Miscellaneous Observations.

Since the former Statistical Account was written, various improvements have taken place in the parish. Excellent roads have been opened—extensive plantations have been made—and a large extent of land reclaimed. Steam-boats ply regularly, and facilities are afforded for the introduction of the comforts of civilized life. But no permanent improvement has taken place in the circumstances of the people generally. Population has increased from 1788 to 3000, and lands which were then possessed by labouring tenants are now converted to sheep-farms. This has reduced the people's means of support. There are no manufactures, and, as they depend on land exclusively for their subsistence, an extent of poverty prevails among them now, to which formerly they were strangers. As yet, however, crime is unknown among them. A high degree of moral feeling has hitherto restrained them; but it is to be feared that grinding poverty will break down this check, and introduce crimes at which they hitherto have shuddered.

December 1840.

PARISH OF DUIRINISH.

PRESBYTERY OF SKYE, SYNOD OF GLENELG.

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I.—Topography and Natural History.

Name.—Duirinish, or more properly *Durinish*, is by some resolved into two words of Scandinavian origin, signifying the promontory of Deer; but more probably, the name is derived from the Gaelic *Dur*, which, like the Latin *Durus*, signifies hard or rocky, and *Innis*, a very common Celtic term, signifying indifferently promontory or island. *Dur-innis* in the case before us, then, signifies the rocky promontory; a designation which every one acquainted with the parish will acknowledge to be a very appropriate one,—as it forms a large promontory, singularly rocky and bold. This parish is, both in conversation and in writing, sometimes designated *Kilmuir*, a corruption of *Cill-Mhuire*, *i. e.* a place con-

secrated to the Virgin Mary; but Durinish is the name by which it is generally known.

Extent.—The extreme length of the parish from Unish to Idrigil is 19 miles; breadth, from Vaterstein to Lynedale, 16 miles. Its extent in square miles is about 100. But these distances convey no idea of the difficulty of traversing it, it being intersected by arms of the sea, by hills and morasses, which render travelling through it a very arduous task.

Boundaries.—It is bounded on the west by what is called the Minch, the channel which separates Skye from the Outer Hebrides; on the north and north-east, by Loch Grieshernish, or Arnizort, a branch of Loch Snizort (except that a small strip of land to the east of this loch belongs to it); on the south and south-east, by Loch Bracadale, and one of its branches called Loch Carroy, and on the east partly by the parish of Snizort, and partly by that of Bracadale.

Figure.—The form of the parish is as irregular as may well be conceived, and defies all power of minute description. On a general view, it presents the appearance of a large promontory, or rather peninsula, separated from the rest of Skye by a neck of low moorish land, about four miles in breadth, stretching from Loch Carroy to Loch Grieshernish already noticed. But this peninsula is first subdivided by Loch Follart, or Loch Dunvegan, which, branching off the Minch, stretches due south to within less than two miles of Loch Carroy. These two large subdivisions are again cut up by Loch Bay and Loch Poltiel, each of which is near two miles in length, and by so many creeks and inlets as would be tedious to enumerate. Of the two larger divisions, the western one is known as Duirinish proper, while the northern portion of the east one is called *Vaternish* or *Waternish*, and forms a separate parish *quoad sacra*, being one of the recent Parliamentary erections.

Mountains, &c.—The only mountains in the parish deserving the name, are two which are situated in the western peninsula, and known to the country people as the Greater and Lesser Helvel (probably a corruption of *sealbh mheall*, the charmed or fortunate hill; and evidently of the same derivation with Helvellyn in Wales.) These rise each to the height of 1700 feet, and are remarkable for the verdure of their surface, and the regularity of their slope, while their summits are perfectly level. This last peculiarity has procured for them, especially among sailors, the name of Macleod's Tables; and I believe that they are more

completely tabular in their forms than any other mountains of equal size in Scotland. From the Larger Helvel, a range of elevated hilly ground extends to the north, and terminates in Dunvegan or Galtrigil Head, a singularly bold and precipitous headland, which is upwards of 300 feet in perpendicular height; while, from the Lesser Helvel, a similar range strikes off to the south, ending in the Points of Idrigil and Waterstein, the cliffs of the former of which rise abruptly from the sea to the height of 400 feet; those of the latter to near 600. With the exception of the headland of Tallisker in the neighbouring parish of Bracadale, these two are by far the highest and grandest in the country. A few hundred yards from the Point of Idrigil are to be seen three very remarkable basaltic pillars, rising perpendicularly out of the sea; the highest of which is about 200 feet in height, the other two about 100. These pillars are generally known as Macleod's Maidens; but the country people designate them as a mother and her two daughters, calling the matron *Nic Cleosgeir Mhor*. There was at one time a fourth pillar, but it yielded to the action of the storms and waves, and has now disappeared in the deep. They certainly present at a distance no indistinct resemblance to gigantic females clad in cloaks and hoods, while the superior size of one of them entitles her at least to the honour of being thought the eldest. Sir Walter Scott compares them to the Norwegian Riders of the storm, or chusers of the slain; and the tradition which says that the mother is constantly engaged in weaving a web of cloth which one of the daughters is occupied in fulling or thickening, is probably of Scandinavian origin. I have not learned what is the office of the third, nor, with the exception of the above, could I gather any legend connected with them.

There are two other series of hills in the parish; but as they neither rise to any considerable height, nor have anything peculiar in their formation, they do not merit a particular description.

The surface of the ground is generally sloping, and the few tracts of level land which are to be met with consist almost wholly of deep peat moss.

There is one valley, called Glendale, about two miles in length, which stretches from the head of Loch Poltiel in a southerly direction, until it reaches near the base of the Smaller Helvel. Its breadth is from half a mile to three-quarters of a mile; its sides sloping gradually, and covered with very rich pasture. It is di-

vided by a considerable stream, here called the *Amhainn Mhor*, the Large River; a title which, however, it scarcely deserves to enjoy. There are neither streams nor valleys in any other portion of the parish worthy of mention.

Caves, &c.—There are some caves, and an immense number of caverns and hollows in the rocks along the coast, formed evidently by the action of the waves on the barrier which opposed their progress. Indeed, the coast for several miles presents the appearance of an almost endless variety of Gothic arches, some of them only a few feet in height, others rising as high as fifty or sixty feet; some regular and symmetrical, according to the strictest rules of art; while others look as if the builder in constructing them had taxed his powers to heap together all that was grotesque and incongruous. Some of these caves are above tide-mark, but into many of them the sea rushes with a deep and hollow murmur, which is most solemn and awe-inspiring. One of them, called *Uamh a Choinnleir*, or the Cave of the Candlestick, possibly because on account of its darkness, it requires to be entered with a candle, is near 100 feet in length, about 50 feet in height, and presents a scene of gloomy grandeur well worth the visiting. Another which I examined is 120 feet in length, 40 feet in height, and about 10 in breadth. A third, called Idrigil Cave, which is but small in comparison with those now mentioned, has yet a melancholy interest attached to it, as having been for some time one of the many dismal prisons in which the unfortunate and ill-used Lady Grange was confined. It is now frequently resorted to as a dwelling by the fishermen who follow their trade on the coast. They here hang up their nets to dry, cure their fish, cook their victuals, and sleep soundly on the dry sand with which part of the cave is strewn.

It is somewhat singular regarding these caves, that while there is water oozing through most of them, there is no stalactitic formation, no calcareous accretion of any kind to be found in them. The basaltic rock appears black and bare in all of them.

Coast.—The coast, owing to the numerous arms of the sea, already adverted to, is no less than 70 miles in extent. It presents many headlands of stupendous height, and forming scenes of singular wildness and magnificence. Within the lochs, however, the ground shelves down with a moderate declivity, and affords a great variety of commodious landing-places. Lochs Dunvegan and Grieshernish form safe roadsteads for vessels of the largest

size, from whatever quarter the wind may blow, and Loch Bay, Loch Poltiel, and Loch Carroy, though more exposed, afford good anchorage in ordinary weather. A small branch of Loch Carroy, called Pol Roag, forms an anchorage as safe as can be imagined; but, owing to the narrowness of the entrance, it is adapted to small craft only.

The high water line is almost everywhere composed of a rocky ledge, but between this and low water-mark, a beach is found, generally consisting of gravel and large stones, sometimes of sand, and in a few instances of mud.

Islands.—There is a number of small islands belonging to the parish, but none of them is inhabited except one, called Eilean Isa, "the island of Jesus," which is only a few miles in circumference; yet, from its fertility, supports fourteen or fifteen families in considerable comfort.

Meteorology.—It is well known that along all the Western Isles a great quantity of rain falls annually. Skye, owing to local causes, the height of its mountains and headlands, receives more than its due proportion of this quantity. The island of Uist, though lying further west, yet being much lower, enjoys a comparatively dry climate, especially as regards the partial and generally heavy showers of summer. Clouds loaded with the vapours of the Atlantic pass over it unbroken; but, when dashed against the lofty hills of Skye, discharge their contents in torrents.

The winters are very boisterous, but far from being cold. In this parish snow seldom lies above a few days, except on the top of the Helvels, and very little ice is formed.

Climate.—The climate, though moist, is far from being unhealthy. On the contrary, it is highly salubrious. While so much rain falls, there are no stagnant pools or marshes to retain or corrupt it, and the vicinity of the sea tends to preserve an equable temperature, which is highly conducive to health. Some fatal diseases, frequent in other places, are unknown or nearly so here; among which may be mentioned that fatal scourge of Britain generally, consumption. The most prevalent complaints are, dyspepsia, dysentery, slow fevers, and cutaneous diseases, which are almost entirely confined to the humbler classes, and arise from lowness of diet, and want of attention to cleanliness. There is one very loathsome disease, commonly called the *sevens* or *sibbens*, which is very prevalent here; but whether it be indigenous or imported, I have not been able to learn.

