

PARISH OF LADY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Situation, &c.—LADY parish is situate on the east side of the Island of Sanday, and is about nine miles long by one mile broad. It is bounded on the north, east, and south, by the sea; and on the west, partly by Cross parish, and partly by the sea, forming the large bay and harbour of Otterswick. The parish takes its name from the church called Lady Kirk, or the Kirk of our Lady, evidently dedicated in Catholic times to the Virgin Mary. It consists of several districts or subdivisions, as follows: Elsness, Overbister, Coligarth, Tressness, Neivark, Selibister, Northwall. Each of these districts was probably, in ancient times, a separate distinct parish.

Meteorology.—I subjoin a statement of the average heat of the weather for the greater part of two years.

1824.		1825.	
Average heat of January	41° Fahr.	Average heat of January	40° Fahr.
February,	39	February,	41
March,	38	March,	42
April,	52	April,	40
May,	47	May,	49
June,	54	June,	52
July,	56	July,	57
August,	57	August,	56
September,	53	September,	54
October,	46	October,	46
November,	40		
December,	37		

On the estate of Elsness, there is an oyce or inlet of the sea, from which the water wholly retreats, during the ebb tide—containing 100 Scotch acres. The entry is narrow, but of sufficient depth of water for sloops of any size; and the whole oyce might easily be converted into a harbour. At present, there is a rock or bar near the mouth, which, with ordinary floods, renders

* Drawn up by the Rev. Walter Traill.

the passage impossible, excepting to very small vessels. But were this obstruction removed, which could be done without any great expense of time or labour, the passage would be easy to sloops of any size. There is a similar oyce or inlet of the sea at Tressness, of at least twice the extent, and without any obstruction in the entry. Perhaps, both of these places might form proper stations for herring or cod fisheries. But should this notion be erroneous, there can be no doubt that the extensive bay of Otterswick, common to Lady parish and Burness, would afford stations along its winding shores for one or more fishing-villages. This bay may be divided into the outward and inner harbours, the former eight, the other two miles in length. As, in storms from the north-east, it is difficult for vessels to ride in safety in the outer harbour, on account of the violence of the sea, they usually (in this case) retreat to the inner harbour, where no gale, however strong, can do them any injury. In some parts of the outward harbour, the water is 12 fathoms deep, with a stiff clay bottom; in other parts, from 5 to 10 fathoms deep, bottom clay, with a covering of several feet of sand.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Antiquities.—There are in the parish several of those buildings called Picts' houses.

I have received the following communication from Dr Wood, an ingenious medical gentleman, who practised several years in Sanday:—"The island of Sanday is first mentioned in the Orkneyinga Saga, during the reign of Earl Paul, who having, in 1136, defeated Earl Ronald in a sea-fight, and having captured most of his fleet, returned in triumph to Orkney, and invited to a splendid banquet all the aristocracy of the islands, with their friends. He then resolved that a watch-tower should be erected in Fair Isle, on which a fire should be kindled, should an army be observed approaching from Shetland. There was another watch-tower erected in Ronaldsay, and similar ones in most of the other islands, so that the signal might be seen over the whole. He appointed Thorstein, the son of Havard, the son of Gunna, to take charge of Ronaldsay; and Magnus, his brother, to take charge of Sanday."*

"Sanday is again mentioned in the year 1137, after Earl Ronald had returned to the islands. 'Ronald sends ambassadors to the Bishop, begging he would intercede for him. He afterwards

* Vide Orkneyinga Saga, pp. 186, 187.

adds to the embassy Thorstein, the son of Rangnu, and Thorstein, the son of Havard of Sanday.* Again,—Sanday is mentioned as a fit place for a conference to be held between Swein, son of Asleif, and Anakol, a follower of Earl Erlend. ‘When Gauti met Swein, he sent a messenger to Anakol, and requested Swein to betake himself to Sanday, with his followers, that they might hold a conference there. He therefore promised, he should go thither.’†

