UNITED PARISHES OF
SANDSTING AND AITHSTING.

PRESBYTERY OF LERWICK, SYNOD OF SHETLAND.

THE REV. JOHN BRYDEN, MINISTER.

I.—Topography and Natural History.

Though the Islands of Hialtland, variously named Hethland, Schetland, Shotland, Shetland, or Zetland, were assigned in wadsett to the Crown of Scotland nearly five hundred years ago, little more is known of them, generally speaking, than if they had remained, to the present day, a pertinent of the Crown of Denmark.

That the present inhabitants are of Scandinavian origin, many circumstances tend to prove. The historian, Torphæus, asserts, that these islands were discovered about three hundred and eighty-five years before the birth of our Saviour; but that they might have been inhabited from a much earlier period.

When Harold Harfagre, King of Norway, landed in Shetland in 875, he found "Papæ;" but these might have presided over the worship of Odin, and directed the rites paid to the Scandinavian god. It is probable that the Christian religion was not attempted to be introduced among the natives till about the beginning of the tenth century; and even then, its progress was very slow. For the Earls, who ruled with despotic sway, and who seldom acknowledged any superior, longer than they could renounce their allegiance with impunity, uniformly opposed the introduction of Christianity; till a circumstance took place, about the middle of the tenth century, which brought about its reception and establishment. The King of Norway happening to touch at the islands, invited the reigning Earl and his family on board of his ship, with the determination, it would appear, of converting him and his people to the Christian faith, by argument or force. The invitation being accepted, the King gave the Earl his choice, either to embrace the Christian religion, and be baptised, and thus secure his friendship, or to have his Earldom wrested from him,

and himself and family put to the sword. The Earl, for a time, hesitated as to the choice he should make; but, seeing the sword about to be plunged into the breast of his son, parental tenderness overcame his scruples; he renounced the worship of Odin, professed himself a Christian, and was baptised. His people soon after followed his example.

Shetland, while subject to the Danish government, was governed, in all civil matters, by a judge called "the Grand Foude;" and hence the country was designated by the name of a "Foudrie." This Foudrie was divided into a number of small districts, over each of which was appointed a subordinate foude, or magistrate. To him was committed the power of judging and deciding in cases of smaller moment, of keeping the peace and of regulating weights and measures. In the discharge of these duties, he was assisted by inferior officers, called "Ranselmen," and "Lawrightmen." Whoever considered themselves aggrieved by the decision of the local foude and his officers, had the power of appeal to the Grand Foude, who, at his "lawting," assisted by the "Udalmen," made laws, and determined in all cases of life and death.

After the islands were annexed to the Crown of Scotland in 1470, in the reign of James III., their government was usually bestowed on some Court favourite, who made the most of their precarious possession, and whose sway was generally marked with cruelty and oppression. Though these rulers were frequently changed, the poor islanders for a long time benefited little by any change which took place. And, while writhing under the yoke of the oppressor, the knowledge that they were deprived of the means of redress, rendered that yoke still more galling. Even when subject to a milder sway, the acts of former oppressors continued to be felt; and many exactions, equally unjust in themselves, and contrary to express stipulations, were made, and continued to be made; these, by prescription, having now become legal demands.

Name.—These united parishes seem to have taken their name from the two bailiwicks or courts of justice held in them; the one on the Ting or Taing, (a neck of land jutting into the sea, in the vicinity of Sand), hence Sand's Ting; the other similarly situated near Aith; hence Aith's Ting.

Under the chief foude or judge, there were inferior foudes or judges, whose province seems to have been, to hold their courts in places situated at a distance from the principal foudry, or high court, to which appeals were carried. The appointment

of sheriff put an end to these courts; but, it must be admitted, that the municipal regulations by which their proceedings were conducted, were well calculated for preserving good order in the islands.

