

PARISH OF WICK.

PRESBYTERY OF CAITHNESS, SYNOD OF CAITHNESS AND
SUTHERLAND.

THE REV. CHARLES THOMSON, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—THE vocable *wic* in Danish, Saxon, and other northern languages of Gothic origin, signifies *a corner, a flexure, a bending reach* in a river, *a bay*. Hence the derivation of Wick, formerly spelled Weik, which has always been the name of this parish, is obvious. A well-defined and rather beautiful little *wic*, or bay, which, no doubt, formed a comparatively safe and commodious harbour to the Danish and Norwegian pirates* of ancient days, communicated its appellation to the village which gradually rose on its northern shore; and, finally, the name was extended to the whole parochial district which, ultimately, became connected with the town.

Extent.—The parish of Wick is 15½ miles in extreme length from north to south; its average breadth is about 5 miles; and its superficial extent may be estimated at 77 square miles, or 61,600 imperial acres.

Boundaries.—The parish of Wick is bounded, on the south by the parish of Latheron; on the south-west, by the parish of Wattin; on the north-west, by the parish of Bower; on the north, by the parish of Canisbay; and on the east, by the Moray Frith.

Coast.—The coast of this parish presents along its line, which is about twenty-six miles in length, a great variety of features. Near the northern extremity, on the townland, or estate of Nybster, it is formed by lofty rugged rocks. These are succeeded by gently sloping fields, on the northern limit of the Bay of Keiss. Almost the whole of the shore on the bosom of this capacious bay is low,

* The northern pirates received the name of *Vikings*, that is bay-men, because they lurked in the *wics*, or bays. *Wick* is yet in use in the Scottish dialect, as the *wick* o' the mouth, the *wick* o' the ee.

and formed of flinty sand. Towards the southern side, it is composed of comminuted shells. The coast now becomes bold and rocky till it reaches the Noss, or, as it is usually, but tautologically, styled, Noss-Head. From Noss to Staxigoe it is composed of lofty, black, and rugged rocks, which are continued with more or less of the same savage character to Proudfoot, the northern side of the entrance to the Bay of Wick. At the Head of Wick, opposite to Proudfoot, the same kind of rugged, rocky coast recommences, and continues, with but trifling interruptions, till it passes beyond the southern boundary of the parish. On the coast of the parish of Wick, there are numerous *goes*,* or small inlets of the sea, with steep and rocky sides. Commencing at the south side of Keiss Bay, the principal of these, between it and Noss-Head, are Braidgoe; Caldersgoe; Sclatygoe; Ruthigoe; Girnigoe, crowned with the hideous ruins of Castle Sinclair and Girnigoe, the principal ancient baronial stronghold of the Sinclairs, Earls of Caithness; Manigoe, supposed to be properly Moneygoe, because it is reported, and the fact, that in it several parcels of base copper coins have at different times been found, corroborates the tradition, that Earl George the Wicked entertained in it one Smith, a coiner of bad money; Sandygoe; and Mursligoe, the cove frequented by seals. An entrance from this goe leads under a small rock, by a dry passage, into an immense cavern under Noss-Head. Between this headland and Broad Haven, are Staxigoe, so called from some *Stacks*, or detached rocks, which rise above the sea at its entrance; and Eltrigoe. Papigoe lies in the Bay of Wick. A passage is said to lead a considerable way from the sea, to a small knoll called the Pap, whence the name of Papigoe.

On the shore to the south of Wick Bay, lies a black and frightful chasm, on which stands the dismantled tower of Auld Wick. At sea, this ruin forms an excellent landmark, and is by sailors called the Aul' Man' o' Wick. Southward from Auld Wick is the Burgh of Hempriggs, so called from its having been in very ancient times the site of a *bruch*, or fort, the traces of which are still visible. It forms a small fishing haven. In the mouth of it stand the *Stacks* of Hempriggs. The principal of these is an immense outstanding rock, perforated from side to side, and from top to bottom; the resort, in the breeding season, of innumerable sea-

* This ancient relic of Norwegian colonization is pronounced in one syllable, with the *g* hard, as if written *gyoes*.

fowl; and always of a pair or two of merlin hawks. The Brig o Tram, Craig-Ammel, Brickigoe, and Falligoe, near the southern termination of the parochial coast, are some of its more interesting features.

Keiss Bay, called also Reiss Bay, from the townland of Reiss, which lies upon it; Ackergill Bay, from the noble Tower of Ackergill, which stands on its shore, and likewise Sinclair Bay, from the neighbourhood of Castle Sinclair and Girnigoe; and the Bay of Wick are the only two bays on the coast. The former is by far the larger. Ships have often been stranded on its shore. This has arisen from its having been mistaken for the eastern entrance of the Pentland Frith. A lighthouse ought to be erected on Noss-Head.

This dangerous promontory, Proudfoot, the Head of Wick, and Ulbster Head, are the most important headlands on the coast.

Surface.—The surface of the parish of Wick is in general flat, or but very gently sloping in different directions. The northern parts generally face the south, and the southern have a northern and north-eastern exposure, as shown by the run of the water. Its aspect is bleak, unpicturesque, and tame. The heights of Yarrows and Camster, towards the south-west of the parish, are the only hills deserving of the name. Their elevation above the sea is considerable; but their appearance is dull and heavy.

A spacious valley, forming the fertile strath of Stirkoke, stretches in a westerly direction from the Bay of Wick to the Loch of Watin,—a distance of about twelve miles, without ever attaining an elevation of more than 60 feet above the level of the sea. Half a mile above Wick, a similar valley, running southwards in a circum-linear direction, and keeping nearly parallel to the sea coast, but bending a little more to the west, arrives at a somewhat greater elevation at its southern extremity, than the former. Another valley, containing the deep and extensive moss of Kilminster, separates the parishes of Wick and Bower.

Meteorology.—The climate of this parish is that of the whole of Caithness,—very windy, humid, and variable. The average number of days in the year with rain is 190; with snow, 36½; and with frost, 35. The fall of rain is pretty equally distributed throughout the twelve months. The quantity of rain that fell in 1840, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December inclusively, was as follows:—

Months.	Inches.	Months.	Inches.	Months.	Inches.
January,	4.85	May,	2.86	September,	5.32
February,	1.56	June,	1.99	October,	6.18
March,	.78	July,	3.	November,	3.61
April,	.97	August,	2.43	December,	1.74

Total, 35 inches and 29 decimal parts, or rather more than one-fourth of an inch.

Fogs, which are often very dense and wetting, generally come from the east. They seldom last above an hour or two. This is owing to the breezy character of the weather. The days with fog amount in the year to 35. Westerly winds prevail. The winter is in general windy. In the beginning and the fall of the year, it is often exceedingly tempestuous. The following table, calculated from observations made for several years, will give some intimation of the various atmospherical conditions of the climate of this part of Scotland.

Barometer.	Spring.	Summer.	Autumn.	Winter.
Mean average,	30.04	30.12	30.05	29.94
Highest,	30.85	30.80	30.70	30.70
Lowest,	29.00	29.40	28.90	28.90
Range,	1.80	1.85	1.40	1.80
Thermometer.				
Mean average,	47°	56½°	56°	65°
Highest,	58	70½	65	55
Lowest,	32	52	44	39
Range,	26	18½	21	22
Prevailing winds,	S. E. to S. & N. W.	W. to N. & N. E.	S. E. to S. & N. W.	S. to N. W.
Days with rain,	42	50	51	47
Days with snow,	18½	0	2	16
Days with frost,	14	0	1	20
Days with fog,	8	9	6	8

It appears from this table that the range of the barometer is least in summer, and of almost equal extent in the other three quarters, and that of the thermometer is nearly equal throughout the year; the greatest range of each instrument being in spring. The range of the prevalent winds in winter is very circumscribed. In spring and autumn, they go round half the compass, and in the same direction from south-east by south to north-west. In summer, their range is also limited, but not to such a degree as in winter.

The winters are becoming milder and more open than they formerly were. The number of days in the year with frost, and of those with snow, is decreasing. This present winter, however, has been very severe; much more so, indeed, than any preceding win-

ter in the memory of the oldest inhabitants. Snow seldom falls for more than a day, or lies above two days, at a time. Thunder is very rare. It generally occurs at a great distance; and lightning seldom strikes or does any injury.

In 1784, a halo, "superbly bright and luminous, consisting of two bows, concentric, with an apparent interval of from three to four feet between them, and extending over a great part of the hemisphere, was distinctly seen." * What are usually called falling stars are frequently seen shooting across the nocturnal sky. The polar lights are visible almost every night, and generally prevent it from ever being very dark.

Diseases.—Fever, rheumatism, pleuritis, catarrh, cough, inflammation of the throat, are amongst the most numerous of the diseases. Pulmonary consumption is not frequent amongst adults; but infants with any weakness about the chest are generally carried off in childhood by hooping-cough, which is often very general and fatal, or by different pectoral affections. Rheumatism was not common till about the beginning of the present century, when the homely warm woollen clothing of olden times began to give place to the flimsier though gayer cotton dresses, which are now very generally worn. Itch is exceedingly prevalent among the children. The kind of food on which the lower orders chiefly subsist, the state of their habitations, the scantiness of their clothing, and their indifference to cleanliness, along with the contagious nature of the complaint, sufficiently account for this. Fever of a typhoid type is seldom absent from one lane or other in the burgh of Wick, Louisburgh, and Pulteneytown, whence it breaks out, and becomes epidemic in the neighbouring country. It is generally most acute soon after the close of the fishing-season. Nor is it difficult to account for its severity at that period. During the fishing there are not fewer than 10,000 persons added to the ordinary population of the place; and these are necessarily crowded together, sometimes to the number of ten or twelve, in one small room. This circumstance, taken in connection with the great consumption of spirits, and the very filthy state of the houses, shores, and streets, with putrescent effluvia steaming up from the fish-offals lying everywhere about, render it a wonder that typhoid diseases are not much more prevalent. The shortness of the fishing-sea-

* Statistical Account, Vol. x. p. 81.

son, the greater supply of food, and the state of excitement and activity in which all connected with the fishing live during the period of its continuance, are no doubt the great counteracting preservatives. Indigestion, arising from the almost exclusive vegetable food of the commonalty, is very frequent. The small tenants, especially the females, are perhaps most liable to this complaint; which seems to be on the increase. Small-pox is seldom long absent from the parish, and is often very fatal. Great numbers of the people have a strange antipathy to vaccination. They brand it as a tempting of Providence; whereas their rejection of this preservative is this sin. British cholera is endemic and epidemic, and often makes its appearance, especially in the latter form. It is never fatal in ordinary circumstances. Pestilential cholera visited Wick during the fishing season of 1832, a short while after its appearance at Thurso. The number of cases reported amounted to 306, of which 66 proved fatal.

From various calculations it appears, that the proportion of sickness in the different sexes gives $141\frac{1}{2}$ females to 100 males. Under twenty years of age, more males are sick than females; between twenty and seventy more females than males; and above the latter age, they are equal. The proportion of sickness, to such a degree as to demand medical attention, is about $5\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 per cent. of the population. The deaths are about 20 per cent. of the sick.

Instances of great longevity are not uncommon. There is at present an old lady, resident in the burgh, who has entered into her 101st year, and an old farmer, in the landward part of the parish, who has entered into his 102d. Both these venerable persons are in the perfect possession of all their mental and bodily faculties.

Maniacs are very rare. Idiots and fatuous persons are remarkably common.

A singular *lusus nature*, which occurred in the person of a child in the neighbourhood of Wick, about eighteen years ago, may here be mentioned. This child had a perfect eye on the back of the head. It lived for two years; and it is evident had the use of the supernumerary organ, from its never allowing a cap to be kept over it.

Hydrography.—It is needless to describe the well-known stormy Moray Frith, which, as has already been said, forms the eastern boundary of the parish of Wick.

The burns of Slickly, Stanstill, and Kilminster contribute to supply the Loch of Wester, which lies within three-quarters of a mile of the shore of Keiss Bay. This loch is about a mile long and a third of a mile broad. Its outlet forms the River or Water of Wester, which, after a winding course, flows into the Bay of Keiss. On the very highest ground of Noss-Head is the Loch of Noss, which, notwithstanding its elevated situation, and though no streamlets fall into it, is seldom if ever dry. The Loch of Kilminster lies in the middle of the moss of that name, and does not exceed three-fourths of a mile in breadth. The Loch of Winless is to the south of the Loch of Kilminster. The waters of both fall into the River of Wick.

The River of Wick, by far the largest stream in the parish, is the outlet of the beautiful Loch of Wattin, in the parish of that name. It lazily flows in a south-easterly direction through the rich and loamy strath of Stirkoke, till, after a winding course of eleven or twelve miles, about nine of which are within the parish of Wick, which it divides into two parts of almost equal extent, it disembogues itself into Wick Bay. Its average breadth is about thirty feet; but in rainy seasons, it overflows its banks, and overflows the strath through which it winds. The principal streamlets which it receives within the parish of Wick from the north, are the Burn of Winless, which issues from the loch of that name, the streamlet which flows from the Loch of Kilminster and Altmarlach, close on the west side of the upper glebe.

On the south side, the Burn of Bilbster is the first considerable streamlet which the River of Wick receives within the parish. The Burn of Hauster collects the greater part of its waters on the north and east of Camster, a townland belonging partly to Wick and partly to Latheron, (one of its sources being the little moss-fed Loch of Carnlia); and after a sweeping course of eight miles around the south side of Stirkoke, falls into the same river, upwards of three miles below the Burn of Bilbster. In the north end of the Moss of Tannach is Loch Dhu, three-quarters of a mile in circumference. Its outlet falls into the Burn of Hauster. Half a mile to the south of Loch Dhu, lies the Loch of Hempriggs, about a mile in length from north to south, and more than half a mile in breadth. The natural outlet of this loch is the Burn of Newton, which falls into the River of Wick, below the Burn of Hauster; but a lade, which has been cut from it, carries a runnel of

water of fifty horse-power into Pulteneytown for various industrial purposes. This loch is supplied chiefly from the Loch of Yarrows, two miles and a half distant to the south-west, into which runs the water of the drained Loch of Brickigoe. Two trifling lochs, one of which is named Wairows, among the hills of Yarrows, send out, towards the sea, a little stream, which divides into two streamlets, one of which runs into the Loch of Sarclet, lying half-way between Sarclet and Ulbster House; and the other falls into the sea at Falligo, southwards of Ulbster. The Loch of Sarclet, which is not above three-fourths of a mile in circumference, discharges its waters into the sea, a little to the south of the village of that name. The waters of the valley of Camster fall away, to the south, into the parish of Latheron.

Except a few rather pretty braes towards the mouth of the River of Wick, the scenery, both on the lochs and on the brooks of the parish, is as tame and unpicturesque as it possibly can be. Most of the well-water of the parish of Wick is impregnated with lime or iron. Chalybeate springs of considerable strength occur a little to the south of the Castle of Auld Wick, and on the face of a low bank to the north of Proudfoot, the north-eastern extremity of the Bay of Wick.

Geology.—Of the hilly ranges on the south and west of the parish, the formation is principally composed of greywacké and greywacké slate, with a few limestones, sandstones, &c. Towards the summit of the Yarrows Hills, a gneiss formation abounds. With these exceptions, the rock-formations of this parish consist almost entirely of the coarser kinds of the clay-slate or flagstone, so prevalent in the flatter grounds of Caithness. This is an immense formation of alternating beds of silicious and calcareo-silicious flagstone or slate-clay; dark, foliated, bituminous limestone; pyritous shale; sandstone, &c. The silicious beds predominate in the lowest position in this formation, and the calcareo-bituminous bed gives the type to the intermediate part, becoming more silicious and arenaceous at the upper posture, and so graduating into the superior division. The aggregate thickness of these deposits is very great.

