

UNITED PARISHES OF STRONSAY AND EDAY.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

THE REV. JOHN SIMPSON, MINISTER.*

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Situation, Extent, &c.—STRONSAY is situated in the south-eastern parts of the North Isles of Orkney, having the German Ocean on its east side; the Stronsay Frith, by which it is separated from Shapinshay, on its west side; and Sanday Sound, separating it from the Island of Sanday, on the north side. Its extreme length is 7 British miles, and its extreme breadth $5\frac{1}{2}$. But, as it is of an irregular shape, being greatly indented with bays, it contains, including its adjacent holms, only 14 square miles, or 8960 imperial acres.

Name.—Dr Barry, in his History of Orkney, gives the following account of the etymology of Stronsay. “From an inspection of the map, it appears to be not only curiously indented, but almost cut into three distinct islands, which were formerly so many separate parishes, and this intersection has probably given rise to the name conferred on it by the ancients of the Isle of Strands or Stronsay.” More probably, the name is derived from the word *strom*, which signifies a current. And this epithet is not inapplicable, as Stronsay is swept on all sides by peculiarly rapid tides.

* Drawn up by the Rev. David Rintoul, Missionary Minister in Eday.

Topography.—Stronsay has eight principal headlands and promontories. These are the following: Towards the north, Linksness and Huipness; towards the east, Griceness, Odness, and Burrowhead; and towards the south, Lambhead, Torness, and Rousholmhead. The principal bays are, Mill Bay, on the east side; Holland's Bay, on the south side; and Evigan Bay, on the west side. All the headlands are low, except Burrowhead and Rousholmhead, which consist of bold and elevated rocks. The three bays terminate in a sandy beach. There are two excellent harbours, each having two entrances, namely, Linga Sound, on the west side, protected by the small island of Lingholm; and Papa Sound, on the north-east side, protected by the small island of Papa Stronsay.

Stronsay is of moderate elevation. There is, however, a ridge, running almost continuous from north to south, considerably higher than the rest.

There are several small islands connected with Stronsay. These are Papa Stronsay and Lingholm, already mentioned, as also the two holms of Huip, near the shore, on the north side, and the Holm of Auskerry, about three miles to the south.

The three last holms contain only pasture grounds, and are uninhabited. Lingholm has one family dwelling on it, and a small portion of it is under cultivation. Papa Stronsay, by far the most valuable of these small islands, is about one mile in length, and one-half mile in breadth. It contains several families, and is very pleasant and fertile.

Eday lies about the middle of the North Isles of Orkney, towards the north-west from Stronsay, and separated from it by the frith called Eday Sound, about four miles broad. It is about seven and a-half miles in length and three in breadth, having an area, including Pharey and the holms, of about eleven square miles.

The name of this island has been derived, by some writers, from the eddies produced by the rapid tides that wash its shores. Others, however, have derived it from the word heath, and in proof of this, they refer to records some centuries back, in which Eday is written Etha. If this latter derivation be correct, it may be observed, that the name is strikingly descriptive of the character of the island, as heath covers the greater proportion of its surface.

The principal headlands in Eday are, Veness, towards the south-east; Warness, towards the south-west; Fersness, towards

the west; and Redhead, a high promontory of red granite, towards the north. There are several bays about Eday, in which vessels can anchor occasionally; and there are two excellent harbours, viz. that of Fersness, on the west, and Calf Sound, on the north, each of which has two entrances.

Eday, though like Stronsay, of moderate elevation, yet it has a ridge considerably higher than Stronsay, running (with the exception of a short interruption towards the middle), from north to south.

There are six small islands connected with Eday. These are, the Island of Pharey, with its holms, which protect the harbour of Fersness, on the west, and contains sixty-five inhabitants; the small red holm, between this island and the Redhead; the Calf of Eday, which protects the harbour of Calf Sound; and the two green holms off the south-west of Eday. All these, with the exception of Pharey, are pasture holms, and uninhabited.

There are several fresh-water lakes in each of these parishes, particularly one in Stronsay, nearly a circle, and somewhat less than a mile in diameter.