Situation, Boundary, and Extent.—These united parishes are situated in latitude 60° 30′, and form the bounds of one ministry. They lie nearly in the middle of the mainland of Shetland, and are bounded on the east, by that part of the parish of Tingwall, called Wiesdale; on the south and south-west, by the Atlantic Ocean; on the north-west, by the parish of Walls; on the north, by a large arm of the sea called the Minn, or Swarback's Minn, separating them from Muckle Roe, an island belonging to the parish of Delting; and, on the north-east, they march with Delting on the Mainland. As no regular survey of the parishes has been made, or actual measurement of their extent taken, their dimensions cannot be stated with perfect accuracy; but their length may be fairly estimated at 10 miles, and their breadth at 8 miles.

Topographical Appearances.—These parishes are of an oblong figure, and their greatest length is from north to south, or rather from north north-west to south south-east. They abound in knolls, or rising grounds; but there are no hills of any considerable height in them, neither is there, in any one place, any considerable extent of low level land. The cultivated lands are generally bounded on the one side by the sea, while the occupiers of lands, which are farther inland, have an easy access to the sea, none of them being more distant from it than a mile. All the rising grounds are covered with heather, interspersed with patches of green, on a mossy soil, while the nesses or peninsulas are generally green. The parishes abound in moss, which, in many places, is very deep, and which affords abundance of excellent fuel for the people, though it yields not much good pasture for the cattle. The shore on the west side, where it is washed by the Atlantic Ocean, is bold, and in the rocks are many caves, to which the wild pigeons resort.

Climate.—A great deal of rain falls, and the air is generally very damp. Notwithstanding, however, the excess of moisture, the country cannot by any means be considered as unhealthy. Though the deep moss, which is the general soil in these parishes, may emit copious exhalations, these do not appear to carry with them any contagious miasmata. But when these exhalations are condensed and converted into hoar-frost, they often do very serious damage

to the crops. If the corns are filling, and the potato haulms are green, they never recover.

Heavy and long-continued rains frequently fall in every season of the year, but more especially in winter and spring. The heaviest rains are from the south and south-west. Yet, while the climate is justly characterised as variable and uncertain, the best proof that these changes are not prejudicial to the health is, that many of the inhabitants enjoy this blessing almost uninterruptedly till an advanced age. I may mention that there are eighteen persons now living in the parish, whose united ages amount to 1552.

Voes or Bays.—The principal voes or bays on the north-west and west are, Gruting, Airs of Selivoe, and Olla's Voes, which lead in between the south point of the Island of Vaila, in the parish of Walls, and the well known land-mark, the burgh of Culswick. The entrance is narrow, but deep; and within, there is nothing to fear,—these three voes or bays being completely landlocked. They are also very extensive, capable of affording anchorage to ships of any burthen and in any number.

Several miles to the southward and eastward, along a bold shore, are the two voes of Skeld. The more westerly voe opens to the south, and in it vessels seldom come to an anchor. The entrance to the more easterly voe is narrow, but inside it enlarges into a fine bason with excellent anchorage.

By rounding a pretty high headland a little farther east, the entrance into Selivoe and Sand-Voe opens. These voes are separated from each other by a small island called Kirk-holm, and a neck of land called Kirk-ness. The more westerly is Selivoe, (which, in the Norwegian language, signifies Herring-voe), which extends a considerable way inland. In any part of it, a vessel may ride in perfect safety. Not even a swell from the ocean is felt here; and if the anchors and cables are good, the bottom being a stiff blue clay, blow high, blow low, nothing is to be feared.

Sand-Voe, on the contrary, is so very open to the south-west, and the ground so very loose, that no vessel would anchor in it unless in fine summer weather, and would hardly risk lying in it over night.

Leaving Selivoe, crossing the mouth of Sand-Voe, and passing through a narrow sound between the peninsula Foreness, and the small island Foreholm, Sandsound-Voe opens on the left, and winds in a northerly direction between five and six miles inland.

It takes different names according to the different places bordering on it; such as Sandsound-Voe, Tresta-Voe, Bixter-Voe, &c.

Entering in from the west, through St Magnus's Bay, and on the north part of Aithsting, is the voe or bay of West Burrafirth, opening to the north, an unsafe harbour, and seldom taken by any vessel. Proceeding east, round the Nien or Ness of Brindister, a fine voe opens called the Voe of Brindister, from a village of that name near its mouth. As it extends inland several miles in a south-westerly direction, it takes the name of Unifirth-Voe, from a village of that name situated on its west bank. It is here studded with several small green holms or islands, and its shores yield the richest, and, for the same extent, the greatest quantity of sea weed for kelp, which is perhaps in the country.