The cliffs along the coast to the north of Keiss are chiefly composed of grey, brown, and greenish sandstone in thin layers, alternating with pyritous shale, which disappear in the Bay of Keiss. At the Castle of Girnigoe, there is a remarkable section of the

dark-bluish calcareous flagstone, which continues along the coast to the cliffs southwards of the burgh of Wick. This deposit differs from the general formation of the district in being in thicker beds, on which account it is much used in building. The stratal dip is generally to the north-east, with, however, numerous interruptions.

Of the cliffs to the south of the Bay of Wick, the stratal dip is in the same direction, and the flagstone is surmounted by soft greenish micaceous shale and sandstone. The operations near the southern side of the new harbour of Pulteneytown have brought into view a very singular disposition of the superior recumbent detritus. This, for the space of about 100 yards, is composed of large stones, huddled together like the rubbish of a quarry. The bank of fine bluish clay, resting upon this, is of considerable height. Imbedded in it, and near its summit, lies a conspicuous mass of coarse-grained dark-grey granite, of perhaps twenty tons in weight. It has been blasted with gunpowder, and various idle attempts have been made, but happily without success, to destroy this huge and remarkable boulder. A similar granitic boulder is found opposite, on the northern side of the bay. These are the only specimens known of this kind of stone in the parish; and they bear evident marks of having been rolled along by some mighty current.

Farther along the coast, on the south side of Wick Bay, nearer the Castle of Auld Wick, where the sea-cliffs are above thirty feet in height, and far above the reach of the high tide, the uppermost strata have been deranged by some mighty force directed upon them from the Moray Frith. Enormous masses of rock have been broken off from their beds, and thrown upon one another in most terrific confusion. One prodigious mass has been heaved from its bed below, and placed upon a similar rock immediately above, on which it is supported by a small stone between them, so that a person can walk beneath it.

About four miles to the south of Wick, the line of bearing of the schistose rocks is altered; and from a point near Ulbster, where they begin to dip in an inland or westerly direction, a great change is observable in the physical character of the country.

Fossil Organic Remains.—Ichthyolites are universally spread over this extensive deposit; and their occurrence is not confined to one particular stratum, but is characteristic of this vast schis-

tose formation, from the lowest to the highest beds. They have been found at Wester, near Keiss Bay, and elsewhere. These stone-fish occur in beds of dark-gray calcareous schist, highly bituminous and micaceous. In general, the animal remains are easily distinguishable from the imbedding matrix by their dark colour. Professor Agassiz, the celebrated naturalist, who has devoted so much of his time to the study of fossil fishes, has determined, and for the first time, with accuracy, the characters of our Caithness species.

Mineralogy.—Minerals are not abundant. The laminated beds of the rock-formation are, over all the parish, much intersected by symmetrical joints and fissures, which are filled up in numerous instances with trap. This often has the direct effect of altering the stratal inclination, and indeed of twisting and contorting it in all imaginable directions. Quartz or felspar likewise often fills up these fissures; the smaller of which are sometimes occupied entirely with calc-spar. The clay-slate contains many varied pyrites. At Staxigoe there is a vein of ironstone. Running down into the harbour of this village, there is a vein of lead-ore imbedded in felspar. Between Staxigoe and Broad Haven are several small veins of copper-ore. At the latter village there is a pretty good appearance of alum-rock. Immediately to the south of the Castle of Auld Wick, is the best vein of copper in the parish. It was wrought about eighty years ago by a company of miners, who carried off several ship loads of ore; but, having found a better vein in Shetland, it was abandoned; but not, however, before they secured themselves against competition, by taking a lease of it from the proprietor. Sulphate of barytes occurs on the coast opposite to the House of Ulbster, and is in some places three feet thick.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Tower of Ackergill, there is a considerable vein of a kind of parrot-coal, which emits a bright flame in burning, but is not reduced to ashes.

Marl of various qualities abounds in this parish. The draining of the loch of Brickigoe has made accessible a bed of most excellent marl of 20 feet in depth.

The soil varies in different places. The moss at the foot of the hills of Yarrows, the one between Sarclet and Ulbster; the Moss of Tannach, and the Moss of Kilminster, the last of which is many feet in depth and of great extent,—are the principal deposits of peat-earth in the parish of Wick.

From three to four hundred acres in the strath of Stirkoke are covered to the depth of from three to five feet, with an alluvial and loamy soil, which has evidently been brought by the River of Wick in repeated floods from the parish of Wattin. This track is one of the richest meadows for the grazing of cattle in Caithness, but is subject to frequent inundations. On the banks of the Hauster Water, and, in several other places, a deep covering of detritus and shale is to be met with. These contain many fragmentary remains of ostraceous shells, which are found at a height of from 100 to 150 feet above the level of the sea.

Though the soil is in some places light and sandy, and in other places rich and loamy, yet in by far the greater part of the parish it consists of a stiff hard clay, produced by the decomposition of the clay-slate. In general, the subsoil is composed of a close, retentive, gravelly clay, mixed with fragments of slate not yet decomposed, and resting on the surface of the flagstone or clay-slate. This construction retains the moisture which, along with the humidity of the climate, renders the soil not merely damp, but in many places wet, and thus offers the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the land.

Botany.—The two Scottish heaths, *Erica cinerea*, heather, and *E. tetralix*, bell-heather, abound on the moors. A purely white variety of the former is occasionally found. The bilberry, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, blaeberry; the *Empetrum nigrum*, cranberry; the black bear-berry, *Arbutus alpina*; and the red bearberry, *A. Uva ursi*, may likewise be found on heathery banks and heights. *Myrica gale*, the Scottish myrtle, is occasionally found shedding its agreeable perfume across an impassable bog. One of the most elegant of our indigenous flowers, the birds'-eye primrose, *Primula farinosa*, called also from its flowering in April and August, *Primula Scotica*, the Scottish primrose, adorns, with its lovely little purple flowers, the savage heights of the coast of the Moray Frith. It is also called the *powdered beau*, from the white dust which plentifully covers the under side of the petals. The primrose, *Primula veris*, is found on the burn sides. A very dwarfish species of willow may be met with creeping among the heather in wet places. Orchidaceous flowers, baldairies, in great variety abound. The Links of Keiss are begemmed in the season with the beautiful little white flower of Parnassus, *Parnassia palustris*. White and red clovers are indigenous; the former

often springs up spontaneously on ground which has never been cultivated, when a little lime may have fallen upon it, or it may have been casually turned up by the wheel of a cart or the plough. This is also the case with a species of hearts-ease. The tubers of *Orobus tuberosus*, knappards or caperoilie, which have a sweetish taste, somewhat like that of liquorice, are sometimes chewed to allay hunger. Corncockle, *Agrostemma Githago*, which has but very lately made its appearance in this quarter; betony, *B. officinalis*, found, though but dwarfish, on the road sides; ground-ivy, *Glechoma hederacea*; and foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*, found near Thrumster, are of comparatively rare occurrence. The last plant is provincially called *dead men's bells*, and has many superstitions connected with it. But the rarest plant in the parish of Wick was the white water-lily, *Nymphaea alba*, which was found only in one spot in all the county of Caithness. This was the Loch of Brickigoe, on the estate of Thrumster. But some time ago this loch was drained for marl, and the pride of the Cathanensian Flora destroyed. Roots, however, were taken from the Loch of Brickigoe, and planted in a pond near the House of Stirkoke, and at different places in the county of Caithness.

Lichens in great variety, and often of great beauty, clothe the rocks and stones in all parts of the parish. The rein-deer lichen, *L. rangiferinus*, grows to the height of about three or four inches among the heather.

Woods.—There are at present no natural woods in the parish. Trees have been planted to a considerable extent around the houses of Hempriggs, Stirkoke, and Thrumster; but neither the climate nor the soil is congenial to their growth, and they do not thrive. Elder is excepted; almost everywhere it flourishes amazingly. Quickset hedges have, in many places, been trained into good fences.

But though the parish of Wick is at present destitute of natural wood, such does not appear to have been always the case. It is said, that, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, the hills of Yarrows were covered with copse-wood, which was destroyed by fire, for the purpose of expelling the wolves, with which the place was infested. But the most remarkable evidence of ancient woods is found in the Bay of Keiss. Between the links and the sand, and running down under the sea, there are found the re-

mains of a submarine forest. These are like peat moss, entirely composed of decayed wood. The barks of various kinds of trees are quite discernible; and even the seeds of the birch and ash are so well preserved, as to appear but lately from the tree. No large trunks are found; only small specimens of oak, ash, birch, and plane-tree; but none of fir.

Mammalogy.—Remains of bovine ruminants of a very large size have been found in the mosses and marl-pits of this parish. The wolf and the wild-goat were once common in the district, but have both been extinct long ago.

The wild-cat is occasionally seen. Otters are often found. The Links of Reiss are stored with rabbits. Hares are numerous. The fox breeds in the rocks about the coast. Moles are superabundant. Weasels, ferrets, and polecats, are not uncommon. Ermines have been found at Stirkoke. A stray deer from the heights of Morven is occasionally met with.

The native breed of horses, still employed by the smaller tenants, is diminutive and weak. Their provincial name is *garrons*. The original stock of cattle was also small, but the beef was excellent. Probably the ancient Cathanensian breed of sheep is not yet altogether extinct in the parish of Wick. They are very small, with a dirty brown fleece and four small horns.

Ornithology.—By the kindness of Eric Sutherland Sinclair, Esq., surgeon in Wick, who has paid much attention to this subject, this Report is enriched with the following "List of birds found in the county of Caithness, and principally in the parish of Wick." It cannot fail to be extremely interesting; and may astonish some with the extent and variety of Cathanensian ornithology. Mr Sinclair has formed with his own hands an extensive ornithological collection illustrative of the natural history of the district. All the birds in the subsequent list, except those marked with an asterisk, are in this learned gentleman's museum.

The names of birds found in the county of Caithness, and principally in the parish of Wick.

Aquila Chrysaëta
Haliaeetus Albicilla
Accipiter fringillarius
Astur palumbarius
Falco peregrinus
 ——— *Subbuteo*
 ——— *Tinnunculus*
 ——— *Æsalon*

CAITHNESS.

Buteo vulgaris
 ——— *Lagopus*
Pernis apivorus
Circus rufus
 ——— *cyaneus*
 ——— *cineraceus*
Otus vulgaris
 ——— *Brachyotos*

Strix flammea
Ulula stridula
Hirundo rustica
 ——— *urbica*
 ——— *riparia*
Cypselus murarius
Caprimulgus Europæus
Muscicapa grisola

I

Muscicapa luctuosa	Certhia familiaris	Spathulea clypeata
Lanius Exeubitor	Troglodytes Europæus	Chauliodus strepera
Merula viscivora	Cuculus canorus	Anas Boschas
———— pilaris	Columba Palumbus	Querquedula acuta
———— musica	———— Cenas	———— Crecca
———— iliaca	———— Livia	Mareca Penelope
———— vulgaris	———— Turtur	Oidemia nigra
———— torquata	Phasianus Colchicus	———— fusca
Cinclus aquaticus	Tetrao Tetrix	———— perspicillata
Saxicola Cenanthe	———— Scoticus	Somateria mollissima
———— Rubetra	Lagopus mutus	Fuligula ferina
———— Rubicola	Perdix cinerea	———— Marila
Erythaca Rubecula	———— Coturnix	———— cristata
Phœnicura ruficilla	Ardea cinerea	Harelda glacialis
———— Tithys	———— purpurea, <i>rare</i>	Clangula vulgaris
Salicaria arundinea	Numenius arquata	———— histrionica
Sylvia sibilatrix	———— Phæopus	Mergus Merganser
Regulus aurocapillus	Totanus fuscus	———— Serrator
Accentor modularis	———— Calidris	———— cucullatus
Motacilla alba	———— ochropus	———— albellus *
———— Boarula	———— Glareola	Podiceps rubricollis
———— flava	———— Macularius	———— cristatus
Anthus aquaticus	———— Glottis	———— cornutus
———— pratensis	Hypoleucos totanus	———— minor
———— arboreus	Scelopax Rusticola	Colymbus glacialis
Alauda arvensis	———— major *	———— arcticus
———— arborea	———— Gallinago	———— septentrionalis
Bombycilla garrula, <i>very</i>	———— Gallinula	Uria Troile
Plectrophanes nivalis [<i>rare</i>]	Tringa Canutus	———— Grylle
———— Lapponica	———— rufescens	Mergus melanoleucos, <i>rare</i>
Emberiza Miliaria	———— Temminckii	Alca Torda
———— Citrinella	———— minuta	Fratercula Arctica
———— Hortulana *	———— maritima	Phalacrocorax Carbo
Schœniculus Emberiza	———— variabilis	———— cristatus
Passer domesticus	———— subarquata	Sula Bassana
———— montanus	Rallus aquaticus	Sterna Hirundo
Fringilla Cœlebs	Crex pratensis	———— minuta
———— Montifringilla	———— Porzana	Larus minutus
Carduelis Spinus *	———— Baillonii, <i>rare</i>	———— ridibundus
———— elegans	Gallinula chloropus	———— canus
Linaria cannabina	Fulica atra	———— rissa
———— montana	Hæmatopus ostralegus	———— eburneus
———— minor	Streptilas Interpres	———— glaucus
Coccothraustes vulgaris	Arenaria calidris	———— Islandicus
———— Chloris	Vanellus cristatus	———— argentatus
Loxia curvirostra	Charadrius pluvialis	———— marinus
Pyrrhula vulgaris	———— Morinellus	———— fuscus
Sturnus vulgaris	Anser palustris	Cataraetes vulgaris
Pastor roseus, <i>very rare</i>	———— ferus	———— pomarinus
Corvus Corax	———— erythropus	———— parasiticus
———— Corone	———— Bernicla	Procellaria glacialis
———— Cornix	———— Brenta	Puffinus cinereus
———— frugilegus	———— ruficollis	———— Anglorum
———— Monedula	Cygnus ferus	Thalassidroma pelagica
Pica melanoleuca	Tadorna vulpanser	———— Bullockii *
Garrulus glandarius	———— rutula	

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There can be no doubt that the aboriginal inhabitants of the district which now forms the parish of Wick, were of Celtic origin. This is proved by several names of places and rivulets, such as

Auchairn,* Altimarlach, Drumdriy, which are significant in the Gaelic language.

The Celtic inhabitants were invaded and evidently subjugated by the Pechts or Picts, a people of Scythic, or more properly Scuthic, extraction, who sailed from Scandinavia to Orkney; whence they passed into Caithness across the straits denominated from them the Pechtland, softened into the Pentland, Frith, and spread themselves over almost the whole of Scotland. Many traces of them are yet to be met with in the parish of Wick, both in traditions, and in the shape of those singular and curious architectural ruins called to this day by the common people, Pecht's houses. The designation *Cruithnich*, pronounced *Greenich*, that is, wheatmen, by which the Pechts are known in the Gaelic language—the durability of their habitations extending even to present times, when all traces of the turfen huts of their Celtic predecessors have long ago passed away—the legendary marvels of their strength and skill—and the superstitious awe with which, even to this day, the places of their residence are regarded, evince that the Pechts must have been a people greatly superior to the Celts, and far advanced beyond them in knowledge and civilization.

About the year 910, Harrold the Fair-haired, a Norwegian king, having expelled the pirates who infested the Northern Seas, from the Orkneys, carried the war into Pictland, where he was defeated with great slaughter. On his return to Norway, he granted the Orcadian Islands to Ronald, a powerful Norwegian chieftain, to comfort him for the loss of Ivar, his son, who had fallen in battle. Ronald made over this grant to Sigurd, his brother, who, having speedily reduced the Orcadians, passed into Caithness, and subdued it, with Sutherland and Ross, under his authority. Under a succession of Norwegian earls, a very close and frequent intercourse subsisted after this event, for ages, between the north of Scotland and Norway; whence numerous bands of Norwegians successively came and settled in Caithness. Surnames of Norwegian extraction, as Swanson, son of Swen, Manson, son of Magnus, Ronald, Harrold, &c. are frequent in this parish. The termination *ster*, softened from *stadr*, a *steading*, which enters into the names of Camster, Ulbster, Stemster, Hauster, Thuster, Bilbster, Sibster, Wester, Thurster, and Nybster, shows

* Auch-charn, the field of the heap of stones. Alt-na-marlach, thief's-burn.

also the prevalence of Norwegian colonization within the district now forming the parish of Wick.

