varieties of them in this district. Of the Filices, the botanist will find the *Osmunda regalis*, the Lycopodiums, the Polypodium, and the Cytheas; of the Musci tribe, the Sphagnum, the Phascums, and the Splachnum: and that most interesting of all, the Dicranum, and Hypnum.

On the whole, this parish is well worthy of being travelled by botanists, where perhaps they will discover new plants, on mountains never before explored by any with a philosophic eye.

Forests and Plantations.—Our plantations, though they meet the eye in many parts of the parish, are not very extensive. They are chiefly of fir; both the spruce and larch seem to thrive almost as well as the native species; as also ash, oak, birch, beech, elm, &c.

In Rannoch, there is a considerable forest of native fir, and a great deal more of birch still remaining, which is considered as part of the ancient Caledonian forest, which, at one time, extended from Glencoe to Braemar, a distance of not less than 80 miles, and from Glenlyon to the Spian, Loch Laggan, and the Spey, Inverness-shire,—comprehending a tract of mountains, glens, morasses, and blue lakes, of upwards of 2100 square miles.

What remains of the celebrated yew tree of Fortingal churchyard, described by Pennant in his Tour, appears as two distinct trees, some yards distant from each other. At the commencement of my incumbency, thirty-two years ago, there lived in the village of Kirktown, a man of the name of Donald Robertson, then aged upwards of eighty years, who declared that, when a boy going to school, he could hardly enter between the two parts; now a coach-and-four might pass between them; and that the dilapidation was partly occasioned by the boys of the village kindling their fire of *Bealltuinn* at its root. It is from 52 to 56 feet in circumference.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Battles.—In the reign of King Robert I. or II., a battle was fought near the River Erochd, two miles north of the head of Loch Rannoch, between Donnachā Reamhar (i. e. athletic Duncan) progenitor of the Robertsons of Strowan, and M'Dougal of Lorn, who, with his followers, had penetrated into Perthshire as far as the Erochd, in order, it is said, to correspond with, or join, the English. Donnacha Reamhar, as soon as apprized of the

PERTH.

M M

circumstance, quickly assembled his followers from Rannoch, Strath-Tummel, and Athole; concealed them near the east side of Erochd, that he might seize the first opportunity to attack the invaders; and, wishing to ascertain as well as possible their numbers and strength, disguised himself as a beggar, and got into the very heart of their camp. The Lorn men anxiously inquired of him concerning the number of the army opposed to them, and Donnacha Reamhar's personal prowess. They were answered that he was allowed by those who knew him to be a very cruel man; but he hoped they would have him soon in their power. Duncan having now obtained his desire, and not wishing to remain any longer surrounded by inquiring crowds of enemies, endeavoured slowly to withdraw to the outside, which raised the suspicions of the invaders that their new acquaintance was either a real spy, or even Donnacha Reamhar himself; and immediately they commenced a keen pursuit. But the Rannoch hero soon distanced them all except one, on whom he turned with all his fury, despatching him before his countrymen could come up to his rescue; then, redoubling his exertions and speed, he came to the Erochd, which he cleared by one spring, and his pursuers were obliged to stop short. Afterwards, with his men, recrossing the river, he came upon the Lorn men almost unawares. They, however, made a noble and determined stand; but after a dreadful conflict, in which many were slain, they were completely overpowered, and a great many taken prisoners; among whom was the Chief of Lorn himself, who, for some time thereafter, was confined in the artificial island of Loch Rannoch, but was afterwards amicably released.

About a century later, a severe conflict took place on the farm of *Dunan Rannoch*. The hostile parties were the Stewarts of Appin, Argyleshire, and a tribe inhabiting, at that time, the head of Rannoch, called *Clann Jain Bhuidhe*, (the children or descendants of John of the yellow hair.) The cause was this,—Two pedlars of the Stewarts of Appin went to Perth for goods, and, upon their return home by Rannoch, were robbed or killed by *Clann Jain Bhuidhe*. As soon as tidings reached Argyleshire, the Chief of Appin gathered his clan, and marched immediately to Perthshire. The first night, he rested his men upon the confines of Rannoch, where he observed at some distance a habitation with some flocks and herds. This belonged to one of the M^rGregors of Roro Glenlyon, who, for some fault, was banished that district by the rest of the clan. Stewart sent him a polite message, requesting some re-

