

UNITED PARISHES OF CROSS AND BURNES.

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH ISLES, SYNOD OF ORKNEY.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Situation and Extent.—THE united parishes of Cross and Burness include about one-half of the extent of the Island of Sanday, —forming the one the south-west and the other the north-west limbs of that island, which is very much cut up by indentations of the sea. The extreme length of the two parishes from Spurness, in Cross, to Whitemill Point, in Burness, is $9\frac{1}{2}$ statute miles; but the breadth varies from half a mile to three miles. Cross parish is considerably diversified by rising ground; but Burness, like Lady parish, composing the rest of the island, is almost a dead flat, very little raised above the level of the sea. Burness, anciently called St Colm's, extends to about 2500 imperial acres, and, being almost surrounded by the sea, it has, on all its shores, a most plentiful supply of sea-weed, both for manure and for the manufacture of kelp. It is bounded on its west and north sides by the Atlantic Ocean and the dangerous frith, here about seven miles wide, which divides it from the Island of North Ronaldshay; but it is sheltered from the full force of the Atlantic surge by the holms of Ire and the half-tide rocks or skerries of Rive; east and south, it stretches along, and forms one side of, the Bay of Otterswick, anciently called Odinswick, in which is safe anchorage for vessels of any size, while, at the top of this bay on the Burness side, a sort of inner harbour is formed by the point of Lambiness, on the soft sand of which small vessels may be beached at any time with perfect safety. The shores of Burness are generally flat, and the appearance of the parish is green, fertile, and lively, excepting near its junction with Cross parish, where there is a moor of about 200 acres of a most barren and forbidding appearance. There

* Drawn up by Robert Scarth, Esq. Scar House, Sanday.

are several ponds, and one fresh-water loch of considerable extent and depth,—a favourite resort of ducks and other aquatic fowl during the winter and spring; and both this loch and the more extensive one of Bea, in Cross parish, are occasionally visited by flocks of wild swans, as they pass north or south in their vernal and autumnal migrations. The mansion-houses of Scar and Saville are situated about a mile apart,—the former on the west and the latter on the east shores of the parish, surrounded by rich corn fields and pleasant grassy links; and, in the garden at Saville, apples and small fruit are produced.

The parish of Cross extends to about 4600 acres, of which fully a fourth part is moorland, and another fourth part sandy downs and links. The general appearance of this parish (with all deference to the recorded opinion of a fair traveller who lately, from a midnight view on the deck of a steamer, at the distance of sixteen or eighteen miles, condemned the whole island to hopeless ugliness), we must be allowed to say is very beautiful. It is well sheltered from the west and north by the Island of Eday, separated from it by a narrow sound varying from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 miles wide, through which the tides are constantly pouring with a velocity of not less than eight miles an hour. This sound has much the appearance of a noble river, and the resemblance is increased during the ebb-tide by the foaming rapids, as they may be called, of Lashy-Roost running nearly across the channel from side to side; and it is curious to observe with what dexterity the islanders guide their handsome-looking and neatly-rigged yawls through the breakers of the Roost. On the east of Cross parish, Sanday Sound, dividing Sanday from Stronsay and the adjacent holms, runs along, until it leads into the Bay of Kettletoft, at the head of which Cross and Lady parishes march.

The land in Cross rises at two points to more than 300 feet above the sea, and the surrounding islands, sounds, friths, and bays, with the green and generally fertile plains of Sanday itself, present, from these points, one of the most delightful views the eye can rest upon. One of these heights, called the Brae of Feá, falls only a very little distance towards the west, when it terminates in a precipice washed at bottom by the sea, and perforated by curious caverns; while on the east side the slope is gentle, and covered with rich pasture grass, enamelled with the field-gentian, the bird's-eye primrose, the squill, and other flowers, until it reaches the reedy edge of Bea Loch on the property of How.

Geology.—The whole island of Sanday is composed of secondary rocks, sandstone, sandstone flag, and a little limestone. Near the house of Saville, in Burness, there is an isolated mass of primary rock, supposed gneiss, about fourteen tons weight, resting on the surface of the ground, and considered by Dr Neill to be "one of the most uncommon mineralogical appearances in Orkney, the nearest primary rocks being at Stromness, which is above thirty miles distant, and several rapid friths intervening." Opposite to Eday, on the west shore of the farm of Stove, in Cross parish, there is a curious rock called Heclabir, which Dr Neill says is a breccia, "most of the component parts of which are rounded and water-worn nodules of sandstone. The pieces are of different sizes, from balls of three, five, and ten pounds weight, to such as are of the size of sparrow eggs. A few quartz and calcareous nodules are interspersed."

The bays of Stove, Backaskail, and Otterswick produce enormous quantities of shell-fish, principally cockles and the spout or razor fish. The accumulated shells of these fish ground to powder, and heaped up upon the beaches by the action of the sea, and blown inland by the wind, seem to form a very considerable portion of the soil in Cross and Burness; and in some districts it is evident that the dry sandy downs, now inhabited by numerous colonies of rabbits, have at one time been fresh water lochs, or lagoons communicating with the sea. The writer of this article, in draining lands of the description referred to, has found, at a depth in some places of six or seven feet, but always on reaching a certain level, a bottom of mud and gravel containing many remnants of reeds and other aquatic plants; and throughout the depth of the ditch, it was easy to mark the different layers of sand which had been blown over the ground at different periods, by the black line of mossy earth or decayed vegetable matter running along, where each successive surface had been. In immediate connection, however, with such sandy downs throughout both parishes, there are large tracks of strong clay, of gravelly, or of deep loamy land, admirably fitted for raising the ordinary green and grain crops. The natural pastures of Sanday, where they are protected from those most destructive vermin, the rabbits, are exceedingly rich and feeding. They are composed of a variety of grasses, among which cocksfoot, the different fescues, plantains, and the red and white clovers, known here by the names of red and white curl-doddies, are the most conspicuous. Sea-rockets, bent-grass,

and the sea-reed are plentiful near the sandy beaches; and the sea banks themselves are often ornamented by the cowslip, thrift, and sea-pink, epilobium and cranesbill.

Zoology.—Few places present more encouragement to the sportsman than the parishes of Cross and Burness, for though there are no grouse or hares, as on Eday or on the mainland of Orkney, there are great numbers of lapwing, snipe, and landrail; while rabbits are not counted by hundreds, but by thousands. On more than one farm 3000 rabbits are taken yearly! The rocks are tenanted by large flocks of the wild pigeon; and the lakes, sounds, and bays are filled with almost every variety of water-fowl. About the 20th of June, or later, as the season has been favourable or otherwise, literally clouds of the golden plover arrive from the north; and with vast numbers of the sandpiper tribe, of the curlews, herons, and whimbrels, they are to be found on the moors and flat shores of the island, until early spring calls them off to their breeding places in less populous regions. Very many varieties both of water and land birds remain on the island, all the season, and breed there. Of these the oyster-catcher, the redshank, the dunlin, the dotterel, the turnstone, the tern, and several varieties of the gull tribe,—the eider-duck, the common wild duck, the teal, the shield drake, and others of the duck tribe, with larks, buntings, and starlings, are the most numerous. Of the last named birds, the starlings, the writer took from his dovecot in one morning no less than twenty-two dozen.