The clan Gun are said to have originated in the twelfth century within the parish of Wick, where they once were very powerful, and still are very numerous. About the year 1100, Olaf, a man of great bravery, dwelt in the isle of Graemsay, one of the Orkneys. He had three sons, Waltheof, Gun, and Swen.* From the second of these, traditionally called the Great Gun of Ulbster, where he dwelt, the clan Gun deduce their descent.

About 1140, Ronald, Earl of Orkney, whose name was canonized at Rome in 1192, "was entertained at a town called Wick, by Roald, who had a son that was come to maturity, called Swen, who was one of those that waited at table."† Margad, who managed the possessions at Dungaldsbay, now Duncansbay, of Swen Olafson, who followed the profession of a pirate, went some time afterwards to Wick, and twenty men with him, to transact some business, and before his return slew Roald in his own house, and some others with him. Earl Ronald was urged by Swen, the son of Roald, to avenge the murder of his father; but the Romish saint, after some feeble attempts to seize the person of Margad, who was successfully protected by Swen, his master, was, after still more horrible atrocities had been perpetrated, reconciled at last to both the murderer and the pirate.‡ Some time thereafter, whilst Ronald was on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Harrold the Wicked, Earl of Orkney, spent the winter at Wick, and was robbed of the rents of his estates in Zetland by Swen the pirate, whose stronghold was at Lambsburgh, hodiernally Buchollie's Castle in Canisbay, near the northern boundary of the parish of Wick.§

Caithness continued subject to Orcadian earls of Scandinavian extraction till about 1330, when, owing to the failure of the male line, this earldom went into other families, and the power and influence of the Norwegians passed away.

At, and for some time previously to this era, more than a third part of Caithness, including the district which now forms the parish of Wick, was possessed by a family surnamed De Cheyne. The last of the male line, Sir Reginald, is yet under the designation of Morar na Shien, famous in the Highland districts as a mighty hunter. He was most anxious for a son to heir his vast estates; and when his wife, Mary, brought him a daughter, he ordered, in a paroxysm of fury, the child to be destroyed. It was,

* Pope's Torfaeus.

† Ib.

‡ Ib.

§ Ib.

however, conveyed away; and a little sister escaped, in a similar manner, the rage of her twice disappointed father. Years rolled on, and Morar na Shien often lamented his childless condition. At length, on some public occasion, a great festival was held, at which Sir Reginald noticed two young ladies, who far outshone the rest of the company. Morar na Shien expressed his admiration, and lamented to his wife his cruel infatuation, by which he had been deprived of daughters, who, had they been allowed to live, would have been about the age of these peerless beauties. Mary de Cheyne hastened to confess her justifiable disobedience to her husband's orders, and introduced the young ladies to him as his own daughters. Overpowered with joy, Sir Reginald de Cheyne acknowledged them as his, and constituted them heiresses of his extensive possessions. Morar na Shien died about the year 1350. Mariotta, his elder daughter, married John de Keith, the second son of Edward the Marischal, by whom she had a son, Andrew, who became possessed, in right of his mother, of the lands of Ackergill and other estates in the parish of Wick. Marjory, the younger, was heiress of Duffus, and married Nicholas, the second son of Kenneth, Earl of Sutherland, who thus obtained the castle and lands of Auld Wick, in the same parish. William, on whom his father, Earl William, passing by an elder brother of the same name, entailed the earldom of Caithness, married a daughter of Keith of Ackergill.

These various marriages brought the Sinclairs, Sutherlands, and Keiths into the parish of Wick; and subsequent events gave rise to the following couplet, which is yet often repeated:

Sinclair, Sutherland, Keith, and clan Gun,
There never was peace whar thae four war in.

About the year 1464, serious disputes having arisen between the Keiths and the clan Gun, Keith of Ackergill associated with himself the Mackays of Strathnaver, who readily entered into the quarrel, and marched against his enemies. The hostile parties encountered each other on the Moor of Tannach, in the parish of Wick. A desperate conflict ensued, but after a cruel slaughter on both sides, the Guns were at last defeated. To terminate these bitter and bloody feuds, it was arranged that a meeting should take place with twelve horses on each side, between Ackergill and the Cruner, as the chief of the clan Gun was styled. This interview was appointed to be held in the Chapel of St Tears, not far from Ackergill. The Cruner, with the greater part of his sons

and principal kinsmen, to the number of twelve altogether, came at the time appointed, and, as Keith had not yet arrived, they proceeded into the chapel to their devotions. Whilst they were at prayer, Ackergill came up with twenty-four men, on each horse two, and rushing on the Cruner and his followers, overpowered and slew them all, but not before the greater part of the Keiths had fallen. This horrid act of treachery did not pass unrevenged. William, the grandson of the Cruner, afterwards intercepted and cut off George Keith of Ackergill and his son, with twelve of their retainers, at Drummoy in Sutherland. The lands of Ackergill passed into the possession of the Earl of Caithness.

The earls of Caithness, who had acquired the greater part of the parish of Wick, fixed their baronial residence at the Castle of Girnigoe, near the Tower of Ackergill. In 1576, this stronghold became the scene of one of the most fearful atrocities on record. John, the Master of Caithness, surnamed from his great strength, *Garrow*,* had incurred the displeasure of his father, George, the fifth Earl of Caithness of the name of Sinclair, because he would not execute the revengeful hatred of the earl against Dornock, and extirpate its inhabitants. Having inveigled the Master into the snares which had been laid for him, his father had him seized at Girnigoe, and cast into a dark and noisome dungeon below ground, in which he dragged out for years a wretched existence. At last his keepers, David and Ingram Sinclair, relatives of his own, determined to destroy him; and after having kept him for some time without food, gave him a large mess of salt beef, and then withholding all drink from him, left him to die of raging thirst.

This inhuman earl died at Edinburgh in 1583, and his body was buried in St Giles's, where his monument is still to be seen. His heart was cased in lead, and placed in the Sinclair's aisle, where his murdered son was buried at the church of Wick. There is evidence that, if not a Papist, he leaned much to Popery.

He was succeeded by his grandson, George, son of John Garrow, who began his career by avenging his father's death. David Sinclair resided at Keiss, and Ingram at Wester. The daughter of the latter was to be married, and a large party were invited to the wedding. Earl George met David on his way to Wester, and ran him through the body with his sword. The earl then rode over to Wester, and accosted Ingram as he was playing at foot-

* *Garbh*, Gaelic, rough, strong.

ball on the green. "Do you know," said he, "that one of my corbies," so he called his pistols, "missed fire this morning?"—and drawing it from the holster as if to look at it, shot him through the head.

In 1588, the Earl of Sutherland, in revenge for the slaughter of one of his dependents by the Sinclairs, made an inroad into Caithness, and advanced as far as Wick, which he took and burned. One of his followers, having entered the church, found the leaden box enclosing the heart of the late Earl of Caithness, and, disappointed in his expectations of treasure, broke the casket open, and flung the corrupted heart into the air. Proceeding onwards, the Sutherlands laid siege to the Castle of Girnigoe, from which they retired, after having beleaguered it in vain for twelve days. Next year the men of Caithness having killed the Earl of Sutherland's herdsman, that chieftain sent an army of 300 men, who marched almost as far as Girnigoe, and cruelly ravaged the country. In this inroad, they spoiled the ship, and plundered the goods of one Andrew Wardlaw, a merchant in the town of Wick.

In 1606, the Earl of Caithness, by purchase of some estates, became proprietor of almost all the parish of Wick; but his infamous conduct, which has procured for him in the traditions of this parish, the cognomen of the Wicked, involved him in inextricable difficulties. To recruit his exhausted resources, he harboured at Girnigoe a coiner called Arthur Smith, who filled the country with bad money. This, and his turbulence brought down upon his head the vengeance of the Court; and Sir Robert Gordon, the first Knight-baronet of Scotland, was despatched with ample powers to chastise the treasonable earl. Lord Caithness fled; but Sir Robert laid waste his estates, and took possession of his castles of Girnigoe, Ackergill, and Keiss. The earl at length submitted himself, and was alimeted by his creditors with an annuity out of his dilapidated estates. He died in 1643, and was succeeded by his great-grandson, George, who sold in 1672, the whole earldom, title, and all, to the Laird of Glenorchy, and died in 1676.

Glenorchy, who thus had become proprietor of the greater part of the parish of Wick, having married the Countess, assumed the title of Earl of Caithness. His right to this honour was disputed by George Sinclair of Keiss. To vindicate his claim, Glenorchy having obtained letters from the Council, raised a troop of

several hundred men, and marched against Sinclair, to dispossess him of his patrimonial estate. Keiss collected a force of 400 men, and awaited his enemy in the borough of Wick. There he plentifully regaled his followers; who had not recovered from their revelling, when, on the 13th of July 1680, they were informed that the Campbells were crossing the country towards Keiss. Inflamed with drink, the men of Caithness vauntingly rushed on the men of Glenorchy, who were strongly posted on the western bank of the burn of Altimarlach, on the northern side of the River of Wick, close above what now forms the upper glebe. A total rout of the revellers immediately ensued, who turned their backs and fled through the gully towards the river. Numbers were killed in attempting to cross; and tradition says, that the Campbells, in pursuit of the fugitives, passed over the river dry-shod, on the bodies of the slain. Notwithstanding this disaster, the right of Sinclair of Keiss to the title of Earl of Caithness was at last recognized, and Glenorchy was created, as a sort of compensation, Baron of Weik.

The Baron of Weik was hated by the people. They burned the corn and houghed the cattle of the tenants on his estates; till at last, utterly wearied with these incessant vexations, he divided the whole of his lands in Caithness into sixty-two portions, great and small, which he sold in 1690.

In this transaction terminated the civil history of the parish of Wick. Nothing has since occurred within it worth recording.

Land-owners.—The principal land-owner is the Right Honourable Benjamin Dunbar Sutherland, Baron of Duffus, and a Baronet. Lord Duffus is paternally descended from Nicholas Sutherland, second son of Kenneth, Earl of Sutherland, who married Marjory de Cheyne, second daughter of the celebrated hunter, Morar na Shien. Marjory was heiress of Duffus, and likewise of Auld Wick in this parish, of which her descendant is proprietor at this day. The other land-owners are, William Horne, Esq. of Scouthel, who possesses, in the parish of Wick, the estates of Stirkoke and Sibster; Robert Innes, Esq. of Thrumster; Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Keiss and Bilbster; John Sinclair, Esq. of Barrock, proprietor in Wick, of Howe and Mireland; Sir George Sinclair, Bart. of Ulbster; the Earl of Caithness, of Mirelandorn; William Sinclair, Esq. of Freswick, proprietor in Wick, of Nybster; the British Society for improving the fisheries are feudatories under Lord

Duffus of Pulteneytown ; and James Smith, Esq. of Odrig, is owner of a small property.

Of these, Lord Duffus and Robert Innes, Esq. are the only constantly resident land-owners. William Horne, Esq. is occasionally resident at Stirkoke. All the rest are non-resident.

Parochial Registers.—The records belonging to the Kirk-session have not been well preserved. The earlier minutes of session have been lost. Those at present extant consist of five volumes. Of these, the first, which contains 237 folio pages, commences on the 20th of July 1701, and ends on May 13th 1723 ; the second, which contains 85 folios, begins on May 2d 1742, and ends on September 24th 1758 ; the third, containing 145 folios, begins on October 1st 1758, and ends on January 13th 1793 ; the fourth, which contains 139 leaves, and is a mere ragged fragment of a quarto volume, wanting both beginning and end, commences on the 29th of October 1801, and terminates on February 9th 1816 ; and the fifth, in which the minutes of Session are being recorded, commences on July 12th 1816. The baptismal registers, which have not been regularly kept, consist of six volumes, and commence on the 3d of November 1701. Up till a late date the registers of matrimonial contracts, and of births and baptisms, were strangely mixed and jumbled together. The register of marriages commences on the 28th of August 1840. There is no register of deaths.

Antiquities.—Several cairns on the Yarrow Hills are, perhaps, with the addition of some Gaelic names of places, the only remains of the aboriginal Celtic inhabitants of this district.

The curious ruins of the Pechtish habitations are numerous scattered all over Caithness. Several of these are in the southern division of the parish of Wick. Some occupy the most fertile situations ; others again are placed on barren land, where there are no traces of cultivation.

In their outward appearance the Pechtish houses look like little round grassy knolls, about twelve or sixteen feet in height. One at Thrumster, the seat of Robert Innes, Esq., from which the earth has in part been removed, was found to have been composed of two concentric circular walls, built of stone and clay, with a considerable interval between them filled up with earth ; the whole forming a rampart of about eighteen feet in thickness. The enclosed area was occupied with several cells ; and evident marks of five fire-places around the inside of the inner wall were discovered. The whole was very inartificially vaulted with flagstones, and cover-

ed over with a thick coating of earth. Various articles were found among the rubbish; such as a wooden distaff, which soon crumbled into dust; a freestone basin; and three bullets about the size of musket-balls, of a substance like marbles streaked with blue. The skeleton of a tall man, who had been buried in a coffin made of flags, was dug up from the mould which had been heaped up against the outside of the fabric. In most of the Pechtish houses which have been opened, there were found little recesses in the inner walls, which had evidently been used as dormitories for the inhabitants.

There can be little doubt that these remarkable structures were the dwellings of the Pechtish chiefs, who were in all likelihood both the leaders and priests of their people. The power and influence with which, by force and fraud, they ruled over and oppressed the Celts who formed the bulk of the population, have invested even to this day, the places of their abode with dread and terror. It is still deemed *no cannie* to dig up a Pecht's house. Scarcely will a peasant profane their verdant sward with a spade. He stands in dread of the fairies, who yet are believed to haunt such places, or of some other unknown and revengeful power.

A ruin on the Links of Keiss, called Toft-Ferry, is pointed out by tradition as the remains of the first house built of stone in Keiss, and one of the first three built in the parish of Wick. The other two were, one at Harland and one at Hauster.

On the Links of Kiess, and about half-a-mile to the south of Toft-Ferry, there are near the beach other two ruins covered with sand, called the Birkle Hills. These are more conspicuous than Toft-Ferry, being of a conical form, and elevated about thirty-five feet from their base, and about sixty-five yards asunder. They are said to be the ruins of two castles, called Castles Linglass. Tradition reports that the castles were burned down; and the report is confirmed by the calcined state of such stones as have been dug from the ruins. It is said that a village was connected with them, of which, however, there are now no remains.

An apparently monumental stone at Ulbster, on which are engraved some untraceable sculptures, is said to mark the grave of a Danish princess, whom Gun, the progenitor of the clan Gun, married in Denmark. The vessel in which the Great Gun of Ulbster returned home with his bride was wrecked on the iron-bound shores of Caithness, and the Danish princess was drowned.

Elsher's Cairn, between Wick and Papigoe, marks the spot

where it is traditionally reported that an Earl Alexander was slain. Who he was, or whence he drew his title, is not known.

Along the coast, are four very ancient strongholds, three of which are in ruins. The Castle of Auld Wick is perhaps one of the oldest buildings in Caithness. It stands to the south of Wick Bay, on a lofty peninsular rock projecting into the Moray Frith, and consists at present of the grim remains of a strong tower of the rudest masonry, with the merest slits for windows. The space behind it towards the sea, has been occupied with two ranges of lower buildings, the foundations of which are yet traceable. On the very point of the projecting rock, is a flat smooth space, surrounded by the remains of a wall, which appears to have been a kind of garden, promenade, or bowling-green. Rude steps lead down to the sea. The whole has been defended on the land-side by a deep ditch, over which communication has been held with the land by means of a drawbridge. The ruins of this black unsightly tower, still nearly three stories high, form an excellent land-mark to sailors, by whom it is called the Aul' Man o' Wick.