It is worthy of mention, that, while vaccination is generally neglected, those of the people who remain at home, with few exceptions, escape the ravages of small-pox; but those who go to the south or low country are almost universally attacked by it, and many of them fall victims to it.

Geology and Mineralogy.—The geology of the parish is remarkably uniform, being almost entirely of the trap formation. Horizontal beds of amorphous basalt and trap tuff are surmounted by columnar basalt, the angles of which are, however, seldom regular or well defined. It may be said to show only an incipient tendency to crystallization. These beds are very frequently intersected by veins or dikes of basalt, harder, darker, and more splintery than that of which the columns are composed.

Minerals.—The simple minerals imbedded are zeolites of every variety and in great abundance; steatite likewise abundant, especially about Dunvegan; augite and olivine more rarely.

Beds of limestone occur in two localities, 1*st*, at Waterstein (or Vaterstein,) in a very remarkable situation,—the immensely high cliffs already noticed, overhanging the sea; and 2*d*, more extensively at Loch Bay, in the district of Vaternish. In this latter locality, the limestone contains numerous fossil shells, and in some instances is entirely composed of them. They seem all to belong to a comparatively recent era,—a fact which might be easily ascertained by a skilful geologist, as they are very little changed from their original state. One of these beds of shelly limestone lies under an immense cliff of basalt, which is near 200 feet in height. Veins of sandstone occur at Loch Bay, along with the limestone, and both here and at Vaterstein seams of coal are to be met with. The sandstone is very soft and friable, consequently utterly unfit for the purposes of building. The coal, which is hard and brittle, resembling cannel-coal, though scarcely so lustrous, is to be found in seams of only a few inches in thickness. Repeated attempts have been made to discover a workable seam; but they failed; and it is evident, from the geological formation of the surrounding district, that all such attempts must end in disappointment.

Soils.—The soils are generally peat moss, or a mixture of peat moss and decomposed trap. There are a few tracts of clayey soil to be met with, and still fewer of gravelly; but no instance of sandy soil occurs.

Zoology and Botany.—Very little can be said on these heads.

The quadrupeds common on the mainland of Scotland, are all to be found here, except the hare, mole, and polecat, which are not to be met with in Skye. Hares have been introduced once or twice; but they very speedily disappeared, whether owing to the jealousy of those who feed them, but have not the privilege of shooting them, or to the unsheltered nature of the country, I have not the means of ascertaining. The other two species of animals have, I believe, been never seen in the island,—a fact which the inhabitants have no cause to regret.

Of fishes, the herring is undoubtedly the most important in an economical point of view, next to which come the cod and ling, large quantities of which are annually caught along the shores,—quantities capable of very considerable increase, were the inhabitants active or enterprising fishers. Turbot, mackerel, skate, haddock, and flounder, are likewise to be met with, but not in large numbers. Shell-fish is very abundant whenever the beach is smooth, and is much prized by the poorest of the people, to many of whom it affords sustenance in the latter end of summer, when, generally, every other provision fails.

It is worthy of remark regarding the herring, that they are found of very different qualities in the different lochs that indent the parish, and that they are almost always found of the same quality and appearance in the same loch. This would seem to warrant the belief, that herrings, like salmon, have peculiar localities to which they regularly resort.

Botany.—The botany of the parish is, like its geology, very uniform, and consequently uninteresting. No rare plant has been discovered in it except the *Mimulus luteus*, an American plant, which is to be found in a ditch close by the inn at Dunvegan; and it is supposed, though there is no certain proof of this, that it is not indigenous to Duirinish, but has been thrown out of some garden into its present situation.

There is one culinary vegetable—the cabbage, which thrives better in this parish, I believe, than anywhere else in Scotland. The *Glendale Cabbage* is known and sought after not only throughout all Skye, but likewise in many places on the mainland; and its immense size, combined with its delicacy of flavour, entitles it to the pre-eminence which it has attained. The seed is said to have been obtained from a foreign vessel which was wrecked at the foot of Glendale many years ago. Whether it be a distinct species I am not able to determine.

The district is entirely destitute of natural wood,—some scraggy hazel and stunted birch bushes to be met with in a few localities, not deserving the name. It is evident from the remains of trees found in the peat mosses, that the country was not always equally bare; but as these remains are neither very numerous nor of a large size, it may be concluded that it has not been well-wooded for many ages back. Until about sixty years ago, there seem to have been no attempts made by art to remedy the deficiency of nature. But about that time, General Macleod of Macleod commenced planting around his castle of Dunvegan; and his example has been followed by his two successors, so that now there is an extensive and thriving plantation, where formerly all was bleak and bare. The late Mr Macdonald of Lynedale, about fifty years ago, likewise planted to some extent around his own dwelling, where now trees of some size are to be seen. Mr Macleod of Orbost, and Mr Cumming of Griesbernish have followed the example set to them. Their houses will soon be completely sheltered, as they are already ornamented by wood of their own rearing. But, with these exceptions, nothing has been done to redeem the district from its naturally naked character.

The larch is decidedly the most congenial tree to the soil and climate of this place; but a great variety of other trees, such as oak, ash, plane, beech, alder, and birch, are found to thrive pretty well, notwithstanding the violence of the sea-blast to which they are constantly exposed. Scotch fir has not succeeded well, though tried more than once.

II.—Civil History.

Tradition speaks of some sanguinary battles fought between the Macleods and the *Clann Raonnuill* or Macdonalds of Uist, who made repeated attempts either to possess themselves of the country, or at least to plunder and ravage it. The fiercest and bloodiest of these battles was fought at a place called Ardmore, in the district of Vaternish, on the beach below the old church of Trumpan. Many of the Macleods were assembled in this church, when the enemy came suddenly upon them, surrounded the building, set fire to it, and destroyed all the worshippers; one woman alone excepted, who made her escape during the confusion of the fray. This barbarous and sacrilegious work, however, did not pass unrevenged. The inhabitants of other parts of the country had observed the boats of their foe. The beacon-lights and *Crois Tara* (fiery-cross) soon brought together men who were

accustomed to war, and delighted in it. The smoke and flames of their church, which were visible from many parts of the parish, caused them to redouble their speed; and before the Macdonalds had regained their vessels, they were beset by the infuriated Macleods, who took full revenge for the slaughter of their friends. The booty was recovered, and the greater number of the Macdonalds left dead on the shore. The burial given by the Macleods to those of their enemies who fell on this occasion, was different from that which the Highlanders generally gave to brave opponents. The bodies, it is said, were ranged in a line by the side of a stone wall which stood near the scene of combat, and the wall thrown down upon them. Hence the battle is still known as *Blar Milleadh Gáraidh*, (*i. e.*) the battle of the destruction of the dike. Whether this be or be not a correct account of the origin of the name, it is very certain that a deadly conflict did take place on the spot pointed out as the battle-field of *Milleadh Gáraidh*; for large quantities of human bones are still to be seen there, on turning over some loose stones by which the ground is covered. The smothering of the Macdonalds by the Macleods in the Cave of Eigg, while a barbarous, was not an inappropriate retaliation for the work at Waternish.

There are indistinct accounts preserved of another battle fought by these hostile clans, known as *Blár Bhatternish*, the battle of Vaternish. There the Macleods lost many men, and were on the point of being completely discomfited, when the celebrated Fairy Flag or enchanted banner of their chief was unfurled, which immediately (this being one of its three miraculous properties) multiplied the number of the Macleods threefold, or rather made their enemies believe that they were so multiplied. The Macdonalds, seeing themselves beset by so large and unlooked for a host, were seized with a sudden panic, sought safety in flight, and were completely routed. So says tradition; and there are some who still give implicit credence to its reports, however absurd they be.

Family of Macleod.—The Macleods obtained peaceable possession of this parish in the tenth century, through the marriage of the first Tormoid, or Norman of the name, with the only daughter of MacRailt, the original possessor of the soil; and, despite the repeated attempts which have been made by their enemies to deprive them of it, and of the changes which time usually produces in families, they still retain possession of all of it, except what has

been voluntarily alienated. The chief historical interest of the parish may be said, indeed, to rest on the fact, that in it is situated the principal stronghold and residence of this very ancient family; and it may not be foreign to such an account as the present, to say a few words regarding their early history.

In a statement, professing to be drawn from the chronicles of Iceland, it is said, that several Norwegian chiefs, tired of the tyranny of Harold Harfinger their king, abandoned his dominions, and betook themselves to the sea in quest of a habitation where they might enjoy liberty. They landed on the Pharo Islands, which they found uninhabited, and of which they took immediate possession. After this they subdued Orkney and Shetland, the Isle of Man, and all the Hebrides, as well as several tracts on the mainland, from Caithness to the Mull of Cantyre. These scattered possessions were formed into two principalities, or rather a kingdom, and an earldom,—the seat of the former being in the Isle of Man,—that of the latter in Orkney. Both the King of Man and the Earl of Orkney exercised for a time an independent sway; but they were soon found out by their old master, who compelled them again to acknowledge his supremacy,—at least nominally. These islands then continued attached to the Crown of Norway until the battle of Largs in 1261, when Magnus, son of King Haco, surrendered them to Scotland; guaranteeing, however, to the Norwegian settlers all the rights and privileges which they formerly possessed.