The fish caught round the island are, cod, ling, skate, holibut, flounder, and the young of the coal-fish, here called sillocks and cuiths. These last are caught on the fly, either from the rocks, or from the stern of a small boat; and in addition to the supply of food which they form at all seasons of the year, and the quantity of oil for household use produced from their livers, the catching of them is no despicable sport, and would be preferred to the finest river fishing by those who would rather fill their basket in one hour, than exercise their patience by waiting all day for even “a glorious nibble.” Lobsters are caught in great numbers by boats from the shore, and bought up and conveyed to the London market, direct from Sanday, by smacks. Seals are pretty numerous; but, as there are no resident sportsmen, they are not often shot. The otter frequents the rocks and caverns on the west side, and is occasionally seen stealing his way to Bea Loch. But the most exciting of all fishings, if fishing it can

be called, is that of the bottle-nosed or ca'-ing whales, the *Delphinus deductor* of zoologists. Large shoals of these animals, varying from 50 to 500 in number, and from 5 to 25 feet each in length, get occasionally embayed; and upon this happening, all boats are launched, all hands active, every tool which can be converted into a weapon of offence to the strangers, from the roasting spit of the principal tenant, to the ware-fork of the cottar, is put into requisition. The shoal is surrounded, driven like a flock of timid sheep to shallow water on a sandy shore, and then the attack is made in earnest. The boats push in, stabbing and wounding in all directions. The tails of the wounded fish lash the sea, which is dyed red with their blood, sometimes dashing a boat to pieces. The whales in dying emit shrill and plaintive cries, accompanied with loud snorting, and a humming noise easily mistaken at a distance for fifes and drums; so that the whole scene has been not inaptly compared to a battle-field.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Parochial Registers.—There are or rather were two parochial registers,—a register of births and baptisms, and a register of marriages commencing in 1711, and kept, apparently with great regularity, until 1793, since which time a great majority of the births have not been registered, and no register of marriages has been kept. There have been no illegitimate births in either of the parishes, during the last three years.

Rents of Land and Proprietors.—It may be curious to observe the difference in the yearly value of the lands in Orkney, since the valuation made for assessing the land tax in 1653. The names of the then proprietors of Cross and Burness were, Magnus Fea of Grindilla; James Fea of Stove; John Scollay of Leta; John Smith of Seater; John Elphinstone; John Miller of Skelbuster; John Irvine of Isgairth; John Henryson; James Traill of Houbister; John Groat of Elsness; Malcolm Sinclair of Papness; James Cock of Westove; Thomas Abercrombie; Richard Fotheringham; Brandy Thurland; Walter Thomson; John Above-the-Riggs; John Scott of Langskeal; Edward Cock; Robert Stewart of Brough and the Earl of Morton; and the whole lands are rated in the same valuation at L. 1690, 0s. 5d. Scots, or L. 140, 16s. 8d. Sterling; to which add feu and scat and teind-duties payable to the Earl of Morton as Donatory of the Crown, viz. 1 barrel butter at L. 20; 76 lispunds butter at L. 2; 650 meils, 1 setting, and 6 marks of bear at L. 1, 13s. 4d.; 13 meils, 5 settings, 20½ marks of meal at L. 4; and L. 127, 10s. 6d. Scots money, gives.

L.1441, 1s. 11d. Scots, or L.120, 1s. 9d. Sterling,—making the gross land-rent of both parishes, at that remote period, L. 260, 18s. 5d. Sterling.

In the last Statistical Account of Sanday and North Ronaldshay, 1793, prepared with great intelligence, care, and accuracy, by the late Rev. William Clouston, then minister of Cross and Burness, the gross rent of the two islands is stated at L.1064, 3s. 0½d. Sterling, and calculating at his conversion of rents in kind, which would now be just about half-price, the then gross land rent of the parishes of Cross and Burness alone amounted to only L. 413, 11s. 1d. Sterling.

Cross parish now belongs in property to

1. Samuel Laing of Papdale, whose lands of Stove, Grindilla and Whippa Land, form the south promontory, and are let in one large and five small farms, including the grazings of the Spurness holms for a land rent, wholly exclusive of kelp, of	L.244	9	0
Public burdens,—the superior duties and land tax being redeemed, are	21	16	0
	Net,	L.222	13 0
2. John Balfour of Trenaby, whose lands of Warsetter and Westbrough, with several small farms, two wind-mills, and two water-mills, are let for a land rent, exclusive of kelp, of	L.330	5	0
Public burdens,—including superior duties payable to the Earl of Zetland, are	94	14	3
	Net,	245	10 9
3. The Earl of Zetland, whose lands of Backaskail, Leyland, and part of Nibister, are let for	L.63	14	0
Public burdens are,	12	8	5
	L.51	5	7
To which add, average value of superior duties drawn by him out of the parish, and for which he pays no proportion of public burdens,	64	1	7½
	Net,	115	7 2½
4. Thomas Traill of Westove, whose lands of How, Howgarth, and Beanness, with 14 cotts, are let to one tenant for a land rent, exclusive of kelp, of	L.134	0	0
Also some inclosures connected with the principal inn of the island, let together on an improving lease, for a nominal rent of	0	2	6
	L.134	2	6
Public burdens,—the superior duties being redeemed, are	22	15	1½
	Net,	111	7 4½
5. The representatives of the late J. T. Urquhart of Elsness, for the water-mill of Bea, and pendicles of Isgarth and Hettal, a land rent of	L.47	0	0
Public burdens, land-tax, and superior duties being redeemed,	1	1	8
	Net,	45	11 4
Carry forward,	L.740	9	8

	Brought over,	L. 740	9	8
6. Three small farms in the occupation of the proprietors, viz. Fea of Bollaquoy and Seater, Mr Dennison of Myres, and Selater of Skelbuster, in all worth of land rent, about	L. 40	0	0	
Public burdens of the three, including superior duties, payable to the Earl of Zetland,	9	15	7	

Net, 30 4 5

Net land rent of Cross parish in 1840, L. 770 14 1

Burness parish, with the exception of three acres in Hettal, and 18 acres, the minister's glebe lands, is the property of

Thomas Traill of Westove, and is, including wind-mill and water-mill, occupied by sixty tenants, paying rents varying from L. 4 to L. 40 each, making a land-rent, exclusive of kelp, of L. 510 19 10

The mansion house of Sear, with a farm of near 80 acres, is occupied by the factor, and the other mansion-house of Saville, with lands around, is occupied by the Rev. Walter Traill of Westove, together worth about

130 0 0

L. 640 19 10

The superior duties having been purchased from the Earl of Zetland, the present public burdens of stipend, school salary, &c. amount to

69 19 7

Net land rent of Burness in 1840, L. 571 0 3

The gross rents stated above being L. 1564, 11s. 11½d. Sterling, (after making allowance for lands farmed by proprietors themselves, which it is probable Mr Clouston did not include in his rental, as also for the difference in the relative value of money and farm produce, the rents being then mostly paid in kind,) it will be seen that the gross rents of these two parishes have been more than doubled since 1793; and this, notwithstanding that not only kelp but rabbit skins, upon which he counts for part of the farmer's profit, have become unsaleable. But the most casual observer will see at a glance, that, from whatever cause the value of grain and cattle now yearly exported, is proportionally increased.