The Castle of Auld Wick was, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, one of the strongholds of Sir Reginald de Cheyne. On his death, before 1350, it passed into the possession of Nicholas Sutherland, second son of Kenneth Earl of Sutherland, and ancestor of the Barons of Duffus, who married Marjory, second daughter of Sir Reginald. The castle and lands of Auld Wick afterwards went by marriage into the family of Oliphant; and tradition says that a Lord Oliphant was slain in a rencounter not far from the tower. By the Oliphants they were sold to the Earl of Caithness; by a subsequent earl, they were disposed of to Glenorchy, by whom they were sold to Dunbar of Hempriggs, and finally by the marriage of Sir James Sutherland, second son of James, second Lord Duffus, with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir William Dunbar of Hempriggs, the lands and castle of Auld Wick have come into the possession of the present Lord Duffus, the lineal male representative of Nicholas Sutherland and Marjory de Cheyne.

The Castle of Girnigoe, which stands a little to the west of Noss-Head, was the chief baronial stronghold of the Sinclairs, Earls of Caithness. Its ruins occupy the whole surface of a bold peninsular rock, which, starting from a shoulder of the mainland, shelters a *goe* or inlet of some width, whence the castle received its name. The ruins are evidently of different ages. The date

of the older and larger portion, which is the one farther out, is buried in remote antiquity. The newer portion seems to have been built in the sixteenth century. The extremity of the peninsular rock is occupied by a chamber said to have been the Earl's bed-room. A trap-door in the middle of the floor led through the rock to the sea. This room communicated by a flight of steps with the court, which stood on a higher level. On the right side, facing the Bay of Keiss, ran a range of low rooms all the way to the dungeon-keep, while towards the land there were only three or four small rooms next the bed-chamber, the rest of the court on that side having been shut in by a high wall, pierced with seven loop-holes. The tower, which consisted of five stories, and is about fifty feet in height, occupied the whole breadth of the rock. The staircase, circular within, stood in the north-east corner next the land. No part of the stair remains. The main part of the tower is of such a size as to contain several vaulted apartments on the ground floor, besides the passage to the newer building. In one corner of the room next the sea there is a narrow stair leading into a cell, partly formed in the rock. A small window opening on the Bay, but beyond the reach of the hapless captive, gives light enough to reveal the gloom which pervades the dungeon. Here languished for several years, till he was ultimately murdered, John Garrow the Master of Caithness, a victim to the hatred of his unnatural father, who revelled in the chambers above, while his son was perishing in the dungeons below. In the north-west corner of the court, a passage leads through the tower to the edge of a chasm in the rock, over which a draw-bridge led to the court of the new castle.

With the exception of one or two outer rooms, and of a narrow chimney-stalk of the main tower, this part of the building is now a heap of rubbish, presenting a singular contrast to the older walls, which are nearly entire. This decay must be ascribed to a defect in the foundation, which seems to have been built with clay. The superstructure being cemented with lime, fell almost in one mass into the hollow between the castle and the mainland, and still shows the sides of several arches of very strong masonry prostrate on the ground. The tower of this part of the castle was not nearly so lofty as that of the other; but much more attention had evidently been paid in the construction of it to internal finishing. Access was obtained from the mainland by a draw-bridge over an

artificial ditch across the neck of the peninsula, through an arched passage into the court.

The situation of this castle is naturally strong, and its occupants could have set at defiance assailants armed with the weapons of ancient days. A garrison could not have been pressed by famine, so long as they commanded the sea, for they could always obtain provisions through the secret passage, and the gae would afford secure accommodation for such small craft as they might employ for traffic with the neighbouring shores.

In 1606, George the Wicked, Earl of Caithness, obtained an act of Parliament changing the old name of Girnigoe into that of Sinclair. Both names, however, are applied to the ruins, which are always called Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe, the latter name being applied to the more ancient portion. A drawing was taken of these castles by Daniell, before Castle Sinclair became so ruinous as it now is.

The tower of Ackergill, anciently written Aikrigill, which stands on the bosom of the Bay of Keiss, is a noble and impressive structure. It is perfectly rectangular, eighty-two feet in height, and battlemented. The walls are extremely massive, upwards of thirteen feet in thickness; and the whole building is venerably grey with the hoar of great antiquity. It is in excellent repair; and is at present the residence of the Honourable George Dunbar, Master of Duffus, to whose father it and the Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe belong.

By whom, or at what time, the tower of Ackergill was erected, is altogether unknown. The lands of Ackergill belonged to Morar na Shien, with whose daughter Mariotta they went into the possession of the Keiths, and, after passing through the hands of the Sinclairs and others, came at last into the family of Duffus.

On the northern side of Keiss Bay stand the ruins of the Castle of Keiss, opposite the Castles Sinclair and Girnigoe. It consists at present of the remains of a paltry tower.

This stronghold was formerly called the Fortalice of Radder. It anciently belonged to the Earls of Caithness. At present, it is the property of Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Newmore and Keiss.

Near Thrumster House is a standing-stone, respecting which there is an ancient tradition in this district, that Margaret the Maiden of Norway, heiress of the Scottish Crown, was wrecked on this coast on her return to Scotland, and buried under the "Standing-Stane o' Thrumster."

The only other antiquity worth noticing, is that of the Sinclairs' Aisle, in the church-yard, opposite the door of the Parish Church. It is in the form of a small but elegant chapel. The walls are entire, but roofless. It was built by that Earl George who murdered his own son in the vaults of the Castle of Girnigoe.*

An old image of St Fergus, the tutelary saint of the parish in Popish times, habited in a monkish dress, and standing on some sort of animal, which formerly lay in the church, has now been placed in the jail. Its features are altogether effaced.

Modern Buildings.—The chief of these is the parish Church. This is a large substantial fabric of the very plainest Gothic, built of blue flagstone, with freestone at the corners, doors, and windows, and on the spire. It is imposing from its size. The Town and County Hall is likewise of flagstone, ornamented in front with freestone, and a belfry like a cupola. The hall itself is a large and well-proportioned room. Its walls are adorned with well executed portraits of the late Earl of Caithness; the late Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster; James Traill, Esq. of Rattar; and Kenneth Macleay, Esq. The Commercial Bank is of freestone, with pillars of the Ionic order. The Congregational Chapel in Wick, the United Secession, the Reformed Presbyterian, and the Popish chapels in Pulteneytown, are very plain buildings. The Academy, built by the British Fishery Company, is a good and commodious building. A new church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, is about to be commenced in Pulteneytown.

A Temperance Hall, capable of holding 1000 persons, is in the course of being erected in Wick, by the Total Abstinence Society of Wick and Pulteneytown.

Hempriggs House, formerly Telstone, the seat of Lord Duffus, though of considerable antiquity, is a large and commodious mansion. The House of Stirkoke, the seat of William Horne, Esq. of Scouthel; the House of Thrumster, the seat of Robert Innes, Esq.; and Rosebank, the property of Kenneth Macleay, Esq. of Newmore,—are excellent residences. There are also substantial houses at Ulbster, Tannach, Bilbster, Sibster, Harlan, Reiss, and Noss, and not a few in the burgh of Wick.

The material of which these and all other stone erections in

* On a stone in the aisle is the following inscription: "Here within lyes intombed ane Noble and worthie man, John, Master Fiar of Caithness, of Clyth and Greenland, Knight, father of ane Noble and potent Lord, now George Earl of Caithness, Lord Sinclair of Berridale, who departed this life the 15th day of March 1576, being of age 45 years."

colonists, a people cognate with the Pechts, infused a much larger portion of Gothic blood into the Celtico-Pechtish population of the district. The changes made, a few years ago, on the estates of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, drove a great many Highlanders into Caithness, who found work and sustenance chiefly in the more commercial districts of the county. This Celtic supply is kept up by the herring fishery, which annually brings into Wick very great numbers of young Highlanders, several of whom every year settle in the parish. From all these causes it follows, that the present parishioners of Wick are an intermixture of the Celtic, Pechtish, Norwegian, and, latterly, again of the Celtic races.

This is evident, both from the names and from the physical character, of the people. It is difficult to say whether the surnames of Gothic or those of Gaelic origin predominate. Gaelic baptismal names are likewise very common. The physical character of the people also denotes their Celtico-Gothic origin. Though there are some, yet there are remarkably few red or yellow-haired persons in the parish. Their hair is generally black or very dark-brown, and their complexions correspondent. Their persons are taller and larger limbed than those of their Celtic neighbours, though not so tall nor large as those of unmingled Gothic descent. In general, their countenances are rather roundish than oval; their eyes dark; their teeth short, white and firmly set; and their frames spare, but straight, alert, and sinewy. Many are very handsome.

Language.—The language spoken over all the parish is, with exception of that of some Gaelic incomers, a dialect of the lowland Scottish. It is distinguished, however, by several peculiarities. Wherever the classical Scottish has *wh*, the dialect of the parish of Wick has *f*; as *fat* for what, *fan* for *whan*; and wherever the Scottish has *u*, this dialect has *ee*; as *seen* for *sune*, *meen* for *mune*, *feel* for *fule*. *Ch* at the beginning of words is softened into *s*, or *sh*; as, *surch* for church; *shapel* for chapel. *Th* at the beginning of words is often omitted. *She*, *her*, and *hers* are almost invariably used for *it* and *its*. This seems a Gaelic idiom; and the tendency to pronounce *s* and *ch*, as *sh*, seems a relic of Gaelic pronunciation.

Habits.—At all seasons of the year, whisky is drunk in considerable quantities, but during the fishing season enormous potations are indulged in. It may seem incredible, but it has been ascertained,

that, during the six weeks of a successful fishing, not less than 500 gallons a day were consumed. Let it be remembered, however, that at that period 10,000 strangers, as boatmen, gutters, &c. were crowded into the town of Wick. Of late years, the people have been more temperate. Snuffing is almost universal among the men, and both it and smoking are very common among the women. About L.3,500 a-year are spent in the parish of Wick on tobacco.

Character.—The parishioners of Wick are shrewd and attentive to their own interest. Their shrewdness, however, sometimes degenerates into cunning. Unchastity, both in man and woman, is lamentably frequent, which appears from the records of the kirk-session to have been always the case. They possess, notwithstanding, many most estimable qualities. They are remarkable for natural affection, and show much kindness to their poorer neighbours. No small respect is evinced by the commonalty for the ordinances of religion; family worship is prevalent among them; the Sabbath is much regarded; and their attendance on the preaching of the Gospel is most laudable.

Smuggling is all but unknown, excepting between the fishers and the French fishing-boats during the season of the herring-fishery. Poaching is not frequent; and there is not a pawnbroker in the parish.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

The state of agriculture in the parish of Wick, previously to 1790, was extremely curious, and its arrangements as hostile as they possibly could be to all improvement. Each property was divided into townlands. In every townland there were what was called "the mains," which consisted of a farm, on which were a barn and a stack-yard. The proprietor retained the mains in his own hand. The remainder of the townland was divided into what were called penny-lands, halfpenny-lands, farthing-lands, and octos. These were measured out by shrewd countrymen, called land-riders, or more properly land-redders, for they did not ride. In accomplishing their work, they spaced six spaces as the breadth of a rig of corn-land, and 240 as the length. This they denominated a firlot-sowing of oats. This multiplied by four, the number of firlots in a boll, gave 5760 square spaces, being precisely the number of Scotch ells in a statute Scotch acre. The land-redders knew nothing about surveying, nor had ever heard of a chain, or of an acre; yet it must be

plain, that, long before the memory of man, their measurement must have been founded on actual mensuration by the chain.

The grass-land, outfield, or in arable, was assigned in fixed proportions to these different divisions; and a certain rent, varying in different townlands, was laid on the grass-land, and a certain quantity of grain to be paid for the corn-land of these various penny, halfpenny, farthing, and octo lands. The townland of Papigoe, for instance, in the neighbourhood of the town of Wick, was divided into fifteen penny-lands, one halfpenny-land, and half an octo. Every penny-land paid eleven bolls of corn, or farm as it was called, and no money. The townland of Kilminister was red into thirty-six penny-lands, each one of which paid four bolls of farm, and L.5, 6s. 8d. Scots as rent of the grass-land. To render the state of matters still more opposed to all improvement, the custom of run-rig was common. This most barbarous custom was said to have originated in times of universal and incessant feuds, as a preservative against one neighbour's setting fire to the field of another, and to make the whole townland equally anxious to resist an enemy in case of invasion.

These penny-lands, &c., were let to small tenants, who, besides the rent already specified, yielded an infinite variety of minute services to the landlord. The tenants of each penny-land, for instance, had to bring out their own plough, fully equipped, early in spring, and plough half an acre of oat-land in the mains, —to send a man to sow the seed, —to send their harrows and harrow the ground, —to send two persons to carry on the horses' backs, for there was not a cart in all the parish, the manure in straw baskets, called caizies, for the bear-land, —to lay the manure on, —to send a plough and till the bear-land, —to sow the seed, —to harrow it with their own harrows: in summer, to mow the natural grass, —to make it into hay, —to cart it, —to carry it to the yard with their own carts, —to build it into stacks, —to send a person to weed the corn, —to cast 400 feal for building houses, and 300 divots for thatching them: in harvest, to cut down a certain quantity of corn, —to carry it, and build it in the stack-yard, —to furnish a certain number of winlins to thatch the mains' stacks, a certain quantity of drawn straw to thatch the mains' houses, and a certain quantity of *simmins*, that is, plaited straw-ropes, to bind down the thatch, —to thrash a certain quantity of corn in the barn, —to dry it in the kiln, —to carry it to the mill, —to carry the meal thence to the girdel, and to ship it on board for exportation,

—to carry one letter in rotation to any person in Caithness,—to give a certain portion of peats,—to dress a certain quantity of lint,—to winter a certain number of cattle—to pay one fat lamb, two geese, hens, chickens, eggs, &c. &c. The land-redders laid off to each penny-land such a proportion of arable land as they thought would sow twelve bolls of small oats, or eight bolls of bear. Of the natural grass-land assigned to each penny-land the tenant had exclusive possession only till the corn was off the ground, when the whole again became common till the next spring. Instead of being encouraged to take in and improve any part of the outfield-land, the tenants were expressly debarred from doing so, or, in the country phrase, corrupting the leases, and were prohibited from cultivating any more than the portion of corn-land which had been ridden off to them.

The state of agriculture was what might have been expected from such wretched arrangements. There was not a cart in the whole county. Not a potato, nor a turnip, nor sown grass was known. No rotation of cropping was observed, except that the arable land was always alternately in oats and bear, the manure being invariably put to the bear-crop. Not a drain was dug; and not a fence was to be seen except about a field or two round the proprietors' houses.

This extraordinary mode of farming went on without any change till 1790. In 1782, Sir Benjamin Dunbar, the present Lord Duffus, succeeded his father. He found all the townlands on the whole of his extensive estates in Wick, comprising the half of the parish, under lease to middle-men, who paid him only the money rent payable by the small tenant for the grass-land, and 6s. 8d. for each boll of eight stone and a half, paid by them for the corn-land. Thus the middle-men had the mains of each townland, and the services of the subtenantry free. Sir Benjamin, aware of what was passing in other countries, determined to put an end to this wretched system, which had immemorially prevailed. Having ascertained on what principles the land-redders divided and apportioned the land, he had the whole of his numerous townlands measured with the chain, abolished the middlemen, converted all the services of the tenants into money, and granted them leases at a fixed rent. The result of this enlightened procedure was most advantageous. Tillage was extended, better modes of cultivation were introduced, land was improved, the rental of the proprietor increased, while the tenantry were delivered from their

former degrading vassalage, and their comfort and respectability greatly promoted. When Sir Benjamin Dunbar came into possession of his estate, there were but a very few farm-houses on it built with stone; now, there are very few, if indeed any, built of turf.