Mineralogy.—The soil, in general, rests upon a bed of grey slate, dipping towards the west at an angle of about thirty degrees with the horizon. There is some sandstone about the north-west shore of Stronsay. And in various parts of Eday, particularly towards the north-western part of the island, this stone abounds. The stone from this quarry has been much used for building in Kirkwall; and it may be observed, that some of it was sent a few years ago for this purpose to London. In these parishes, the soil which predominates, is that of clay, sand, gravel, loam, and moss, the last particularly in the parish of Eday. In Stronsay, marl has been found, which has been used as manure.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—The principal proprietors of these parishes are, Mr Balfour of Trenaby; Mr Urquhart of Elsness; Mr Heddle of Melsetter; Mr M'Kenzie of Groundwater; Mr Stewart of Brugh; and Mr Laing of Papdale, brother and representative of the late Malcolm Laing, Esq. Advocate, the author of the *History of Scotland*. It may be noticed, that a large part of that work is understood to have been written, while the author was residing in the mansion-house of Carrick, in Eday. Carrick was erected into a burgh of barony during the reign of Charles the First. And it may be remarked, that the House of Carrick was

the residence of Mr Fea of Clestran, who, about a century ago, dexterously captured the pirate Gow, who had come with his vessel to Calf Sound, and was thus the means of arresting him in his wicked career, and giving him over to merited punishment. The late Sir Walter Scott, as is generally believed, has taken this incident as the groundwork of his novel, entitled the Pirate.

Antiquities.—There are several monuments of antiquity in these parishes. Towards the north end of Eday, there is a standing-stone in the midst of a lonely heath. It is about 17 feet in height; and although a remarkable object, tradition says nothing as to its origin. There are various remains of ancient places of worship, and likewise places for interment, in these islands. Of the latter there is one deserving of more particular notice, at Housebay, in the south end of Stronsay. In this burying-ground, a number of bodies have been laid along side of each other, and separated from the rest by stones placed on edge at the foot and head, and on each side. It does not appear that wooden coffins had been used; but, by way of substitute, a rude stone box had been formed for the head of the corpse, composed of stones set on edge, and one laid over them as a lid covering the face. The rest of the body, it seems, had been covered only with the bare earth.

There are various Picts' houses of considerable size in the southern parts of Stronsay. One of these is of greater magnitude than the rest, situated on the neck of land connecting Lambhead with Stronsay. It contains several apartments, which, by their smallness and rude construction, show that the inhabitants must have made little progress in the arts of civilized life.

Below this ruin, towards the west, there are the remains of an ancient pier, formed, as is supposed by some, for the protection of vessels. It is now in such a state of dilapidation, that it is impossible to say when it was made. Its appearance is that of a mound of stones, extending to about 90 feet in breadth, and running into the sea in a westerly direction about 800 feet, and then turning southward in a direction towards the extreme point of Lambhead about the same length,—leaving, however, at the extremity, a sufficiently capacious entrance for vessels. And although, at this part, there is no breakwater, it may have been protected in another way, as a strong current runs continually past the head and across the entrance, so that the waves would be broken in passing it. The lower division of the pier (if such it was) has suffered most from the violence of the waves, as it is now covered over at high

tide, while the greater part of the upper division still appears above water.

It may be observed, that this ancient pier has been scarcely, if at all, mentioned by former writers. And tradition says nothing as to which of the ancient proprietors of these islands it is to be referred to.

III.—POPULATION.

There are no records of an early date, from which to give any account of the ancient population of these parishes. In 1781, they contained 1494; and in 1831, 1827 souls. This increase is to be ascribed to the more extended cultivation of ground formerly lying in a state of nature, and also to the improvements in the fishing of lobsters, cod, and herrings.

The people in these parishes enjoy a competent share of the comforts of life. Besides meal and potatoes, most of them have some butcher-meat during the year. But their principal animal food is fish, such as cod, especially herrings in their season, as well as cooths and sillocks during two-thirds of the year.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—As there is no proper survey of these parishes, it is impossible to specify the relative proportions of ground in different conditions. As to Stronsay, however, it is supposed that about one-third is arable, one-third green pasture attached to the various farms, and one-third heath,—most of which is undivided common. And as to Eday, about 1000 acres are arable, 720 green pasture, and the remainder is heath, but not undivided common.

The kinds of grain commonly raised are bear or bigg, and grey or black oats, the latter having awns as well as the bear. Potatoes also are everywhere cultivated. Various farmers have raised white oats and pease, as well as turnips and artificial grasses. And Mr Laing of Papdale, in addition to these, has raised barley with much success.

