

heirs and successors, are trustees, with unlimited power as to the management of the school, and appointment of the teacher. Owing to the poverty of the people, the fees in each of these schools are very inconsiderable.

Fuel.—The fuel is peats, which the women carry home in creels on their backs, from a very great distance.

April 1840.

PARISH OF BRACADALE.

PRESBYTERY OF SKYE, SYNOD OF GLENELG.

THE REV. JOHN R. GLASS, MINISTER.*

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE name of the parish, which appears to be compounded of the Celtic adjective *breac* (spotted,) and the Norse word *dale* (field,) has been the same from time immemorial.

Extent.—Its length is about 20, and its extreme breadth about 8 miles.

Boundaries, &c.—It is bounded on the south and south-west by the sea; on the north, by the parish of Duirinish; on the east, by the parishes of Snizort and Portree; and on the south-east, by the parish of Strath. Its form is very irregular, being intersected by arms of the sea in various directions. The only hills in it of particular interest are part of that ranged called Coullin, stretching along the boundary between it and the parish of Strath, and so justly celebrated for their picturesque appearance; and a hill called *Prismheall*, overhanging the farm-house of Tallisker. But the surface is in general very hilly.

In that district of the parish called Minginish, there are various valleys which form almost the only low and flat lands; but that of Tallisker is the only one worthy of particular remark, its formation being highly romantic, and its soil particularly fertile. In the other district, there are several detached fields along the coast.

* Drawn up by the Rev. Roderick Macleod, formerly Minister of Bracadale, now of Snizort.

The extent of coast is probably about 60 miles: it is flat in some places, but, for the most part, high and rocky. In the bays the shore is either sandy or clayey; but in the more exposed parts of the coast very rough and stony.

The principal bays are Lochs Bracadale and Eynort, both affording safe and commodious anchorage to vessels of any burden. The head-lands are Rhuandunan, the southernmost point of the parish, and Tallisker-head to the west, at the southern entrance of Loch Bracadale. The islands are Soay, Wiay, and Taarner; the first lying about south-east by east of the point of Rhuandunan, opposite to Loch Skavaig, at the head of which is the celebrated *Coiruisg*, (for a description of which and the surrounding scenery, the reader is referred to the notes appended to Sir Walter Scott's poem of the Lord of the Isles); the two last lying at the mouth of Loch Bracadale, opposite Tallisker-head to the north.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owner.—Macleod of Macleod is sole proprietor.

Parochial Register.—The parochial register is but of a recent date, and is as regularly kept as the present state of the law will admit; for, without a legislative enactment rendering it imperative on parties to register births and deaths, no regularity can ever be expected in the matter.

Antiquities.—There are no antiquities worthy of notice, unless it be the ruins of two circular towers, the most entire of which is close by, and seen from, the Parliamentary road, about a mile and a-half from the manse northwards.

Modern Buildings.—The only modern buildings are the church, a distillery, two slated houses on feued ground lately built, and some farm-houses, all of the ordinary materials.

III.—POPULATION.

At the time of the last Statistical Account, the population was 2250 souls. By the last census it was 1769, and since that period there has been a farther decrease. This decrease is solely to be ascribed to the system of farming which has for some time been adopted, viz. throwing a number of farms into one large tack for sheep-grazing, and dispossessing and setting adrift the small tenants.

The average number of persons under 15 years of age is 589
 betwixt 15 and 30, - 565
 30 and 50, - 295
 50 and 70, - 221
 upwards of 70, - 57

There is only one gentleman of supposed independent fortune residing in the parish.

There are about 20 unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers upwards of fifty years of age, and about 150 unmarried women upwards of forty-five years of age. The average number of children in each family is 4.

Language.—The language generally spoken is Gaelic; and it has lost no ground within the last forty years.