The great improvement of land within the parish of Wick may be seen from the following statement. In 1666, the valued rent of the parish was L.6977, 6s. 8d. Scots. In the corrected rental of last century, it stood thus:

Of the landward part of the parish,	L.6970	0	2
Of the burgh,	166	18	4
Total,	L.6596	18	6 Scots.

In 1700, the real rent was L.1000 Sterling. In 1728, the vic-tual being converted at L.4, 3s. 4d. Scots, it was L. 13,659, 10s. 10d. Scots, equal to L.1138, 5s, 10d. Sterling.

In 1830, the real rent of the landward part of the parish was,	L.12,000	0	0
burgh of Wick,	L.3544	9	0
Louisburgh and Blackrock,	1250	0	0
Staxigoe, Broadhaven, and Papigoe,	1834	2	0
Pulteneytown,	7398	18	0
Banks and Bankhead,	251	0	0
Total in Sterling money,	L.26,218	4	0

As to particular estates; in 1753, the rental of Hempriggs was,	L.642	2	3
Ulster,	94	8	0
in 1804, the rental of Thrumster,	180	0	0
in 1814,	Stirkoke,	611	0
	Ulster,	214	3
in 1830,	Hempriggs, exclusively of Pulteneytown, was	5607	18
	Stirkoke,	1834	0
	Thrumster,	947	0
	Ulster,	493	0

In 1792, the rent of the best land ranged from 10s. to 15s. per acre. In all the parish at that period, there were of sown grass only 12 or 14 acres at Hempriggs, 8 in possession of the minister, and a few patches between Wick and Staxigoe. There was not a cart in the parish, the ploughs were of the very rudest description, drawn by three or four worthless horses, with, perhaps, a couple of cows to assist, a lad tugging them on before, and a man holding the single stilt behind. Such a phenomenon may yet indeed be seen, even in 1841. The commenced improvement of the district, however, had already beneficially affected the wages of labour and the price of provisions. In 1792, ploughmen, who had, some years before, had no more than from 13s. 4d. to 18s. the half year, got from L.1 to L.1, 8s.; women-servants, who had, for the half year, had from 6s. 8d. got from L.1, to L. 1, 4s.; day-

labourers got from 6d. to 10d. a day; women were hired for the harvest at 6d. a day and a bannock; and domestic servants had raised their half-yearly wages from 6s. 8d. to 13s. Provisions brought the following prices: those which had sold at 1d. per pound rose to 2d.; hens fetched 3½d. a piece; cocks 3d.; and chickens 1¼d.; eggs were 1d. per dozen; geese, which had sold at 8d a piece, brought 1s. 6d.; and corn, which, in 1762, had sold at from 5s. to 8s. a boll, brought in 1792, from 10s. to 18s.

In 1840, the average rent of arable land was from L. 1, 5s. to L. 1, 10s. an acre. A ploughman got for the half year L. 4, 10s. and victuals; a woman for the same term L. 1, 10s. and victuals; day-labourers earned in summer from 1s. 6d. a day, to 2s.; in winter, about 2s.; women in summer, 8d. a day; in winter, 6d.; men got as harvest fee, L. 1, 10s., with a weekly allowance of fourteen pounds of meal; and women L. 1, with a weekly allowance of twelve pounds. Wool brought from L. 1, 4s. to L. 1, 6s. a stone. The price of mason-work from L. 1, 15s. to L. 2 per rood; and of three feet dikes from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 3d. a yard. A good cart brought from L. 10 to L. 11; and an iron plough, L. 3, 10s. Bear, on an average of the last five years, brought L. 1, 4s. per quarter; and oats, L. 1, 1s.; potatoes were 12s. per boll; turnips, L. 5 per acre; and hay was about 6d. per stone. In 1840, the price of oat-meal was 15s. per boll; of bear-meal, 12s. per boll; of beef per pound, 4½d.; of fowls, from 6d. to 9d. a piece; and of eggs per dozen, about 4d.

The average rent of grazing for the year is at the rate of L. 6 per ox or cow; and of L. 1 per sheep on inland, and of 8s. on moory patsure.

Live-Stock.—Of cattle there are two breeds. In the *first* place, the pure Highland, which has been much improved of late years by the introduction of bulls and breeding cows, selected from the best Highland stocks in Scotland. *Secondly*, crosses from the short-horned bull and Highland cows have been introduced, and answer well, especially for feeding, as they are brought at an early age to a great size and weight; and, since the introduction of steam conveyance, can be conveniently sent to the southern or metropolitan markets. The common breed of sheep is the Cheviot. This is crossed by the Leicester tup; and the cross thrives remarkably well. These sorts of stock are the most profitable, taken together with the present improved system of agriculture and rotation of crops. Both sheep and cattle, indeed, are in such a forward state of improvement, as to be capable of being brought into competition

with those of the southern districts, and of late years have carried off several premiums at the Highland Society's shows.

In 1833, there were 12,375 acres under the plough. Very great additions have since been made to this amount. Extensive inroads are made upon the waste lands every year. In reclaiming waste land, it is ploughed and fallowed for one or more years, as the soil may require, in order to pulverize it. Then lime is laid on the ground at the rate of from thirty to forty bolls, or marl from eighty to 100 bolls an acre. The ground having been thus prepared, is sown with white crop, and afterwards with turnips, oats, and grass, each year in succession. A vast extent of waste land has been reclaimed under this system.

Thorough draining is indispensable to the improvement of land in the parish of Wick. Furrow-draining has lately been introduced, but has not yet been extensively practised. The most advantageous rotation of crops is the six-shift. This is chiefly followed on the larger farms. On these, also, the fields are generally enclosed either with ditches, stone walls, or quickset hedges, which, in many places, with pains bestowed on them, thrive very well.

The value of the whole produce from agriculture in 1833 was L. 37,120, of which about L. 34,418 were for grain, &c. There is no account of the value of the live-stock at any period.

Of the smaller farmers, the younger and more active follow the larger as closely as their limited means will allow: but still it must be confessed, that a considerable number lag behind, and, from want of skill, capital, or activity, plod on in very nearly the system observed by their forefathers. It would appear, indeed, that a very great number of the farms are much too small. They do not afford employment all the year round to the farmer and his *garrons*. He thus is obliged to drive peats into Wick, or at times to work at day's-wages to the larger farmers, or at any other kind of employment that he can fall in with. Many of them betake themselves to the sea in the fishing-season. Their means are scanty; their education is therefore often very limited; their houses are bad; and their children grow up and have their habits formed in total ignorance of what, in the southern parts of Scotland, are reckoned necessaries of life; and this state of matters, without any desire of improvement, is thus, in numerous instances, perpetuated from father to son. It might, perhaps, ultimately be well for the population of this district, if those numerous insignificant patches of land were laid together, and formed into farms

of from L.30 to L.100 of annual rent, taking care that there should be the greater number at the smaller rent between L.30 and L.60. The state of capital and the physical character of the district apparently point out this as a desirable arrangement. In effecting it, however, very much tenderness ought to be shown. All great changes ought to be gradual. The violent and extensive ejection of small tenants, not having the means of supporting themselves and families till other sources of support are discovered and made available, always occasions an amount of suffering, that can neither be compensated nor atoned for by any consequent agricultural improvements.

Leases.—At present, leases are given, varying from fourteen to twenty years in duration. If leases are not taken too high, they plainly form a great encouragement to the tenant. But they likewise are as evidently beneficial to the landlord. The tenant is induced to lay out both capital and labour in improving his farm, by which means the landlord's estate is improved. The relation, indeed, of landlord and tenant involves many reciprocal advantages, obligations, and duties. The comfort of the landlord and his prosperity will be deeply involved in the character, comfort, and prosperity of his tenantry. He should, therefore, endeavour to store his estates not only with the best cattle, but with the best men. It is as much his interest as his duty to promote, both by precept and example, Christianity on his estates. This would be the parent of all improvement. God has placed the heritors of Scotland in most responsible situations. A Christian landlord is an unspeakable blessing to all under his influence, and, next to an unchristian minister, an unchristian heritorship is about the greatest curse that can befall a parish.

Fisheries.—There is a small salmon-fishery in the Bay and River of Wick. Probably about 150 men are engaged all the year round in the white-fishery, on the coasts of the parish.

This, however, is of very trifling importance indeed, in comparison of the herring-fishery, which is carried on to a great extent in this district. From time immemorial vast shoals of herrings have frequented the coast. They were, however, in ancient days, almost completely neglected. For nearly 200 years the people contented themselves with catching a few fish on rude iron hooks, and proceeding with that excellent bait to the cod-fishing. About the beginning of the eighteenth century, nets began to be used. Some time afterwards, the attention of Government was directed to the fishery, and

bounties were offered for its encouragement. In 1767, John Sutherland of Wester, John Anderson of Wick, and Alexander Miller of Staxigoe, fitted out two sloops on the bounty, which, however, by some informality, they lost. Next year, they fitted out one sloop again, fished successfully, and, though with some difficulty, recovered the bounty. This adventure not having been very encouraging, their ardour abated for some years; but the place of rendezvous having been at last altered, the herring-fishery thereafter annually increased. Adventurers came from Aberdeen, and from the Orkneys, and established the fishing at Staxigoe, and took leases of 99 years' duration, for the purpose of building stores and houses for the curing of red-herring. Those enterprising fishcurers employed boats and crews from Avoch and the neighbouring towns, on the southern side of the Moray Frith; but these fishermen never went farther from the shore in search of fish than a mile or two, when, if they did not find any, they concluded that none were on the coast. In 1786, the British Society for extending the Fisheries, and improving the sea-coasts of the Kingdom, was incorporated by Act of Parliament. This incorporation greatly promoted the fishery. A great number of boats and crews from the Frith of Forth began to come northwards to the fishing, and the crews, being more adventurous, sought for the fish at the distance of ten or twelve miles from the shore, with most encouraging success. In 1782, 363 barrels of white herring were exported. In 1790, there were at Wick 32 boats, measuring 1610 tons, on the bounty. That year, there were 10,514 barrels of white, and above 2000 of red-herrings exported, besides about 700, estimated to have been consumed in the county. In 1808, the British Fishing Society, incorporated, as has been mentioned, in 1786, commenced their establishment of Pulteneytown, by making a harbour for the accommodation of boats and shipping, and by granting feus in perpetuity for building on liberal terms. In 1809, commissioners were appointed by Act of Parliament, for the purpose of promoting and regulating this branch of national industry.

Under improved methods of curing, introduced by the commissioners, and an additional bounty granted by Parliament in 1815, the fishery increased so rapidly, that, in 1824, the British Fishery Society commenced the construction of an outer harbour, which, having been finished, rendered the port both safe and commodious. This measure consolidated the prosperity of the Wick herring-

fishery. It now could afford to lose the Parliamentary bounties, which, in 1830, were withdrawn.

The shoals of herrings appear on the coast about the middle of July, when the fishing is immediately begun. It is continued for eight or ten weeks. The fishing stations within the parish are at Keiss, Staxigoe, Broadhaven, Wick, and Sarclet. The average annual number of boats employed for the last ten years is about 900; and the average annual quantity of fish taken for the last twenty years is 88,500 barrels. The price of a boat with its fleet of nets and everything complete, is from L.140 to L.150 Sterling. Each boat on an average generally fishes from 100 to 150 crans, at a price of from 10s. to 12s. per cran. A barrel of cured herrings costs L.1.

The following table shows the state of the herring-fishery at Wick in 1840:

Native boats,	428
Strange boats,	337
	<hr/>
Total of boats,	765
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Crews of said boats,	3,828
Coopers,	265
Women employed as gutters, &c.	2,175
Labourers,	46
Carters,	127
Other labourers employed about the fishing.	150
Seamen in coasting vessels (supposed),	1,200
Fish-curers entered,	91
	<hr/>
Total of persons employed,	7,882
	<hr/>
Total of barrels cured,	63,495
	<hr/>
Barrels bung-packed, branded,	10,383
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Barrels exported to Ireland,	51,250
To other places in Europe,	4,461
	<hr/>
Total of barrels exported,	55,711

The herring-fishery has in a very rapid manner increased the population, and augmented the rental of the parish, and the pecuniary resources of many of the parishioners; but whether it has added to the happiness and comfort of the people at large, may well be questioned. If it has increased the wealth, it has also increased the wickedness of the district; and any one acquainted with the sources of happiness well knows that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Very great care was taken to promote the numbers and success of the fishers of herrings, but little or no care to promote either the number or success of the fishers of men. The

result which invariably follows such conduct has ensued. The population rapidly increased; rents, wages, and prices rose; buildings were erected, and all things seemed prosperous. But there was a worm in this blossom of happiness. The means of grace and of pastoral superintendence were not extended. Multitudes escaped altogether beyond their blissful influence. No care was taken of the 10,000 young strangers of both sexes who were crowded together with the inhabitants within the narrow limits of Wick during the six principal weeks of the fishing, exposed to drink and numerous other temptations. The consequences have been such, as any one acquainted with the propensities of fallen humanity might easily have foreseen; and results have verified the declaration of the prophet, that "the ungodly who earneth wages, earneth wages to put them into a bag full of holes." A people cannot be exalted without righteousness, and with righteousness they cannot be degraded; but morality cannot be communicated nor upheld without the full and abundant administration of the Gospel. When will legislators, heritors, and merchants be convinced of this?

Manufactures.—There are in Wick and Pulteneytown four rope-works, which employ, besides the masters, 75 men, with occasional hands. The first of these commenced in 1820. All the rope which they produce is consumed in this port. There is one distillery and brewery, which employs 12 men; one meal and barley-mill, which employs 5; four saw-mills, three of which are driven by steam and one by water, employ 26 hands. A manufactory of pavement for exportation employs from 60 to 80 workmen. There is a ship-building yard, commenced in 1815, with always one or two vessels on the stocks, employing about 50 shipwrights. Twelve boat-building yards employ from 70 to 80, who launch from 80 to 100 boats annually. There has lately been established in Pulteneytown an iron-foundery, which gives employment to from 6 to 8 men, and promises to be prosperous. A Gas Company was formed in 1840, whose works are in the course of being erected; and it is to be hoped, that, by another winter, both Wick and Pulteneytown will be lighted with gas. There are 265 coopers in the parish. The principal, almost, indeed, the sole occupation of females in and about the towns, is the spinning of yarn and making it into nets for the herring-fishing. At this they can earn the miserable pittance of only 2½d. or 3d. a day.

Navigation.—A little trade has been carried on from the port of Wick from very early times. In 1588, Alexander Earl of Sutherland burnt the town of Wick, and spoiled the ship and plundered the goods of Andrew Wardlaw, a merchant.

In 1840, twenty-one ships were registered at the port of Wick, amounting to 1154 tons. The tonnage of the ships which have entered this port for the last twenty years may have been about 30,000 tons annually; and the yearly number of sailors about 3000.

A steam-boat began to run from Wick to Leith in 1833, once a fortnight. The Sovereign steam-boat of 200 horse-power, which commences for the season in March, and is laid up in November, makes a voyage, once a week, between Lerwick, Kirkwall, Wick, Aberdeen and Leith. It carries passengers, stock, and goods; and has been of the greatest advantage, not to Wick only, but to Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland. Two smacks ply, each once a fortnight, between and Leith. There is at Wick a Chamber of Commerce.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—Wick is the market-town of this parish. It is a place of great antiquity; and was at the request of the Earl of Caithness, of whose earldom it formed a part, erected into a royal burgh on the 25th of September 1589. The superiority of it has been bought and sold by the Sinclairs of Caithness, the Glenorchys, the Sinclairs of Ulbster, and the Sutherlands; but the Reform Bill has reduced this once potential privilege to feebleness. It is, therefore, now little valued. The set of the burgh consists of a provost, two bailies, a dean of guild, a treasurer, and seven councillors. There are no corporations or crafts in this burgh. At Michaelmas 1755, the number of burgesses amounted to 53; at the same term in 1801, to 29; and in 1832, when the roll was last made up, to 66. About 15 have since been added. The dues payable on the admission of a burghess amount to L.4, 4s.