From time immemorial, the ordinary mode of cultivation in Orkney has been to sow bear and grey oats, alternately in the same field. And the ground is enabled to hold out with this severe rotation, by the great profusion of sea-weed which is everywhere found, and assists in manuring for the bear,—the ground seldom receiving any manure for the oats.

A great proportion of the horses, cattle, and sheep, are of the small Orkney breed. But many excellent horses and cattle have been introduced from Angus-shire, and other southern counties;

and Mr Laing of Papdale has shown, on a considerable scale, that Cheviot and Merino sheep, or a mixture of them, thrive very well.

The crops of grey oats and bigg, in favourable seasons, have a considerable appearance on the ground; and, considering the mode of culture, are fully as good (particularly the bigg) as can be expected. It may be observed, however, that here it is not easy to specify the returns from a particular field, as the farmers are not in the practice of computing the produce by the acre. When the ground is in good condition, the crop of white oats and barley has an admirable appearance; and, when the filling season is favourable, approaches to the excellency of the same crops in the southern parts of Scotland. The soil and climate are extremely well adapted for the culture of turnips, potatoes, and artificial grasses, such as clover and rye-grass; and very fine crops, particularly of the two first, have been raised in this quarter.

Of the great farms, renting from L. 100 to L. 200 per annum, the leases are generally of nineteen years duration. Of farms of more moderate extent, the leases are in some cases shorter. And most of the smallest farms were let from year to year, until about two years ago, when the proprietor of Eday let these for the same period of nineteen years as the rest of his farms. It may be observed, as a peculiarity of these islands, that the farms are let for a gross rent, and not by the acre. Most of the farms have a considerable proportion of pasture ground attached to the arable.

Several of the dwelling-houses on the farms are rather unsuitable; but not a few of them, particularly on the largest farms, are comfortable dwellings, consisting of more stories than one. The same distinction applies to the offices on the farms, the smaller ones being rather mean, while the largest farms have offices spacious and substantial. They are, in general, erected by the proprietors; and for the most part are in a state of progressive improvement. Three of the farmers in these parishes have thrashing-machines turned by horses. Most of the ground is unenclosed; but on several of the largest farms, some substantial stone dikes have, within the last few years, been erected.

The greatest part of Eday being covered with moss, presents a great obstacle to agricultural improvement, though it is to be allowed that this is of the greatest benefit to the inhabitants for fuel, and contributes a considerable share of the same important commodity to the inhabitants of several of the adjacent islands,

and some cargoes have been sent to the Frith of Forth within the last two years. Almost the whole of Stronsay, with the exception of about a square mile covered with moss, in the south-western part of the island, might, without much difficulty, be brought under cultivation. Some parts are fertile and other parts are poor, but it is all free of stones and wet, while there are no places so steep as to prevent the plough passing along. The desiderata are skill, industry, and capital, along with the division of that part which is now common. It must be observed, however, that, of late years, considerable progress has been made in extending cultivation over waste ground in these parishes; and one proprietor, Mr Laing of Papdale, stands prominently forward in this species of improvement, having, in the course of two years, made the plough to pass over more than 100 acres of barren moor. It is a curious fact, that ground which has been yielding grey oats and bigg alternately, for a series of years, refuses to yield white oats, and this, too, even though the ground is of excellent quality. The cause of this may be, the quantity of shell sand, which mixes more or less with the sea-weed, that has been used as manure for centuries, destroying the adhesion of the soil. But, whether this be the real cause or not, it is certain that white oats grow in contiguous ground that has been newly cultivated.

The ease with which sea-weed can be procured as manure, by presenting a temptation to the farmer to have always a grain crop upon his ground, may be supposed to have much impeded the introduction of the improved mode of agriculture. Another obstacle which may be mentioned, is the manufacture of kelp from sea-weed, which, for nearly a century, has occupied a great proportion of the labouring part of the community, during the summer season, and thereby withdrawn the attention of all classes from agriculture. The ardour for kelp making is, however, much abated, in consequence of the little remuneration which it brings, the price having fallen from L.15, or even L.20 per ton, to L.5.

