

## PARISH OF FARR.

PRESBYTERY OF TONGUE, SYNOD OF SUTHERLAND AND  
CAITHNESS.

THE REV. DAVID MACKENZIE, MINISTER.

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### I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

*Name.*—THE parish appears to have been called Farr, for more than 400 years. The name is probably derived from the Gaelic word *Faire*, a watch or centinel; for, about half a mile north of the parish church is the ruin of a circular tower, or *Dunn*, the nearest to the sea-coast of a chain of these ancient buildings, extending for more than twenty-four miles into the interior. Not far from this Dunn, is the promontory called Farr Head, from which, in clear weather, there is a distinct view of that part of the northern ocean, which lies betwixt Orkney and Cape Wrath. From this promontory, a centinel or watch could easily discover vessels approaching the coast, and, during the period of invasions from Denmark and Orkney, could speedily communicate the necessary intelligence to the inhabitants of the interior, by means of the chain of towers, and such signals as were then in use. This, however, is only a conjecture as to the name of the parish, founded on the geographical relation of the place now called Farr to Strathnaver, where the principal chain of towers was erected, and which strath, in ancient times, was the most populous and most interesting part of the parish.

*Extent and Boundaries.*—The parish is about forty English miles long, from Baligil in the north-east to Muadale in the south-west; and varies from eight to twenty miles in breadth, the narrowest part being in the middle of Strathnaver. It is bounded on the north by the Northern Ocean; on the east, by the parish of Reay in Caithness; on the south, by the parishes of Kildonan and Lairg; and on the west, by the parish of Tongue. Its figure is irregular.

*Topographical Appearances.*—The principal mountain in the parish, and the highest in the county, is *Bein Chlibrig*. It is near

the south-west extremity, and not far from the Parliamentary road from Bonar Bridge to Tongue. Its height is 3200 feet above the level of the sea. Its form is conical, especially towards the summit, which is called "*Meall a' neuion*," that is, the summit of the Bird, probably from its being the chief residence of ptarmigan in the parish. Towards the sea-coast, to the north-east, on each side of Strathnaver, there are several hills, of various dimensions; but they are all far below the elevation of Chlibrig, and have nothing in their form or relative position deserving of notice. Near the coast, the low hills exhibit a greater quantity of bare rock, and are in general more precipitous.

The greatest quantity and extent of low flat land is in Strathnaver and Strathrathy in the interior; and in Armidale and Mains of Strathy on the sea-coast. There are several farms along the shore, in all of which there is a considerable extent of arable land; but the surface is uneven.

*Straths.*—The largest valleys are Strathnaver and Strathrathy. Strathnaver, a place from which the Noble family of Sutherland have one of their titles, is a beautiful valley, extending from the sea-coast, in a south-west direction,—a distance of about twenty-eight miles, including the ground along the river, the loch, and the Water of Mudale, beyond Lochnaver. Considering the extent of this strath, the beauty and variety of the scenery, which almost invariably attract the notice of the traveller of taste, and the richness of the pasture it everywhere produces, this valley is undoubtedly the finest and most interesting Highland strath in the whole county of Sutherland. Strathrathy stretches directly south from the sea-coast, a distance of twelve miles; it is about ten miles north-east of Strathnaver. Between these, along the sea-coast, are situated the valleys of Clachan, where the parish church and manse are built, Swordly, Kirtomy, and Armidale; but these are quite diminutive compared to those already described.

*Caves, &c.*—There are several caves, natural arches, and fissures, along the sea-coast, and a few caverns in the interior. The most interesting of the caves are in the Aird of Kirtomy, Strathy, and Strathy-point. The finest natural arch is near Farr. It is described in Pennant's Tour, and referred to in the former Statistical Account of this parish. The largest cavern in the interior is in *Carn a' Mhadi*, in Bein Chlibrig, noted in the traditional history of the parish as the retreat of a robber named Chisholm from In-

verness-shire, who, more than a hundred years ago, had taken shelter there, and for some time supported himself by the deer of Bein Chlibrig, and the flocks of the neighbouring tenants. Any farther description of the caves and caverns in this parish is considered unnecessary in this work.