In proceeding a little farther east, and rounding a pretty high headland called the Ness of Nunsburgh, the Voe of Clousta opens, running inland about one mile and a-half in a southerly and south-easterly direction. This, as well as the Voe of Brindister, affords excellent anchorage, and in both, vessels can ride in the greatest safety. The west end of the Island of Vementry, with some small grazing holms, lie outside, and in a great measure cover the entrance into this voe. A vessel leaving Clousta Voe and sailing east, must steer outside of the Island of Vementry and through the Minn or Swarback's Minn. There is a passage inside of the island, that is, between the island and the mainland; but it is too narrow and shallow unless for boats.

A little farther east, is the Island of Papa Little; passing between it and a part of the mainland called Aithsness, Aith's-Voe opens to the southward, and East Burrafirth-Voe due east. Aith's-Voe is a very extensive inland harbour, while East Burrafirth-Voe is very small. Both, however, are perfectly safe.

These are the principal voes or harbours in Sandsting and Aithsting. They are excellent in themselves, but their situation renders them comparatively of little benefit either to the public or to individuals. Several of them, however, abound with the largest and finest oysters which are to be found in the kingdom. There are also many mussel scaaps or beds in them, which are used as bait for the small fishing; and in the deeper parts of the voes, is to be found a large mussel called a yoag, which is used as bait by vessels in the cod-fishing.

Islands.—The principal islands are, Vementry and Papa Little. There are several other small islands or holms, which are capable

of grazing one or two cows during the summer, or a few sheep; and some of them yielding grass barely sufficient for supporting an eil-mark* sheep for a few months, in the summer and harvest.

Vementry is a large island, green on the east end, and covered with heather on the west. It is considered a rich island, and is capable of grazing about twenty score of sheep, besides a proportion of black-cattle. It is at present stocked with a heavy breed of sheep, generally of the white-faced kind. It yields a yearly rent to the proprietor, Mr Gifford of Busta, of upwards of L. 60 Sterling. About one hundred years ago, it was purchased, stocked with fifteen score of sheep, for L. 30 Sterling; a striking proof how much money has been depreciated, while lands and produce have risen in value. There are three merks of rental land in the island, which was formerly cropped, but which, for these few years back, have been mostly converted into pasture. The greater part of the sheep stock are in steelbow.† The island pays of stipend to the minister, 16s. 6d. Sterling.

The Island of Papa Little is neither so rich in quality, nor so extensive as Vementry. It also consists of three merks of rental land, which is cropped by the tenant. It will carry about ten score of sheep, which, till lately, were of the native breed, but are now begun to be crossed with the white and black-faced kinds. But the tenant is of opinion that the island, owing to the want of a sufficiency of good food, is incapable of carrying a heavy breed of sheep. The rental land is of a very good quality, but the pasture ground has a very parched appearance, consisting principally of stinted heather. In addition to the sheep stock, the tenant keeps about fifteen head of black-cattle, young and old. The island was some time since held in steelbow, but it now pays a yearly rent of L. 20 to the proprietor, Sir Arthur Nicolson. It pays of stipend to the minister, 13s. 6d. per annum. The sheep in Vementry and Papa Little are free from the scab.

Springs.—There are innumerable springs in the parish, of pure and wholesome water, and also many which have passed over bog-iron, and which are strongly impregnated with its tint and taste.

Lochs.—There are no fewer than 140 lochs in the parish,

* Eil-mark, a beast which no dike will turn, and which cannot be kept out of the corn.

† Steelbow; that is, the tenant receives a certain number of sheep, cows, or horses, for the use and profits of which he pays a certain sum per head yearly, and at the expiry of his lease is bound to leave an equal number.

some of which are of very considerable extent. They are generally skirted with green, and several of them are studded with islets or holms, on which numerous wild fowls build their nests. The water is very dark-coloured, owing to the mossy nature of the soil through which the rivulets run, which feed the lochs.