“In the year 1157, Earl Erlend and Swein left Shetland for Orkney; but, ‘encountering a severe storm, and a variety of whirlpools, in Dennis roost, it happened that Swein was separated from the Earl, and driven to Fair Isle, with twelve of their ships. He concluded that the Earl had perished. From thence he sailed south to Sanday, where he found Erlend with three ships. There was great joy on both sides at this meeting.’‡

“In the year 1158, Swein fled to Sanday to escape the wrath of Earl Haralld, whose house in Gairsay he had forcibly entered, with intent to murder him; but Haralld then happened to be in a neighbouring island, hunting hares. When Haralld was informed, by his domestics, of this outrage of Swein, he immediately set out in search of him to Enhallow, whither Swein had fled; however, he contrived to conceal his vessel in a large cavern in one of the cliffs of that island, and so eluded the search of his pursuers, although they were at one time so close to the mouth of the cavern, that he overheard their conversation.” “He leaves his ship in the cavern, and seizes a merchant vessel which belonged to the monks, sails to Sanday, and there lands and sets fire to the ship. Upon landing, he repairs to a farm called Völunes, occupied by a man named Bardr; he was a kinsman of Swein; having privately begged of him to come out, he made known to him his wish to remain there.”§

“The remains of the Scandinavian buildings of Sanday are numerous in Lady parish; but it is to be regretted, that all of them are now in so ruinous a state, as to render an accurate description of them impossible. They mostly abound on the nesses or headlands, which situations appear to have been first settled, both from their proximity to the sea, from which the inhabitants would procure their chief sustenance, when agriculture was unknown or little attended to, and from such situations being most easily defended against the attacks of neighbouring tribes.

* Vide Orkneyinga Saga, pp. 214, 215.
 † Ibid. 348, 349.

‡ Ibid. p. 392.
 § Ibid. pp. 370, 371.

“ Toftsness, the northermost point of Sanday, appears to have been a well-peopled settlement, from the numerous ruins which are still to be seen. The greater part of the Ness has been enclosed with a chain of forts, which were connected by a stone-wall. Within this wall, the ground has been covered with buildings of various sizes:—circles of stones set on edge, with, frequently, an upright central stone, are still to be seen,—and numerous graves lined with flat stones, and also surrounded by small circles of stones. Several of these graves have been opened; some of them contain human bones,—others contain only ashes; in many of them, deers’ horns have been found. One of the forts, on the wall, was examined a few years ago. It measured, inside, 16 feet in length, and 6 in width; the walls were 8 feet in height, and from 4 to 5 feet in thickness; at the height of 6 feet from the foundation, the stones, inside, were laid so as the upper stone overlapped the one immediately beneath, thus contracting the opening above, which was roofed over with large flat stones. All the stones in this building were large flat stones from the beach. The wall was regular and firmly built. There was no clay nor cement of any kind. A deer’s horn was found in this building, and several fragments of bones.

“ From the quantity of sand blown over these remains, it is almost, indeed altogether, impossible to give any accurate description of them; but, from their extent, it is evident that many people, and a great deal of time, must have been occupied in their erection. Some account of this place appeared in an Edinburgh newspaper, several years ago.

“ Tressness, on the east-side of the island, contains several tumuli, which have never been examined. They are situated close by the sea, at convenient landing-places. The largest of them, called Wassa, is built of large flat stones; it is about 15 feet in height, and upwards of 180 feet in circumference at the base.

“ Elsness appears to have been an extensive settlement. On the northern extremity of this cape, there is a burgh or fort called Augmund’s Howe. It is now in ruins, and overgrown with grass and weeds. It is situated close by the beach, and has been surrounded to landward, by a circle of upright stones. On the east side, where the ground is low, there is a semicircular terrace, the outer edge of which is formed also by stones set upright. The height of the fort is about 18 feet.