*Bays, &c.*—There are about thirteen miles of sea-coast, from Naver Bay in the west to Baligil Burn in the east. With the exception of Kirtomy and Armidale, and a few more creeks where boats can land in moderate weather, the coast is either bold and dangerous to mariners, being composed of perpendicular or projecting rocks, from 20 to 200 feet high, against which the waves of the Northern Ocean break with awful fury; or there are shallow sands, on which heavy surges are almost invariably rolling. The bays are Naver, Farr, Kirtomy, Armidale, and Strathy. The principal headlands are, Airdniskich, Aird of Farr, Aird of Kirtomy, and Strathy Head. From this Head, the Lights of Cape Wrath and Dunnet Head are seen in clear weather.

*Climate.*—Considering the latitude of this parish, which is 58° 30' north, the temperature is on the whole mild; and there are no diseases prevalent that can be ascribed to any peculiarity of the climate.

*Hydrography.*—In every district, valley, mountain, and hill of this parish, there is an abundant supply of perennial springs of excellent water. So far as known to the writer, their chemical properties have not been ascertained; but it is evident many of them run on iron ore. The number of fresh-water lochs of various dimensions in the parish is very considerable; the largest of which are *Loch Naver*, *Loch Coir-na-fearn*, and *Loch Strathy*. But the most interesting of the whole is Loch Naver, in respect both of extent and scenery. It is 7 miles long, and about 1½ miles broad. Its depth is ascertained, by sounding, to be in some parts 30 fathoms. Its shore is in some places pebbly, in other parts rocky and sandy. It is richly supplied from the adjacent hills, mountains, marshes, and valley ground, with large tributary streams, especially the rivers Mudale and Strathvagasty, which enter the loch near the inn of Aultnaharve. The scenery around it is very interesting, having *Bein Chlibrig* at no great distance on the south; several low hills and abrupt rocks nearer its shore; its banks beautifully skirted with a variety of indigenous trees growing to a considerable height;—the distant hills of Kildonan to the south-east, and those of the Reay country to the west, appearing in their grandeur from certain

points in its vicinity. And there is an excellent road on the north side of the loch, from which the tourist can see the whole with ease and advantage.

The principal rivers in the parish are the Naver, the Borgie, and the Strathy. The Naver issues from the loch already described, near Achness, at which place it receives a large stream running from *Loch Coir-na-fearn*. From Achness it runs north-east, a distance of eighteen miles, until it enters the ocean at the farm of Airdniskech. Besides its supply from Loch Naver and Loch Coir-na-fearn, it receives a number of considerable streams in its course through the strath, so that, when flooded in winter, it is the largest river in the county. The Naver is not rapid in its course, the declivity of the strath being very gradual. The Strathy flows from the loch of that name, and from the adjacent hills and marshes; and is, when flooded, a large stream. The Borgie runs from Loch Loyal in the parish of Tongue; and is, in some parts of its course, the boundary line between this parish and Tongue. But its salmon-fishings have been for a long time the property of the Noble family of Sutherland. It enters the Northern Ocean within a mile of the Naver, at a place in the parish of Tongue called Torrisdale.

*Geology and Mineralogy.*—The rocks and stones in this parish, of which immense quantities are to be seen in every direction, especially along the coast, appear to be chiefly coarse granite, gneiss, and sandstone. In Kirtomy on the sea-coast, there is an extensive deposit of old red sandstone, mixed with conglomerate. At Strathy, there is a large quarry of white sandstone, which takes dressing by the chissel; and near it, a considerable extent of limestone, from which excellent lime is manufactured for the supply of the parishioners.

The most of the rocks and precipices along the shore exhibit a great variety of veins and fissures which cut across the strata, and greatly derange and alter them. But in many places on the coast and in the interior, the strata are distinctly and regularly arranged: and in such cases the inclination and dip are not many degrees from perpendicular. The most striking and marked exception is at Strathy, in the free and limestone quarries, where the strata are horizontal.

The soil along the coast, especially near the bays, is light and sandy; on the banks of the Naver and Strathy it is composed of sand, gravel, and moss; and in the interior, at the base of the

hills, and near the different lochs, except Loch Naver, the soil is a deep moss.

*Zoology.*—It is reported traditionally, that bears and wolves at one period existed in this parish. But this must have been when those extensive forests of fir grew in this country, the remains of which are still found deeply imbedded in moss, and are raised by the parishioners for roofing their houses, and other domestic purposes. The only species of animals which existed in comparatively modern times in the parish, but which have now disappeared, are goats. About forty years ago, they were numerous, and serviceable to the inhabitants; but, by the introduction of the sheep-farming system, they have been entirely exterminated.