freshment to his men; when M'Gregor, in the true spirit of ancient hospitality, sent his servant with a fat cow, which pleased the Chief of Appin so well, that he desired an interview with M'Gregor; and proposed that he should accompany him next day, and that, should they be able to extirpate or banish *Clann Jain Bhuidhe* from Rannoch, he should have all their lands to himself. This proposal was readily accepted; and next day M'Gregor with his servants marched along with the Stewarts. On the farm of Dunan, near the side of the river Gamhair, they were met by the *Clann Jain Bhuidhe* in full muster to receive them. In the battle which ensued, most of the *Clann Jain Bhuidhe* were slain, the rest were hemmed in by the victors, and obliged to swim the river; and the few that escaped fled to other districts. A small rill, called by old people *Caochan-na-Fola* (the rill of blood), points out, to this day, the place where the action was fought. The chief of Appin, having now had his full revenge, quickly retraced his steps to Argyleshire, after bidding adieu to his new ally, and wishing him joy of his newly acquired possessions. M'Gregor had now as much land as his chieftain of Roro; and the family of Dunan for many generations was among the most respectable of the clan Gregor in these districts.

Many other battles might be mentioned, such as that of *Laggan-a-chatha*, fought betwixt the Stewarts of Garth and the M'Ivors of Glenlyon; that of *Glen-Sassun*,—fought betwixt King Robert the Bruce and Edward's adherents;—of which a short notice was given in the former Statistical Account.

A long and severe feud existed betwixt the clan Cameron and the Macintoshes,—whereof this parish was occasionally the scene, and which continued, it is said, for 350 years; during which, many acts of cruel retaliation took place, until the latter submitted to Sir Evan Cameron in the seventeenth century. *

Remarkable and Extraordinary Leaps.—These are,—1st, *Donnacha Reamhar's* leap over the river *Erochd*, when he was pursued by the M'Dougals, as already related. The river is confined by the opposite rugged rock into a breadth of about 16 feet, where the torrent rushes through with irresistible fury; and this chasm the hero is said to have cleared at one spring,—the bank of the stream at that place being so steep and uneven that it could not

* Details of these feuds are given in the MS.

be a running but a standing leap. It retains still the name of *Leum Dhonnacha Reamhair*.

2d, *Leum-a-Chleasaiche*, (the man of Feats' leap.) This is at the head of Fortingal, properly so called, where the Lyon has opened for itself a passage in the solid rock, seemingly not worn down from the surface by degrees, as is generally the case; but as if the river had at once burst through, leaving the rock joined above like an arch, which the swellings of the stream have in the course of ages widened and separated. The breadth of the gullet is about 20½ feet. The depth of it is about 20 feet.

3d, *Leum-mhic-a-Cheannaiche*, *i. e.* the chapman's son's leap, over the river of Bunrannoch,—which consists of first a leap to a rock in the middle of the current, and then a spring to the opposite bank. The hero of this feat is said to have been one of the M'Gregors proscribed by the law at the time,—and pursued by the Campbells and the *black dogs*, as they were called. After gaining the opposite bank, he turned round upon the latter with all his fury, dispatched them, and got clear off.

4th, *Leum Phurraig*.—This was a nickname of one Campbell, who lived in Carie Rannoch in the earlier part of the seventeenth century. He was a famous marksman with the bow and arrow, and very swift of foot,—qualifications he had sometimes occasion to avail himself of. In flying from the Macdonalds of Glencoe, he is said to have made the leap here mentioned over Linne-choimhleum, in the den above Innerchadden and Dalchosnie.*

Records.—Most of the proprietors of this parish having risen with Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1745, their houses, papers, &c. were destroyed by the royalists, and consequently the principal family records were thus lost. There are in my own possession, documents showing, that, in the reign of Charles II., a parochial school was in existence in this parish.

Eminent Men.—Major-General David Stewart of Garth, author of *Sketches of the Highlands and of the Highland Regiments*, was a native and an heritor of the parish. He died in St Lucia, West Indies, in 1829, Governor of that island, much and justly regretted by all who knew him.