The first Earl of Orkney was Torf-Einar, son of Rognvallar Earl of Maeria, in Norway, and brother to the famous Rolf-Gaunger, or Rollo the Dane, the founder of the Duchy of Normandy. One of his descendants, Thorfinn, left a numerous family of sons, who quarrelled about the paternal inheritance, appealed to arms, and deluged the island with blood. Liot or Leod (as it is now written by us), one of the number, apparently more peaceably disposed than his brothers, left the scene of contest, and settled himself in the Island of Lewis,—the Gaelic name of which, *Leodhas*, signifies the habitation of Leod. He was the common ancestor of the numerous and powerful clan of Macleod, which became divided into two main branches, springing respectively from his sons, Tormoid, and Torgil or Torquil. From Tormoid is descended the chief of the Macleods of Skye, sometimes styled of Harris, of Dunvegan, of Macleod. From Torquil are descended the Macleods of Lewis, now represented, though not in the direct

male line, which has long ago become extinct, by Macleod of Raasay. They at one time had extensive possessions and sway; but forfeited the greater portion of their lands in the reign of James VI. The Macleods of Dunvegan have been more fortunate, and have retained, as already observed, through the lapse of many ages, and through various vicissitudes of fortune, all their original possessions, except what they voluntarily disposed of.

There is a striking proof of the complete subjugation of the Island of Skye to the Norwegian invaders in the fact, that very many of the proper names still used in it are traceable to a Norse origin. The inhabitants have Tormoid, Harold, Olaus, and Magnus,—all Norwegian names, still common among them. But it is much more remarkable than this, that nearly every farm, every hill, every stream, has a Norwegian appellation, while, at the same time, not the remotest trace of Norse can be discovered in any part of the language of the country, except the proper names. The Gaelic spoken throughout the island is remarkably pure, and free of foreign admixture. It is worthy of observation at the same time, that, while in this country, where the Celts were subdued, but from which they were never expelled, they adopted foreign names to designate almost all the places; in the south again, from which they migrated, or were expelled ages ago, where now not a word of their language is spoken, yet places are almost universally designated by names which they have left behind them, that is, by Celtic names. This, however, is not the place where to follow out the conclusions which might be drawn from such facts.

The descendants of Leod still retain their Scandinavian names; but, in every other respect, they have long ago conformed to the habits of the Celtic tribes among which they dwelt, especially in regard to the clan or patriarchal system of government which prevailed among the Scotch and Irish Celts, but was utterly unknown among the branches of the great Gothic family.

Notwithstanding that the Macleods have had their principal residence in this parish for many centuries, none of the heads of the family have been interred in it, (their burial-place being at Rodil, in Harris), except the late chief, who ordered his remains to be buried on his own estate. There is now a plain but tasteful monument erected over them by his successor, in the churchyard of Duirinish.

In the same burying-place, there is an obelisk erected by the noted Simon Lord Lovat on the grave of his father, who died at

Dunvegan, and was a near relation of the Macleod family. It is now, however, considerably decayed, and threatens soon to crumble into ruins except it be repaired.

Lady Grange.—There are the ruins of two religious houses to be seen in the parish,—one in the valley of Glendale, the other at Trumpan, in the district of Vaternish. The history of both seems to be completely lost. In the latter place is interred the ill-fated Lady Grange, whose singular history accords better with the dark ages of barbarism than with the general character of the times in which she lived and died.

Some very romantic and fabulous accounts have been given of this lady's sufferings; but the following particulars have been stated to us on authority which deserves regard. She was the daughter of Cheisly of Dalry, a man of violent passions, whose temper she unfortunately for herself inherited. She became the wife of Mr Erskine of Grange, who was made a Lord of Session, in 1707, by the title of Lord Grange, and was Lord Justice-Clerk during the latter years of Queen Anne's reign. He was brother to the Earl of Mar, who headed the ill-conducted Rebellion of 1715 against the House of Hanover; and though he did not openly join the rebels, yet he aided them with his counsel and wealth. His house was a frequent rendezvous to the disaffected gentry and nobility; and his wife, who was not privy to the conspiracy, soon became suspicious of such frequent and numerous meetings under her roof. With the curiosity natural to her sex, she resolved to possess herself of the secret of their proceedings, and accomplished her object by hiding herself under a sofa during one of the conferences. She was warmly attached to the reigning family. Her love to Lord Grange, who treated her with much harshness and unkindness, was by no means deep or cordial. A quarrel—no rare occurrence—took place between them, when she threatened to revenge herself by disclosing his traitorous purposes to the Government under which he lived. He knew her violence and her resolution too well to doubt of her fulfilling her promise; and seeing that his own safety and that of all his accomplices were at stake, he instantly called a meeting of them, in order to devise a remedy against the danger which surrounded them. It was agreed at this conference that she should immediately be locked up; that a report of her death should be spread abroad; and that the Lairds of Macleod of Dunvegan, and Macdonald of Sleat, whose territories were very remote, should remove her, in

convenient time, to some secluded spot on their estates, where she might be no more heard of.

This barbarous plan was accordingly acted upon. News of her death were spread abroad; a mock funeral took place; while shortly afterwards she was forced away from her home and family, and, by devious routes, carried as far as Skye. She manifested her characteristic spirit in resisting those who were sent to carry her off; and so violent was the struggle, that two of her teeth were knocked out before she was overpowered. But she was overpowered, and so dexterously was her abduction managed, that her friends knew nothing of her fate for several years, but believed that she was in reality dead. She was at first confined in the hut of some poor retainer of Macleod in Skye. When afraid that her residence might possibly become known, he sent her to Uist among Macdonald's followers. From thence she was banished to the remote island of St Kilda, where she remained for seven years. She was again taken back to Uist, and thence to Skye. While here a second time, she fell on a very ingenious expedient for communicating with her friends. The poor people among whom she lived were accustomed to manufacture their wool into yarn, which they annually sent in large *clues* to the Inverness market, for sale. Lady Grange acquired the art of spinning, and, having possessed herself of writing materials, she wrote a letter to one of her relatives, which she secretly enclosed in a clue of her own thread that was sent to the market along with others. The purchaser of the yarn forwarded the letter to its destination. Her friends were filled with indignation, and instantly applied to the Government for the liberation of the unfortunate lady from her captivity. The Government sent a sloop of war to the coast of Skye, in order to make search for her; but her gaolers were far too well acquainted with the many fastnesses and hiding-places of the country to allow her to be thus taken. They immured her for some time in the cave of *Idrigil* already noticed, as being situated on the west of this parish. After this she was transferred to Uist, the person who had the management of the boat having beside him a rope, with a running noose at one end, and a heavy stone at the other, intending, according to his orders, to fix the noose round the prisoner's neck, and to consign her immediately to the deep, should the sloop of war come in sight during the passage. The passage was accomplished without such a tragical catastrophe as was contemplated. Lady Grange was confined for some time

longer in Uist, and again brought back to the district of Waternish, in this parish, where she ended her days.

Her persecutors showed throughout the utmost anxiety to conceal her place of residence, knowing well the vengeance that would fall upon them if this were discovered. They resolved, that, if possible, even the grave should not bear witness against them; for after her death they filled a coffin with sods, and, with much form, interred it in the church-yard of Duirinish, having invited many people to the funeral of the strange lady, while, meantime, her remains were secretly deposited in the church-yard of Trumpan, at Waternish. There are few persons who have had so many funerals as Lady Grange; and few, also, who have had more cause to long for a real one, for that place "where the wicked cease to trouble, and the weary are at rest."

On the recital of this story, it is impossible to avoid a feeling of surprise, that such an outrageous act of injustice and oppression as that above detailed should have been allowed, and that within less than a century back, to escape unpunished by the Government of Great Britain.

Antiquities.—First among the antiquities are to be noticed Duns or forts, of which there is a large number throughout the parish; no fewer than fifteen; all of them contiguous to the sea, and evidently at one time of very great strength. They are generally of a circular shape, built of dry stone without lime or mortar; frequently of such large blocks as would apparently require the aid of powerful mechanical engines to raise them to the height at which they are found. Some of these forts had a winding stair in the middle of the wall, ascending to the top of the building, and secret cells near the base. Others again seem to have contained no hiding-place, except recesses in the wall might be called so. The diameter of the largest which I have examined is about 40 feet; the thickness of the wall 12 feet. How these buildings were roofed, it is not easy to understand; as it is generally asserted that no wood was used for the purpose.

There are also several *tumuli* or barrows to be met with throughout the parish, the two most remarkable of which are near the head of Loch Carroy. These, like the forts, are built on elevated ground, but are merely piles of loose stones. The two adverted to are known by the name of the *Barpunan*. None of them has been opened up, but if opened up, they would, like others, be probably found to contain, in vaulted chambers, urns,

in which were deposited the ashes of once renowned, but now forgotten heroes.