When the manufacture of kelp was a source of profit to the proprietors, and when almost everything else was neglected in order to increase its quantity, the produce of the manufacture from Cross and Burness was as follows:

Mr Laing from Stove and the Spurness holms,	47 tons.
Mr Balfour,	175
Note.—The tenants of Westbrough and Warsetter yet pay a considerable rent for the kelp of their properties; but this kelp rent has been deducted before stating the land rent as above.	
The Earl of Zetland,	10
Note.—The same remark applies as to Westbrough and Warsetter.	
Carry over,	232

Thomas Traill,—In Cross, In Burness,	Brought over, 18 220	232 tons.
Bollaguoy and Skelbuster, with the minister's glebe in Cross, made about	—238 10	480 tons.
Total,		

Say 480 tons of marketable kelp, which, from its very superior quality, always met with a ready sale at Dumbarton and Newcastle, and so lately as the years 1825–26, and 27, (it having been much higher priced previous to that time,) left a clear average return to the proprietor of L.9 per ton, making L.4320. This source of revenue is now almost wholly cut off. The use of kelp in the manufacture of glass has been superseded by Spanish barilla, brought in at a low duty, and still more, it is said, by new chemical discoveries in the art of glass making. The only demand now for kelp comes from chemical works on the Frith of Forth, and Lord Normanby's alum works near Whitby; but the prices offered are such as will do little more than cover the expense of manufacture and the freight.

It may be easily supposed that the abstraction of so large an amount of revenue from the proprietors of these parishes, in common with the other proprietors of Orkney, must have been severely felt, not only by themselves, but also by the farmers, peasantry, and trades-people dependent upon them; and this the more, that formerly in Orkney every consideration was sacrificed to kelp. Agriculture was much neglected, and even the fisheries, for which the county is so well adapted, were unattended to. So long ago as 1804 Dr Patrick Neill of Edinburgh warned the proprietors, of what has actually happened, in these words: "Should a cheap process for extracting the soda from sea water happen to be discovered, or should the market for kelp on any other account unexpectedly fail, the landholders of Orkney will find, when too late, the great imprudence of thus neglecting the cultivation and improvement of their lands."* The consequence has been, that several extensive properties have been forced into the market, and partly from an absurd notion that the failure in the manufacture of kelp would have the effect of lowering the land rents, and making their recovery uncertain,—partly from the want of tenants of sufficient skill and capital to take the manor farms, and follow out the very extensive and, in many cases, highly judicious improvements which had been begun by the proprietors; but, above all, from the entire

* Tour through Orkney and Shetland, by Patrick Neill. Edinburgh, 1806.

and inexcusable ignorance of south country capitalists, as to everything connected with this remote but highly interesting and valuable county, no sales could be effected, and these properties have been left not in the best possible situation for the comfort of the people, nor for their own improvement, viz. under trust for the payment of creditors. With every disadvantage, however, the peasantry of the country have done wonders for themselves.

Most fortunately, before the entire fall of kelp, Mr Laing of Papdale and others, had, by liberal encouragement and large advances, induced their small tenants and cottars to fit out boats, nets, and lines, and to attempt the prosecuting of the herring and cod fisheries. Taking warning from the bad effects of compulsory labour on the kelp manufacture, these gentlemen did not enthrall their tenants, by any interference with the produce of their fisheries, but left them at liberty to dispose of their fish to the highest bidder, and to lay out their gains as they thought fit. The inhabitants of the parishes of Cross and Burness, as, indeed, of the whole Island of Sanday, were rather behind their neighbours in starting to this new scene of industry; but they can now boast of many crews of excellent fishermen and of well-rigged and powerful boats, to whose numbers every year is adding; while the rising spirit of independence, which successful exertion and unfettered industry is sure to produce in any people, leads them yearly to pay more and more attention to improving the management of their small farms, of their stock of cattle and horses, and to raising the scale of their personal comforts in clothing and lodging; so that, considering the enormous quantity of land in those parishes, lying comparatively waste and unproductive, the proprietors, with a little well-timed direction and encouragement, may not only secure their present land rents, but look forward to making up, from the same source, great part, if not all, of their heavy loss by kelp.

III.—POPULATION.

By the census taken in 1881, there were in Cross parish 91 inhabited houses, 62 families said to be employed in agriculture, 16 in trade, and of other families, 3—total 101 families.

Males,	250
Females,	291
Total,	541

There were in Burness parish 76 inhabited houses, 69 families employed in agriculture, 11 in trade, and 1 other family—total 81 families.

Males,	208
Females,	237
Total,	440

Total population in both parishes in 1881, 981

The total population of Cross parish is now	560
The population of Burness parish is	432
Total of both parishes now	992
The number of children below 15 years of age in both parishes is	190.

The cottar system, which formerly prevailed universally, and still does prevail to a small extent, is perhaps the most degrading to the labouring class, the most discouraging to industry and exertion, and consequently the most injurious to morals, which can be conceived. A youngster, when he has hardly attained to manhood, and before he can have saved as much as will purchase a bed and blankets, makes an improvident marriage, and only then thinks of looking for a hut to shelter him and his fast-increasing family. Having got the hut and a small piece of land, he has to go in debt for the purchase of a wretched cow and a still more wretched pony, and, paying his rent in small but never-ending and ill-defined personal services, or, as it is expressively called in the country language, "on-ca-work," he becomes the slave of the principal tenant, who is so blind to his own interests, as to prefer the slovenly half-executed work of this hopeless, ill-fed, and inert being to the willing and active services of a well-paid and well-fed farm-servant. The tenants of Sanday are, in general, very kind to their cottars, and seldom a day passes without their having to grant some little entreated favour or other, which the circumstances of the cottar makes necessary for his support; but they do not seem to calculate the value in money of the property thus given away. Often, in the course of the year, it will amount to as much as the wages of a good ploughman; but then, being an uncertain bounty, and, moreover, the product of beggary, it does the receiver little good beyond the immediate relief to his family, and destroys in him all habits of self-dependence and of foresight.

The tenants complain that, from the inducement held out to young men by the fisheries, it is nearly impossible to get farm-servants. While the tenant was paid a high price for the manufacture of kelp, he kept his farm-servants all the year round, employing them profitably during the summer season in the kelp; but, not having yet gone into the system of raising extensive green crops, he does not conceive that he needs servants during the four months betwixt plough-casting and harvest; consequently, he pays off his servants at the former period, and they are thus forced to become fishermen. He cannot, therefore, expect that they will return to him exactly at the time which suits his convenience, nor that a man, who may be making L.1 a-week, with the chance sometimes

of as much in a day and night, will leave this exciting employment for farm work at as much per month. The remedy of all this is evident. Let the cottar's house and land be rented in money, which rent let him make out in any line his genius may lead him to. If the tenant requires his services, he ought to be hired by the day or hour at fair money wages, and if he requires any farm produce he ought to pay for it in cash. In regard to farm-servants, the tenant would find his interest in employing only those who have nothing to do with boating or fishing,—managing his farm so as to give them work all the year round, and paying them such wages as shall give him a right to insist for close, constant, and active service.

The most approved make of carts, ploughs, rollers, and other farming implements are in general use; and some of the ploughmen would obtain prizes at a competition even in the south country.

The society of Sanday is equal to that of any of the islands, and the clergy and principal farmers are exceedingly hospitable and obliging to each other, as well as to strangers. There are few or no games, or public amusements of any kind. The common people used to be fond of dancing and foot-ball playing, but of late years, it is to be regretted, that, while there is less hilarity and social enjoyment among the young, there is more of quiet tipping in the public-house. Relaxation and amusement are necessary; and when the innocent recreations of music and dancing are discouraged, there is a risk that something worse may be had recourse to.

The language spoken, as through all the islands, is English. Among the peasantry a good many words are peculiar to the north isles, and some of them are evidently of Scandinavian origin. A few are given in alphabetical order. Anything like a complete list would encroach too much on our space.*

* *Abin*, (v.) to thrash half a sheaf for giving horses.—*Abir*, (n.) a sheaf so thrashed.—*Acamy*, (adj.) diminutive.