Struan Robertson, chief of that name, and, in his day, one of the most considerable proprietors of the parish, was an elegant poet. An octavo volume of Struan's poems was published after his death from his manuscripts, or rather from the recollection of

* Particulars are detailed in the MS.

those who heard them repeated at the time ; but while the worst of them were recollected, as generally happens, the best were allowed to escape the memory.

Allan Stewart of Innerchadden, who lived much about the same time, and was also a proprietor in the parish, was a poet no less eminent than the chief of the brave Clann Donnachaidh (Robertsons) above-mentioned. He, as well as Strowan, shared in the common calamities of those who took up arms in favour of Prince Charles in 1745. Their houses were burnt, and their properties plundered.

Dougal Buchanan was another eminent character connected with the district. Though not a native, he resided here for a considerable time after the middle of the last century, as teacher on the establishment of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at Kinloch Rannoch,—a valuable man in his day, and highly useful in enlightening the people in the knowledge of the truths of the Gospel. In his manners among his intimate acquaintance, he was affable, free, and jocular ; he was consequently much esteemed, both by the gentlemen and common people of the district, who, when they had not an opportunity of hearing sermon from the parish minister, flocked to him upon Sabbaths, when he read and expounded the Scriptures to them. He was a severe disciplinarian, feared, but at the same time beloved, insomuch, that the people offered to raise a fund to send him to College, so as to get him licensed to preach the Gospel, and become their pastor in the district on the Royal Bounty ; but, from some cause or other, the plan was not followed out. Dougal Buchanan was the author of a small but valuable collection of sacred poems, in the Gaelic language,—which displays poetical talent of no ordinary kind. They are to this day admired, and read with benefit by every Christian who understands the language. He composed several songs on various subjects, that were never published.

Land-owners.—The chief land-owners are, John Stewart Menzies, Esq. of Foss and Chesthill ; Ronald Menzies, Esq. of Culdares ; Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell, Bart. of Garth ; Francis Garden Campbell, Esq. of Troup and Glenlyon ; The Most Noble the Marquess of Breadalbané ; General Robertson of Strowan ; Sir Neil Menzies of that Ilk, Bart. ; Colonel John M'Donald of Dalchosnie, C. B. 92d Highlanders ; Messrs Stewart of Innerchadden, of Lassentullich, and of Crossmount.

Parochial Registers.—The earliest entry in the parochial re-

gisters now extant, is 1748. They are now very irregularly kept, not a tithe of the births or baptisms being recorded.

Antiquities and Curiosities.—Among these, may be included the yew tree in the churchyard of Fortingal, already noticed. The Roman Camp, as it is called, is at the west end of Fortingal. The spot where the General's tent is allowed to have stood, is surrounded by a deep *fosse*. To the west of this, at a short distance from each other, are two obelisks, the one about 6 feet high: the other lying on the ground, having been undermined some fifty or eighty years ago. It is 8 feet long. The prætorium, is still complete. A little to the north-west, is an ablong eminence, nearly 60 feet long, and 18 broad, and about 7 feet high, which appears to be a *tumulus*, raised over those who fell in the deadly conflict.

From a slight inspection of the ground, it appears that the Lyon at one period flowed to the *north* of the camp, though now some hundred yards to the south; and this is farther confirmed by the tradition of the country. Nor is it unlikely that all the ditches surrounding the camp were filled with water from the river. The area occupied is allowed to be from 80 to 90 acres in extent.