Subterranean dwellings, or earth-houses, of considerable size, are to be met with in the parish. These seem evidently to have been intended for hiding-places in times of danger. There is one of them situated on the farm of Vatten, having its entrance in the face of a very precipitous bank, overhanging a deep ravine. This door, or more appropriately fox-hole, is completely covered over with heather and moss, so that its existence would never be suspected even after a minute examination of the bank. A passage about three feet in height, and near the same breadth, roofed by stones laid on as lintels, leads inwards to the distance of sixty or seventy feet, when it opens into what appears to have been a central room of considerable extent, arched over with stone, and from four to five feet in height. Off this room, several narrow galleries branch off in various directions, but to what extent has never been ascertained, as it is difficult and even dangerous to explore them until they be opened from above, and free air admitted into them. How these dwellings were ventilated, so as to be fit for the habitation of human beings, it is not easy now to discover, (as for light they seem to have been utterly destitute of it,) but in all probability the ingenuity of our rude ancestors discovered expedients, more simple, if not more effective, than those boasted of by our scientific age. There is another interesting specimen of these earth-houses on the farm of Clagan; but it is neither so extensive nor so well constructed as that already adverted to.

The only relics of antiquity excavated in the parish are some urns, apparently of Celtic manufacture, which were dug up about four years ago, in an old burial-place near the site of the parish church. These are composed of a very coarse reddish clay; but have several rude ornaments upon them, or rather are notched and scolloped throughout, and are much more elegant in shape than those generally known as Celtic urns, frequently are. One of them is in the possession of Macleod of Macleod. Another is believed to be in the Glasgow Hunterian Museum. All the rest were broken to pieces through the carelessness of the excavator, who was more anxious to fit the ground for bearing a crop of potatoes, than to bring to light any relics of antiquity which it contained.

The Castle of Dunvegan is a very interesting monument of bygone ages. The oldest part of it is said to have been built in the

ninth century. Another portion, consisting of a very high tower, was added by Alastair Crotach, or the Humphbacked, 400 years later. These two towers were conjoined, by means of a long low edifice, erected by Rory Mór, who was knighted in the days of James VI. Various additions have been made to it since, and the whole now forms a large mass of gray building, which, especially at a distance, presents a very imposing appearance. It is situated on a precipitous rock, washed on one side by the sea; on another, by a stream of some size; on a third, it is guarded by what was at one time a moat, consisting of a natural hollow between the castle rock and another steep rock at some yards' distance; on the fourth, the base is easily accessible, but owing to the height of the rock, and to its being surmounted everywhere by a wall with deep embrasures, even here it would be difficult to storm it, if at all well garrisoned. The entrance was of old from the sea side, by a very long, steep, and narrow stair; but a new approach has been of late formed by throwing a bridge over the chasm already noticed, which now renders it of easy access. There is a small but very convenient harbour right before it, and a spring of excellent water rising on the top of the rock which forms the court-yard. These were the two circumstances which probably went farthest to determine the site of this fortalice when its foundation was laid.*

Among the ancient relics preserved in the castle, the "Fairy flag," which, according to tradition, is the palladium of the Macleod family, the hinge on which their fortune turns, claims the first notice.

This once celebrated banner, partly owing to the inroads of moths, and partly to the still more destructive inroads of curious visitors, many of whom carried off portions of it, is now dwindled down to very small dimensions. The fabric is of strong silk of a yellow colour. It is said to have been taken as a prize by one of the Macleods from a Saracen chief during the Crusades, and to possess three miraculous properties,—first, when displayed in battle, to multiply the number of the Macleods threefold; second, when spread on the nuptial bed, to make it productive; and third,

* Sir Walter Scott, in his Diary of 1814, gives a minute account of the Castle of Dunvegan, which, notwithstanding his unrivalled power, and generally minute accuracy in the description of old towers and castles, is more picturesque than correct; and in describing the scene to be witnessed from the window of the "haunted chamber," he allows his imagination to deceive him completely, when he states that "Macleod's Maidens," formed an interesting part of it. These pillars are not visible from any point within four miles of the castle.

"Aliquando dormitat bonus Homerus."

to bring shoals of herring into Dunvegan loch. According to the original instructions given regarding the flag, it was to be publicly displayed only on three occasions: 1. when the clan was in imminent peril of being overthrown in battle, on which occasion the unfurling of it would turn the tide of victory completely in their favour; 2. when the sole heir and hope of the family was near death, and then it would restore him to health; and 3. when, through some cause not explained, the whole race of Macleod are to be on the verge of utter extinction, in which emergency the flag will save them; but flag and flag-bearer are to be swept away by a whirlwind, and never more to be seen on earth.

Laying fiction aside, the "Fairy flag," according to the most probable accounts, is a consecrated banner which once belonged to some order of the Knights Templars, and is undoubtedly of very high antiquity.

There is also in the castle a very ancient cup or chalice, generally known by the name of *Nìdl Glundubh, i. e.* "Niel of the Black Knees," and said to have been taken by one of the Macleods along with other spoils, from an Irish chief, called *Nial Glundubh* many centuries ago. This cup is hollowed out of a solid block of very dark wood, stands on four silver legs, has a rim of silver about two inches in depth around the lips, and is ornamented by several vertical stripes of silver, raised considerably, and wrought with great elegance, having numerous sockets in them for the reception of precious stones, a few of which still remain.*

Rory Mor's Horn.—A drinking cup, of much larger dimensions than that now adverted to, ought not to be passed over in silence, especially as it has found a place in one of the Bacchanalian songs of Burns, and is briefly described by Sir Walter Scott. This is a very large horn, which was probably at one time worn by a long-horned kyloe ox, and is destitute of any ornament ex-

* The description given of this chalice by Sir Walter Scott, in his Notes to the Lord of the Isles, and the drawing by Daniell, published in some of the miscellanies of the day, must have made its form and appearance familiar to many readers; but we may here give the inscription which it bears, copied from Sir Walter's version of it. "Ufo Johannis Mich magni principis de H. R. Manæ Vich Siabia Magryneil et sperat Domino Jhesu dari clementiam illorum opera. Fecit anno Domini, 993, Onili Oimi." The inscription is in Saxon black letter, and the numerals 93 are perfectly distinct; but it is very difficult, indeed, to discover the preceding 9, and from the facts that the Arabic numerals were not at all known in Europe till 991, very little used in Western Europe for a couple of centuries after this, and very rarely, if ever, used in the midst of Latin inscriptions in the middle ages, it must be doubtful whether the inscription should not be referred to a later period than the tenth century.

cept a broad rim of silver, chased and carved, around the edge. It is said to have been the favourite drinking cup of *Ruari Mor*, *i. e.* "Big Roderick," one of the Macleods already referred to: but from its containing three ordinary bottles, that is upwards of five English pints, it is probable that he did not often empty it. The quaffing off its contents in claret is one of the ceremonies regularly gone through at the inauguration of the chief of Macleod. It is believed, however, that in modern days a piece of cork is on these occasions fixed in the horn, much nearer the top than the bottom.

Bagpipe.—It is well known that the great bag-pipe, the instrument on which the national music of Scotland was chiefly played for so long a time, and which has still so striking an effect in rousing the martial spirit of the Highlanders, was cultivated with greater success by the Macrimmons, the hereditary pipers of the Macleods, than by any others in the Highlands. The name of Macrimmon, whether on fanciful or on conclusive ground we pretend not to say, has been derived from the fact of the first musician who bore the name having studied his profession at Cremona in Italy. Certain it is that, what rarely happens, high musical talent as well as high moral principle and personal bravery, descended from father to son during many generations in the family of the Macrimmons. They became so celebrated that pupils were sent to them from all quarters of the Highlands, and one of the best certificates that a piper could possess was his having studied under the Macrimmons. Finding the number of pupils daily increasing, they at length opened a regular school or college for pipe music on the farm of Boreraig, opposite to Dunvegan Castle, but separated from it by Loch Follart. Here, so many years of study were prescribed, regular lessons were given out, certain periods for receiving the instructions of the master were fixed. The whole tuition was carried on as systematically as in any of our modern academies; and the names of some of the caves and knolls in the vicinity still point out the spots where the scholars used to practise, respectively on the chanter, the small pipe, and the *Piob mhor*, or large bagpipe, before exhibiting in presence of the master. Macleod endowed this school by granting the farm of Boreraig to it, and it is no longer ago than seventy years since the endowment was withdrawn. It was owing to the following cause: The farm had been originally given only during the pleasure of the proprietor. For many ages

the grant was undisturbed : but when the value of land had risen to six or seven times what it was when the school was founded, Macleod very reasonably proposed to resume one-half of the farm, offering at the same time to Macrimmon, a free lease of the other half *in perpetuum ;* but Macrimmon, indignant that his emoluments should be curtailed, resigned the whole farm, and broke up his establishment, which has never been restored.

The Macrimmons were well educated, intermarried with highly respectable families, and were universally regarded as vastly superior to the common class of the country people. A son of the last family piper holds the rank of captain in the British army, and is said to inherit the musical talents of his race. There are a few of them still residing in this parish, but they are born of what was reckoned a very low marriage for Macrimmon, and they do not possess either the talents or respectability of their progenitors. A Macrimmon still acts as piper to Macleod, but he is not descended of the Boreraig Macrimmons, who appear to have renounced their profession with their endowment.

We know not whether there were establishments similar to that of Boreraig in other parts of the Highlands; but it certainly is to be regretted that it was dissolved, and also that we have not minuter information as to the mode of training pursued by those who were universally acknowledged to be the first masters of bagpipe music.

Eminent Persons.—Among the distinguished persons who were born in the parish, may be noticed Mary Macleod, or " Mairi Nighinn Alastair Ruaidh," *i. e.* Mary, the daughter of red-haired Alexander, who lived at Dunvegan about 200 years ago, and was a near relative of the Chief of Macleod. Her fame is confined by the narrow bounds of the Gaelic language; but wherever it is known she is known, and admired as a poetess of the first order that has appeared in the Highlands for many ages back. Her conceptions are remarkably vivid, and display much poetic fire; her language is certainly very rich and varied; and some of her compositions present instances, both of melting pathos and of rousing energy, which might well bear comparison with many of the eulogized productions of modern days.