Bal, (v.) to throw at.—*Been-hook*, (n.) part of the rent paid by a cottar for his land is work all harvest; but besides his own labour, he must bring out his wife three days, for which she receives nothing but her food. All the women on a farm are called out at the same time; they work together, and are called been hooks, and the days on which they work been-hook days.—*Bull*, (n.) one of the divisions or stalls of a stable.—*Buily*, (n.) a feast.—*Buist*, (n.) a small box.—*Buile*, or *Buito*, (n.) a piece of flannel or home-made cloth, worn by women over the head and shoulders.—*Brammo*, (n.) a mess of oatmeal and water.—*Bret*, (v.) to strut.—*Brodend*, (adj.) habituated to.—*Burstin*, (n.) meal made of corn parched in a pot, or "hellio."

Cruc, (n.) a small inclosure for raising cabbage plants.—*Cummal*, (n.) a small rising ground.—*Cuppo*, (n.) a hollow place.—*Chceeing meat*, (n.) It was formerly

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—Strangers still find much to condemn in the management of the land in these parishes; but to those who recollect what it was forty years ago, a very great improvement, indeed, is perceptible; and now that the slavery of the kelp manufacture has been removed, and the free and unfettered energies of the farmers begin to be applied to their proper business, it may be hoped that twenty years hence, they will in this respect stand exposed to less objection on the part of their more fortunate southern neighbours.

Great part of the lands have been placed in a state of severalty, and the marches betwixt different farms, as well as betwixt estates ascertained; and, in many cases, good division-fences erected. The purchase or redemption by some of the proprietors, of the

the custom that the women who had attended an accouchement brought a present of meat next day to the lady in the straw;—it generally consisted of a stoup full of “Eggalourie,” and a “cubbie” of bannocks, and was conveyed by stealth into the bed of the invalid—*Calzee*, (n.) a large straw basket—*Cubbie*, (n.) a small caisie.

Dair, (v.) to make an impression—*Dello*, (n.) a small patch of cultivated ground—*Domalus*, (adj.) impotent—*Doring*, (part.) confusion, noise—*Dovend*, (adj.) benumbed.

Eri-oy, a great grandson—*Esk*, (v.) to rain a little—*Ere*, (n.) a small quantity—*Eggalourie*, (n.) a dish of eggs and milk boiled together.

Fallfu, (adj.) affectionate—*Fole*, (n.) a small bannock—*Foudal*, (adj.) procrastinating—*Forsal*, (v.) to harness—*Frootery*, (n.) superstitious observances—*Furkin*, (adj.) melting—*Fur-scam*, (n.) of the four horses formerly used abreast in the old Orkney plough, the first or right hand one was called the fur horse, the second the fur-scam, the third the volar-scam, and the fourth the outend horse.

Goe or *Glo*, (n.) a cave or creek into which the sea flows—*Geyar-carl*, (n.) a supernatural being like the kelpie—*Gist*, (n.) an intermission of rain—*Glaggo*, (n.) a mixture of burstin and milk—*Grummal*, crumbs, fragments—*Gul*, Sir, by the way of address—*Gully*, (adj.) good, agreeable.

Harakit, (n.) hearthburn—*Hellio*, (n.) a stone with a rim of clay about it, used in parching corn for burstin.

Illy, (n.) anger—*Itifu*, (adj.) angry.

Ket, (adj.) dwarfish—*Kleipie*, (n.) a blow.

Lubbo, (n.) a meal measure, very neatly made of bent.

Main, patience—*Maish*, bashful—*Mullio*,—a bundle of gleanings.

Nouat, a dock for a boat—*Nouster*, a landing place.

Oddie, a sewer—*Orafu*, glutton, greedy.

Peerie, little—*Pooty*, a small cod—*Pousted*, bewitched, infatuated.

Quoy, a small enclosure.

Rawley, ugly—*Renzie*, to writhe with pain—*Ruist*, *Rug*, or *Mur*, synonyms for small rain—*Ruggie*, an old cod—*Rugfus*, rude.

Scatfu, inclined to steal—*Scrancel*, a morsel—*Scrime*, to see an object dimly—*Slio*, a drying-house—*Smoois*, sly—*Snaain*, a sea-weed—*Suck*, loose straw rubbish—*Sucky*, untidy.

Tirras, ill-natured—*Tirvy*, angry—*Toy*, a woman's cap—*Tray*, stiff, stubborn—*Tray-sitten*, lazy, stupefied—*Trow*, a boggle—*Tumati*, piece of arable land next the standing.

Uin, mad, furious—*Unfaray*, unwieldy, overgrown.

Vahr, having no appetite—*Vidiment*, insignificant—*Vista*, a short journey—*Vahr*, the spring season.

Waaf, a signal—*Wain*, hope—*Wallows*, the devil.

Yammeh, born in the same year.

feu-duties formerly payable in grain, and butter, and meal, to the Earl of Zetland, (though made at far too high a price,) has set them at liberty to occupy their lands in the raising of cattle and sheep, to which, in this mild but variable climate, with a low mean temperature, they are more suited than to the production of grain. And farther, by the landlords fixing a money rent with the tenants, neither are exposed to the uncertainty and fluctuation of grain fiars, and the postponement of regular termly settlements. It is not the fault of the soil nor of the climate, however unfavourable, nor of the industry, intelligence, or enterprise of the inhabitants, that this country is so far behind the rest of Scotland. The excessive feu-duties, most grossly unjust in their origin, which were payable in kind to the donatory of the Crown, cramped the energies of both landlord and tenant. These duties went out of the country like a tax making no return, and from their nature, could not even induce the great man, who received them, to take a patrimonial interest in it. It has often been a matter of wonder how little of favour or encouragement these islands have received at any time from the Government, when it is considered that the population of Orkney and Zetland exceeds that of Berwickshire, East Lothian, Roxburghshire, Dumfries-shire, and other counties of note and consideration; and that there are only thirteen counties in Scotland which exceed these islands in population, and only eight which exceed them in extent of surface. But to return to rents in kind, they keep back improvement, and yet well-informed landlords are still found giving in to them, just to meet the scruples and prejudices of tenants. Under this system, the tenant will hardly ever progress; he must remain stationary, and can derive nothing from his farm, beyond a subsistence. In good years, his surplus payments in kind, inferior in quality, because he forces all his land to carry grain, do not leave him a remunerating price for his labour, and in bad years he is charged a high price for what the overwrought soil did not produce to him.

The middleman system of letting farms, with a multitude of cottars or small tenants placed at the mercy of the principal tenant, is fast breaking up. Mr. Laing of Papdale gave the first blow to this cottar system on his farm of Stove. When he began the improvement of this farm, he allotted to the cottars, in a district by themselves, three Scotch acres of arable land each, with about an equal quantity of grass ground;—for this possession, with

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their house and yard, they paid a rent of L. 5, 5s., and were left wholly at liberty, the only condition of their holding being the regular payment of the rent. At same time, he offered, if they chose to work kelp, to give them the same price for their labour, L.3 to L.4 per ton, which had been formerly paid to the principal tenant; and such was the effect of this free system, that men considered notoriously slothful were converted into willing and industrious labourers, and not only was the quantity of kelp greatly increased, but he never wanted good and efficient workmen to hire at fair wages for his farming improvements. Mr Laing's example has been followed with success in the parish of Burness, where, by doing away with all services, by a moderate allowance for improvements, a little nursing, and care in helping the small tenants to dispose of their produce to advantage, an addition to the land rents, and a most evident improvement in the condition and habits of the occupiers, has been effected.