Near the church of Fortingal, in the middle of a field, is a large Druidical circle. Many of the stones have, from time to time, been buried in the ground, to make way for the plough. The circular forts, of which the ruins of fourteen or fifteen are still distinctly traced, are built without any cement or mortar, of such large stones as would cost the moderns immense labour, if not altogether baffle them, without the aid of machinery, to raise and lay with such nicety and regularity on each other. The diameter of the circles within walls (which are generally 8 feet thick) is sometimes 60 feet. The original height of the walls cannot now with accuracy be traced or ascertained; because of the constant dilapidation carried on by people from the neighbouring villages; but the presumption is, that it was not less than 12 feet. It does not clearly appear that they were watch-towers, as has been conceived by some, as they are but *seldom* in view of each other, and are as often in low as in high situations. That they were real habitations, there can be little doubt; for it is quite evident that, in some of them, there were several halls or apartments; tradition bears that there were twelve. The apartments extended from the wall, which served as a common gable, towards the centre. Some ascribe these buildings to the Druids: but if any credit be due to the uniform tradition of old

people, these buildings belonged to the Fingalians. For Fingal's heroes are said to have had 20 or 21 castles, as they were called, scattered over this parish. In the upper part of the glen, on the farm of *Cashlie*, i. e. Castles, there are, within the distance of a mile, three of these, one—*Caisteal an Deirg*, the Castle of Dargo—another, *Caisteal an Duibhe*—the castle of the black hero,—and *Caisteal coin-a-bhacain*—the Castle of the dog's kennel. This bacan, or stake, to which the Fingalians tied their stag-hounds, and from which the castle is named, is a thin stone, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, resembling the letter q, with the small end set into the ground, upon a little green eminence.

Although it is difficult or rather impossible to ascertain the era to which these forts should be referred,—the total want of lime in their construction, though it is often found in great plenty in the very neighbourhood, renders it probable that they were built before its use was known to the inhabitants. The presumption also is, that these forts are the first rude specimens of architecture in the country. The difference between these and the castles of succeeding or feudal ages is remarkably striking, and shows clearly that the art of building had, before the era of the latter, undergone a very great change.

Besides the Fingalian castles, there are other two old castles, the residence of chiefs during the feudal ages, and which, before the introduction of fire-arms, might be deemed impregnable. The one in the east end of the parish, was occupied by the *Cuilean Cursta*, or the Fierce Wolf, as he was called, brother of the Earl of Buchan, from whom a great number of the Stewarts of Athol are descended. (See Stewart's Sketches.) This castle is built upon the point of a rock where two deep chasms meet, formed by brooks flowing at their bottom; it was defended by a ditch or draw-bridge.

The other castle is at the foot of Glenlyon, situated on a high steep bank, and defended also by a drawbridge. The last proprietor that resided here, about the middle of the sixteenth century, was Duncan Campbell of Glenlyon, commonly called *Donnacha ruagh na feileachd*, i. e. Red Duncan of Hospitality: he is said to have carried his hospitality to such an extravagant and romantic height, that his fame in this respect was not confined to Scotland, but extended to the sister island, Ireland.

There is on the farm of Inverchadain, an old ruin, called *She-omar-na-Staing*, i. e. the Ditch Hall. It seems to have been

built of no other materials than earth and turf, according to the description given of it by Blind Harry. Here Wallace, coming from Argyle, attended by a few faithful adherents, rested with his men for some days. And the Rannoch men, glad of such an opportunity, immediately joined the hero's standard, and marched to attack the English at Dunkeld and Perth.

King Robert the Bruce was in Rannoch on two occasions; on one of which, he gained a victory over the English at Dalchosnie. On another occasion, after sustaining a defeat on the confines of Argyle, he was obliged to conceal himself for a considerable time in Rannoch, at a place, still called after him, *Seomar an-righ*, the King's Hall, a sequestered and beautiful romantic spot on the side of the Tummel, below Crossmount. Gilbride, or Bredus of the Cave, as he is called in history, also took shelter in Rannoch. Being defeated by the King's troops in his attempts to recover possession of "the Isles," he for some time concealed himself till the King's troops should retire. Hence he was called Gilbride of the cave. The cave or hiding-place was no other than the north side of Loch Rannoch, where he principally took shelter; and a farm there got its name from the circumstance, *Aulich*, i. e. *Uamh-fhalaich*, the hiding-place or cave. There is on the face of the hill above the farm, a remarkable well or spring of water gushing out of the earth, the strongest I ever remember seeing, called *Fuaran Ghille-bhrìde*, or Bredus's well. A few such would inundate the parish of Feadail,—of which already Gillebride's Cairn is not far distant; and other places in the neighbourhood are still called after him.