In 1660, the customs were let at L.55 Scots; in 1688, at L.63, 10s. The ordinary revenue for 1840, was,

Rent of customs,	L.30	0	0
Do. of House in Bridge Street,	6	10	0
Do. of street manure,	5	0	0
Do. of curing stations,	7	5	0
Receipts for freedom of trade and burghess dues,	4	19	0
Fou-duties,	21	4	6
Total,	L.74	18	6

This may be considered as a fair average of the ordinary burghal revenues of Wick, for several years by-past. The expenditure is about L.70 a year. There is no debt.

The records begin, "In the name of the Father, the Sone, and the Holy Ghoste. At the burgh of Weick, the sext day of Januarii, 1660 yeares." They are not voluminous, and are occupied with ordinary burghal business.

In 1840, the population of Wick was,

Males, 561; Females, 698; Total, 1254.
The number of families was 300.

There is no police.

The land-tax of the royal burgh, recoverable from feuars and traders, is L.11, 14s. The rental amounts to L.2600.

The church and parish school, the town and county buildings, and the jail, are within the royal burgh.

The trade of Wick consists in the export of herring, and of live-stock and grain, and of the import of such articles as the wants of the district require.

Wick is the county town. The sheriff has held his ordinary court here since 1828, when the Court of Session decided in favour of Wick, in the process of removal of the court from Thurso, where they had previously been held from time immemorial. The Custom-house establishment has also been removed hither from Thurso. The customs in 1839 amounted to L.2083. A weekly market, well frequented, is held in Wick on Friday.

Parliamentary Burgh.—The royal burgh of Wick, from the date of its erection to the Union, sent a commissioner to the Scottish Parliament. At the Union, it was associated with Kirkwall, Dornock, Tain, and Dingwall, in the return of one member to the British House of Commons. By the Reform Act, Cromarty was united to this batch, the bounds of Wick as a Parliamentary burgh were enlarged, and it was constituted the returning burgh.

The village of Louisburgh, built on leases of 99 years, from Lord Duffus, lies contiguously to the royal burgh of Wick, on the northern side; and that of Pulteneytown, commenced in 1808, by the British Fishery Society, is separated from the latter on the south by the bay, and united to it by a bridge of three arches, over the River of Wick. Wick, Louisburgh, and Pulteneytown, with the manse and lower glebe, Bankhead, and a few more other places included within the boundary, compose the Parliamentary

burgh of Wick. The number of proprietors of houses worth L.10 and upwards in the Parliamentary burgh is 181; of L.10 householders, 233; and of voters, 257, of whom 88 are enrolled on premises within the royal burgh. The rental of the Parliamentary burgh is L. 4770.

In 1840, the population of the Parliamentary burgh was as follows:

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Of Wick, -	561	693	1254
Of Pulteneytown, &c.	1329	1630	2959
Of Louisburgh, &c.	170	209	379
Total,	2060	2532	4592

The number of families was,

In Wick, -	300
In Pulteneytown, &c.	683
In Louisburgh, &c.	80

The number of inhabited houses, 1578.

Villages.—The village of Broad Haven, which is a fishing station with 170 inhabitants, is about a mile along the northern shore from Wick. A mile farther on, is that of Staxigoe, not far from Castle Girnigoe, containing 261 inhabitants. It is a place of some antiquity. Two store-houses of the Earls of Caithness, built 250 years ago, are still standing there and in good order. They contain 4 meal-girnels, each girnel capable of holding 1000 bolls of meal; and 4 lofts, each capable of containing 1000 bolls of bear. These were necessary when rents were paid in kind. Staxigoe is another fishing station, with a tolerably good natural harbour for boats. The village of Sarclet, on the estate of Thrumster, lies about five miles to the south of Wick. It is situated on the top of a small bank overhanging a small cove, which, at considerable expense, has been converted into a pretty good harbour for fishing-boats.

Means of Communication.—Wick is a post-town. In 1829 the revenue of the post-office amounted to L.1200 a-year. A daily mail-coach from Thurso passes through the town to the south in the morning, and another from the south through the town to Thurso at night. The mail-coach commenced to run on the 15th of July 1819. A daily post-gig runs between Wick and Huna, from which latter place the letters for Orkney are dispatched twice a-week. A steam-boat of 200 horse-power plies once a-week, from March till November, between Lerwick, Kirkwall, Wick, Aberdeen, and Leith.

The Huna road, entering the parish from the north at Nybster,

passes through Keiss, and close to the lower end of the Loch of Wester, near which it is joined by the new line from Bower. Crossing the Water of Wester by a bridge of two arches, this road joins the one from Castleton, at a short distance to the west of the House of Keiss. Its length within the parish is seven miles, and that of the new Bower road nearly four; the road from Castleton, in the parish of Odrig, enters the parish of Wick at Kirk, and, crossing the Moss of Kilminister, where there are two or three trifling bridges, continues in a pretty straight line till it approaches the town, where it bends to the south, and, passing the manse and the church, joins the main-street of Wick, at a distance from Kirk of eight miles. Before it reaches the manse, it is joined from the west by the road from Wattin through Sibster-Wick. This road measures seven miles, and is not yet completed through the townland of Winless. From the Castleton road a branch is sent through Louisburgh along the coast by Papigoe and Broad Haven to Staxigoe, a distance of about two miles. The Parliamentary road from Thurso enters the parish of Wick three-quarters of a mile to the west of Bilbster House, and runs in a tolerably straight line down the south side of the River of Wick, till it joins the south road at Rosebank, a distance of six miles and a half. The south road, on passing from the town, crosses the river of Wick on a plain stone bridge of three arches, which cost L.1700, and runs in a winding direction through the estates of Hempriggs, Thrumster, and Ulbster, till it leaves the parish at the Mission House of Bruan, a distance of about eight miles. A new county road leaves the north Parliamentary road at Stirkoke, and, passing through Tannach, joins the south Parliamentary road at Thrumster, a distance of about four miles and a half. A road runs from the south Parliamentary road to Sarclet, a distance of about two miles. All these roads are of the very best description. The whole extent of road in the parish is very nearly fifty miles, of which the Parliamentary line measures fourteen.

Harbours.—The harbourets of Sarclet, Broad Haven, and Staxigoe, have already been mentioned. A small harbour has been made at Keiss. The only harbour originally on the coast of this parish, was the mouth of the River of Wick, into which the M^cFarlan MS. says, that vessels of between thirty and forty lasts burden could enter. In 1810, the British Fishery Society completed a harbour in the Bay of Wick, at an expense of L.14,000, of which L.8500 were defrayed by Government, capable of con-

taining 100 decked vessels. From the great increase of trade consequent on the prosperity of the herring-fishery, this harbour soon became quite inadequate, and a new one was planned, and in 1831 completed, at an expense of L. 40,000. It is unhappily exposed to the swell of the sea, which rolls in from the mouth of the bay.

The best place, it is said, for a harbour on the eastern coast of Caithness, is at Sinclair's Bay, which is a part of the Bay of Keiss between Ackergill and Castle Girnigoe.

Ecclesiastical State.—We learn from Tertullian that, before his time, Christianity was planted in parts of Britain which had been inaccessible to the Roman arms. There is good reason for believing that, before this period, the Romans had a settlement to the north of the Grampians, of which Pteroton, hodiernally Inverness, was the capital. The Christian churches to which Tertullian alludes were collected from among the Celtic tribes, who seem to have occupied, in these ancient days, the whole of modern Scotland, up to the Pentland Frith. Their ministers were styled Culdees, from *Cuildich, dwellers in remote or sequestered places*: and it was always asserted by them, that their church had been planted by the immediate disciples of the Apostle John. The Pechts, who had invaded and subjugated the Celts, were heathens. The seat of their king was near Inverness, and their kingdom stretched northwards to the Pentland Frith. In 566, the Pechtish sovereign, Brudy II. was converted and baptized by Colum, Abbot or President of the Presbyterian College of Iona. At the Pechtish court Colum met an Orcadian prince, to whose protection, at the Culdee's request, Brudy recommended certain missionaries in Orkney. Presbyterian ministers, or Culdees from Iona, styled also I-colum-killi, the Island of Colum of the Cells, in allusion to the numerous churches which he planted, and from others of their colleges, were speedily settled over all the west and north of Scotland. The places of their residence are generally denoted by the prefix *kil*, which evidently signified a Culdean church; as Kilmarnock, Kildonan, &c. One of them had probably his residence within the parish of Wick, at a place called Kilminister, which, in pronunciation, is often shortened into Kilminster, Kilminster, and Kilmster. In the very middle of the Moss of Kilminister are the ruins of a building, called unto this day the Kirk o' Moss. A causeway, the traces of which are yet distinctly visible, led through the deep and otherwise impassable bog to this ancient place of

worship, which stood on a little knoll. This situation corresponded exactly with the predilection of the Culdees, who loved, in those ferocious times, remote and sequestered residences, whence, indeed, they had their distinctive appellation.

Presbyterianism, derived from the scriptures and Apostolic days, continued for ages the form of ecclesiastical government in the Scottish Church, unmixed with Prelacy till 909, when Constantine the Third appointed Kellach bishop of St Andrews. At this period, the Norwegians established themselves in Caithness, and patronized the heathen deities. About 100 years afterwards, however, the Scandinavian idolatry gave place to the Romish; the Norsemen of Caithness and Orkney having been converted by certain papal ecclesiastics, backed by the sword of Olaf King of Norway. Malcolm Canmore, who began to reign in 1066, founded the prelature of Caithness, comprehending Caithness and Sutherland, and made Dar, one of his favourites, the prelate. Popery flourished apace within the diocese. Besides the Kirk of Wick, there were within the bounds of the parish, the Kirk of Ulbster, dedicated to St Martin; the Kirk of Thrumster; the Kirk of Hauster, dedicated to St Cuthbert; the Kirk of St Ninian, at the Head of Wick; St Mary's Kirk at Sibster; the Kirk of St Tears, dedicated to the Holy Innocents, near Ackergill; the Kirk of Moss, latterly dedicated to St Duthoc; the Kirk of Keiss; and the Kirk of Strubster. The Kirk of Ulbster is yet entire, and has been converted into a family tomb. Several of the burial-places attached to the other kirks are yet in use. Around the ruins of the Kirk of Moss, there are about twelve acres, said to have been under tillage so late as 1689.

In Caithness, the progress of the Reformation was very slow. Only Wick and Thurso had ministers in 1567; the rest of the parishes of the county were supplied by readers and exhorters. In 1576, Dunnet, Halkirk, and Wick had each a minister and a reader. The other parishes appear to have been entirely destitute of teachers. Wick, apparently, was visited soon afterwards with a long vacancy. The people, in these circumstances, continued attached to popish superstition. They were accustomed to visit the chapels with which the parish abounded, and pay their devotions to the stone images of their tutelary saints and saintesses. Dr Richard Mercheston, minister of Bower in 1613, exerted himself to suppress this atrocious and debasing sin, and procured the demolition of the stone images. On his return homewards, he was drowned by the blind and infuriated idolaters. It was given out,

however, that it was the saints who did it; and that a lapideous saintess, whom he had cast down and broken to pieces, the day before, was seen a-top of him in the water.

The minister, however, and kirk-session were anxious to put an end to such humiliating superstitions, and the sessional records bear evidence of their zeal. But, notwithstanding all their exertions, hagiolatry still lurked in the parish of Wick. Within the memory of persons yet living, it was customary for people to visit the Chapel of St Tears on Innocents' day, and leave in it bread and cheese, as an offering to the souls of the children slain by Herod: but which the dog-keeper of a neighbouring gentleman used to take out and give to the hounds. Till within a few years, it was customary for all the inhabitants of Mirelandorn to visit the Kirk of Moss every Christmas before sunrise, placing on a stone, bread and cheese and a silver coin, which, as they alleged, disappeared in some mysterious way. There are still several holy lochs, especially one at Dunnet, to which people go from Wick, and, indeed, from all parts of Caithness, to be cured of their diseases. They cast a penny into the water, walk or are carried withershins around the loch, and return home. If they recover, their cure is ascribed to the mystic virtues of the *Halie Loch*; and if they do not, their want of faith gets all the blame.

The Kirk of Wick was in Popish times dedicated to St Fergus. It probably stood before the Reformation at Mount Hellie, or Halie, near the eastern end of the town. We have no account of the erection of the edifice in the present church-yard, of which the Sinclair Aisle and Dunbar Tomb are the only remnants; but it must have been built before 1576. It was repaired in 1728, and again in 1752. A new church was erected at the close of the last century. This was found, soon after it was finished, to be very insecure. A new one became indispensable, which, after various delays, having been commenced, was at length finished in 1830, at an expense of L. 4780, 13s. 10½d.

The Right Honourable Lord Duffus is patron of the parish.

Parish Church.—Standing at the west end of the burgh, the parish church is very conveniently situated for the great body of the parishioners. Excellent roads lead towards it in all directions. It is nine miles from Nybster, on the north; seven from Bruan, on the south; seven and a-half from Mirelandorn, on the west; and about a mile from the Moray Frith, on the east. It is not inconveniently situated for the great bulk of the parishioners; but

those of Mirelandorn, Winless, and Bilbster, amounting to 369 souls, while about seven miles from the church of Wick, are within two miles of that of Wattin. This mal-arrangement ought to be remedied.

Allowing eighteen inches to a sitting, the church will contain 1981 sitters. It is seated, however, to contain only 1835. All the seats are said to be free. The church is well attended.

Though much too large for the comfort either of the minister or of the congregation, the church of Wick does not afford nearly sufficient accommodation for the population of the parish. This deficiency is in part supplied by the mission of Bruan, and the *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss.

Mission of Bruan.—At first, this mission comprehended Ber-ridale and Bruan, at which places divine worship was celebrated alternately. Since a parliamentary church was erected at the former place in 1826, the labours of the missionary have been confined to Bruan.

The mission-house is situated in the parish of Wick, but just within the boundary which divides it from the parish of Latheron. The principal part of it was built in 1798, to which an aisle was subsequently added. It is a very plain thatched building, capable of accommodating 585 sitters. The manse, on which is a debt of L. 50, and glebe of four acres, are within the parish of Latheron. The ground was generously given by the family of Ulbster. The missionary district comprehends the extremity of the parish of Latheron in the southern extremity of the parish of Wick. In 1840, the population of the Latheron portion was 770; that of the Wick portion as follows:—

Adherents of the Church,	450 males,	491 females,	total	946
Seceders,	21	37		58
Independents,	10	14		24
	<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>
Total,	481	542		1028

Almost all the inhabitants engage in fishing.

The endowments of the mission consist of the manse and glebe, and L. 25 Sterling annually, given by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge. Seat-rents make up the missionary's stipend to nearly L. 100 a-year. But the district is very poor, and this latter source of income varies considerably. An additional endowment, even of L. 50 a-year, would be an unspeakable blessing to this important mission.

Missionaries of Bruan.—1. William Mackintosh, afterwards

minister of Thurso; 2. John M'Donald, now minister of Ferrintosh; 3. Donald M'Gillivray, afterwards minister of Kilmallie; 4. Duncan M'Gillivray, now minister of Lairg; 5. William Sutherland, now in America; 6. George Davidson, now minister of Latheron; 7. Archibald Cook, now minister of the North Church, Inverness; 8. John Sinclair, A. M., present incumbent.

Parish of Keiss, quoad sacra.—The *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss was erected 1833, by authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It is composed of the northern extremity of Wick and of the southern extremity of Canisbay. The boundaries have not yet been settled. It is understood, however, that the portion which belongs to Wick is bounded on the north and north-east by Canisbay; on the north-west by Bower; on the south by the southern ridge of the valley of Wester; on the east by the sea. The Wick portion is five miles in length, and three miles and a-half in average breadth.