Crops.—By far the greater part of the arable lands in these parishes are still cropped alternately with bear and oats, the enormous supply of sea-weed for manure keeping up the fertility of the land under this scourging system. Potatoes are, however, more extensively cultivated than formerly, and on some farms, turnips and sown grasses are introduced into the rotation. The bear is thin-coated, and meals well, being white in the flour. The weight does not average more than 42 lbs. per bushel, unless where compost has been applied, when it has reached 48 lbs. per bushel. Turnip and rye-grass seeds are raised, and are found to give great satisfaction, when sown in the southern counties. The soil is admirably adapted to turnip husbandry, and most splendid crops of this valuable esculent may now be seen growing, where a short time since, rabbits alone had possession of the soil. In many places throughout the island, where steadings have been of old, large heaps of rich mould are to be found. These seem to have been the accumulations of the farm manure of many a year, during times when the people were too indolent or too prejudiced to apply it to the soil; and it is even in the recollection of the writer, that a tenant of a large farm held his cottars bound, as a service once a year, to clean his dung court, and convey the manure as a nuisance, to the sea-beach, and he has witnessed the wilful burning of the straw, from which forty bolls of grain had been thrashed.

In improving the sand links or rabbit warrens, these accumulations become a most important auxiliary, for, being trenched and

exposed to the frost and the vivifying effects of the air, and afterwards mixed with small kelp and a sufficient quantity of fresh seaweed to melt it, they form compost, by means of which a great extent of the most unpromising rabbit links is converted into a flourishing turnip-field, where properly selected grass seeds are sure to thrive with the next crop. The grass seeds found to suit best for such land, are two bushels of perennial ryegrass; one bushel of mixed timothy and cocksfoot; six pounds of ribgrass; and six pounds of white clover per acre. The Rev. Walter Traill of Westove, has cultivated lucerne in such land with success. Cabbages manured with the sea-weed are also raised to great size; the common Scotch grey reaching a weight of fourteen pounds each plant.

Stock.—The horses used for carriage and draught are good hardy ponies of from 14 to 15 hands high; many oxen are employed in carting sea-weed; and the cattle generally are improving in weight and quality. The Neapolitan, the Berkshire, and other improved breeds of swine have been introduced, and considerable numbers are yearly exported alive to Aberdeen and Peterhead. The native breed of sheep, which are kept on tether during the summer, and roam at large over the fields and round the shores, where they eat sea-weed in winter, are not yet extinct, but their numbers are much thinned. They are the short-tailed sheep of Iceland, Shetland, and the Hebrides. In 1808, Malcolm Laing of Papdale introduced the Merino breed on his property of Stove, and purchased rams at high prices from some of the best flocks in the kingdom. They were crossed with Cheviots, and they succeeded most satisfactorily. Mr Laing, one year, it is said, received 7s. 6d. per pound for some of his wool. The wool of clip 1811 of the lambs of some Orkney ewes by a Merino ram, was considered by a wool stapler from Yorkshire, better worth 2s. 8d. per pound, than the wool of the Orkney dams of these lambs was worth 8d.; and the quantity being about double, made a difference of 9s. 4d. between the fleece of our Orkney ewe and that of her lamb by a Merino tup at shearing time; a sum equal to the value of the ewe fleece and carcass altogether. Mr Laing found the Orkney cross assimilated faster in fleece than the Cheviot did; but the cross with the Orkney was inferior in carcass to that with the Cheviot.*

Poultry of all kinds thrive well, and are numerous and cheap.

* Agricultural Report of the Orkney Islands, by John Shirreff, 1814.

Wages.—The wages of a good ploughman are L. 7, 7s. of money, with six bolls of meal, and milk and rabbits. But the greater number of farm-servants are employed on the farms for the winter half-year only, for which their wages are from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3, and they are fed and lodged in the family. Women-servants receive from L. 2, 10s. to L. 3 per annum; but as they are much engaged at home in the plaiting of rye-straw for bonnets, they are unwilling to work in the field, and are generally employed only in the care of cattle or as house-servants. Day-labourers are paid from 1s. to 1s. 3d. per day, but, as already observed, very few are thus engaged for money wages, and, as a labourer cannot obtain employment on day's wages throughout the year, there is found to be a scarcity of them when a job occurs for which they are required.

Fisheries.—There are in Cross and Burness fourteen boats engaged in fishing lobsters; and fifteen boats and sloops fishing cod and herrings, besides numerous small boats. It has been observed that the inhabitants of Sanday are only beginning to devote attention to the fisheries; but it may not be out of place here to state the quantity of cod caught, cured, and dried in the north isles of Orkney, during the present season, 1840.

In the island of Westray,	-	-	-	-	-	120 tons.
Eday,	-	-	-	-	-	109
Stronsay,	-	-	-	-	-	30
Shapinsay,	-	-	-	-	-	65
North Ronaldsay,	-	-	-	-	-	10
Cross and Burness, Sanday,	-	-	-	-	-	14
Lady parish, do,	-	-	-	-	-	6
Rousay and adjacent Isles, including sundry small parcels from some of the islands already named, which were separately sold and shipped,	-	-	-	-	-	90
In all,	-	-	-	-	-	444 tons.

Which were sold by the fishermen themselves for about L. 5400 0 0

When to this is added the value of herrings caught and delivered to curers at Stronsay by North Isles boats, which the writer of this article has no means at hand of correctly ascertaining, but which could hardly be less than an equal sum, he thinks that it will be allowed that the inhabitants of these islands bid fair to do away with the character for supineness and indolence in regard to fishing, which has been liberally bestowed upon them by those who were either unacquainted with them, or made no sufficient allowance for their peculiar circumstances. As the cure of cod was almost unknown in Orkney previous to the appointment of fishery-officers to oversee and direct it, the Orkney men had no bad habits, in

this respect, to get rid of, and they have so closely followed the excellent directions which have been given them, that their fish are acknowledged equal, if not superior, to any that come to market.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Ecclesiastical State.—Of the population, there are adherents of the Established church, of all ages, in both parishes, 810. Of these 447 are communicants.

The adherents of Dissenters of all ages are 181; of these, 96 communicate with the United Associate Seceders, who have their meeting-house in Lady parish, and 3 are Anabaptists. There is one parish church in Cross and another in Burness, and divine service is performed in each on the alternate Sundays. This is a source of great inconvenience both to minister and people. There are in both parishes 102 families further than two miles; 64 families further than four miles; and 28 families further than six miles distant from one of the churches; and this tends much to prevent, on the part of the people, a regular Sabbatical attendance at either place of worship. But supposing the people were in general able, as they are very willing, to give a regular weekly attendance, there would still be the serious and palpable want of church accommodation, for the church of Cross has only 248 sittings, and that of Burness, including those of the passage, 262. To accommodate, therefore, two-thirds of the church adherents, 292 more sittings are wanting in Cross church, and in Burness, 278. Indeed, neither of the churches can accommodate even the communicants of the establishment. The remedy for this evil would be either the erection of one convenient church for both parishes in a central situation, or dividing the parishes *quoad sacra*, and appointing a pastor to each.

The manse is rather an old house, but kept in good repair by the heritors. It is situated in Cross parish, and there is a glebe of about twenty acres, with garden and offices attached. The other glebe in Burness parish, which is rented for L.10 or L.12, has been already noticed. The stipend, payable almost entirely in money, including L.66, 7s. 4d. drawn from the Island of North Ronaldshay, formerly united with these parishes, amounts, with allowance for communion elements, to L.210.