III.—POPULATION.

At present, no part of the parish is more populous than it was in 1790; whereas in several districts, the population has since decreased fully a half; and the same will be found to have taken place, though not perhaps in so great a proportion, in most or all of the pastoral districts of the county.

According to census of 1801, the population was	-	3875
1811,	-	3236
1821,	-	3189
1831,	-	3067
Number of families in the parish,	-	621
chiefly engaged in agriculture,	-	273
in trade, manufactures, or handicraft,	-	119

One of the principal causes of the decrease has been emigration. Upwards of 120 families from this parish, since the former Account was drawn up, have crossed the Atlantic, besides many

individuals of both sexes; while many others have sought a livelihood in the low country, especially in the great towns of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Crieff, &c. The system of uniting several farms together, and letting them to one individual, has, more than any other circumstance, promoted emigration.

There are seven different burying-places in the parish,—two in Glenlyon, one in Fortingal, and four in Rannoch,—at none of which are registers of burials kept.

Language, Character, &c. of the People.—The Gaelic is the language of the natives. It is, however, losing ground, and losing its purity, very much of late. Forty years ago, in some parts of the parish, especially in the district of Rannoch, it was spoken in as great purity as in any district of the Highlands. That race of genuine natives having disappeared, many of their phrases and idioms have become almost unintelligible to the rising generation. It is, however, gratifying to the antiquary and to the lover of Celtic literature, that so much has been done to rescue the language and insure its permanency and stability; still all that is practicable has not yet been achieved. Hundreds of vocables might be collected which have escaped the notice of the several learned compilers of our Gaelic dictionaries.

The people may be characterized as intellectual, sober, and industrious in their habits, honest and religious. Crime and delinquency are ashamed to raise their heads; and consequently occur as rarely among us, as in any parish of equal extent and population, in the Highlands, or in any part of the kingdom.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Not even an approximation to the number of acres of arable, waste, pasture, common, woods, &c. can be given.

The indigenous kinds of trees that prevail are the birch, fir, alder, hazel, oak, elm, ash, plane, willow, beech, the yew. The kinds generally planted, and which thrive well, are the Scotch fir, larch, spruce, oak.

The arable land in this parish bearing but a very small proportion to that in pasture, and the holdings invariably consisting of very disproportionate quantities of both,—the rent of small crofts will give the best idea of the rate of land in this parish. The rent of a lot of two acres, with as much hill grazing attached as is sufficient for the maintenance of a horse, a cow, and two dozen sheep, summer and winter, is from L. 6, 10s. to L. 7.; of a lot of five acres, having

corresponding pasture for a horse, two cows, and one or two young cattle, with some dozen sheep, L. 14 to L. 17.

The average expense of grazing a sheep, of which there are about 62,000 in the parish, is from 3s. to 3s. 6d. per annum. The summer grazing of a cow, of which there are about 1200 in the parish, is L. 1; of young cattle, of which there are about 3000, from 5s. 6d. to 8s. 6d.; horses, of which there are about 360, from L. 1, 5s. to L. 1, 10s. on low ground, and L. 1 for hill grass.

Wages.—A farm-labourer receives in winter about 1s. per day with victuals; in harvest from 1s. 6d. to 2s. A woman, during the same seasons, respectively, from 3d. and 9d. to 1s., with victuals also. A farm-servant's wages run from L. 10 to L. 13, with victuals in his master's family. A servant-maid's wages are from L. 4 to L. 5, 10s.

Live-Stock.—Our sheep are mostly of the black-faced kind, and our black-cattle of the West Highland breed. Great attention is paid to the improvement of both among all classes of graziers; and consequently, when a public sale happens by one of our principal graziers, it is not uncommon to see a bull knocked down for L. 50, a cow for L. 40, and queys at L. 35!

Some of our best sheep stocks, when sold by apprizement, bring L. 26 per clad score.

Leases generally run for five, seven, eleven, fifteen, and nineteen years. Seven is the most general term. Leases are considered favourable to the occupiers, as affording them confidence in carrying on improvements on their farms. The improvements on the old mode of farming have been very great. In my younger days hardly any plough went without four horses, and two athletic men to lead and drive. But that mode of agriculture is now gone by.