She had a sister named Jean, who also composed songs and lyrics ; but the higher fame of Mary has caused Jean to be comparatively forgotten.

Many individuals born in this parish have distinguished them-

selves both in camp and council, especially in the former. Several might be named, of whom some are still living, who, born and reared in thatched cottages, have attained the rank of generals, and the dignity of knighthood; and have held highly responsible offices under the Government of the country; but we consider it foreign to the object of such an account as this to particularize them all.

Land-owners.—Of the land-owners of the parish, Macleod of Macleod, who possesses about one-half of the parish, is first to be mentioned. Major Macdonald of Waternish ranks next to him in extent of territory. Mr Macleod of Orbost; Mr Macleod of St Kilda; Mr Maclennan of Lyndale; Mr Cumming of Grieshernish; Mrs Murray of Cushledder; Mr Nicolson of Husabost; and Mr Macdonald of Skeabost, compose the remainder. Nine in all.

The only mansion-houses in the parish besides the Castle of Dunvegan, are those of Orbost, of Grieshernish, and of Waternish.

Parochial Registers.—The parochial registers have been very much neglected; there being none extending farther than thirty years back; and session-records, it may be mentioned, were not kept with any degree of fulness before the commencement of the year 1840.

III.—Population.

The number of the inhabitants of the parish was given in 1811 at 3227; in 1821, at 4174; in 1831, at 4765; and now it is closely bordering on 5000.

We do not here see any remarkable increase of population; but the number bears a vast disproportion to the resources of the parish; and is far greater than the soil can support. This has been the case for many years back,—known and felt by every intelligent person connected with the country; and thus it becomes interesting to inquire why such a state of things has been permitted by those who had it in their power to prevent it, and also how the population manage to subsist when the resources of the country are insufficient for them, and they have so little means of paying for imports from other countries.

We answer the second question first, by stating that the people generally live on the poorest and scantiest fare, and many of them for a part of the year are supported mainly by shell-fish; that, by sending their families annually to the south to labour there, the parents are, to a certain extent, upheld; and that, when every other

resource fails them, they live on their wealthier neighbours, some by begging, and some by stealing.

As to the first question, the answering it will occupy some time, and in considering it, we should remember, both that population has, in all circumstances, a strong natural tendency to multiply itself, and that among an uneducated people this tendency always increases in the direct ratio of their poverty. We see, then, that in this island strong checks were necessary to prevent an overgrowth of population; and we shall endeavour to state some of the causes which prevented and still prevent the application of these checks.

In the olden time, the number of a chief's followers constituted his wealth, his power, and his safeguard. He then, for the most obvious reasons, gave the produce of his lands to the support of his retainers, and thus the country was capable of supporting a larger number than it is now, when so much of its produce is given as rent; and if scarcity were felt in these lawless days, a few forays or *creaghs* from some other district soon supplied it.

After the abolition of the clan system, and when rents, which were at first very light, came to be exacted, the wars in which Britain was constantly engaged for such a series of years, afforded an outlet, to a considerable extent, to the superabundant population; and many of those who did not avail themselves of this outlet emigrated to the North American colonies; thus showing much more enterprise than is manifested by their descendants.

Later still, the manufacture of sea-ware into kelp afforded abundant employment to all the islanders who were not engaged in the tillage of the soil, and amply rewarded their labour, so as to enable them to purchase such necessaries and comforts of life as they needed.

During these times, then, the pressure of the population on the means of subsistence was but slightly and seldom felt, and consequently there was little cause to check its growth. Now, however, matters are completely changed. There is no recruiting for war. The kelp trade is completely at an end. The people do not emigrate. There are no public works where they may find employment. They raise but a very inadequate quantity of food, and they are, as the natural result, in great want and distress. Yet there are reasons which still induce some persons rather to encourage than to stop the increase of the inhabitants. We may first mention, as what in some instances, though unin-

tentionally and indirectly, helps to aggravate the evil complained of,—the kindness of the proprietor of the soil. He sees his people increase too rapidly; but they consider a separation from their native place the greatest of all earthly evils. While they can manage to procure a meal or two of potatoes in the day, they are contented, and implore permission to remain as they are. He can sympathize in their feelings of attachment to the place where they were born, and where their fathers are interred. He feels for them as his people, and, rather than inflict on them the misery of removal, he allows them to shift as they best may.

But the selfishness both of tenants and proprietors does much more to augment the evil under consideration than the cause now referred to. Thus a tenant takes a farm without sufficient capital to stock it, or to pay the rent. He has, however, a remedy at hand in letting portions of the farm as crofts to some of the poor people in the vicinity, who are always eager to get any piece of ground. These, for a time, pay part of his rent, perform much of his agricultural work, and yield him considerable profit. But frequently in the course of no long period, they also get into difficulties, when they betake themselves to their master's expedient of subletting. The half of the croft is given to the oldest son, who immediately marries; a farther portion is perhaps given to some other relative. The crofts, or lots as they are here called, dwindle down into the most insignificant patches, incapable of yielding food even for a quarter of a year to the many families which occupy them. The wages earned by labour must then go to purchase food. The cow is sold to pay the rent, and the unfortunate crofter sinks into a state of the most abject poverty.

Again, when land is purchased with the sole view of pecuniary gain, it is undoubtedly the purchaser's interest to subdivide it as minutely as possible, for it is well-known that when there is a redundant population, the smaller that the lots of land are the greater will be the number of competitors for them, and of course the more will the rent exceed the actual value. Such proprietors take care to give no leases to their lotters. They keep them as tenants at will, and thus it is easy to eject them if they become unable to pay the rent, and just as easy to get others to occupy their place, to subject themselves to the same fleecing process. Sometimes the reduced lotter, though deprived of his cow, is not driven away from the estate, but is sent to the sea shore, where he may get fish for his own support, and for payment to the landlord for his hut, and

the liberty of cultivating a small patch of waste land. If these unhappy individuals, as very frequently happens, under the dread of starvation, forget the laws of God and man, so as to "put forth their hand to steal," their master knows perfectly that, like the fox, they will not plunder near their own den,—that they will go to a distance to forage; and he needs not fear that his sheep will be touched by them, while there are some belonging to any other person within reach of a long night's journey.

Thus an avaricious proprietor may at any time increase his rental in this country, by the subdivision of his farms, and for some years he will succeed in exacting every penny of his rack-rent. Again, if he wish to sell his property, the long rent-roll duly attested will enhance the value of it in the market. If he be desirous of borrowing money, through the same roll he may induce a money lender, ignorant of the actual state of matters, to advance on the security of the property a sum double its actual value.

There are here strong temptations for hard-hearted avarice to deepen the evil under which the island already groans, to encourage the increase of the already teeming population, and there is an open door for cruelty on the one hand, and for fraud on the other; but we are glad to say that there are few who have yielded to the wicked solicitation,—that the more enlightened of the land-owners and of the tacksmen of this parish are sincerely anxious to promote the comfort of their people.

It must be evident, at the same time, to every thinking man, that, while some of the land-owners and tacksmen may be to blame for the present state of things, yet that the main cause of the evil is to be found in the ignorance of the people themselves. Were they enlightened, they would not submit to extortion or to want. They would seek in other quarters of the world the means of independent and comfortable subsistence. They might fare much better where they are. But generally they are unenlightened—they are deplorably ignorant, and, being so, they are destitute of the true spirit of independence—of the proper ambition to better their circumstances. They feel a blind, and, therefore, a very powerful attachment to the rocks and glens amid which they were brought up—an almost invincible aversion to abandon them. They are improvident as to their marriages, and also as to the husbanding of the slender resources which are within their reach. Many of them are utterly careless regarding the future.

The immediate and most obvious remedy for the evils arising

from the superabundant population of the parish is confessedly the removing of numbers of the people, by emigration, to places where they may support themselves in comfort by the labour of their hands.

This is a measure which is loudly called for by the circumstances of the country,—demanded more loudly and imperiously each succeeding year,—and a measure which, if now neglected, will speedily force itself on the notice both of the land-owners, and the government of the kingdom, not only by the piteous wailing of want and of famine,—not only by the sad spectacle of a once moral people becoming, through the hardening and *animalizing* influence of grinding poverty, the reckless slaves of low passions,—but by the still more alarming, though not more woeful, spectacle of a loyal and peaceable people giving themselves up to robbery and rapine. The flocks of the large sheep-owners are annually thinned by those who feel the pinching of famine; and to such an extent is this system carried now, that it has led to the proposal of establishing a *rural police* throughout the island, which is expected to come into immediate operation; *a measure completely unprecedented in the history of the Highlands.*

We do not expect, of course, that the evil is to be completely cured by emigration: but if the population were once thinned by that means, education would go far to do the rest. And besides the improving effects of education on the character and habits of those who remain at home, it is well known to those who are acquainted with Skye, that the best educated among its common people generally, almost universally, have sought a foreign country where to advance their fortunes; that very few of those who receive even the rudiments of a good education remain at home; and were knowledge generally given them, there would be no call either for the Government or for the land-owners to interfere with them.