“ From Augmund’s Howe, there may be traced the remains of

a wall thickly studded with circular forts, running to the north-west across the Ness, and thus enclosing fully a third of the whole Ness. These small forts on the wall are, now, only ruinous cairns. They are all, or most of them, placed on the inside of the wall. The few on the outside seem to have been so placed for security's sake, as they are uniformly on gentle risings. The wall does not run in a straight line, but has several curves, to avoid low spots of ground which are, in winter, covered with water. The enclosed space is literally covered with tumuli and heaps of ruins. None of those now remaining are of great size. The largest have been levelled and ploughed over. The peaceful husbandman has now succeeded the restless and daring sea-king. The sickle and the scythe have succeeded the sword and the battle-axe.

“ Most of these tumuli which have been opened, contained burned stones, ashes, bones, and sea shells. In some of them, were graves lined with flat stones. An axe, said to be of bone, was found some years ago, but was destroyed by the ignorant people who found it. An arrow or spear-head was also found at the same time. It is of stone, three inches long, and lozenge-shaped. The point is broken off. Many such articles might have been discovered, had proper persons superintended the removal of the tumuli.

“ A number of the smaller heaps within the walls are formed of what the country people call *cramp*, and are said by them to have been used as places of sacrifice. For whatever purpose they were used, it is plain they must have been the sites of strong and long-continued fires. The *cramp* resembles the refuse from a glass-blower's furnace. It is of a reddish colour, and contains portions of a coarse glass, stones, and sometimes fragments of earthen vessels. The sea-weed, with which the shores abound, must have furnished the fuel. This, by long heat, would be reduced to kelp, and, by a continuance of the heat, and the admixture of sand and stones, would, in process of time, produce the *cramp*.

“ There is another burgh, a little to the westward of Augmund's Howe, also built close by the beach, but considerably less than the former. On the north-west side, there is a circular enclosure of about an acre, which has, at one time, been under cultivation, and has given the name of Quoyness to this building.

“ Throughout the Ness, there are several circles of stones, with, for the most part, a central stone also set on edge. None of these stones are more than two feet above ground, and perhaps about as much under. All the circles measured nearly the same in cir-

cumference, about 36 feet. None of them are to be found above a few yards from the beach. The finest specimens are at a creek, which forms an excellent harbour called Kettletoft. On each side of this creek, are two circles; the first two are close by the beach, the other two at the upper extremity of the creek. The only tumuli outside the line of forts are three or four, at a short distance from Augmund's Howe. All the rest, burghs, tumuli, and circles, are on the west side, that is, within the fortified wall.

“ The ruins here differ in several particulars from those at Toftsness. At that place, the forts or watch-towers are of an oblong shape; here, they appear to have been circular. At Toftsness I never heard of any cramp having been seen; here, it abounds. Fewer graves have appeared here than at Toftsness, and none within circles of stones. Notwithstanding these circumstances, they both appear to be the work of the same race of people. The apparent differences, for they are not real, may be easily accounted for. May not the taste or style of one architect (builder, at least,) have differed from that of another in the formation of the watch-towers? Or may not the forts or watch-towers at Elsness have originally been of the same shape with those of Toftsness, and may they not have attained their present circular form, from being reduced to ruins and overgrown with grass? The sand blowing off Toftsness, which has buried most of the ruins there, has preserved the watch-towers in a comparatively perfect state. The absence of cramp at Toftsness may be accounted for by the different kind of fuel which may have been used. In that place, there is a thin layer of turf or peat under the sand, which, no doubt, would be preferred to the sea-weed; and we are informed, that one of the Earls, Torf Einar, taught the inhabitants the use of turf or peat some centuries before Christianity was introduced into Orkney. (Vide Torfæus and Ork. Saga). There is no peat at Elsness, nor, indeed, in any part of Sanday, but Toftsness.

“ None of the circles at Elsness have been opened, or graves might have been found in them, as well as within the circles at Toftsness.