Fisheries.—The fishing, which is of most importance to the great body of the inhabitants of these parishes, is the sillock or cooth. Besides furnishing the people with a considerable part of their food during three-fourths of the year, the taking of this fish, which is both with the bait and fly, affords to old and young a source of interesting amusement, more especially during the pleasant evenings in summer. The lobster-fishing has been carried on here,

for about half a century. This fish is caught during the months of April, May, and June, a little without the low water-mark, by means of small boats with two men in each, employing for this purpose small nets with flesh or fish used as bait. The lobsters, when caught, are transferred to chests floating in some sheltered place, from which they are taken generally every week, and conveyed to London by welled smacks. The cod-fishing for export commenced in the year 1828, and is prosecuted in the neighbouring seas with small sloops, for the most part decked. The herring-fishing was begun here by Mr David Drever, farmer at Huip, in the year 1814. And soon after, Mr Laing of Papdale, in connection with a company in London, afforded such encouragement, that the harbour of Papa Sound, admirably fitted for this purpose, and in the vicinity of the finest fishing-ground, soon became the great resort of boats from the North Isles, and indeed from all Orkney. Mr Laing, the proprietor of the adjacent ground, has built a considerable village for the accommodation of fishermen who have come from distant places to reside here, and likewise a commodious pier for the curing and loading of the fish. The herring-fishing commences towards the end of July, and continues for six or eight weeks, during which time the number of boats employed has been sometimes about 400, and most of these are manned by four, and some by five men. There are also anchored in Papa Sound from 25 to 35 vessels, (sloops and brigs,) mostly from the south-west of Scotland, attending on the fishing. And in addition to coopers and others, there are several hundreds of women employed in cleaning and salting the fish. Numbers of persons also resort to the station to traffic with the curers and fishers, while visitors come to witness the busy scene, so that the fishing-season is a memorable part of the year in the parish of Stronsay. It may be added, that it is difficult to specify the average quantity caught by one boat, but it varies from the smallest number of crans to about 200. A common number is from 35 to 70.

It may be added, that shoals of small whales occasionally run aground on these islands, or when seen off the coast are hunted ashore by the people with boats. One of these shoals, fifty in number, came ashore at Rousholm, in November 1834, which yielded oil to the amount of about L.100. And in the beginning of the present year, another shoal, 287 in number, came ashore on the west side of Eday, which yielded a return of L.398. These

fishes, however, are only rare visitors, and their return cannot be calculated on.

Produce.—The average gross amount of raw produce raised yearly in Stronsay, including the holms connected therewith :

4214 bolls of bear of 6 bushels, at 13s. 6d. per bush.,	L.2844	9	0	
570 do. of white oats of do., at 12s. per bushel,		342	0	0
5232 do. of black oats of do., at 6s. 6d. per do.,		2223	12	0
53 do. of pease of do., at L.1,		53	0	0
<hr/>				
10069—total number of bolls of grain,				L. 5463 1 0
3992 barrels of potatoes, at 2s. 3d. per barrel,	L.449	2	0	
81000 cabbages, at 2s. 6d. per 100		101	5	0
59½ acres of turnips, at L.4, 10s. per acre,		267	15	0
9800 stones of hay, at 6d. per stone,		245	0	0
<hr/>				
				1063 2 0

Cattle and horses.

110 large horses, at L.3 per head, for grass & fodder,	L.390	0	0	
189 small do. at L.1, 5s. per head, for do. do.		236	5	0
137 oxen, at L.1, 10s. per head, for do. do.		205	10	0
397 cows, at L.1, 10s. per head, for do. do.		595	10	0
527 stirks, at 15s. per head for do. do.		395	5	0
<hr/>				
1360—total number of cattle and horses,				1762 10 0
310 swine for keeping, at 5s. per head,				77 10 0
1555 sheep, native breed, for keeping, at 1s. 6d.				116 12 6
3200 rabbits yearly,—value for skins and carcase, 6d.				80 0 0

Kelp.

215½ tons, at L.5 per ton,				1077 10 0
----------------------------	--	--	--	-----------

Lobsters.

2900 lobsters, at 3d. each,				36 5 0
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--------

Herrings and cod.

2300 barrels of herring, at 10s. per barrel,	L.1400	0	0	
4 tons of cod fish, at L.12, 12s.		50	8	0
<hr/>				
				1450 8 0
<hr/>				
Total value,				L.11,126 18 6

Account of Produce, &c. in the Parish of Eday, including Pharey and Holms.