Education.—There is only one parochial school in the island, situated at the junction of the three parishes, and there is no other school in Cross or Burness, though female schools are much

wanted. The parochial schoolmaster's salary is L.46, 14s. 4½d., and the average yearly amount of school fees received is L.10. The average number of scholars attending the parochial school is 53.

Poor.—The number of poor persons receiving aid from the session in Cross is 13, and in Burness, 11; and the sum distributed to each has been 2s. 6d. The amount of collections for the poor at the churches has been L.5, 10s. yearly, which, with a donation of L.1, 1s. from Mr Balfour of Trenaby, has formed the amount of the provision for the poor, excepting that there is, on Mr Laing's property of Stove, a mortification by the proprietor of four small cottages or farms, worth now L.5, 5s. each of yearly rent, for supporting four superannuated servants, who spend thirty years in constant service on the principal farms; failing whom, the session are empowered to draw the rent for behoof of the poor upon the farm of Stove in the first instance, and, in lack of them, for the general poor of the parish. The charity has not latterly been well administered, and hardly any one of the persons now in possession of the farms are paupers of the description contemplated by Mr Fea, the benevolent mortgager, nor are they entitled to hold them.

Fuel.—There are no peat-mosses in the Island of Sanday, and the inhabitants of Cross and Burness are consequently ill supplied with fuel. Each family endeavours to procure a boat or more of peats from the neighbouring Island of Eday, to which the cottar adds prepared cow and horse dung, and the larger tenants coals from the Frith of Forth or Newcastle.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

It is evident that these parishes are still capable of very great improvement. Steam-navigation, which has now reached Kirkwall, were it also brought through the islands, would do much, by making the transit of grain, cattle, and other produce free from the uncertainty attending sailing-vessels. But perhaps the most hopeful prospect of improvement would be from the sale of some of the estates now in the market to men of capital and enterprise. A few tenants from improved districts are also wanted, not theorising speculative gentlemen farmers, who might cavil and carp at things as they are, without knowing how to mend them; but hard-working sure-going men, with sufficient capital, and with common sense enough to make their plans conform to soil, climate, and circumstances; in fact, just such characters as are usually described to be the most suitable for emigrating to the

colonies; and it has often struck the writer as wonderful, that young farmers, as well as men of capital, should attempt the back woods of Canada, or expose themselves to the privations of dry and scorching seasons in Australia, when such good opportunities for turning their skill to account, and for investing their capital, were to be found so much nearer home, in a comparatively mild climate, and among a people proverbially kind to strangers, and generally as well-informed and as companionable as any in Scotland.

NORTH RONALDSHA.*—THE REV. ADAM WHITE, MINISTER.

Extent, &c.—THE island of North Ronaldsha, the most northerly of the Orkney group, is separated from the island of Sanday by a frith of about three miles broad where narrowest; and lies upwards of thirty miles from Kirkwall, nearly in the direction of north-east. In form, the island is very irregular, but never exceeds two miles in breadth, and, in length, measures about five miles from the two extreme points, though there are scarcely four between the two most remote dwelling-houses. It is calculated to contain about four square miles. On the south and east sides of the island, where the beach is for the most part low, shelving and sandy, the shape is probably much altered from what it originally was, as a considerable extent of ground seems to have been gained from the sea by the gradual accumulation of sand, which is every winter drifted up from the beach, and spreads over the grounds above. The west and north-west sides are rocky and abrupt, though not very elevated, and there is often such a heavy surf breaking upon the rocks, that the spray renders the land, to the distance of some hundred yards, quite black and sterile. Towards the north-east, the shores of the island are, in some measure, protected by two reefs of rocks, called the altars of Lina and the Shelky Skerry.

Topographical Appearance.—The general surface of the island is rather flat, having only a gentle rise toward the middle. It is much above the average of the other islands in point of dryness, and, with the exception of a small strip about the middle, and an edging round the shore, kept as a lair for sheep, it is all in a state of cultivation. Its superior dryness it owes very much to the large

* Drawn up by the Rev. Adam White, Minister of the parish.

mixture of shell-sand found in its soil, and partly also to there being proper declivities for the water discharging itself into the sea.

There are but three bays; the South bay, Ness bay (on the south-east side), and Linket bay (on the east.) None of these are safe anchorages, and, excepting in mild weather, no vessel can remain upon the coast. The chief headlands are Twingas, Stromness, Brides-ness, and Dennis-ness.

Zoology.—The fish which are found on the shores or in the neighbouring seas, are such as are common to all Orkney. Those which are most frequently caught for home consumption, are siliks and cuthes,—the coal-fish, I believe, in the first and second years of their existence; and those which are caught for the market, are lobsters and cod. The Shelky Skerry mentioned above is much frequented by the great seal or *Phoca major*. There are always some about it; but in winter, great numbers occasionally arrive from the north seas, and sometimes bring forth their young upon the rock. The islanders are on the watch, and often secure the strangers by going out in a midnight expedition with clubs, on which occasions they have been known to kill as many as three score. A successful expedition of this kind is a matter of no small rejoicing, as a good supply of oil is obtained from the seal.

A great variety of birds frequent the island, but none of them are of a rare description, unless perhaps the red-necked phalarope (*Tringa hyperborea*), which visits North Ronaldsha in considerable numbers about the middle of June, and departs early in September. It makes its nest among the reeds about the lochs, and lays four eggs of a dingy olive colour with brown spots. It is pretty tame, and allows its motions, which are very graceful, to be observed at a small distance. After north-east gales of some continuance, many strange birds are occasionally found, such as the goatsucker, the golden-crested wren, the cuckoo, and the snowy owl.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

The island is wholly the property of William Traill, Esq. of Woodwick, who, however, does not reside upon it. It appears anciently to have been divided into three nearly equal parts,—the mounds which formed the division, and which are of a considerable height and breadth, being still almost uninjured. The only other things which bear the appearance of antiquity, are the remains (all under ground) of an old castle, called still Burriou Castle, and a large erect flat stone, rising ten or twelve feet perpendicular

above the ground, much the same in size and appearance as those found in other parts of Orkney, especially in the parish of Firth and Stenness. Concerning the one here, there is no tradition either as to its original use or the period of its erection.

III.—POPULATION.

Habits of the People.—The customs of the people are much the same as those prevalent in other parts of Orkney. One only seems to be quite peculiar, and is almost uniformly observed at funerals,—the nearest of kin present being always expected to throw upon the coffin the first spadeful of earth. In the case of near relatives, this comes to be a very painful service; but it is regarded as a sacred duty, and is not declined even by the most afflicted widow. What may have been the origin of the practice, it is perhaps impossible to ascertain; but now, it is evidently considered as a proper mark of tenderness and respect towards the deceased.

It is reported in the former Statistical Account, that the population was then (1791) 420,—211 males and 209 females. By the census taken in 1831, the population was 522,—247 males and 275 females; exhibiting an increase in forty years of 102 inhabitants. The amount in April 1836 did not exceed 480, which is owing to a new division of the lands having been made in 1832, when the number of houses was reduced, and about eighty persons left the island.