The improvements in farm-buildings and inclosures are equally remarkable and progressive. When a new lease is obtained, the heritor or proprietor meets the farmer's wishes, with a liberality that does him credit. Splendid and elegant accommodations are furnished for the tenant; and the steadings and houses for the cattle, &c. are excellent.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—It can hardly be said that there is any market-town or village in the parish. The nearest market-towns are Crieff and Perth, distant respectively thirty and forty miles.

Means of Communication.—The means of communication enjoyed by the parish are but indifferent. There are several carriers

from the parish, regularly plying betwixt it and Perth. Between Aberfeldy and the extremity of Glenlyon, there is a runner three times a-week, passing and repassing through the district of Fortingal; but the graziers in the upper parts of the glen are served indifferently. At Kinloch-Rannoch, a penny post-office was lately established. The communication is with Pitlochry three times a-week. The letters, &c. for the district are regularly brought forward thus far by post, and thence circulated by the best means that offer, through the country.

Our bridges and fences are generally kept in good repair. I would particularly refer to the great improvements made, of late years, in bridges, fences, and roads, upon Sir Niel Menzies's property of Slismine, in this parish. In connection with the trustees of the estate of Strowan, the patriotic Baronet also caused to be erected, last summer, a most elegant new bridge over the Gamhaire, at the west end of Loch Rannoch. I regret to say that the heavy floods of last harvest carried off this beautiful structure; but it is now in the course of being rebuilt by the same parties.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is situated within three miles of the south-east corner of the parish. There are, also, two Government churches,—one in the district of Rannoch, and the other in that of Glenlyon,—both of which have lately been erected into parishes (*quoad sacra*) by the General Assembly. The three churches form nearly the angular points of an equilateral triangle, whose side is about twelve miles. The parish is thus divided into three great portions or districts, (exclusive of the district of Bolfracks,) south of the Tay. The parish church is about six miles from the limits of its own district, *quoad sacra*, on the west, three from the east, and about four from the north-east; but its distance is from thirty-five to forty miles from the western boundary, *quoad civilia*. The government churches are at least seventeen and twenty-six miles from the extremities of their respective districts. To afford the remote parts of their congregations every opportunity to hear the word, the ministers often preach, the one at a station eight miles, and the other twelve miles, distant from their respective churches. There are eleven heritors or land proprietors in the parish, all whose estates are of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards. It is but justice to mention here, as an instance of their generous spirit and liberality, that a few years ago they built one of

the most handsome school-rooms in the Highlands of Perthshire, for the parish, with suitable accommodation to the teacher.

A most splendid manse and court of offices were also lately erected for the accommodation of the minister; to the building of which the heritors agreed, without any solicitation on his part.

The church, a very old fabric, though as firm as the surrounding rocks, was newly seated, roofed, ceiled, lathed and plastered about the year 1821. It bears every mark of having been a Popish construction; and is rather inconveniently narrow, particularly at the time of dispensing the Sacrament, when immense crowds attend from the surrounding districts.

Education.—There are 12 schools in the parish, viz. the parochial school; 2 schools on the General Assembly's scheme; 2 on that of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge; and 7 others supported by families, which, being remote from the established schools, join in hiring a young lad, to teach their children, during four or five months of the winter only. All are, however, connected with the Established Church. The parochial teacher has the legal accommodations to the full, and the maximum salary, besides an allowance for a garden. The Assembly teachers have each a free house, croft, and cow's grass, and a salary of L. 20. Those of the Society have the same emoluments as the Assembly teachers, with a salary of L. 15 or L. 20, and a few pounds for fuel. The amount of fees received by the teachers of the Assembly and Society schools, owing to the indigence of the inhabitants in their neighbourhoods, is merely nominal, or quite inconsiderable.

Poor.—The number of persons receiving parochial aid is from 60 to 70, throughout the whole parish. The weekly collections at the churches may amount to about L. 50 per annum. Some of the poor get only 10s. or 12s; others L. 1 or L. 1, 10s. In cases of emergency, the heritors meet, and assess themselves for the support of extraordinary paupers and lunatics, sometimes to the extent of L. 60 or L. 80.