“ At Newark, in the centre of Lady parish, there were lately discovered under land, which had been cultivated for generations, the ruins of a large circular building. It was built of large flat stones, admirably fitted together, but without cement of any kind. The wall curved slightly inwards, from the foundation to the height of 8 or 9 feet, and then outward, as it rose in height, for about 4

fect, where it had the appearance of having been thrown down. It was about 12 feet wide at the bottom inside. The wall was fully 6 feet in thickness, and, in some parts, a double wall was perceptible, with an intermediate space of about 3 feet. This double wall went all round; but, from the great quantity of rubbish, it was found impossible to trace it. There was no appearance of door nor window, unless in the south and east sides, where two small openings communicated with the space between the walls. In one of those openings, was found a bone pin, three inches long, smoothly polished; in the other opening, part of a very coarsely-formed comb, made of the bone of the whale.

“The interior of the building was fitted up with rubbish, stones, and gravel, and above all was a deep layer of red ashes, thickly interspersed with the bones of cattle, sheep, swine, rabbits, and geese, and with limpets and other shell-fish. The whole of the building is now under ground, and must have been so for many generations. It has been built on a rising ground. The sea, on either side of it, may be distant about half a mile. From the top of it, which, in its original state, would have been a few feet higher than the ground which now covers it, both sides of the island would have been seen,—a great portion of what lies to the southward and westward, and all that part of the island lying north-east of it. This tower, in all probability, belonged to that description of them of which the Castle of Mousa in Shetland is said to be the most perfect specimen. (See *Ivanhoe*, last edition, Vol. ii. p. 335,) where, in a note, the learned author gives a very interesting account of such towers, and particularly of that of Mousa.

“About a quarter of a mile northward of the Newark tower is a tumulus, which has never been opened. It is covered with a rich sward. It is called by the country people “Ivar’s Knowe.” The ground slopes gently from this knowe to the beach, which forms the south-east side of the Bay of Otterswick or Odenswick. Along this beach are the remains of two or three more buildings. About a mile south-west of these, in the centre of a marsh on the farm of Cleatt, is another small tumulus; and about half a mile farther south, on the same farm, is another, situated on the edge of marshy ground, which is covered by the sea in spring-tides. A considerable extent of barren uncultivated ground stretches to the south-west, along the banks of Otterswick, and is terminated by the farm of Coligarth. Many small circular mounds may be seen on this moor, all, or most of which, contain masses of cramp.

“ The Ness of Coligarth or Coliness extends a good way across the Bay of Otterswick to the north-west. In this ness there is a very large artificial mound, which, if examined, would be found to contain the largest burgh in Lady Parish, if not in Sanday. The surface of this mound has been broken in several places for the purpose of taking away large stones, which are found in every part of it. About three years ago, while removing some of these stones, a spear head was found; it is of iron, seven inches long, rounded and pointed at one extremity, and flattened at the other.

“ On the south-west side of Coligarth, another barren moor commences, and runs along the banks of Otterswick almost to the bottom of the bay, where this parish is joined by Burness. Along this moor, too, are scattered a number of small circular heaps; but the largest and most remarkable are in the immediate vicinity of Coligarth. They consist of three pretty large tumuli, partly surrounded by a square enclosure. There is also within the enclosure an excellent spring well, which has been carefully built about with large stones. The remains of a wall may be traced, running in a southerly direction from these tumuli, a good way across the moor. These three tumuli are called by the country people Myrtis's Knowes, or the Knowes of Myrtis.

“ The principal Scandinavian antiquities in this parish have now been enumerated. Many more, no doubt, are buried under ground, some of which may yet be discovered. What we now have, is sufficient proof of the rude state of society in these islands at one period.

“ Religious buildings were formerly pretty numerous in this parish; in general, they were only small chapels; at least we have not now the remains of any large religious edifice. Nothing now is left of them, save their foundations overgrown with grass and weeds. They are all surrounded by, or in the immediate vicinity of, good land, and generally near a well or fresh water loch. None of them are to be found on the moor or hill ground. Several of them have been built close by the ruins of other buildings; such situations may have been chosen, from the ready access to stones which they afforded; or the devout men engaged in the conversion of the Orcadian heathens, to show their utter abhorrence of the ancient superstition, may have erected their chapels on the very ruins of the temples of Odin.