The total number of families,	112
inhabited houses,	85
The yearly average of births for the last five years, (not having data to go farther back),	18
The yearly average of marriages,	3
deaths,	6½
Number of unmarried men above 50 years of age,	0
widowers,	3
unmarried women above 45,	5

These facts will be found to speak very highly for the general healthfulness and prosperity of the population of the island. There is not a single person at the age of fifty, who has not felt himself able, or at least thought he was so, to support a wife and family, all who have reached that age being married; and what is perhaps still more extraordinary, out of the whole number, three only are widowers, and these very old men, while there are but five females, who may be said to be without hope of marriage. Then look to the small number of deaths as compared with the number of births, the one being little more than one-third of the other; and what is most extraordinary of all, the small number of deaths in proportion to the whole population. The rate of mortality, judging from the last

five years, is only 1 in 77. The average number of the population in each year has been, as nearly as possible, 495 ; and even taking 7 as the average number of deaths, it makes the rate of mortality $70\frac{1}{2}$. This almost exceeds credibility ; but there is one thing to be mentioned in explanation of it, which is, that there are some persons, almost every year, leaving the island in quest of employment, who seldom return to reside in it, while there are none coming from other places to reside here. Consequently, the number of deaths in the island will scarcely give a correct representation of the deaths of those who belong to it. This, however, could not affect the rate of mortality very much ; and by employing a different method for ascertaining the rate, taking the average age of the persons who have died during the period in question, it is still brought up to 62. The facts will fully substantiate this proportion. The people are uncommonly healthy and robust. Excepting a very few who die in infancy,—and these seldom exceeding one in the twelvemonth,—deaths among the young are exceedingly rare. By far the greatest number of deaths take place on those who have reached sixty-five or upwards ; and yet comparatively few outlive eighty. Occasional instances of very great longevity will be found no test of the general healthfulness of the population, or of the average term of life ; and it is precisely among a population like that of this island, that these attain their maximum, where all are accustomed to laborious occupations and exposure to every kind of weather, which tend, in the first instance, to render the bodily frame hardy and robust, and, at the same time, prevent it from reaching an extreme old age.

There is a great deal of native politeness and much kindness of heart among the people ; but in domestic comforts, they are certainly far behind the general run of peasantry in the southern districts ;—not that they are generally more deficient in the materials of comfort,—for every house almost has two or more cows, a pig, several sheep, and abundance of poultry. But there is a great want of neatness and cleanliness in the management of household matters, so that their condition has nothing of the tidy and comfortable appearance of what is now to be met with in houses of a like description in the south. And for any effectual improvement in this respect, there are two formidable barriers in the way, which are not likely soon to be overcome. The women have much work to do out of doors, a species of work, too, which peculiarly unfits them for the neat management of house-

hold concerns, such as cutting sea-weed for kelp, carrying up ware for manure on their backs, and spreading it on the land; and besides, the construction of their houses is very unfavourable, which are not only not plastered but not even built with lime, and seldom have any semblance of a chimney even upon the roof,—while, for the sake of having each part of the house supplied with an equal share of heat, the fire-place is most commonly planted in the middle of the floor. The smoke consequently finds its way in every direction, and to keep either the walls or the utensils in a state of proper cleanliness, is next to impossible. Yet the present form of houses is much superior to what was possessed by the last generation; and this form may soon perhaps give way to another in a higher state of improvement.

The greatest natural discomfort, however, under which the inhabitants of this island labour, is the scarcity of fuel. There are no peats in it, nor any to be found nearer than the Island of Eday, which is fifteen miles distant. Of course, very few are able to supply themselves with fuel of that description; a considerable number get a partial supply; making up the deficiency with cow-dung converted into what are called *scons*, and the stronger kind of sea-weed. Many can afford nothing but the two last, and in cold weather they are often in a very comfortless condition. This is an evil beyond remedy, as there is not the least chance of the bulk of the population ever being able to lay in a sufficient provision either of coals or of peats.

There are no blind, deaf, or dumb in the island, and but two idiots, and one fatuous person.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

The island is altogether of an agricultural character. With the exception of two weavers and one tailor, there are none who do not spend the chief part of their time in the labours of the field. The subdivision of labour is here only in its infancy. Most of the men are able to sew, and at leisure hours make or repair their every-day clothes. The wool, out of which these are made, is all carded and spun on the little wheel by the women, who are for the most part exceedingly industrious. And besides the three regular men of handicraft above-mentioned, there are a good many who work occasionally as smiths, carpenters, and boat-builders; but they have all farms or shares in farms, to which they chiefly look for their subsistence; and even the three who are the most exclusive in their employments, always shear in harvest and go

out to some of the fisheries in summer. This mixture of employments is not favourable either to great skill or to much profit in any particular department; but with such a limited field, and especially surrounded with so many who have both the leisure and the inclination in most things to help themselves, it is scarcely possible for any one to gain a sufficient livelihood by confining himself to any single occupation.

In the last Statistical Account, ninety-four persons were stated to be engaged in agriculture, and nineteen in fishing. This division, however, was formed, not because there was a complete distinction between the two classes of persons, but because their principal support was derived from these respective occupations. Judging by the outlay of time, all of them might be designated as agriculturists,—as, during eight months in the year, their main employment is connected with husbandry. But in this, younger brothers and sometimes other relatives give their work for their food, while for every thing besides they must be indebted to the lobster and herring-fisheries; and these, therefore, may with propriety be named from the occupation which yields them most advantage. There are also about a dozen employed as farm-servants, and two men who are called millers, though a large part of their time is spent otherwise, the one as a smith, the other as a carpenter.

These are the only divisions that subsist among the inhabitants of this island. There is no merchant, no baker, no shoemaker, no innkeeper; and the consolation of being without the last, is almost enough to reconcile one to the inconvenience arising from the absence of the rest. This is an inconvenience felt only by the few, who are in the habit of using things, which the island itself does not furnish, and a little care and experience soon teaches them how to provide against it.

Agriculture.—The cultivated part of the island has never been exactly measured; but about a fourth only of the whole surface is waste, the greater part of which is the portion along the west and north-west side, which is rendered sterile by the spray. This portion may therefore be regarded as hopelessly sterile. But the small tract in the interior, which is still unreclaimed, is now divided off, and promises in a few years to be all in a state of cultivation.

Rental.—The whole rental of the island is nearly L. 500.

The sort of farms and the style of farming which prevail here, are rather of a primitive nature. With the exception of one farm, which pays a rent of about L. 80, there is none that exceeds L. 25,

and the greater part are much below this. It was the policy of the landlords in this country to subdivide the land, and encourage the increase of population as much as possible, for the purpose of obtaining a sufficient number of labourers to manufacture the kelp; and now when they would fain adopt an opposite policy, and enlarge the size of their farms, the excess of population meets them with an insuperable difficulty. Until a few years ago, indeed, there was no such thing as a separate and distinct farm in this island; it was divided into five townships or districts, each containing a considerable number of houses scattered up and down, amongst which the land, both pasture and arable, was equally divided; and that none might have the advantage of another, not only was every plot of arable ground divided, but an exchange made every year,—so that improvement was impossible, and the industrious had no encouragement for their industry. In 1832, this system was wisely broken up, and the whole island squared off into little farms, lying contiguous to the several houses. A new and higher scale of rents was, at the same time, agreed upon, which rendered the measure unpopular; but considerable allowances were for some years to be made for improvements in drains and enclosures, of which the more industrious have so far availed themselves, as both greatly to improve their farms, and to pay their rent without much difficulty. But excepting on the larger farm, and partially on one or two others, there is no regular rotation kept up. The land is alternately cropped with bear and oats—a mode of cultivation which is not likely to be soon abandoned, as it is much favoured by the large quantities of sea-weed drifted to the shore, and almost rendered necessary by the demand for winter fodder to their cattle. They can consequently grow nothing but the inferior kinds of grain, bear, or bigg, and the small grey or black oat. About 1500 bolls of the former are raised, and 1200 of the latter; and of these quantities nearly one-third is exported. The bear commonly weighs 44 lbs. per bushel; after turnips it has been found to weigh as high as 48 lbs.; and the oats are generally from 25 to 28 lbs.