The sheep-farmers rear the Cheviot or white-faced kind of sheep. The lotters have a breed of small Highland cattle; a few ponies of a similar description; and sheep of the black-faced kind.

On Bein Chlibrig, and the adjacent higher hills, there are considerable flocks of red deer. Hares and rabbits are found in the parish. Ptarmigan, black-cock, grouse, partridge, plover, and snipe, are numerous in the hills, moors, and inland glens. A great number of aquatic fowl frequent the sea-coast and fresh-water lakes; and the woods of Strathnaver are thronged by various classes of birds. The cuckoo, lapwing, and swallow pay their annual visits; and, so far as they escape the vigilance of game-keepers and vermin-destroyers—foxes, otters, wild cats, eagles, hawks, ravens, and carrion-crows, are to be found.

In the larger rivers and lakes, there is abundance of salmon; and in the lesser lochs and streams, trout are found in considerable quantities. There is a rich supply of cod, ling, haddock, and herring, in their season, on the sea-coast. Turbot and mackerel have been taken occasionally, and lobster is caught for the London market.

*Botany.*—The herbage of this parish is of a mixed character, varying according to the elevation of its mountains, hills, valleys, and shore ground: and, on the whole, the parish affords an interesting field for the botanist. If there be few rare plants, there is a rich profusion of those already well known in this country. The mountains, hills, and moors are generally covered with the common red heather, deer-hair, and a long tough grass, called Flying Bent. In the softer marshes, there are extensive plots of cotton-grass. With a trifling exception, all the trees in the parish are indigenous. Of these, there is a considerable variety,—such as the hazel or nut-tree, alder, roan-tree or mountain-ash, willows, and



birch. The alder tree grows to a considerable size on the banks of the Naver and *Loch Coir-na-fearn*; but the birch is the most abundant, and, on the banks of Loch Naver, the most flourishing wood in the parish.

## II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The only printed accounts of the ancient state of the parish, so far as known to the writer of this article, are to be found in Sir Robert Gordon's *History of the Earldom of Sutherland*, and in Mr Robert Mackay's *History of the House and Clan of Mackay*, published in 1829. Any manuscript documents tending to throw light on the ancient state of the parish, which might have been in the possession of heritors, or wadsetters, formerly occupying lands within its bounds, are supposed to be now in the archives of the Duke of Sutherland, the proprietor of the whole parish. The most accurate geographical description of the boundaries and localities of the parish is to be found in a map of the county, lately published by Mr Burnet, from a particular survey taken by order of the late Duke of Sutherland.

*Parochial Registers.*—The only parochial registers extant are a book in which the minutes of the kirk-session are kept; and another, in which births and marriages are recorded. The earliest entry in the first is in the year 1754; and in the second, in the year 1800.

*Antiquities.*—The antiquities of the parish consist of the remains of several circular towers or dunns, built of large undrest stones without mortar; a number of barrows or tumuli; a few erect stones in the form of obelisks; and the ruins of a castle built with mortar. The remains of the circular towers are in Strathnaver. The principal field of tumuli is about half a mile east from the parish church, close by the public road to Thurso. The finest erect stone is in the churchyard of Farr; and the ruin of the castle is on a small *peninsula* about a mile and a half north of the parish church. The traditions connected with the more ancient relics are imperfect. It is reported, that the circular towers were built and occupied by an ancient race called, in Gaelic, *Cruinnich*, from either of two Gaelic words, *cruinn*, round or circular; or *cruinnachadh*, a gathering. The tumuli indicate fields of battle, on which foreigners, especially Danes, and the native inhabitants, had bloody conflicts; and the erect stones are said to point out the places where chieftains have been interred. This is very probable, from the circumstance of these stones being seen not far from the fields of tumuli; as is the

case at Dalharrold in Strathnaver, and in the church-yard of Farr. The stone in the latter place has been evidently brought there either from a foreign country, or from some other part of this kingdom. It is very hard, but differs entirely in its appearance and quality from any of the rocks in this neighbourhood. It is about twelve feet long, more than five feet being above ground, and as many under it. There is a regular figure carved on the west front of it, evidently hieroglyphic.—The ancient castle is supposed to have been the residence of the Mackays of Farr previous to their being created barons, and obtaining the title of Lord Reay. It is not known by whom it was built. \*

### III.—POPULATION.

From the remains of antiquity mentioned under the former head, it is evident there must have been a considerable population, either occasionally resorting to this parish, or permanently residing within it, at a very remote period of the history of Scotland. About 400 years ago, the Mackays began to make themselves conspicu-