“ None of these chapels have exceeded twelve feet in length, and from eight to ten feet in breadth. Foundations of them may

be seen at Northwall, Newark, Cleatt, Tressness, Overbister, Coliness, and other places. It is likely they would all have been dedicated to some saint or other holy person; but tradition, which is very scanty here, has only preserved the names of three of them; Peter Kirk, or St Peter's Chapel, (which has been of rather larger dimensions than the others), on the banks of Otterswick, near Newark; the Chapel of Arstas, close by the round tower lately discovered at Newark; and St Magdalen's Chapel in Overbister.

"Founts, or holy water basins, have been found at several of them. These founts are all formed alike, from rounded pieces of red sandstone, roughly hollowed out on one side.

"On examining the small portions left of the walls of the chapels, they are found to be cemented with clay; some of them have been plastered inside with lime.

"In the spring of 1826, while removing some large stones which impeded the operations of the plough, near the foundations of a chapel in Overbister, a long subterraneous passage was discovered, which terminated in a circular cavity. The bottom and sides of this passage were formed of the solid rock, as well as the cavity at its extremity, which has likely been intended for a well; the top or roof of the passage was carefully covered with flagstones, and above was the natural soil. The entrance to the passage was by two steps cut in the rock. The length of the passage was $19\frac{1}{2}$ feet; height, 3 feet; width, about 1 foot 9 inches; diameter of the well, 3 feet; from the roof to the bottom of the well, 3 feet 6 inches. Several small pieces of decayed oak were found in the passage. The well contained a very little water and mud.

"At a few feet distance from the entrance to this passage, a causeway was discovered, formed of rounded stones from the beach, and laid with great care, the stones in the centre being set upright, those on each side sloping towards the centre. The causeway was 4 feet broad; it commenced at the chapel, and run in a straight line to the westward for 30 or 40 yards; it then turned to the south, and was traced in that direction for about 60 yards. It most probably, at one time, led to a small loch, which is about 200 yards distant from the site of the chapel.

"Tradition gives no name to this chapel. The small hillock was known to the old people by the name of the Carsè of Henzie Hunt. St Magdalen's Chapel stood about 200 yards north of this.

"No graves are to be found near any of these chapels, unless

at one built on the ruins of the burgh of Coliness. This chapel has been built at the south-east corner of the ruins of the burgh. Its length was 12 feet; breadth little more than 8. A stone, 2 feet long, 10 inches in thickness, and as many in breadth, was found in this chapel. One side of this stone was covered with small circular holes, about one inch in depth, and straight lines were cut from one hole to another; the holes were not arranged in any regular order. The use of this stone must remain unknown.

“ At a very short distance from the west end of the chapel, a number of graves were discovered; all were lined with flagstones. None of them were above two feet under the surface of the ground. They were close together in rows, forming the divisions between the graves. Many of the skeletons were pretty entire; they were lying with their heads to the west. All were on their right sides, with the knees a good deal bent. One of the skulls had a long wound on the upper part of it. A gold ring, rather larger than a finger ring, was found in one of the graves; but the boy who found it, broke it, to ascertain its composition. I saw only a small fragment of it. On the flag which formed the south or right side of one of these graves, there was a very rude attempt at carving a cross Calvary. The upright portion was 13 inches long; the cross beam, 9 inches. More curious discoveries might have been made here; but the search was discontinued.”

III.—POPULATION.

Amount of population in 1801,	-	830
1811,	-	862
1821,	-	880
1831,	-	858

Customs.—Formerly, it was customary for companies of men, on new year’s morning, to go to the houses of the rich, and awake the family, by singing the New Year’s song, in full chorus. When the song was concluded, the family entertained the musicians with ale and bread, and gave them a smoked goose or a piece of beef.*

Language.—Our language is rather a dialect of the English than the Scotch, and the pronunciation also resembles the English. But several words are evidently borrowed from the French, for example, *vilipend*, to abuse by opprobrious or railing language. This word is frequently used by Brantome, who wrote in the age of Mary Queen of Scots. The country people term the black

* A copy of this song, set to music, is inserted in the MS.

window fly, *matilot*, the French term for a sailor. The term has been suggested by this insect creeping or climbing on glass.