Habits of the People.—The habits of the people are far from being cleanly. Shaving is only a weekly work, sometimes not so frequent; water is but sparingly employed for the ablution of the person, while clothes are very rarely changed. The houses are wretchedly filthy, so much so, that it is cause of wonder that their occupiers enjoy such a measure of health as they do. These houses have but one door, opening at the end. Next to the door is the byre, where the cattle stand every night during the year,—the cows sometimes fastened by a straw rope to one of the rafters in the roof, while the

young animals go at large. The byre is cleaned only twice in the year,—at the beginning of winter, and at the end of spring, when the potatoes are planted; and, previous to these respective periods, there are many feet of dung and straw in the dwelling. Over this height, however, it is necessary to climb in order to enter the kitchen, which is at the opposite end of the house, and separated from the byre only by a very thin partition of boards or wattles, that does not reach above half-way to the roof. There is seldom any other apartment than this, except it be a small space railed off where the potatoes and fish are stowed. The furniture is very scanty and rude. A couple of bedsteads, filled with straw or heather or ferns, a few chairs, and a table, generally complete the list. Such of the family as cannot find room in the beds sleep on the floor, and a stone is always deemed a good substitute for a chair. Indeed, there are some houses where no chair is used,—stones, pieces of dried turf, and one or two small stools or *settles* constituting the only seats. The mode in which these comfortless dwellings are built, is worthy of notice, as being very peculiar. The walls are uncommonly broad, in some instances six or even seven feet. Properly speaking, there are two walls, built at the distance of eighteen inches or two feet from each other. This vacant space is filled up with earth, and the whole covered over at the top with green sod. The rafters are rested on the inner edge of the inner wall, instead of being placed on the outer edge, as in other places, consequently there is a considerable breadth of the wall left completely exposed, and the rain of course enters here, and continually deluges the house. But the people, while they are anxious to exclude the wind, seem to have no dread of damp. I have seen two sheep grazing abreast on the top of one of these walls, and they might easily give room to a third. Two men might walk round on some of them, without any danger of falling off.

The fire is always placed on the middle of the floor, and the only outlet provided for the smoke, is a small circular aperture in the roof. There is seldom more than one window in a house. This is placed at the inner edge of the wall, where it gives least light; but very often, the hole where the window should be, is left open, except during a very strong wind, when it is stuffed up with some straw or rags of old clothes. Thus, owing to the exclusion of the light, and to the smoky atmosphere within the house, it is always enveloped in a twilight obscurity, which does not tend to the promotion of cleanliness or comfort.

The ordinary food of the peasantry is potatoes and fish, sometimes potatoes and salt, and sometimes potatoes alone. Butcher-meat is almost unknown to them, and very little meal is used. Considering this wretchedly low diet on which they subsist, it is astonishing what work they perform, and what fatigue they undergo.

Character.—The intellectual character of the people is good,—insomuch that, if a comparison were instituted between the advancement made by such Highland boys as attend school for a year or two, and that made by the boys of the peasantry in the Lowlands in similar circumstances, it would be found very much in favour of the former.

If we compare the amount of crime committed in our parishes here with that committed even in rural parishes in the south, the balance will still be found in favour of the Highlands. But it is too apparent, at the same time, that crime in this part of the country has been much on the increase for several years back. This is partly owing to the poverty of the people: but in a great degree to the kind of intercourse which they carry on with the Lowlands. The great majority of the young women go thither annually during the harvest season, where they are not only withdrawn from the superintendence of their parents and friends, and destitute of the ordinances of religion, but are exposed to the contamination of the worst and most degraded society, and the effects are sadly visible in their loss of modesty and virtue. Many of them, after their return, give birth to children, who are unacknowledged by a father, and grow up without being received by the church, or much cared for by their mothers. There are several in the parish, of this unfortunate outcast class, unbaptized and uneducated.

The young men generally go south in the latter end of spring, and continue at such work as they may find, until the beginning of winter, when they return home, and contribute of their earnings to the payment of their parents' crofts, but spend the remainder amid utter idleness, until the ensuing spring, when they resume their travels and their toil. Many of the aged men again, pass the months of June, July, and August, in fishing herring on the east coast of Scotland, and return to their homes only when their presence becomes necessary for the securing of their crops. Thus the population is quite a fluctuating one. The people, old and young, especially the latter, are for a considerable portion of

the year removed from the salutary restraints of the presence of acquaintances and friends, and from the still more important restraints of pastoral superintendence and gospel ministrations. The service of the sanctuary conducted in English is to them in an unknown tongue, from which they derive no benefit, and on which consequently they do not wait. They are, while in the south, strangers, in whose moral or religious circumstances no one feels an interest; and thus abandoned to their own wills, and exposed to the contact of society worse than themselves, they become each year more and more callous, and lawless, more and more confirmed in vice. A provision for the religious instruction of these poor wanderers who annually migrate from their own homes in quest of subsistence would certainly be a desirable boon.

The people universally have a sense of religion,—of the religion of nature. Indeed, I have never met with a common Highlander who did not shudder at the mere mention of Atheism. At the same time, however, they are very ignorant of the religion taught in the Bible,—of the way of salvation through Christ Jesus. A strict profession of holiness is, it may be remarked, more honoured here than in many other parts of Scotland, the neighbouring county of Ross alone excepted, and there are some who act up to their profession. Yet the people generally are unacquainted both with the letter and the spirit of true religion, and there is much superstition, the sure concomitant of ignorance, still lingering among them. Our limits forbid us to enter at any length on this subject, but we may remark, that while it is now rare, though not unknown, to use charms or incantations for curing the diseases of the human frame, these means are daily resorted to for curing the diseases of cattle. "Silver water," as it is called, "fairy arrows," and "charmed stones," are still held to be possessed of much efficacy, and they who have power to call forth their virtues are held in high estimation.

There is at least one man in the parish who professes to be possessed of the mysterious power known as the "second-sight." He affirms that he frequently foresees coming events; but he wishes not to be spoken to on the subject, and seems to consider his gift a misfortune more than a benefit.

Smuggling may be said to be unknown now throughout the island. A cask of foreign brandy or Hollands, and a roll of smuggled tobacco are occasionally, but very rarely, received from some

of the Baltic traders; and there is no illicit distillation carried on. Poaching is also nearly unknown.

IV.—Industry.

Agriculture.—Almost the whole population is engaged more or less in agriculture. There are five proprietors of land residing in the parish, all of whom farm to some extent, except one. There are seven tacksmen, or occupiers of large farms. There are 40 individuals who support themselves mainly by handicraft, or retailing merchandise: but all these have patches of land. There are two ministers, one surgeon, and ten schoolmasters in the parish. There are at least 1200 grown up males employed in agriculture during a considerable portion of the year, either as crofters, or as farm-servants. There are no retired capitalists among us.

There are 1900 acres now in cultivation, and upwards of 3000 which were once cultivated, but are now in pasture. Thus there are about 40,000 acres which have always remained waste. There are 12,000 acres of these that might be brought into tillage, 4000 of which would probably yield a good return for the expense. The remainder, however, would require a greater outlay of capital than it would be prudent to expend upon them. 100 acres under wood; no undivided common.

The rate of grazing varies both according to the quality of the pasture, and the will of him who lets it. That of a cow ranges from L.1 to L.3, 10s.; of a sheep from 1s. to 4s. per annum.

Wages.—The common wages of labourers are, in summer 1s., in winter 9d.; of artisans, 2s. 6d. without victuals; of female servants, from L.3 to L.4, 10s. in the year; of men, from L.6 to L.18, according tothe charge entrusted to them.

Live-Stock.—There are still some of the *caoirich bheaga*, or little sheep,—that is, the breed of sheep indigenous to the Highlands,—kept by the poor people; but they are very worthless compared with the larger kinds introduced from the south. They are very diminutive in size, seldom weighing more than 30 pounds, and are to be found of a great variety of colours, white, black, grey, brown, and sometimes with a mixture of all these. They are, however, useful to the common people, as they require very little food to support them, and are so tame as to allow themselves to be milked daily. Their wool is of a fine quality; and their mutton possesses a delicacy of flavour which far surpasses that belonging to the best fed of the larger kinds.

These sheep constituted at one time all the flocks of the coun-

try; and it is not above forty years since the *caoirich mhora*, or black-faced breed of the south, were introduced here. The gentleman who did introduce them is still living, though of an advanced age. The black-faced sheep were found to answer very well; but they are now rapidly giving place to the Cheviots, which are found to answer still better. Every extensive farmer in the parish has adopted them as the most profitable stock; and great attention has been paid to their improvement, so much so, that it is generally admitted that there are not better sheep in the whole county, than are reared in this parish.

The black-cattle may be said to have given place almost entirely to the sheep. The crofters still keep them; but those that they have, are of a very inferior description. There are only two of the gentlemen who retain what is called a *fold* of cows. These, however, are of very fine quality; and it is evident that the soil is well adapted for the rearing both of sheep and black-cattle.

Husbandry.—The most improved methods of husbandry were adopted several years ago by the land proprietors and the wealthy tacksmen; but their example seems to have produced no effect on the common people, who still pursue a very antiquated, laborious, and unprofitable mode of tilling their land. It is rarely that they use a plough; and though they are sufficiently well acquainted with the use of the spade, they never apply it to this purpose. The instrument in use among them is called *cas-chrom*, literally the crooked leg, a kind of clumsy spade, or rather a very rude and primitive plough; probably *the* primitive one which was subsequently so much improved on in various parts of the world. The *cas-chrom* is pointed with a piece of iron nearly half an inch in thickness, about ten inches in length, and four in breadth, which may be called its *sock*. Into this is fixed the *sole*, a strong piece of wood from two to three feet in length; and to the *sole* is fastened, by means of nails, the handle or *stilt*, which is about five feet in length, considerably thicker than a man's wrist, and forms a very obtuse angle with the sole or lower part. At the junction of the sole and handle, there is a wooden pin, called *sgonnan*, fixed in at right angles to the sole, for the foot to rest upon when the implement is used in digging.