\* Connected with the antiquities of the parish, the writer may mention a few particulars regarding a *loch* in Strathnaver, about six miles from the church,—to which superstition has ascribed wonderful healing virtues. The time at which this *loch* came to be in repute with the sick cannot now be ascertained. It must, however, have been at a period of the history of this country when superstition had a firm hold of the minds of all classes of the community. The tradition as to the origin of its healing virtues is briefly as follows: A woman, either from Ross-shire or Inverness-shire, came to the heights of Strathnaver, pretending to cure diseases by means of water into which she had previously thrown some pebbles, which she carried about with her. In her progress down the strath, towards the coast, a man in whose house she lodged wished to possess himself of the pebbles: but discovering his design, she escaped, and he pursued. Finding, at the *loch* referred to, that she could not escape her pursuer any longer, she threw the pebbles into the *loch*, exclaiming in Gaelic, *mo-nar*, that is shame, or my shame. From this exclamation the *loch* received the name which it still retains, "*Loch-mo-nar*," and the pebbles are supposed to have imparted to it its healing efficacy. There are only four days in the year, on which its supposed cures can be effected. These are the first Monday, old style, of February, May, August, and November. During February and November, no one visits it; but in May and August, numbers from Sutherland, Caithness, Ross-shire, and even from Inverness-shire and Orkney, come to this far-famed *loch*. The ceremonies through which the patients have to go are the following:—They must all be at the *loch* side about twelve o'clock at night. As early on Monday as one or two o'clock in the morning, the patient is to plunge, or to be plunged, three times into the *loch*; is to drink of its waters; to throw a piece of coin into it as a kind of tribute; and must be away from its banks, so as to be fairly out of sight of its water before the sun rises,—else no cure is supposed to be effected. Whatever credit might be given to such ridiculous ceremonies as tending in any respect to the restoration of health, while ignorance and superstition reigned universally in this country, it certainly must appear extraordinary to intelligent persons, that any class of the community should now have recourse to and faith in such practices; but so it is, that many come from the shires already mentioned, and say they are benefited by these practices. It is, however, to be observed, that those who generally frequent this *loch*, and who have found their health improved, on returning home, are persons afflicted with nervous complaints and disordered imaginations, to whose health a journey of forty or sixty miles, a plunge into the *loch*, and the healthful air of our hills and glens may contribute all the improvement with which they are generally so much pleased.





the year 1800, it is impossible to classify the ages of persons above thirty years. It is certain, however, there are a number of healthy, active people in the parish from fifty to sixty, many from sixty to eighty; and a few vigorous and stout from eighty to ninety.

The average number of children in young families, 5; the number of insane in the parish, 1; fatuous, a female, 1; blind, a male and a female, 2; deaf, a male, 1; dumb, a male, 1.

*Language, Character, &c. of the People.*—The Gaelic language is spoken in common conversation, and it is in that language that the people receive religious instruction with most advantage. Their language has been rather improved of late by means of Gaelic schools. The English, however, is gaining ground considerably, especially among the younger part of the population. The people are more cleanly in their habits than they were forty years ago. They dress neatly on public occasions, and in the cloths and cottons of south country manufacture, make a more showy appearance than their ancestors in the more homely but more substantial garbs wrought at home. Their ordinary food consists of the produce of their lots, viz. oat and barley meal, milk, potatoes, and cabbages,—with fish, especially herring. Very little butcher meat is used by the natives; but a considerable quantity of tea and sugar is consumed in the parish.

The people are social among themselves; kind and hospitable to strangers, according to their circumstances; acute and intelligent, according to their advantages; moral in their general habits; regular in attending on religious ordinances; and many among them decidedly pious. Smuggling is entirely abandoned by them, and poaching is almost unknown.

#### IV.—INDUSTRY.

*Agriculture and Rural Economy.*—Except about 600 acres on the sea coast, which are kept in cultivation by the lotters, the whole of the land of this parish, formerly in tillage, is, with the adjacent mountains, hills, and glens, laid out in extensive sheep walks. From the great extent of the parish, and the nature of its surface, it is impossible to give its measurement in acres with any degree of accuracy. The different plots of trees in the parish cover about 800 acres; and of late years, considerable attention has been given to the woods in Strathnaver, by pruning and thinning.

*Rent of Land.*—The average rent of the land occupied by the lotters is 16s. per acre, including their privilege of hill-common

and peat-moss. The rent paid by the sheep-farmers is moderate.