	Bears, bolts.	Oats, bolts.	Beans, bolts.	Potatoes, barrels.	Turnips, acres.	Cabbages, hundreds.	Hay, stoncs.	Cows.	Oxen.	Sticks.	Horses.	Sheep, Cheviot.	Sheep, native.	Sheep, High-land.	Swine.	Arable land, acres.	Improved last 3 years, acres.	Green pasture, acres.	Habbits, No.	Fens sold, fathoms.	Tons of kelp.	No. of hands employed.	No. of lobster boats.	No. of linnis employed.	No. of sloops for coals.	No. of hands employed.	Herring boats.	No. of hands employed.	
Greentoft,	125	300	10	200	15	600	1600	15	4	30	10																		
Stenaquoy,	100	230		120	6	600	400	9	4	16	6																		
Carrick,	40	75		80	4	400	200	6	2	12	4	300																	
Shoal,	68	140		63	2	600		6	2	16	4																		
Musgar,	33	40		35	2	100	45	5	2	15	2			180															
10 small farms,	170	185		165	2	8000	35	34	10	16	18		100		25	75	9	25		200									
11 do.	145	160		150	1	8000		30	6	16	17		80		22	61	2	24	100										
49 do.	445	450		545	2	34,300		120	30	98	80		60		70	180	16	90	60										
68 do.	406	510		612	2	30,000		70	10	80	40				66	204	12	102											
Holm of Eday & Green Holm,										4			480						120	1120	200	6	14						
Ile of Pharey,	80	100		90		6400		12	7	10	14		200		17	40		60		257	148	168	17	34	2	14	24	98	
	1616	2220	10	2042	36	90,100	2280	367	79	317	194	300	920	180	229	879	126	730	1080	466	161	212	19	36	2	14	28	104	

Note.—The rent of arable land and green pasture ground averages from 10s. to 16s. per acre; but to all the arable land there is attached a right of pasture on the common hill, and peats free.

The average gross amount of raw produce raised yearly in Eday, including Pharey and the Holms.

1616 bolls of bear, of 6 bushels to a boll, at 18s. per boll,	L.1050	8	0
785 bolls of white oats, do. to do. at 11s. 6d. per boll,	451	7	6
1445 bolls of black oats, do. to do. at 8s. per do.	578	0	0
10 bolls of beans, do. to do. at L.1,	10	0	0
2042 barrels of potatoes, at 2s. 3d. per barrel,	229	14	6
36 acres of turnips, at L.4, 10s. per acre,	162	0	0
2280 stoncs of hay, at 6d. per stone,	57	0	0
90100 cabbages, at L.1, 5s. per 1000,	112	12	6
307 cows for grass and fodder, at L.1, 10s. per head,	460	10	0
79 oxen for do. do. at L.1, 10s. per head,	118	10	0
317 stirks for do. do. at 15s. per do.	237	15	0
25 horses, (large size,) for grass and fodder, at L.3 per head,	75	0	0
169 horses, (small size,) for do. do. at L.1, 5s. per do.	211	5	0
300 Cheviot sheep, grass for the year, at 6s. 6d.	97	10	0
180 Highland sheep, grass for the year, at 3s. 6d. per head.	31	10	0
920 native sheep, do. do. at 1s. 9d. per do.	80	10	0
223 Swine, at 4s. each,	44	12	0
1630 rabbits skin and carcase, at 5½d each,	37	7	1
466 fathoms of peats sold yearly from the island, at 6s. per fathom.	139	16	0
1560 barrels of herrings, at	L.780	0	0
5400 lobsters, at 3d. each,	67	10	0
8 tons of dried cod fish, at L.12 per ton,	96	0	0
		943	10
161 tons of kelp, at L.5 per ton,		805	0
		<hr/>	
		L.5933	17
			7

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Ecclesiastical State.—There are two parish churches, both in central parts in these islands. The one in Stronsay was built in 1821, the other in Eday, in 1816. Besides these, there are two places of worship connected with the United Secession. That in Stronsay was built in 1800, and that in Eday, in 1829. The parish minister in Stronsay, until about a year and a half ago, was wont to cross the Sound (in breadth four miles) every fourth Sabbath, to preach in Eday. But in the spring of 1834, the Committee of the General Assembly for managing the Royal Bounty appointed the present missionary minister to officiate in Eday; and since that time, the parish of Eday has enjoyed the same benefit of public worship, every Sabbath, as Stronsay, which has been also benefited by this appointment, as the minister of Stronsay can devote all his attention to that parish. Since the appointment of a minister to Eday, a manse has been erected for his residence, partly by collections and subscriptions in Orkney and in the south; and partly by the assistance of the present incumbent in Stronsay.