Rannoch, Glenlyon, and Fortingal have each their separate kirk-sessions and boxes for the poor; and each district may collect L. 16 or L. 18, which goes to the support of their own paupers, while the heritors' assessment is for the whole parish generally.

Few of our poor go about begging,—none in this section of the parish. Still we are infested by a great many vagrants from the great towns of the south. Our poor are thankful and patient un-

der privations; and excepting in cases of real want, and when compelled by the strongest necessity, it may be said that the disposition to refrain from seeking parochial aid is general.

Fairs.—There are 7 fairs held in the parish,—one at Kirkton of Fortingal in the beginning of December, lasting two or three days; at which sheep, goats, and cattle are exposed and bought for being slaughtered for winter store. Some of the inhabitants buy a clad score or two. At this market, a great deal of other business is transacted, accounts paid, servants engaged, &c. There is another fair held at Kirkton, about the end of April, called the “Seed Fair,” because the tenants and others resort to it for their lintseed, clover-seed, &c. Another is held in August, being the greatest market for lambs in these bounds. At Kinloch-Rannoch, there are also three fairs,—one in August for lambs, &c., one in the end of October, and another in April for cattle, &c.; and one at Inverwick, Glenlyon, first Thursday, O. S. for sheep, &c.

Inns.—There are 4 inns in the parish, affording such accommodations as can be expected in a district like this. There are, besides, 6 other houses in retired or remote districts, where whisky, porter, &c. are sold to refresh the traveller, and to which the tenants in the neighbourhood retire on rent days, weddings, &c.

Fuel.—The principal fuel of the parish is peats. In many places, these are scarce, and procured, sometimes, from an elevation of little less than 3000 feet. Wood and turf are partially used also. Coals are brought to the district, by such as can afford it, from Crieff or Perth.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The changes which have taken place since the former Account was drawn up, are quite striking. Then, most of the tenantry in the parish removed, for the benefit of grazing, with their cattle to their shealings, sometimes to the distance of twenty miles. There they remained several months during the summer season, the men employing themselves chiefly in fishing and hunting, the women in spinning and attending to the dairy. And among the middle class of tenants, instances were not uncommon of families paying the rent in this way, by manufacturing lint of their own growth. But now, nothing more is done than what is barely required for family use; because there is no demand. The milk cows are now generally housed every night, summer and winter, and the dairy-maid's musical voice is no longer heard in the fold.

The tale and the song have now also ceased to cheer the winter ingle; and our old people often complain, that the reign of ancient faith and brotherly neighbourhood, which knew no guile, is usurped by mercenary and selfish aims, which have completely done away with that clannish and family attachment, for which Highlanders in former times were so celebrated.

At that time, the women, when they went abroad, dressed in linsay-woolsey, or other homespun apparel, their finest attire; and it was exceedingly rare to meet a woman at church or market, with a straw bonnet or umbrella. Now, the meanest servant maid cannot appear at either, without being provided with both.

Excepting in families of independent circumstances, *tea* was then unknown. Now, it is almost incredible how much is expended on this article by our peasantry. There was, then, little if any clover or turnip sown in the parish; now, even the crofter who rents a few acres, must have his little plot allotted and enclosed for the former, and a ridge or two for the latter. Very great changes for the better have also taken place, in the management of funerals, late-wakes, and weddings. Instead of the unseemly scenes and riots which frequently took place on such occasions, the strictest propriety and decorum now prevail. In husbandry, also, a most remarkable improvement has taken place: and societies for the advancement of every branch of agricultural improvements have been established among us, the beneficial effects of which are visible.

July 1838.

PARISH OF BLAIR-ATHOLL.

PRESBYTERY OF DUNKELD, SYNOD OF PERTH AND STIRLING.

THE REV. JOHN STEWART, MINISTER.

L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name, Boundaries, &c.—THE four separate parishes of Blair, Lude, Kilmaveonaig, and Strowan, constitute what is now generally designated the parish of Blair-Atholl. Though the conditions and period of the annexation of these parishes are unknown, it is certain that their union took place before 1632. The names