*Rate of Wages.*—The allowance to day labourers is from 1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. per day of ten hours; to masons 15s.; to carpenters from 9s. to 12s. per week. The lotters use the Highland delving spade in labouring their land. To this they are forced, partly by being unable to rear horses for the plough, and partly by the very uneven surface of their lots. The greater part of the land in their possession is susceptible of considerable improvement by trenching, draining, removing heaps of stones, inclosing their lots, and turning them with the plough.

*Husbandry.*—The sheep farms are in the possession of gentlemen, who are sufficiently attentive to every kind of improvement of which pastoral districts are susceptible,—by draining, embanking, and burning heath. The leases of the sheep farmers are given for nineteen years: but the lotters on the coast are tenants at will, which is evidently a bar to the improvement of their lots.

*Fishings.*—The principal fishings are those of salmon and herring. Of late years, the rivers have been fished by the heritor, and the salmon sold at a certain rate per pound raw, to a Company who have a curing establishment in the parish. In consequence of this plan, the present rent of the salmon fishings of Naver, Borgie, and Strathy cannot be ascertained. The fishings are kept up by proper guards in close time on the rivers to prevent poaching; and by having a sufficient supply of fishing and curing materials during the fishing season.

*Produce.*—As very little of the raw produce is brought to market within the parish, it is not easy to state its amount. The following account is submitted, however,—giving an average of the last three years.

Annual produce of the land occupied by the lotters, including oats, bear, and potatoes, being the only crops they raise,	-	-	-	L. 2000	0	0
Annual produce of sheep-farms in wool,	-	-	-	3700	0	0
Annual produce of sheep-farms in wethers and ewes, sold to south country dealers,*	-	-	-	5800	0	0
salmon-fishings,	-	-	-	800	0	0
herring-fishing,	-	-	-	1300	0	0
meadow-hay,	-	-	-	310	0	0
Miscellaneous, including dairy produce, black-cattle sold by the lotters, &c. &c.	-	-	-	420	0	0
Total annual produce,				L. 14,330	0	0

The fishermen on the coast have from fifteen to twenty boats

\* About 22,000 Cheviot sheep are annually grazed in this parish, including old and young stock.

of fifteen and twenty tons burden. During the herring-fishing season, ships from the south ports of Scotland, from England and Ireland, come to the coast to land cargoes of salt and barrels, and to carry the cured fish to market. There are no ships belonging to the parish.

#### V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

*Means of Communication, &c.*—The nearest market-town is Thurso, thirty-two miles from this place. There is a post-office here connected with that of Thurso; and a mail diligence, drawn by two horses, and carrying four passengers, which runs three days in the week from Thurso to Tongue, and alternately back; and there is a weekly carrier from Tongue to Thurso. There are no turnpike roads in the parish; but a considerable extent of the Parliamentary road from Bonar Bridge to Tongue passes through the heights, and about sixteen miles of the general line from Tongue to Thurso run near the sea-coast. On the roads in this parish there are two bridges of three arches each, twelve of one arch, and a chain-boat on the river Naver. There are no regular harbours. The safest landing-places for boats are Kirtomy and Armidale.

*Ecclesiastical State.*—The parish church is conveniently situated for the population who are now attached to it, since the erection of the Government church. It stands close to the sea-coast, and is about thirty miles from some parts of the interior. But these remote parts are occupied only by a few shepherds in the employment of the sheep-farmers. The parish-church was built in 1774, is a commodious and substantial building, and is kept in good repair. It is seated for about 750. The communion table is, on ordinary Sabbaths, free to the poor, and accommodates about 64.

There is a Government church and manse at Strathy, ten miles east from the parish church. This church was built in 1826, and its present minister was appointed to it in 1828. It accommodates about 350 sitters. Thus, in a parish, the population of which is about 2100, we have church accommodation for 1160 persons.

The manse was built in 1818, is a commodious house, and kept in sufficient repair. There are about six acres of arable land, some meadow-pasture, and a considerable extent of hill ground, with a right to peats,—legally designed as a glebe. The value of these may be estimated at L. 25 per annum. The stipend is L. 166, 14s. Sterling, including L. 8, 6s. 8d. Sterling for communion ele-

ments. The teinds are exhausted. There is a catechist appointed by the kirk-session, and paid by the people.