Although, however, the old system of alternate cropping is still prevalent, great improvements in farming have taken place during the last twelve years, chiefly owing to the good example and judicious management of the gentleman, (Mr Robert Scarth,) who, during that period, has been acting as factor on the property. There was then but one cart in the island, which was never used,

as the horse showed some disinclination to go into it ; only one two-stilted plough, no inclosures, and both horses and cattle were exceedingly small and trifling. The latter have been much improved by crosses from Dunrobin bulls, and are now equal to the average show of cattle in Orkney. The horses are also greatly improved in size and strength. Enclosures are to be seen on every side, completed or in progress. Every house is furnished with a neat and well-made plough, commonly of wood, but sometimes also of iron—a valuable substitute, indeed, for the old one-stilted shapeless thing they used before, which rather broke up the ground than turned it over. And a still greater advantage is derived from the introduction of carts, with one or more of which every house is now supplied. Before, every thing had to be carried on horse-back, either in sacks or in a sort of wooden creels, which they used for bringing up their ware to the land, and such other articles as could not be put into sacks. In this way an immense deal of time was lost, which they can now save and turn to good account. So that, in an agricultural point of view, the island at present stands upon a far better footing, than it did twelve years ago.

The only other thing to be noticed under this head is the condition of the sheep, which is just as bad as can well be conceived. With the exception of a very few kept on the largest farm for killing, they are all shut out by a high dike, which encompasses the whole island to the mere shores, and a little bit of waste ground left for them here and there. Their sole food almost, is the seaweed that happens to be drifted ashore, and as this comes most plentifully during winter, that is their fattening season, especially before the cold weather of the new year sets in. They are chiefly kept for the wool, from which all that is worn in every-day clothing is manufactured ; but every house has a practice of killing one on yule or Christmas eve, which goes by the name of the yule sheep. And on the forenoon of that day, there is a great gathering, at a certain place, of all the men and sheep in the island, for the selection of the several victims.

Fisheries.—The only fisheries that are carried on with a view to the market, are those of lobster, herring, and cod. In the first, six boats, each having two men, are engaged every year from about the beginning of May to the middle of June. The fish are sold to a London Company, whose welled smacks call for them regularly once a week, at a place about ten miles distant, in the

adjoining island of Sanday. The price given varies from 3d. to 3½d per fish: and it is reckoned a fair fishing, when each boat catches about 600 fish.

To the herring-fishing fourteen boats are furnished by the island, all above 24 and some of them 28 feet keel. They have been built by two workmen in the island, who are in a great measure self-taught; and they are considered the strongest and finest boats in Orkney. They are all held in shares, each the property of four men, who man them; and sometimes a young person is hired in as a fifth hand. As boatmen, they are not deficient either in skill or boldness; but they have never been very successful in the fishery, and the last two years have been so unfavourable, that many have not gained as much as is sufficient to cover their outlay. The station they frequent is in Stronsay, the only one for the cure of herrings in the north Isles of Orkney.

Until the summer of the year 1836, the cod-fishing had scarcely ever been tried here; the people having usually been employed in making kelp, during the part of the season most suitable for that.

The greatest drawback the island has to contend with, in carrying on any fishery that requires large boats, is the want of a safe anchorage. The men are obliged to draw up their boats in the prospect of bad weather, or shift them from one side of the island to another,—both of which are the cause of great trouble and inconvenience.

Manufactures.—The only kind of manufacture carried on in the island, is kelp. As many as 120 tons have been made in one year, though the average would not exceed 100. To get even that quantity requires considerable pushing on the part of the landlord; and now that he has no inducement to do so, the average will be still less. The kelp from this island had always a high character in the market, and has commanded a sale every year as yet, though latterly at very low prices. But as long as it can be sold without any actual loss, it will still be an object for the landlord to get it made; as nearly one-third of the rental is made up by the allowances given for the manufacture of this article, which, but for this, would remain unpaid. The allowance given is at the rate of L. 2, 2s. per ton. A man with his family will make a ton and a-half in ordinary seasons. It has been lately discovered that the kelp made of drift sea-weed, is valuable for the iodine it contains, and for that purpose is worth L. 4 per ton.

But it is only about a sixth part of the whole kelp of this island, that is made of drift sea-weed.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

This island had always been a separate parish, until lately combined with other two, Cross and Burness, in the neighbouring island of Sanday, under one charge. The clergymen having to travel a distance of not less than four miles by land and six by sea, it was impossible there could be regular ministrations in the island, or any proper pastoral superintendence established. Indeed, as to all the benefits of a regular ministry, the people might be said to be total strangers; and being besides nearly all on a level among themselves, no one, from his superior wealth or station in society, to command an influence over the rest, they afforded an example of a people in the common ranks of life, very much left to their own discretion. There were a few things, however, to temper and modify the natural result of such a state of things. Each district had its elder, who was commonly a person of respectability and worth, and was allowed a considerable weight in the settlement of disputes. Then, proudly elevated above these stood the *bailie*, the acknowledged head of all the natives, and looked up to with no small respect; who was appointed to the honourable distinction by the landlord, and was generally chosen with impartiality. The last one, who died only two years ago, and with whom the office also expired, was a person of great reading for one in his rank of life, and was in the habit pretty regularly of reading a sermon to the people on Sunday, and conducting a Sabbath school. This certainly was productive of some good, though not so much as might be supposed,—the authority being still wanting, which was necessary to enforce, on the part of the people, a proper attention. Besides these authorities, the factor occasionally resided on the island, and an annual visit was paid by the landlord; but their stay was too short and irregular to have much influence in moulding the habits and characters of the people.

In 1829, a manse was erected on the island, under the Commissioners for Planting New Churches in the Islands and Highlands, and in the following year a clergyman was ordained. The island was then virtually erected into a separate parochial charge, though it was not constituted such till the summer of 1833. Great joy was testified by the people at the settlement of a minister among them.

There used to be a good deal of pilfering, when a shipwreck

took place,—which was not looked upon as proper stealing. Many persons thought themselves at liberty to appropriate goods of that description, who were never known to steal an article from their neighbours. A good deal had been done to check the evil by the vigorous measures of Mr Scarth; but the discipline of the church was required to put an effectual stop to it. A very different feeling now prevails upon the subject. Shipwrecked property has come to be regarded as personal property; and people who were once in the habit of taking it without shame or remorse, express openly the change that has taken place in their views. At the last two or three wrecks, scarcely any thing was stolen.

During the winter season, it was customary to carry on a perpetual succession of merry-makings, called balls. Every marriage, was the occasion of two—the bride's friends being at the expense of the wedding-feast, and the best-man feeling himself called upon to give *the back-feast*, which occurred a month or two after the wedding, and in which he was assisted by contributions from some of the other young men in the immediate neighbourhood. Besides these regular meetings, a great many more were added to fill up the void. Their moral effect was decidedly pernicious in various ways; but the kirk-session having interfered, little or no excess of this kind takes place.

By the same interference smuggling may now be said to be almost, if not completely abolished.

In general habits, the people are, now at least, remarkably decent and sober.

Education.—There is a school in the island supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.