There are various customs evidently superstitious. Thus, the people never marry, but when the moon is growing. Were they to do so, when it is waning, the marriage bed would be barren. They observe the same rule in killing cows, firmly believing that, if they did otherwise, the beef would dwindle in the pot. Thursday is the day generally fixed for marriage. In going to sea, they turn the boat in the direction of the sun's course. To move in the opposite way, would be considered improper, if not dangerous. When the first lamb seen for the season is white, the omen is fortunate: and the appearance of a black lamb is unlucky.

The people, in general, are peaceful, temperate, and industrious. The poverty of the cottage is cheered by the domestic charities and social affections. In the faithful discharge of their duties, as husbands, wives, parents, and children, they are unrivalled. To the indigent poor, the sick, the lame, the blind, the infirm, they cheerfully give what they can spare. Any individual deficient in those respects, would be viewed by his neighbour with hatred and contempt: consequently, cases of this nature seldom or never occur.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Though there is almost every variety of soil in Lady Parish, what generally prevails is sand, or a mixture of earth and sand. The soil is productive, and, in favoured seasons, considerable quantities of bear and meal are exported. The precise quantity cannot be ascertained, because no farmer will give explicit information on this subject, from an apprehension that, if the truth were fully known, his rent might be raised. But an approximation to the truth may be obtained. Several years ago I procured from the custom-house an account of the quantities of bear, meal, and malt exported coastwise from Orkney for a course of years. This account it may not be improper here to insert.

Account of grain and meal carried coastwise from Orkney in the following years:—

Years.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1790,	2880	315
1795,	4970	1552
1800,	2430	667
1805,	2984	80
1810,	272	
1815,	4399	952

Years.	Oats. Qrs.	Malt. Bush.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1820,	160 197	144	4710	2219

Taking the population of Lady Parish, as a thirty-fifth part of that of Orkney, we have the following results of grain and malt carried coastwise from this parish in the years specified.

Years.	Oats. Qrs.	Malt. Bush.	Bear. Qrs.	Oatmeal. Bolls.
1790,			82 $\frac{3}{4}$	9
1795,			142	41 $\frac{1}{2}$
1800,			69 $\frac{3}{4}$	19 $\frac{3}{8}$
1805,			83 $\frac{3}{8}$	2 $\frac{7}{8}$
1810,			73 $\frac{1}{2}$	
1815,			125 $\frac{1}{4}$	27 $\frac{1}{2}$
1820,	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ 53 $\frac{3}{4}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	134 $\frac{1}{2}$	69 $\frac{1}{2}$

It is supposed that about two-thirds of the parish are in arable land and good natural pasture, and the other third waste and covered with heath.

For at least thirty or forty years past, there has been an inclination in every farmer who had the opportunity, to reclaim land from the waste. Before that period, it was considered as impracticable; but the example of a few individuals who had the fortitude to depart from established custom, showed that the innovation not only was safe, but might even be attempted with advantage. In all probability, after a few years, there will be no waste ground in the parish; and in the course of time, every acre may be brought into a state of garden cultivation.

There are two modes of reclaiming the waste,—*First*, about or after Martinmas, when the ground is soaked with rain, it is ploughed and exposed to the frosts of winter, and the heat of the succeeding summer. In spring of the next year, ware, dung, or other manure is laid on; the ground is broken and made smooth with the harrow and roller; and in the last place, cross-ploughed and sown with oats. In the *second* plan, or lazy bed, the ground, after being spread with horse or cow dung, is planted with potatoes. The lazy bed now mentioned is perhaps the most effectual way of bringing waste ground to a state of cultivation; for in the season succeeding the crop of potatoes, oats or bear may be sown with or without manure, as suits the convenience of the farmer.