There is no Dissenting chapel in the parish; and, with the exception of one shepherd from the borders, who is of the Anti-burgher persuasion, and a shepherd's wife from Lochaber, who is a Roman Catholic, there is not a Dissenter of any description in the parish. Divine service is generally well attended, on ordinary and communion Sabbaths, in the parish and Government church; and the people, old and young, are punctual in attending family and village examinations, are in general well acquainted with the Shorter Catechism of our church, and have regularly the worship of God in their families. The average number of communicants may be stated at 130.

There is no society for religious purposes established in the parish; but, for the last nineteen years, collections have been made, almost annually in our congregations, for missionary and educational objects in Scotland, and the average amount of these is about L. 5, 10s. Sterling.

*Education.*—There are at present four schools in the parish, viz. the parochial school; one supported by the Committee of the General Assembly; one by the Glasgow Auxiliary Gaelic School Society; and one on the Second Patent of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highland and islands of Scotland. The parochial schoolmaster is qualified to teach Latin, Greek, mathematics, and the ordinary branches of English literature; and the teacher of the General Assembly's Committee is required to teach Latin, mathematics, English, and Gaelic. The branches generally taught, are English reading and grammar, writing and arithmetic, and Gaelic reading.

The parochial teacher has the maximum salary; L. 3 Sterling, in lieu of a garden; L. 1 13s. 4d. of session-clerk dues; 4s. for proclaiming banns, and registering each marriage; 6d. for recording each baptism; and a house of three apartments. His rate of school-fees is, for beginners, 6s. per annum; for reading and writing, 8s.; for arithmetic, 12s.; and for higher branches, 20s. per annum. The teacher employed by the Committee of the General Assembly has a salary of L. 25; three apartments; a croft of land, and a garden from the heritor; and fuel provided by the inhabitants of the district. He is allowed to exact fees, according to the rate demanded in the parochial school; only in cases of indigence certified by the minister and elders, a certain modification,

or an exemption altogether, is permitted. The teacher employed by the Glasgow Society has L. 12 of a salary, and two apartments. He is furnished with fuel by the inhabitants, and is allowed to exact fees on the same principle with the teacher under the General Assembly's Committee. The teacher on the scheme of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge has L. 4 of salary, a house and croft of land, with fees.

Last winter, about 240 individuals, from the age of five years to twenty, attended the different schools in the parish. But owing to the general poverty of the parishioners, and to the circumstance, that they are under the necessity of having their children, when they arrive at the age of ten or twelve years, employed, especially in the summer and harvest months, either in working about their own dwellings, or earning something for their support, in the service of others,—education is very imperfectly acquired by a majority of the young. Of those, however, from ten to thirty years of age, the greater number do read either English or Gaelic; many read both, and a considerable number write, and can keep accounts. Even at the oldest age at which the people arrive, a considerable number are found who read the Scriptures fluently, and with benefit. But it is among the aged that the greater number are met with who can neither read nor write. In 1832, it was computed that 870 persons of all ages above six were unable to read; and 300 betwixt six and twenty.

The people value the benefits of education, and would most willingly give their children greater advantages, did their circumstances allow it. A permanent school at Armidale, with those already established, would supply the inhabitants of the sea-coast with the means of education. It is impossible to place a school in the interior, so as to accommodate its scattered and widely separated inhabitants, consisting of a few families of shepherds.

*Savings Bank.*—A savings bank was established this year for the benefit of the whole county;—of which the Duke of Sutherland is patron and treasurer; James Loch, Esq. M. P. president; and the three resident factors of the Duke of Sutherland in this shire, vice-presidents. There are trustees appointed in this parish, who meet every fortnight to receive deposits and give out money as occasion requires. The head bank is at Golspie, near Dunrobin, the seat of the Duke of Sutherland. All deposits are sent from this parish to it; for which the contributors have the receipt of the patron and treasurer, and are allowed four per cent. interest on sums



not exceeding L. 20. Little can be said yet of the advantages of this bank, as the first deposit was made in this parish only on the 15th day of February last; but considerable benefit is anticipated from it to day-labourers, fishermen, and farm-servants, in the course of a few years. The Duke of Sutherland is deeply interested in its prosperity.