Education.—In these parishes, there are three principal schools. Two in Stronsay, and one in Eday. Of those in Stronsay, one is the parochial school, and the other is supported by the Society for

Propagating Christian Knowledge. This school was established by the Society in the year 1782. And it may be worthy of being noticed, that since that time it has continued in the same family, being taught first by the father and afterwards by the present teacher, his son, who is also an elder in the parish church. The school in the parish of Eday is supported by the Committee of the General Assembly for Promoting of Education in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. It was established in the year 1827. Previous to this time, there was no regular school in the parish of Eday. Although the people in Eday were thus so long without any public school, it should be observed that the children were not altogether neglected. They were for the most part taught to read the Scriptures by their parents or some of the neighbours. The Assembly's school, however, has been of great benefit to the parish, as it has spread education among all the families; taught the young to read with more accuracy than formerly, as well as taught them branches to which they could not have access before.

The parish schoolmaster in Stronsay receives a salary of L. 25, 13s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; add to which the fees of scholars, L. 3; total, L. 28, 13s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. The teacher of the Society's school in Stronsay receives a salary of L. 15; add to which, the fees of scholars, L. 1, 10s.; total, L. 16, 10s. The teacher of the General Assembly's school in Eday receives a salary of L. 25; add to which, the fees of scholars, L. 5; total, L. 30.

The average number of children attending these schools in Stronsay, during the summer, are 48; during the winter, 65. The average number attending the Assembly's school in Eday, during summer, are 24; during winter, 36. The fees are from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per quarter.

Besides these schools, there are other casual schools, in more remote parts of the islands, taught by persons who earn their livelihood, partly from the fees of the children, and partly from following some other occupation.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid in these parishes, is about 27. They receive from 1s. to 15s. during the year. The only fund for relief of the poor is that which is procured by weekly collections in the parish churches on Sabbath, with the exception of a donation of L. 2, 2s., per annum, from Mr Balfour of Trenaby for the poor of Stronsay. The collections amount to about L. 8, 5s. Sterling,

per annum. It may be observed, that, although there are many poor persons in these parishes, yet they are more able to find support for themselves here than in large towns. If they procure from their relatives or neighbours some meal and a few fish and potatoes, these are sufficient to satisfy their wants. And though very poor, they enjoy a measure of health and contentment. It may be remarked, that the people in these parishes are very charitable in bestowing help, in the manner referred to, on their poorer neighbours.

Inns, Alehouses, &c.—There are seven alehouses or inns in these parishes, and the bad effects of these houses are the same here as in other parts of the country.

Fuel.—The fuel in the parish of Eday consists wholly of peats, which are dug from the extensive moss that covers the greater part of the island. These peats are of the best sort, and when piled on the hearth make an excellent fire. The inhabitants of Eday, as has been noticed, have right to the free use of peats from the mosses, as a pendicle to their tenements. Several of the north isles of Orkney receive fuel from Eday. Boats containing parties of people to prepare their winter's supply, may be seen sailing from various quarters, in the beginning of summer, when the season for cutting the peats commences. They pay 6s. per fathom for them after they are cut and dried.* And the yearly rent accruing to the proprietor of Eday, for this commodity alone, is not less than L. 199, 16s. per annum. The inhabitants of Stronsay were wont, in former times, to dig their peats from the moss of Rothesholm, already referred to. This privilege, however, about fifty years ago, was denied them by the proprietor, and the question being brought before the Court of Session, it was decided in his favour. Mr Anderson, in his Account of these parishes in 1787, anticipated that this decision would “soon be found a great cause of diminishing the inhabitants.” The numbers, however, have considerably increased since that time, showing that a scarcity of fuel is too feeble a barrier to check population. The tenants in Rothesholm, and some other families, receive their peats, as formerly, from the moss. But most of the remaining families receive the little fuel they use from Eday, and the average expense to one family is about L. 1, 5s. yearly, to which may be added the expense of coal, as some of them use a considerable quantity.

* The measure above-mentioned is of much greater dimensions, than that usually known by the fathom. It contains 12 feet in length, 6 in breadth, and 6 in height.

July 1841.