Habits of the People.—The habits of the people are far from cleanly. In their dress, they are not different from the other inhabitants of the Hebrides; and as to their food they are generally not considered ill provided, who can feed on potatoes and salt; and during the last season even that would have been a luxury to many of them. Regarding their comforts as to clothing, it may be sufficient to mention, that, when it was apprehended the cholera would spread to these quarters, inquiries were directed to be made on this point, and there were 140 families found in the parish who had no change of night or day-clothes. From the above remarks as to food and clothing, it must appear evident, that the people are far from enjoying the ordinary comforts of society; and, under such circumstances, it is but natural they should feel discontented with their situation; and if their complaints are not more loudly heard, one great reason is, that the system of farming pursued has placed them in such absolute dependence on the tacks-men, as to preclude any hope of amelioration.

Character.—The people, in general, are shrewd and sagacious, and manifest a good degree of intellect as to the ordinary affairs of life; as to morality and religion, it is yet but a day of small things.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—The number of arable acres, according to survey, is 4878; of pasture and hill-grazing, 68,311. From the system of farming already mentioned, the proportion of the arable ground in cultivation is inconsiderable.

There is no arable land rented separately. The average rent of grazing is at the rate of L. 3 per cow, and at the rate of 2s. 6d. per ewe for the year.

Leases.—The general duration of leases is fifteen years. The staple produce of the parish is sheep and cattle, on the rearing of which considerable attention is bestowed. Of sheep, there are annually exported about 4500, and of black-cattle about 450.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Means of Communication.—There is a post-office at Struan, about half a mile west from the manse, close by the Parliamentary road, which, from one end of the parish to the other, is in extent about twenty miles. The road and bridges are always kept in good repair.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is situated in a hollow spot of ground on the north side of a small arm of Loch Bracadale, called Lochbeg, within a few yards of the public road, about a quarter of a mile below the manse, as conveniently as it could well be placed; the greater part of the population being distant six miles from the northern, and about fourteen miles from the southern extremity of the parish. It was built in 1831, and affords accommodation to between 500 and 600 sitters. The sittings are all free.

The manse was built about forty years ago, and received some additions and repairs in 1828. The glebe contains about 30 acres, and its value is about L. 15. The amount of the stipend is L. 150.

There is one missionary supported by the Royal Bounty. There is a catechist supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Divine service is always well attended. The average number of communicants is about 20.

Education.—There are five schools in the parish; the parochial school, and other four schools, supported partly by societies, and partly by private subscriptions. The branches generally taught, are, Gaelic, English, writing, and arithmetic. The salary of the parochial schoolmaster is L. 28. Those of the rest vary from L. 8 to L. 25. The amount of school fees, in all cases, is merely nominal. The parish schoolmaster is provided with the legal accommodation. The general expense of education is quite trifling. The number of the young between six and fifteen years of age who cannot write or read is nearly 400; the number of persons upwards of fifteen years who cannot read or write is near 800.

The people, in general, are not so much alive to the benefits of education as could be wished; at the same time, their poverty is such as to prevent them from following up their inclination in that respect, even to the degree in which it exists.

There are some parts of the parish with a considerable population, several miles distant from any school. Two or three schools

would supply this deficiency. The Gaelic schools, wherever they have been established, have evidently been instrumental in promoting the interests of morality and religion.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 64. The average sum allotted to each person is between 4s. and 5s.; the annual amount of contribution is L. 20, 12s.; of which L. 7 arise from church collections, L. 10 from a bequest, and L. 3, 12s. from money at interest. To receive parochial relief was, till of late, almost universally considered as degrading; but that feeling is now rapidly giving way.

There is an annual tryst held within the parish in the month of September.

Alehouses.—There are five licensed whisky houses; and whisky is retailed in various other places within the parish, to the manifest injury of the temporal interests of the people, and the progressive and sure destruction of their morals.

Fuel.—The only fuel used in the parish, except in gentlemen's houses, is peat.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The most striking variations betwixt the present state of the parish and that which existed at the time of the last Statistical Account, are, 1. The formation of a Parliamentary road, which goes nearly over its whole length: 2. The system of farming for some time followed, of several farms being thrown into one grazing: 3. The erection and establishment of a whisky distillery. The first of these variations is a decided benefit to the parish; the second, as decided a disadvantage to its general population; and the third, one of the greatest curses which, in the ordinary course of Providence, could befall it or any other place.

December 1840.