*Poor and Parochial Funds.*—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid is 76; and the average sum allowed them is from 13s. to 3s. per annum, according to their circumstances, as certified by the elders of their respective districts. The annual average amount of contributions for their support, during the last five years, has been about L. 27 Sterling, arising from church collections, amounting to L. 20 per annum, and from donations by heritors, amounting to L. 8 on an average of the last five years. No other method of procuring funds for the poor has been resorted to, and in general they seem content with the existing system. The Marchioness of Stafford, now Duchess Countess of Sutherland, for more than twenty years gave, and continues to give, an annual donation of L. 6 to the poor of this parish. Occasional donations have been given, besides, by members of the Noble family when visiting this parish, and when important changes by marriages and births took place among them; and by such means, a small fund is at interest for the benefit of the poor.

*Market.*—There is a market held at Bettyhill, near this place, on the first Wednesday of November, (N. S.) for general traffic.

*Inns.*—There are three licensed inns, so situated as to be convenient to the parishioners and the public at large. Tippling-houses are entirely suppressed, and their extinction has a good effect on the morals of the people in general.

#### MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

When the former Account was written, a considerable number of tacksmen, natives of the parish, occupied extensive farms in different parts of it; and with them, a dense population of subtenants resided in the interior straths and glens. Now, however, all the lands, both hill and dale, which they possessed, are held in lease by a few sheep-farmers, all non-resident gentlemen,—some of them living in Caithness, some on the south coast of this county, and some in England; and the straths, in which hundreds of families lived comfortably, are now tenanted by about twenty-four families of herds. In place of the scores of Highland cattle, horses, sheep, and goats, which formerly were brought to market, or used for do-

mestic purposes, now thousands of fleeces of Cheviot wool, wedders, and ewes, are annually exported. The people who had been removed from the interior in 1818 and 1819, when these great changes took place, are thickly settled along the sea-coast of the parish, —in some instances about thirty lotters occupying the land formerly in the possession of twelve, and some of them placed on ground which had been formerly uncultivated.

This alteration in the locality of the parishioners has been followed by a corresponding change in the general system of their occupation. Instead of tending flocks, and following other avocations connected with the habits of an inland population, they are now partly employed in cultivating their small pendicles of land; but more vigorously engaged, especially the young, in preparing the necessary fishing implements, and prosecuting the fishing in its season. The females, in place of manufacturing tartans, and other woollen cloths, for their husbands, brothers, and other relatives, now use the spinning wheel in preparing hemp for herring-nets; and the labour of the country weaver is considerably set aside by the knitting of the nets. The *Garb of Auld Gaul* is entirely superseded by the fisherman's habiliments; and our population, who in early life traversed the hills, moors, and crags of the interior, now cautiously steer their boats on the waves of the Northern Ocean, and actively carry on the various labours connected with the fish-curing stations.

The changes referred to in the locality and in the employments of the inhabitants have had their influence on the state of society in the parish. Although there are greater facilities of communication than formerly with different parts of the kingdom, the manners of the resident population are not thereby improved. It is a well authenticated fact in this country, that the herring fishing is not conducive to the improvement of the morals of those engaged in it. The leaseholders of our large sheep-farms are, as was already mentioned, all non-resident gentlemen. But the former tacksmen resided on their own farms, most of them having respectable and numerous families. By their education and status in society, as justices of peace, and officers in the army, their example, in their general intercourse with the people, had an influence in giving a respectable tone to society, which is now almost gone. There is not now a resident justice of the peace in the parish, whereas there was formerly a most respectable bench of such civil magistrates; and the permanent population being composed of lotters, day-labourers,

fishermen, and herds, the people, in general, are much more plebian, than when the former Account was written. On the other hand, the improvements by roads, bridges, more commodious inns, neater cottages, and more regular and sure means of communication, form a most interesting and pleasant variety since the date of that Account. An increase in the number of those who read the Scriptures in English and Gaelic, and a more extensive circulation of the sacred volume among the families of the parishioners, are also among the important changes which have since taken place. The openness of the winters, the absence of those heavy and long-continued storms of snow, which in former times were so destructive to every description of stock, and the general mildness and fruitfulness of the seasons, ought not to be omitted under this head. Since the harvest of 1816, there has not been an extensive failure in the ordinary crop of the parish.

There is much room for improvement on the sea-coast, by a better system of husbandry among the lotters, by rendering the landing-places for boats more commodious and secure, and by an increase of branch roads to some of the townships. It is much to be regretted that the inhabitants have not more permanent and regular employment during the winter and spring months; for by the want of such employment, a great portion of their time is wasted in idleness and dissipation; whereas, they would most willingly avail themselves of any additional opportunities of labour.

*August 1834.*