With this implement, rude and unwieldy as it is, accomplishing the work very superficially, do thousands of the inhabitants of this island, and of a few other portions both of Inverness and Ross-

shires, cultivate their lands; not only plant, but hoe and dig their potatoes; and it is difficult or apparently impossible to convince them, that there is any other which is better suited for these purposes. When oats or barley are put into the ground ploughed by the cas-chrom, it is harrowed, sometimes by means of a large rake made for the purpose, sometimes by a light harrow made of the ordinary shape, but having wooden teeth, and drawn either by men or by women. I have seen this kind of harrow drawn by a horse; but it was fastened in a very primitive, and, to me, a very new mode. The whole harness consisted of two straw ropes, the one of which was attached to the head, and the other to the tail of the animal. The one supplied the place of reins, the other of traces, collar, and hems. The harrow was tied to the *tail* by this straw rope, and the horse pulled away, apparently not much incommoded by the weight fastened to it.

In shearing their corn, the people use the common scythe hook; but in tedding their hay, they use no rakes for gathering it. This is done either by means of straight poles, or by the hands, and of course some of the hay is left on the ground, while much time is very needlessly lost.

The crofters have no notion of the advantage of following the rotation system in cropping. The only change is from oats to potatoes, and from potatoes to oats. But they do not always give such an advantage to the soil as is implied, even in this limited range. It is by no means uncommon to sow oats for three or four years running in the same spot, and that without giving it any manure. When it is getting out of heart, as it almost always does on the second year, the only mode of enriching it that is resorted to, is the heaping it up into narrower compass,—gathering in the edges of the broad ridges. This will ensure a tolerable crop from the centre of the ridge for another year, but meantime the sides become utterly unproductive. In the course of another year or two, the centre becomes equally so, and when the soil is thus completely scourged and exhausted, it is left uncultivated for some four or five years, until it regains strength. But during this process of renovation it may be said to be totally useless, yielding nothing but weeds; and even these in very small quantities.

The oats sown are generally known as black oats, which are very small in the grain, and consequently yield little meal when ground. The potatoes also are of a soft and watery description. There is no attempt at draining or irrigation made. So little do the peo-

ple know of the unfavourable effects of water on their crops, that many of them when cultivating slopes, or declivities, draw the furrows right across the face of the slopes, instead of drawing them up and down, so as to carry off the water. The raising of clover, rye-grass, or turnip, is utterly unknown among them.

It may be noticed, that the grain which is sent to the mill is generally dried in an iron pot over a common fire. The meal thus made is called *mèin ŭrăraidh*, and is preferred both by the common people and gentry to the meal dried on the ordinary kilns. It is also worthy of remark, that the grain is carried to the mill, not in sacks of the common description, but in sacks made of bent or rushes, or some other kind of grass. These are used as keeping places for grain and for meal. Indeed, they are the only sacks in use among the people, and are universally known by the name of *plátàchan*. It was customary, not very many years ago, to perform the processes of thrashing and of kiln-drying the grain simultaneously, by passing the sheaf of corn through a fire made of straw. The filaments that attach the grain to the stalk were readily consumed, the grain fell down into the fire, which was so regulated as to scorch but not to consume it, and the remainder of the straw was thrown aside as useless litter. When the burning process was over, the grain was separated from the ashes and dust in which it had been buried, and ground by the *quern* or hand-mill. The meal thus made was called *mèin ghràdain*, and was very highly prized by all classes. It is not more than thirty years since this expensive and tedious mode of making meal was in almost any instance departed from. So necessary to be followed was this method thought, that many intelligent farmers allowed their cattle to starve for want of provender during spring, while in order to have *mèin ghradain*, they daily burnt more straw than would keep the cattle alive. I have it on undoubted authority, that a tacksman who died only a few years ago, a man of wealth and information, who used to quote the Georgics, and passages of Horace, over his bottle of wine, allowed, just thirty years ago, ten milch cows to die of starvation, while he had six stacks of corn in the barn-yard, all reserved for *mèin ghràdain*. Such are the effects of old habits.

The general duration of leases is fifteen years. The farm-buildings are generally good, and the fences quite sufficient. There has been great advancement made within the last forty years in regard to draining, rotation of crops, introducing good seed, new

and effectual farming implements, and in general all the improvements in agriculture known in the south by the upper classes.

The chief obstacles to farther improvement by the gentlemen and tacksmen are the raininess of the climate, which renders it difficult to secure a crop, though it should be reared; in some instances, want of capital, and in others, indifference to the subject. Among the cottars, again, one obstacle is want of leases; (it should be remembered that they are only the occupiers of extensive farms who generally have leases,—that the cottars are almost universally tenants at will); want of capital, ignorance, and the rooted attachment that they feel to the habits in which they have been brought up. They know that the system which they follow is an unproductive one. They see a proper system pursued by the gentlemen around them: but some will say that they will not bestow their labour on improving land which may become another's before the end of a year. Others again, that they cannot afford to purchase good farming implements, to drain or to enclose; and many, that they will live as their forefathers did.

Fisheries.—There are no fisheries for which rent is exacted; but there is a considerable quantity of fish caught in the creeks and lochs on the coast. The average annual value may be stated at L. 900. The fish is chiefly cod and ling, which are split up, salted, dried, and in this state sent to the market.

Raw Produce.—The total value of raw produce raised in the parish I am unable to state. The rental is L.4200, and the crop is not sufficient for food to the inhabitants, during more than eight or nine months of the year.

Kelp.—There are about eighty tons of kelp manufactured annually in the parish. It does little more than repay the bare expense of making; but it is taken as payment of rent by one of the landed proprietors; and thus he turns the labour of the people to some account.

Navigation.—There are three wherries, each about ten tons burden, belonging to the parish. No foreign vessels visit it for the purpose of trading.

V.—Parochial Economy.

Market-Town, &c.—There is no market-town in the parish. The nearest is that of Portree, which is twenty-four miles distant from the central part of the parish. There is a village called Stein, in the district of Waternish, built several years ago by the North British Fishery Society, which, however, has not in any

degree answered the benevolent purposes contemplated by its builders.

Means of Communication.—There is one post-office, where there are arrivals, and from which there are despatches of letters three times a-week. The length of turnpike road is about thirty-five miles. There are no canals or railroads. The harbours have been noticed in an early part of the account.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is situated in the centre of the parish, and is accessible to as many of the parishioners as will fill it; but it is very remote from nearly two-thirds of the population, many of them being eleven miles distant from it. It was built nine years ago, and is both substantially and tastefully finished. It is seated for nearly 600. All the seats are rent free.

There is no manse in the parish, the heritors allowing L.57 annually in lieu of it. The extent of the glebe is very great, being a mile and a quarter long by a mile broad; but, owing to the poverty of the soil, the annual value of it is not more than L.30. The stipend paid by the heritors is L.96. The deficiency is made up by the Exchequer. There is a church, built by the Church Extension Committee, situated in the district of Flasheddar or Arnizort, about twelve miles from the parish church. It contains 330 sitters, and is a very great convenience to the district; but no minister has been appointed to it. There is a Government church, as already mentioned, in the district of Waternish, which forms a parish *quoad sacra*, having a population of 1700. There are neither missionaries nor catechists in the parish, though both are very much needed. There is no Dissenting chapel of any description. All the parishioners profess to belong to the Established Church, except four families, who attend an Episcopalian chapel, which is situated in the neighbouring parish of Bracadale.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has not been dispensed at the parish church for the last eleven years until 1840, when only 35 communicants partook of the ordinance. In the Government church of Waternish, there was about the same number. It may be noticed here, that there is in this parish, as in almost every other parish in Skye, a set of men who regard "sealing ordinances" as of very little importance,—who seem to think that their efficacy depends to a great extent on him who administers them, and thus will receive them from the hands of a minister whom they approve of in every respect, but will, on no account, receive them from a person to whom they have an objec-

tion, however trivial; who, again, think that the efficacy will be completely taken away by the presence, at the same table with them, even of one unconverted person,—and being very uncharitable in forming an estimate of the character of those whose opinions differ in any respect from their own, they are remarkably scrupulous as to those with whom they will partake. Through the influence of these men (among whom there are some lay-preachers), aided by others who ought to have known better, the majority of the people have been brought to regard the sacraments, especially that of the Lord's Supper, with a degree of horror which causes almost all of them to avoid partaking of it. Thus there are nearly 200 children in the parish unbaptized, and the table of the Lord is unfrequented. It has, to a certain extent, become a proof of piety to avoid partaking of the sacraments; and it is much to be feared that, when Christ's commands in regard to one subject have come to be set aside for the opinions of men, His commands in regard to others will, in process of time, be treated with equal disregard. Yet the unscriptural notions under consideration are daily gaining ground in the place.

There have been L.64 contributed in the parish this year for religious and educational purposes.

Education.—There are ten schools in the parish,—one parochial; five supported by the Assembly's Education Committee; three by the Gaelic School Society; one by an Episcopalian Society; and one unendowed. Gaelic alone is taught in the three schools supported by the Gaelic School Society. In all the others English and arithmetic are taught. The salaries of the schoolmasters do not average more than L.23 per annum. The school fees everywhere, except in the parochial school, where they amount to about L.8 a-year, are merely nominal, or very nearly so, not averaging L.1 in each school. The fees charged in the parish school range from 8s. to 12s. in the year, according to the branches taught. One-third of the children between six and fifteen years are unable to read, and of the grown-up population there are two-thirds in the same condition.