The church and manse were built by Government in 1827, at a cost of L.1500. They are situated on a rising ground at the northern side of the bay of Keiss. Fronting the west, they command an extensive view of the surrounding country. On the opposite side of Keiss-bay, to the left, are seen the gloomy ruins of castles Sinclair and Girnigoe, with the bold and rugged promontory of Noss-Head. The view is bounded in the distance, by the mighty hills which separate Caithness from Sutherland, called Morven, Skerubin, and Maiden-Paps.

The population of that part of the parish of Keiss which is situated within the civil parish of Canisbay is about 200 souls. The part within the civil parish of Wick contains, of males, 362; females, 447; total, 809; of these, 2 are Original Seceders, 12 Anabaptists, 1 is a Reformed Presbyterian, and 1 a Methodist.

The church of Keiss, which is situated within the civil parish of Wick, is capable of holding about 350 sitters. Were galleries erected, it would accommodate 200 more. There is an endowment of L.120 granted by Government. No glebe is attached to the living.

There is a register of births and marriages kept by the session-clerk, which commenced after the passing of an act of the General Assembly in 1833, constituting the Government churches parishes *quoad sacra*.

Ministers of Keiss.—1827, Thomas Jolly, now minister of Bowden; 1829, Thomas Gun, present incumbent.

New Church at Pulteneytown.—It is proposed still farther to increase church-accommodation for the parish of Wick, by the building of an Extension church in Pulteneytown, capable of accommodating 950 persons. Subscriptions amounting to L. 662, 13s. 6d. have been obtained for this most desirable object. The foundation stone was laid on March 17, 1841.

Missionary.—The Rev. David Mitchell has laboured assiduously, as missionary under the Church of Scotland in Pulteneytown, for about two years. He is supported by subscriptions.

Notwithstanding the accommodation provided at Keiss and Bruan, and that which is proposed to be provided at Pulteneytown, the parish church of Wick, though large, is altogether insufficient for the population. After deducting the 809 included in the parish of Keiss, and the 1028 within the mission of Bruan, there are at present within the parish of Wick, *quoad sacra*, 1842 households, comprising, of males, 3482; of females, 4032; total 7514. Taking the number of those who ought to have church-accommodation at the proportion of 55 to the 100, there ought to be church-accommodation for 4132; but the parish church can accommodate only 1835; thus leaving unaccommodated 2297: Or if Pulteneytown ultimately shall be erected into a parish, then there will remain a population in the parish of Wick *quoad sacra* of 6505 souls. Of these there ought to be accommodated 3577; but the church accommodates only 1835, leaving unaccommodated 1742: Or, making a liberal allowance for Dissenters of all descriptions, and stating their numbers at 2100, which will reduce the number of churchmen to 5414, of whom there ought to be accommodated 2977; but the church accommodates only 1835; thus leaving without accommodation 1142 souls.

But the great deficiency lies in pastoral superintendence. It is altogether impossible for one single minister to superintend effectively 7514 persons, or, making allowance for Dissenters, 5414. This will appear still more evident, when the prodigious influx of strangers, amounting to near 10,000, during the fishing season, is taken into consideration. There is not a parish in all broad Scotland, whence issues a more urgent call for help. We are numerous and we are poor; and, from the fisheries and other causes, are exposed to many and great temptations,

which nothing but the full, unfettered, and frequent ministrations of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, carried home on the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, can effectively counteract.

On December 6, 1840, the number of persons on the Communion Roll was, of males, 132; of females, 355; total, 487. The Lord's Supper is dispensed twice a-year in this parish; and the dispensation of it is attended by immense crowds of people from the neighbouring parishes. It is, indeed, a high solemnity.

Manse.—In 1702, the manse was not habitable. In 1709, it was a heap of rubbish. In 1710, a house in the burgh was bought for a manse. In 1728, a manse was ordered to be built on the site of the original one, near the church-yard. The present manse, which stands in the glebe, a little to the west of the town, was erected in 1786. It is a plain but substantial building, and is capable, with some repairs, of being made a very comfortable residence. The office-houses, which are thatched, are ruinous. It is expected that they will speedily be rebuilt.

Glebe.—The glebe consists of two parts; the lower, of about 9 acres, in which the manse stands, and the upper, a mile to the west, on the north side of the River of Wick, about 30 acres. In 1836, the glebe was valued by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction at L. 50 a-year.

Stipend.—In 1792, the stipend was L. 97, 13s. 4d.; in 1810, it was L. 50, and 160 bolls of victual. At present it consists of 17 chalders, half oatmeal, half bear, payable at the fair prices, and L. 10 of money.

Teinds.—The teinds of this parish belong to the Crown. In 1836, the value of the unappropriated teind was L. 340, 9s. 4d.

Ministers of Wick since the Reformation.—Andro Philp, before 1567; Thomas Keir, before 1576; Alexander Merns, Reader at Wick; Thomas Pruntoch; John Annand, before 1636; 1638, David Allardice; 1638, John Smart, ejected in 1650, and afterwards minister of Dunnet; 1659, William Geddes, ejected in 1675; 1676, Patrick Clunis, died in 1691; 1692, William Geddes, restored; 1701, Charles Keith, died in 1705; 1707, James Oliphant, died in 1726; 1727, James Ferme, died in 1760; 1762, James Scobie, died in 1764; 1765, William Sutherland, died in 1816; 1813, Robert Phin, died in 1840; 1840, Charles Thomson, the present incumbent.

United Associate Seceders.—The congregation of these Dissenters was established in 1770. On the 21st of September 1836, according to their minister, the Rev. William Stewart, it amounted

to 1000, of whom 810 were resident within the parish of Wick *quoad sacra*. According to the Rev. Robert Phin, minister of Wick, their numbers within the parish amounted at that date to 700.

The chapel, which stands in Pulteneytown, was built in 1815, and a manse in 1825. There was, in 1836, a debt of L. 130 on the property. Allowing sixteen inches to the sitting, the chapel will contain 658 sitters. In 1836, the number of communicants was upwards of 200. The minister's stipend is L. 100 a-year, derived from seat-rents and collections, with a house and about half an acre of ground.

Independents.—This congregation was established in 1790, in which year the chapel, which stands near Wick, was built. At sixteen inches each sitting, the chapel will hold 666 sitters. In 1836, there was a debt of L. 110 affecting the property. On the 21st of September 1836, the number of Independents resident in Wick *quoad sacra* was, according to the Rev. John Wiseman, then minister, at least 1000; according to the Rev. Robert Phin, minister of Wick, the number was 620. According to Mr Wiseman, the communicants were 129; according to Mr Phin, they were about 100.

Anabaptists.—The congregation was established in 1808. In 1836, the parishioners in the habit of attending were about 90; the number of communicants was then 29. They have no minister.

Separatists.—The congregation was established in 1824. In 1836 their number amounted to 28; and the number of communicants to 13. They have neither chapel nor minister.

Papists.—The congregation was established in 1832. It does not exist but in the fishing-season. A chapel, capable of holding, at eighteen inches a sitting, 306 sitters, was built, in 1836, in Pulteneytown. It is closed, and there is no priest, except during the fishing-season,—when a priest comes, the chapel is opened, and service is performed for those of the Romish persuasion, who, during that period, come to Wick from Ireland and the Highlands.

Original Seceders.—The congregation was established in 1835. In 1836, from 60 to 80 persons were in the habit of attending worship. They have neither chapel nor minister.

Reformed Presbyterians.—This congregation was established in 1836. The numbers in the parish amount to about 200; the communicants to 45. Their chapel in Pulteneytown was built

in 1839. It is capable of holding, on the ground-floor, about 380 sitters. The galleries are not yet erected. They have no minister.

Wesleyan Methodists.—This congregation was established in 1837. Their numbers are not great.

Education.—It was a favourite maxim with the Scottish Reformers, that there should be throughout the land a kirk and a minister for every 1000 inhabitants, and a school beside every kirk. The nobles and gentry, however, voted this a pious imagination, pillaged the church, expended the plunder on their own pleasures, and left the poor to perish for lack of knowledge. But the ministers of the Scottish church were Christians. They were not to be daunted by the hostility both of the land-owners and of the government, and by their unceasing exertions and untiring perseverance, schools as well as churches were gradually planted and endowed in all the parishes of Scotland.

Caithness, however, was long behind the rest of the country. In 1567, only Wick and Thurso had ministers; the rest of the parishes were supplied with readers or exhorters. In 1576, Dunnet, Halkirk, and Wick had each a minister and a reader. The other parishes appear to have been altogether vacant. The disturbances and distresses caused in the seventeenth century by the Episcopalian intruders and persecutors, threw the country back into the Popish darkness and disorder out of which it had been rapidly emerging. In 1697, when the Presbytery of Caithness was, after the Persecution, reconstituted by the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, only Thurso, Dunnet, and Reay had ministers of the Presbyterian Church. Most of the parishes were vacant, amongst which was Wick. In one or two, there were Episcopalian incumbents, a sample of the men who had been intruded in the times of Episcopacy, scandalous in their lives, and opposed, or at least indifferent to the promotion of either the religion or education of the people. The people were, in consequence, ill-educated. In 1701, when a call by the parish of Wick was moderated in to Charles Keith, the second minister of this parish after the Persecution, it is stated by the records of the session, that the call "was unanimously subscribed by the heritors and elders present, and consented to by a greater number who could not subscribe."

The Presbytery were incessant and unwearied in their endeavours to remedy this enormous evil, by the planting of schools;

but their benevolent exertions were counteracted by the culpable opposition of the heritors. These Christian men, however, though discouraged, were not in despair. They persevered, and in 1706 Wick and Thurso were legally provided with schools. In the course of the next twenty years, the legal accommodations had been obtained for Canisbay, Dunnet, Waddin, and Bower. The remaining parishes were not provided for a long time afterwards; and even so late as 1772, Reay was without a statutory school. The Presbytery, while they continued to urge upon the heritors the fulfilment of their duty, did not rest satisfied with shuffling and idle excuses, but did what in them lay to secure for their people the blessings of education, by inviting into their parishes qualified teachers, and affording them every encouragement, by bestowing on them the office and emoluments of session-clerk, and by constantly urging on the people the necessity of contributing to their support: nor did they desist till they had procured from the heritors a legal salary and accommodation for all the schoolmasters within their bounds. In 1759, the parish school of Wick had an income of 20 bolls of meal. It has now the maximum endowment.

But those enlightened and indefatigable Christians were not content with securing for each parish a statutory school; in extensive parishes, they planted charity schools. Several were established in the parish of Wick as early as 1728. In April 12th 1763, there is presented to the kirk-session, a list of several heads of families in Ulbster, who, for the purpose of obtaining a school, oblige themselves to keep a certain number of scholars at it; to pay regularly their quarterly fees, and what meal they bind themselves for; whereupon the session declare their willingness to give what assistance they can to a proper schoolmaster in that place, namely, L. 1, 5s. Sterling a-year, to make up for those scholars whose parents are unable to pay the quarterly fees. In 1792, five charity schools were in operation in the parish, but they have long ago been altogether discontinued.

In 1765, the Rev. William Hallawall, who, for several years had been employed as an itinerant minister in Caithness, by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, but had latterly been chaplain to the Charity Workhouse of Edinburgh, and overseer of the children's education for more than twenty years, having "a peculiar regard for the inhabitants of that large and populous parish of Wick, where I spent," says he, "a good part of my time in my younger years, with great satisfaction," mortified, in the

hands of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, certain property, from which L.21 were annually to be paid for endowing, with L.7 a-year, a school at Keiss; another at Noss; and a third at Ulbster. The heritors are to build school-houses and uphold them, and the Presbytery of Caithness to judge of the qualifications of the teachers. These schools were directed to be called "Hallawall's Schools," by which name, however, they do not seem ever to have been known in the parish. Each of the schools receives from Hallawall's mortification, L.7, 10s. annually, and the same sum from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, which makes up their endowment to L.15. a-year. A female teacher at Ulbster is allowed L.6 a-year by this society. She teaches girls to read and sew.

Besides these schools, there is one at Thrumster and another at Stirkoke on the General Assembly's scheme. The proprietors of these estates have built houses, and allow so much land as an endowment, and the General Assembly grants L.25 a-year.

There are at present 18 unendowed schools in the parish, of which 14 are in the town, and 5 in the country. Of these, there are two kept by school-mistresses within the *quoad sacra* parish of Keiss, one at Reiss, and another at Janetstown, both of which are kept by schoolmasters. Between the school at Reiss, and the Society's school at Keiss, the Kirk-session divides, in equal sums, L.3 a year, arising from a small mortification.

Of the 14 unendowed schools in the town, seven are in Wick and Louisburgh, and seven in Pulteneytown. Of the seven in Wick, one is kept by a master, and six by schoolmistresses. Of the seven in Pulteneytown, three are kept by schoolmistresses, and four by schoolmasters.

Besides all these, there is in Pulteneytown the Academy, an excellent building, raised at a cost of L.1700, by the British Society for Promoting the Fisheries, who likewise contribute to the support of the two teachers.

The following statement shows the average attendance of children in 1840 :

Endowed schools.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Parish school,	60	31	91
Keiss,	49	18	67
Noss or Staxigoe,	45	40	85
Ulbster.	40	20	60
Thrumster,	36	80	116
Stirkoke,	46	40	86
Academy, Pulteneytown,	70	20	90

Unendowed schools kept by masters.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Reiss, - - - - -	46	15	61
Janetstown, - - - - -	16	13	29
One in Wick, - - - - -	60	12	72
Four in Pulteneytown, - - - - -	164	57	221
Unendowed schools kept by mistresses,			
Broadhaven, - - - - -	15	12	27
Two in Keiss, - - - - -	87	38	75
Six in Wick and Louisburgh,	30	119	149
Total,	714	515	1229

A Female School of Industry is supported at Stirkoke by Mrs Horne of Scouthel, where sewing is taught in all its branches.

The school at Reiss, on which is dependent a large and poor district, ought to be endowed; and a school should be planted in the populous district of Hempriggs.

It is impossible to state the fees in the various unendowed schools. It may be said, however, that, in general, they are very low. In the Society's schools, the fees for reading are 1s. 6d. a quarter. In the parish school, the fees per quarter are, for reading, 2s.; for reading and writing, 3s.; for reading, writing, and arithmetic, 4s.; with addition of geography, 4s. 6d.; and for all these with the classics, 6s.

A great number of the children are very imperfectly educated. Many do not get to school above a quarter or two. Poverty is partly the cause of this; but it must be confessed, that there is not so deep a conviction of the benefits of education as every Christian must desire to see.

Sabbath Schools.—Of these there are, connected with the Church of Scotland, one in Wick, attended by about 250 scholars, and one in Pulteneytown, attended by about 320; and in the country, one at Keiss, one at Staxigoe, one at Reiss, one at Stirkoke, one at Thrumster, and one at Ulbster, which are attended by about the same number of scholars by which the schools at each of these places are attended during the week. Sabbath schools are also kept by several of the Dissenting bodies.

Literature.—At Wick there is a library, containing about 1620 volumes. It was instituted in March 1826, and is the property of the subscribers.

There are two reading-rooms, one at Pulteneytown, and the other at Wick; the former established in 1829, and the latter in 1840. Each of them receives about four daily London, and about the same number of provincial newspapers.

The John o' Groat Journal, published at Wick, commenced in February 1836, and has had a uniform weekly circulation, up to the

present time, of 800 copies. About one-half of these is circulated throughout the four northern counties, and the other throughout Britain, and abroad. This Journal advocates what are usually called Liberal principles.

The Northern Star, a fortnightly newspaper, commenced in November 1836, and was discontinued in May 1839. It advocated what are usually called Conservative principles.