I shall now describe the rural policy of the parish; and the description will, in general, apply to the whole island of Sanday, or

more properly speaking, to the portion of Orkney termed the North Isles. One very large farm, the people are divided into three classes; *first*, house-servants dwelling with the farmer, and having a monied fee; *second*, boll-men; *third*, cottagers or cottars. Both the second and third classes are scattered through the farm, in situations most convenient for the farmer. In winter and spring, the boll-man has a monthly allowance of grain and oatmeal, both for wages and food. He is a daily servant till the end of May, when he works in the kelp at a stipulated price per ton, the profit depending on his own industry. Both cottagers and boll-men shear in harvest, and are paid by a portion of land termed a harvest fee. Through the whole parish, each cottager and boll-man can maintain, summer and winter, a milking cow and a horse; and there are instances of several keeping four cows and two horses.

The one-stilted plough was in general use, in my recollection; and, though a fertile subject of ridicule, was the ancient plough of Rome, Egypt, and even England. Though it did the work with sufficient accuracy, still it was an inconvenient instrument, as it required four horses and a driver. The rise of fees, and the horse-tax in the Revolutionary war with France, rendered economy an object of imperious necessity with every farmer; and, therefore, the improved mode of ploughing with two horses, without a driver, was introduced in an early period of the war, and soon became general.

Sea-ware or weed, from its abundance, and the ease with which it can be carried to the land, is used as manure, in preference to compost dung hills. No manure acts more speedily on the soil, or gives a cleaner and more abundant crop. It has been said, that compost dung-hills would give bear of a superior quality,—but if the quantity was not also greater, we would gain no compensation for the additional expense of time and labour. Our crops of bear are as clean as those in any county of Scotland. The wild mustard prevails in our oats, for it seems to be a hardy weed, which has hitherto set the skill of the farmer at defiance, and abounds in every county of Scotland and England, and in every province of France. Careful cleaning of the seed, and extending the drill husbandry to bear and oats, might probably extirpate this and other noxious weeds.

The drill husbandry in potatoes and turnips, prevails in every soil adapted to these useful vegetables. The manure generally used for both, is horse or cow dung; but in light sandy soils, rot-

ten ware has been found an excellent manure for turnip. Since the general use of turnip, our black-cattle have improved in quality; and farmers have also discovered, that it is better to have an under than an over stock, formerly the great error in this country.

The sea-ware was usually carried to the land in baskets, (termed creels) on the backs of horses, to the great injury of the health of this noble animal. These creels, pressing on the ribs of the horse, created internal and incurable disorders. It was liable also to objection in point of economy, as a great number of small horses was required; but the general use of carts has nearly abolished the practice.

Until very lately the longest period for which even large farms were let, was nineteen years; but the greater number of farmers in our parish are, at this moment, tenants at will. While this narrow policy prevails, there can be no lasting substantial improvement. For what individual, removed a single step from insanity, will risk his capital on improvements from which he has no certainty of profit? It is pleasing, however, to reflect that one heritor has lately granted several leases of nineteen years; and there is every reason to hope, that the practice will become general.

What is termed steelbow once existed; but the practice is fast wearing out. It may be thus described: A certain value in horses, ploughs, carts, harrows, and other farming utensils is delivered to the tenant, who must, at the end of his lease, leave on the farm the same value. The dwelling-houses, cottages, and parks, are also valued by men mutually chosen;—the tenant is paid for all ameliorations, and is charged for all deteriorations. The term of entry is Martinmas, and the whole crop, (fodder, seed, and servant's bolls excepted,) is the property of the outgoing tenant. The incoming tenant is bound, not only to thrash the whole crop, with the exceptions already stated, to the outgoing tenant, but also to dry his oats, and convert them into meal. This practice, founded on wisdom and justice, is beneficial to both parties. Were it abolished, the incoming tenant could not lay down the crop for want of fodder, nor could the outgoing tenant convert his crop into meal, without barn, kiln, and other conveniences in the possession of the incoming tenant.