The people, in general, are very indifferent regarding education, and keep their children from school for very trifling reasons. They are so very apathetic on this subject, that it would be highly desirable to introduce the compulsory regulations of Prussia among them. There is a portion of the parish where there are 150 children capable of attending school, who are so distant from a school-

house as to render attendance impossible; but we have a promise of a school in this locality from the Assembly's Education Committee. Still, there are three additional schools required, in order to render it easy for all the children to attend.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—There are 100 persons who rank as ordinary paupers, besides from 40 to 50 who receive occasional relief. The sum annually contributed for their support is a mere trifle. During the last year they got L.10 as a legacy; L.14 as donations from two individuals connected with the parish; L.10 from two of the heritors; and L.7 from church door collections; making a total of L.41. Those who received the highest allowance did not get more than 10s. The sum annually collected at the church door, does not amount to more than L.10, and there is no regular provision whatever made for the poor. They beg from place to place, and are always liberally assisted both by the tacksmen and by the crofters, who have anything at all to spare. But, at the same time, the condition of those who are bed-rid is a very wretched one; while some of those who go about, though they receive food, are miserably ill off in regard to clothing. Some time ago, it was thought degrading to apply for aid from the poor's funds; but this is not so by any means now, and there are many applying for relief who have no title to it.

Fairs.—There is one fair annually held at a place called Fairy Bridge, which is three miles from Dunvegan. It is held for the purpose of disposing of black-cattle, but very few are sold there.

Inns.—There are two inns and three dram-houses or ale-houses, as they are sometimes called, in the parish. The principal inn, which is at Dunvegan, is remarkably well kept; and it is always found, that where the inn-keeper is a man of right principle, there are few excesses committed in his house. Two of the other houses are entirely supernumerary, yet, much to the credit of the people, there is no great quantity drunk in them. The people generally are remarkably sober.

Fuel.—The only fuel used by the common people is peats.

Miscellaneous Observations.

Very great changes have taken place in the parish, both in regard to the aspect of the country, and to the habits of the people, since the last Statistical Account was published.

The formation of roads and bridges may be first adverted to. Twenty-five years ago, there was only one bridge in the parish, and not a mile of carriage road. Now, there are lines of excellent

road traversing it in various directions, and every stream that crosses these lines is spanned by a bridge. The district of Glendale is the only part that is yet left in its original inaccessible state. It may not be undeserving of notice, as illustrative of the effects of long-formed habits, and of that prejudice against innovation which is natural to a primitive race, that, for some years after the construction of roads, the common people would not on any account travel on them. They said that the stones and gravel both bruised the feet, and wore the shoes, and they preferred to follow the old paths, uneven and boggy as they were. Now, however, they have become reconciled to level, dry, and hard roads, and the old paths are almost undistinguishable, being covered with heather and moss.

The mode of agriculture pursued on the larger farms has likewise undergone a total change. Now, fields of clover and turnip are to be seen, where at one time there was nothing but useless bog-grass growing; and a system of five years' rotation is adopted instead of the old one of two. New agricultural implements have likewise been introduced. No longer than twenty years ago, ploughs made entirely of wood, with the exception of the *sock* and *coulter*, were to be seen dragged by four horses, which required two men to drive them, and whose work was so imperfectly done, that three men were employed in beating down the only half-turned furrows, and levelling the very uneven surface left behind. Wooden harrows, and carts of very clumsy workmanship, in the few places where carts were available, were the only ones used; while generally, the articles to be transported from one place to another were carried on horses' backs. Now, one man drives a pair of horses with an iron plough, and does more than the work of six men with four horses. Iron harrows, carts of the best description, and indeed every farming implement used in the south of Scotland, are to be seen every day.

Both dwelling-houses and farm-offices have undergone an equally great improvement; and the stock has been completely changed.

About thirty-five years ago, black-cattle and horses constituted the wealth of the tenantry, and were found grazing on the tops of the highest hills. The few sheep kept were almost exclusively used for the table. The gentleman who broke in upon this system, is still living in a neighbouring parish, and has seen black-faced sheep universally introduced, and again give place to Cheviots, which now graze from the summits of the hills to the

lowest meadows, constituting almost the sole stock of the tacksmen.

The habits of the upper classes have likewise altered to some extent. They pay much more attention to literature than it was formerly customary to do; and the boisterous conviviality which, thirty years ago, was in very high estimation among them, is now almost universally abandoned and discountenanced. Their hospitality continues as unbounded as ever, but in the exercise of it the rules of temperance or decorum are very rarely violated, and every excess is condemned and discouraged.

The immensely increased facilities of attaining education make a great and most beneficial change in the situation of the common people. Now, there are not more than 200 or 300 children in the parish who may not, without any very long journeys, attend school daily. Twenty years ago, there was not that number who could attend school. Schools have not yet produced the effects which they are fitted to do. But their influence is felt more and more each succeeding year; and could the parents be prevailed upon to keep their children regularly in them for the space of a few years, they would soon work a total and most beneficial change in the condition of the community.

The people have become less social, but much more peaceable in their conduct towards one another, and more temperate than they formerly were. It was, as is well known, customary for neighbours to visit each other's houses nightly, and to while away part of the long winter evenings, in reciting tales and traditions, singing songs, or playing some musical instrument. Now, all this is completely given up. It is with difficulty that a tradition regarding the once most popular characters or events can be picked up. "The Tales," or "*Sgeulachdan*," seem to be totally forgotten. It is rare to hear a song sung, and still rarer to hear the sound of pipe or violin. Each family confines itself to its own dwelling, or, if a visit is paid, the time is spent in retailing the silly gossip of the day. People certainly may be far more beneficially employed than the old Highlanders used to be; yet we conceive the change in their habits to be a subject of regret on various grounds. The traditions of a country—the only source of information concerning bygone days in the absence of written records—are always interesting and instructive; and it is to be lamented that the traditions of the Highlands have been to a great degree irrecoverably lost. Still more is it to be deplored that the

"Sgeulachdan" or tales, which were at one period so universally prized, are now so completely forgotten; for they were not only couched in apt and beautiful language, showing that the Gaelic, now become so harsh, and rusty, and unmanageable, was at one time smooth, euphonous, and pliable; but the imagery employed in them displayed often a rich and highly cultivated fancy; while they almost universally contained a moral, highly important and well-pointed. In these and in the proverbs of the country, were the collective wisdom and intelligence of the Highlands to be seen. But both tales and proverbs are now nearly lost; and while most interesting fragments might yet be recovered and preserved, the time for making a complete collection is for ever past.

It is at the same time sincere cause of joy to every one truly interested in their welfare, that the people have abandoned their old customs in solemnizing funerals and marriages. Not many years ago, the memory of a person even in the humblest ranks would be thought dishonoured, unless from fifty to sixty individuals accompanied his remains to the grave. During the "*fārair*" or wake, and especially on the day of the interment, such a quantity of meat and drink was distributed as kept the nearest surviving relatives for several years in the greatest poverty, in order to pay them, and what was far more to be lamented, so much whisky was drunk in the church, or in the churchyard after the interment, that people often forgot the sacredness of the place, and the solemnity of the occasion, renewed old feuds and dissensions, and fought fiercely amid the graves of their ancestors. The sod which, but a short time previous, was bedewed with the tears, and witnessed the lamentations of relatives mourning for him who was laid underneath, was stained with the blood, and became witness to the oaths and imprecations of other relatives, perhaps equally sincere in their attachment to the deceased, but for a time under the ungovernable influence of intoxication. Happily, however, these savage scenes are known now, only as the things of bygone days. Indeed, what may be termed a violent reaction has taken place in the feelings and customs of the people in regard to the funeral obsequies of their friends, which are at the present day conducted more quietly and privately than perhaps in any other portion of Scotland. Only a very few friends, generally from ten to fifteen, assemble to the interment of a common man, and the expense incurred does not amount to more than a very trifling sum, from L.1 to L.1, 10s.

The change in regard to marriages is equally great. Formerly, from 80 to 100 persons used to assemble, and to pass at least two days in feasting and dancing. Now the average number does not exceed five or six; the bridal feast is often nothing more than the usual poor fare of potatoes and herrings, with the addition of a glass of whisky to each individual present, and music and dancing are generally discontinued. Balls and dancing parties have also been given up throughout the parish. Indeed, all public gatherings, whether for shinty playing, or throwing the putting-stone, for drinking and dancing, for marriages or funerals, have been discontinued, and people live very much apart. There is not a tenth part of the whisky consumed that was consumed in the olden time; nor is there one fight for ten that were then fought. Disputes are now referred to the arbitration of the Sheriff, instead of being settled by club-law.

In regard to the general morals of the parish,—a change which, upon the whole, may be pronounced decidedly favourable, has taken place. An open and unshrinking profession of religion, of the faith of Christ, is more frequent and more honoured than it was not many years ago; and while there are some guilty of more glaring immorality than was then known, yet there are others leading lives of stricter purity and godliness. Thus the two extremes are separating more widely, and it is cause of rejoicing to think, that, though the wicked are becoming more bold in their wickedness, believers are at the same time becoming more courageous in the cause of the Lord, and that, being engaged in his cause, they will assuredly prevail.

February 1841.