About fifteen years ago, the parish was supplied by a flying-stationer, who paid periodical visits to Wick. Now, there are two booksellers in the place, both of whom have a considerable business.

Charitable and other Institutions.—The Caithness Agricultural Society, which was instituted about fifteen years ago, holds its annual meeting at Wick. This Society is respectably supported, and has been of the greatest advantage to those objects which are indicated by its name.

There is at Wick a Chamber of Commerce, established about five years ago, which has conferred important benefits on the trade of the place.

The Wick and Pulteneytown Total Abstinence Society was instituted in January 1840. It numbers about 700 members, and has been the means, it is reported, of reclaiming to sobriety several drunkards.

Savings' Bank.—A savings' bank was opened at Wick in November 1840. It is established for the benefit of Caithness, and is the only one in the whole county.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The earliest notice of the poor of this parish is in the sessional records, in which it is recorded that, on the 22d of September 1701, the poor of the parish were convened, when seven males and ten females received amongst them L.6, 7s. 6d. Scots. In 1752, L.95, 18s. 6d. Scots were distributed to 34 males and 60 females.

In 1820, there were on the permanent roll of paupers, 86 males and 96 females, in all 182, who received from the sessional funds L.62, 14s. : besides this sum, there was distributed in occasional relief, the farther sum of L.9, 14s., making in all the sum of L.72, 8s. Sterling, distributed to the parochial poor in 1820.

In 1830, there were 41 males and 124 females, in all 165 persons, on the permanent roll. The sum distributed in permanent relief was L.74, 9s., and that in occasional, L.11, 6s., making together the sum of L.85, 15s., distributed in 1830.

In 1840, there were on the permanent roll, 21 males and 76 females. Among them was distributed in permanent relief, L.32, 3s. : the sum of L.21, 0s. 3½d. was distributed occasionally; in all L.53, 3s. 3½d.

But these statements by no means give a correct view of the extent of pauperism in this parish. Many are extremely poor. Public begging is common both in town and country. There has been put into the hands of the compiler of this report, a list drawn up by William Bruce, Esq. provost of Wick, of the poor who go round the shops and houses every Saturday "seeking their piece." It contains the names of 8 males and 53 females. At the request of the compiler, a committee, composed of the heritors, ministers, householders, and tenants, examined, in December 1840, into the state of pauperism within the parish, and reported that there were of persons utterly destitute,—

In Wick,	6 men,	22 females.	Total 28
In Louisburgh,	21	29	50
In Pulteneytown	8	43	51
In the landward part of Wick <i>quoad sacra</i> ,	22	50	72
In the parish of Keiss,	5	22	27

Total (besides children), 229

There is no legal assessment for the poor in this parish. By far the largest portion of the funds available for their relief arise from collections at the church-door. The interest of L.300, which has been mortgaged for the poor, is applied to their relief; for which purpose, also, small donations are occasionally received.

The poor are by no means clamant in seeking parochial relief. It is still considered as degrading; and there are numerous instances of persons suffering great destitution, rather than make application for relief; and of individuals in but indigent circumstances themselves, taking destitute persons, who have no claim upon them, into their houses, and supporting them without asking or receiving sessional assistance. But it must appear evident, on consideration of the preceding particulars, that, unless the funds of the session are more plentifully supplied, this state of things will not continue much longer. These means of relief are, at present, altogether inadequate to meet even with the veriest pitance the numerous demands made upon them; and symptoms are appearing, that necessity is more and more overcoming the laudable reluctance of the destitute to make application for parochial relief. To bring on a legal assessment, it needs but the refusal of the benevolent shopkeepers of Wick to give any longer the

weekly penny which immemorially they have spontaneously bestowed on each of the numerous poor who go round on the Saturdays to collect it. Let this be done, and they are threatening to do it, and a compulsory poor-rate, with its innumerable train of economic and moral evils, will come on the parish in half-a-year. All parties will then find out, but when too late, that it would have been their wisdom to have supported, with greater attention and liberality, the good old system of the Church of Scotland. Nothing can arrest the progress of a country such as this to pauperism, but evangelical churches, pastoral superintendence, and scriptural schools. But these in sufficient abundance would, under the blessing of God, which is sure to be conferred on the preaching and teaching of the Truth as it is in Jesus, accomplish this.

The kirk-session is composed of the minister and six elders, of whom one is above eighty years of age, and another is in bad health. The elders do what they can for the spiritual and economic good of the people; but what are they among so many?

Police and Crime, &c.—The Earls of Caithness enjoyed, from an early date, the heritable jurisdiction of Caithness and Sutherland. In 1503, James IV. erected Caithness into a separate sheriffdom, and appointed Wick as the place where the courts were to be held. From this arrangement Caithness was, anciently, sometimes denominated the county of Wick, or Wickshire. In 1674, the heritable jurisdictions of Caithness were sold by the Earl to John Campbell of Glenorchy, who sold them in 1718, by auction, to John Sinclair of Ulbster for L.2000 Sterling. When the heritable jurisdictions were abolished in 1748, Ulbster claimed L.5000 as compensation for the sheriffship, L.3000 as Justiciary, and L.1000 as Constable of Scrabster Castle and bailie of the Bishop's lands. The demand was considered extravagant, and he ultimately got only L.3000 for the whole.

Justice in the hands of these heritable sheriffs, in general, failed through their weakness, or was perverted by their wickedness. But, during the seventeenth and the former part of the eighteenth centuries, the courts of the Church, with firmness and impartiality, grappled with this exceeding evil, and often accomplished what the civil magistrates either could not, or, what is, perhaps, nearer the truth, would not attempt. In 1709, we find the presbytery of Caithness informing Queen Anne, that, in consequence of its distance from the seat of government, "this county has for a long time been a stage on which many atrocious villainies have been

acted; particularly, many barbarous and inhuman murders and assassinations of persons of innocence and integrity." The kirk-session of Wick was vigilant and energetic in repressing wickedness of all kinds. Amongst its elders were generally several magistrates, and it exercised a mixture of civil and ecclesiastical authority. On August 31, 1701, "the session taking into their consideration that there are a great many abuses committed, in and about the town of Wick, on the Sabbath day, did and hereby do, for the preventing of which, appoint and ordain that two elders do search the town in time of Divine service and after the same, and make report of irregular persons to the session." Similar appointments are often recorded; and the most unremitting vigilance was exercised. In September 1701, two women are charged "for gathering pease in time of sermon;" a man for "beating his wife;" and, John Naughty "for entertaining persons drinking in time of sermon." The session direct the town of Wick "to put up ane cock-stool." "Alexander Larnoch and his wife are appointed to stand publicly, and to pay 20 shillings Scots for the crime of cursing;" and unto John Johnston the session "offer the alternative either to find surety to pay 8 pounds, or otherwise to be liable to corporal punishment." The latter, "afterwards produced John Sinclair, joiner, who hereby enacts himself cautioner that he shall pay 8 pounds at three terms, namely, 4 merks at Candelmas; 4 merks at Whitsunday; and 4 merks at Lammas 1702. May 25th, 1702, Donald M'Curchie, shoemaker in Wick, who had been guilty both of gross and of contumelious conduct, was ordained by the session "to be carried from the kirk of Wick to the cross, with a paper-hood bearing the inscription of his crime, and to sit there two hours in the stocks with the hood on his head, and thereafter" to give security that he shall pay his mulct, and submit to the customary discipline of the church. The pernicious and most reprehensible practice of levying "mulcts" upon delinquents, by sessional authority, continued till of late years. The people came to regard these fines as just the price of sin; and this feeling is not even yet altogether extinct.

Wick is the county town. The sheriff and other customary courts are held here. The sheriff-court was held at Thurso for a long period previously to 1828; but in that year, Wick, after a protracted litigation, obtained a decision of the Court of Session, declaring Wick to be the head-burgh of the shire of Caithness, and ordaining that the stated sheriff-courts must be held and the

Sheriff-clerk's office kept there. There is a county but not a burghal police.

Crimes.—During the year from September 1st 1827 to September 1st 1828, there were confined within the jail of Wick, 36 male and 8 female culprits; and during the same period, ending September 1st 1829, there were 21 males and 4 females.

In the course of the four years subsequent to August 1830, the number of cases of crime within the county brought to trial, was 62, of which 55 were tried before the Sheriff, and 7 before the circuit-court at Inverness. This was little more than 15 for each year, or in the proportion of 1 for every 2297 of the population; while for all Scotland the proportion was 1 in 1130. The crimes were, of

Theft,	16
Assault and breach of the peace,	31
Malicious mischief,	5
Deforcement of officers of law,	4
Child-exposure,	1
Concealment of pregnancy,	2
Forgery,	1
Defaming of judges,	1
Reckless riding and injury,	1
	—
	62

Of the whole number, 30 were committed within the parish of Wick; 11 in Thurso; 7 in Latheron; 5 in Halkirk; 3 in Reay; 2 in Dunnet; 2 in Bower; 1 in Olrick; and 1 in Wattin. In several of the cases a number of persons were concerned.

Prisons.—In 1840, there were committed to Wick jail, 29 men and 2 women. The following table will point out a variety of particulars; such as the profession, age, and crime of the culprits. It will also show, that the season of the herring-fishery is most productive of crime, and that of a particular kind.

Date of Commit. 1840.	Male.	Female.	Occupation.	Age.	Crime.
Jan. 7,	1	0	Labourer,	45	Theft.
June 2,	0	1		34	Assault.
July 21,	1	0	Fisher,	25	Do.
July 21,	1	0	Miller,	21	Do.
Aug. 1,	1	0	Fisher,	25	Breach of peace.
Aug. 3,	0	1		60	Exposing a child.
Aug. 8,	1	0	Seaman,	29	Theft.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Mason,	35	Assault.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Farmer,	55	Do.
Aug. 10,	1	0	Do.	71	Do.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Sawyer,	31	Do.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Seamen,	28	Rioting.
Aug. 16,	1	0	Do.	20	Do.
Aug. 18,	1	0	Do.	48	Assault.
Aug. 20,	1	0	Servant,	16	Desert. service.

Date of Commit. 1840.	Male.	Female.	Occupation.	Age.	Crime.
Aug. 22,	1	0	Fisher,	23	Rioting.
Aug. 24,	1	0	Packman,	27	Assault.
Aug. 24,	1	0	Do.	25	Do.
Sept. 5,	1	0	Fisher,	30	Rioting.
Sept. 24,	1	0	Labourer,	17	Assault.
Sept. 24,	1	0	Do.	18	Do.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Servant,	16	Theft.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Tinker,	31	Do.
Oct. 13,	1	0	Do.	20	Do.
Nov. 18,	1	0	Carter,	28	Utter. base coin.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Joiner,	22	Poaching.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Farmer,	20	Do.
Nov. 27,	1	0	Joiner,	21	Do.
Dec. 1,	1	0	Fisher,	21	Rioting.
Dec. 1,	1	0	Do.	17	Do.
Dec. 11,	1	0	Do.	46	Poaching.

It must not be supposed that all these culprits were from the parish of Wick. The jail is not for the parish of Wick, but for the whole county of Caithness.

The jail was built in 1828, at an expense of L. 1200, the greater part of which was defrayed by the burgh. It is sufficient for the county. Attention is paid to the health of the prisoners. It is governed according to act of Parliament. The Rev. David Mitchell, Missionary in Pulteneytown, has been appointed chaplain, with a salary of L. 20 a-year.

Fairs.—The following fairs are held within this parish; Skitten Market, at Kilminister, on the first Tuesday of March; Wick Market, on the first Tuesday after Palm Sunday; Fair of Wick in June. All these are for cattle. Margaretmas, at Hill of Wick, on the Tuesday after the 20th of July, for cattle, and the hiring of persons for the harvest; and Fergusmas,* at Wick, in the end of November, for cattle.

Inns and Public-Houses.—Of these there are in Wick and Louisburgh, 22; Pulteneytown, 23; the landward part of the parish, 9; total, 54.

Instead of this appalling number, every person acquainted with the circumstances of the parish must admit, that a dozen were more than enough for all the necessities of the district. An excess of public-houses is one of the most frightful curses which can befall a community. Their effect upon the morals and comfort

* The frequent use of the termination *mas*, in the names of fairs and term days in Caithness, shews the deep hold which Popery had taken of the district. Besides Margaretmas and Fergusmas, mentioned above, there are in the county Colmsmas, the term on the 20th of June; Petermas, 29th June, O. S.; Georgemas, 15th July, O. S.; Marymas, 15th August, O. S.; Lukemas, first Tuesday of October, O. S.; Mansmas, or Magnusmas, first Tuesday of December, O. S.; Tustimas, fourth Tuesday of November, O. S.; and a number more masses.

of the people is most disastrous. Multitudes can trace their ruin in body, soul, and outward estate, to such seminaries of Satan and Belial, as the lower public-houses generally are. Those to whom it belongs to license such places in the parish of Wick have incurred an awful responsibility.

Fuel.—The fuel made use of in this parish, is peats and coals. The latter are brought from the Wear and Tyne, and cost about 18s. a ton. Peats, which form the greater part of the fuel consumed by the commonalty, are dug in the mosses of the parish, and sold in the town for 2s. a cart.

The compiler of this report must apologise for its manifold imperfections. He became a resident in the parish, to which he was previously an utter stranger, only on the 24th of October last. He was requested in December to draw up the report, which he would not have attempted could another person have been found to undertake it. In the midst of the numerous vocations and avocations of a most burdensome charge, he has had to search about for information, and arrange and put it together at short intervals of ministerial labour. To those who have furnished him with materials he desires to tender his grateful acknowledgements, and more especially to the Right Honourable Lord Duffus, and to John Henderson, Esq. Pulteneytown, W. S. From the former he received a great deal of curious and important information respecting the mineralogy, sea-coasts, antiquities, and progressive agricultural changes of the parish; and to the latter he stands indebted for the free use of extensive and most accurate collections made by his learned and godly brother, the late Dr Patrick Brodie Henderson, illustrative of the history and statistics of Caithness. These valuable collections ought either to be published, or lodged in some public library.

March 1841.

Addenda.—About the middle of the tenth century, Arnfin, Harvard, Liot, Sculy, and Lodvir, sons of Thorfin Earl of Orkney, contended on the decease of their father for the sovereignty. Arnfin was assassinated by the contrivance of Regnhilda, his wife, who

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married Havard, of whom she likewise speedily procured the murder, that she might marry Liot, the third brother, of whom she had become enamoured. Sculy determined to dispute his brother's authority. To secure success, he made application to Malcolm I. King of Scotland, who readily agreed to give him assistance, hoping by means of him to wrest the northern counties from the sovereignty of Norway. He created Sculy Earl of Caithness, which was declared a part of the kingdom of Scotland, and supplied him with ships and troops.

Liot was in Orkney when his brother reached the coast of Caithness, and his absence enabled Sculy to overrun the country. He next attacked the islands, but was repulsed, and many of his followers slain. He immediately withdrew to Caithness, whither he was followed by Liot. Meantime Sculy secured the aid of Magbrag, chieftain of Sutherland, and the confederates were encamped in an advantageous position in the Bogs of Skitten, (*paludibus Skidensibus*), a name by which the Moss of Kilminster was anciently called.* Liot advanced against them, and was assaulted with vigour. His men stood firm; and their enemies, after a vain attempt to break his line, were seized with a sudden panic and fled. The rout soon became complete, and Sculy was slain in attempting to rally the fugitives. Liot having been wounded in the pursuit, died soon after. From him the clan Macleod are said to be descended. Lodvir, the last of these ill-fated brothers, succeeded to the vacant earldom of Orkney.

Marl.—The following is the result of an analysis of the marl in the Loch of Brickigoe, on the estate of Mr Innes of Thrumster, by Mr Kemp, Teacher of Practical Chemistry under the Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh.

Pure carbonate of lime,	75 per cent.
Alumina,	8
Silica,	5
Organic vegetable matter,	12
	<hr/>
	100

* The fair held on this moss is to this day called Skitten market.