It has been supposed that steelbow is pernicious, by inducing men of no capital to take farms. In an early period, steelbow might have been equal, or nearly equal to the value of stocking required for the farm. But money has been so much depreciat-

ed, that the value of house and farming utensils required in steel-bow, is so mere a trifle in comparison of the value of the whole stocking actually necessary, that it can afford no temptation to any farmer to compete. The practice, therefore, does neither good nor harm.

On the mode of farming I have only further to add, that it is the practice of our farmers to begin sowing as early as possible on sandy soils. Accordingly, oat-seed commences about the 1st of February, old style, that is the 12th of February, new style. Oats are therefore sown from the 1st of February to the middle or end of March,—as our farmers are of opinion that it cannot be sown too early, especially in dry and sandy soils. In such soils, they generally sow in furrow, or, in other words, sow first, and plough down the seed, to protect it from sand blowing.

The gross rent of Lady parish is as follows :

Rent in bear, 1338 meils, at 6s. 8d. per meil,	L.446	0	0
Do. in oatmeal, 28 bolls, at 16s. per boll,	22	8	0
Do. in kelp, 130 tons, at L.4 per ton,	520	0	0
Do. paid in cash,	1214	12	0

L. 2208 0 0

Harvest generally begins in the first or second week of September, and ends about the middle of October, when the crop is carried to the barn-yard. We do not put the sheaves in stooks, as in the south country, but in miniature stacks, termed here skrews. When the sheaves are large, a threave is generally put in each skrew; but if they are of a moderate size, a threave and a half. Our farmers are of opinion that this mode is preferable to stooking, by protecting the grain from rain, and exposing it to the wind, so that it is thoroughly dried, before it is conveyed to the corn-yard.

The number of carts in Lady parish is 118. It is a remarkable fact, that, at the date of the old Statistical Account of Sanday, the whole island contained only 36 carts; there are now, therefore, 82 more carts in Lady parish than were, at that period, in all the three parishes which composed our island.

The number of ploughs is 83. For each of these, three horses may be allowed, two to till, and one to harrow,—making a total of 249,—an amount rather under, than above the truth.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

This parish, as already mentioned, contains a church termed Lady Kirk. Some years ago, it was rebuilt, and is now large, and

in every respect well adapted for the accommodation of a numerous congregation.

Poor.—The parish funds for the poor proceed from the following sources: *1st*, L.5, a yearly donation, from Mr Traill of Hobbister; *2dly*, Marriage money, 2s. 6d. for each marriage, of which 10d. goes to the clerk and officer, and 1s. 8d. to the poor; *3dly*, 1s. 2d. for the use of the mortcloth in burying; *4thly* and *lastly*, the collections on Sabbath. On an average of three years, the total amount does not exceed L.9, 17s. yearly. From this deduct fees to the clerk and officer, and there remains for distribution, L.7, 3s. The precentor, or reader, as he is generally termed, receives and has received, from time immemorial, nine meils of bear on the bear pundlar, four settings oatmeal, and twelve merks of butter.

Education.—There is in Sellibister, one of the districts of this parish, a school under the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; salary, L. 15 Sterling; reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping are taught. There is also a parochial school common to all the three parishes of Sanday, with a commodious house, and a salary of L. 46, 10s. The school-house is large, well-aired, and well-lighted. Besides reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping, the elements of mathematics, land-measuring, and Latin, are taught. The situation has hitherto been occupied by able and well-qualified teachers.

Light-house.—A light-house was erected on the Start, in the year 1802, and lighted in 1806. It is 100 feet in height, and revolves once in two minutes.

Since its erection, very few vessels have been either wrecked or stranded on our coast. Formerly, three or four vessels were yearly wrecked. Our coast is so low, that mariners are entangled, before aware of the danger. But the same circumstance which is fatal to the vessel, proves, in general, the safety of the crew.

July 1841.