Geology and Mineralogy.—Quartzose gneiss abounds in the hill of Russness, on the east side of the voe of Sandsound, and to the southward of a village of that name. It contains a great quantity of quartz and of light-coloured mica. The line of bearing may be stated on an average from south 12° west, to north 12° east. The dip is to the west, at angles most frequently from 70° and upwards. The position of the strata is sometimes vertical.

The rocks in Foreness (a peninsula to the southward of Innersand, and lying between Sand-voe and Sandsound-voe,) partake of the common description of gneiss, the felspar being in excess, the other ingredients being present, and the strata traversed by small veins of granite.

At Berfield, (a little above Sandsound, on the east side of the voe,) talc takes the place of mica, not only in the gneiss, but also in the granitic veins.

A little to the northward of Innersand, on the west side of the voe of Sandsound, a quarry of chromate of iron was opened some years ago. But though several tons of it have at different times been sent to market, the quality of it, and the returns made, did not warrant a continued working of it. I have seen several large imbedded masses of chromate of iron at Garden, in Aithsting. These are the only places in the parish, where it has been discovered. A little to the north of the chromate quarry, limestone makes its appearance.

At a burn called Tactagill, about a mile to the eastward of Tresta, which is situated on the eastern bank of a continuation of Sandsound-voe, here called Tresta-voe, a great quantity of porcelain earth, of a yellowish white colour, is to be found. Rocks of gneiss, of which white quartz is one of the component parts, blended with talc and felspar, extend from Reawickness to Kirkness, and the west shore of Bixter-voe, being a continuation of Sandsound voe. The directions of the strata are from south 15° west, to north 15° east, and from south 20° west, to north 20° east. Several interstrata of limestone make their appearance, in a line of direction nearly parallel to that of the strata among which they occur. Limestone appears in Kirkholm, Kirkness, (both on

the east side of Selivoe,) and on the west side of Bixter voe. The predominating rocks, in a line from Reawick, along the west bank of Selivoe to the west bank of Bixter voe, are red granite, which comprehends all Sandsting to the west. It contains veins of quartz, and, of course, very red felspar.

The quartz rock of Aithsting is of a bluish grey colour, and presents something of a wedge-like shape. The two bounding lines diverging from a point in the island of Papa Little, are continued in a direction of south 60° west, to the westward; whilst the other extends in a straight line south 32° west, to the head of Bixter-voe, when it first comes in contact with the granite of Sandsting. The quartz admits into its composition so much felspar, that in decomposed specimens, where this ingredient is particularly demonstrated, it is sufficiently distinguished from the sandstone of newer formations, which it otherwise resembles. Siliceous matter is, however, the prevalent substance. In the vicinity of Aithsness, it contains small sparing portions of clayslate, by which it becomes the grauwacke of some authors. At Papa Little, Aithsness, Clousta-voe, Nunsburgh, and West Burrafirth, the rock is, in several places, varied by the presence of small angular portions of red felspar, and passes into felspar porphyry. At Aithsness, it contains greenstone as well as limestone, in the form of thin beds or veins. It is also impregnated with much ferruginous, in the shape of an oxide. In some places, are to be observed veins of sparry iron-ore.

The quartz rock generally consists of minute grains firmly united together, and possessing semicrystalline forms. In this respect it differs from a particular variety of sandstone found on the east side of the island, where the texture is much looser, and where the grains show numerous marks of attrition. South of the hill of Aithsness, and at a few other places, the particles of quartz diminish so much in size, that the rock appears of a compact structure.

The stratification of the quartz rock seems remarkably connected with the partial occurrence of mica, whilst its line of direction does not follow that of other mountain masses of Shetland, which have been represented as stretching from south by west, to north by east. On the contrary, it extends from south 60° east, to north 60° west, from east to west, and from south 70° west, to north 70° east. The dip is at various points of the compass, while the angle of inclination is, as appears in an horizontal section,

from 40° to 45°. In several places, the quartz is decidedly unstratified, and yields to blows of the hammer equally in various directions; but whether stratified or unstratified, it is resolved by other seams into polyedrous masses of various magnitudes.

At the north voe of Clousta, there occurs, resting on the quartz, a small roundish conglomerated mass of granite, felspar, and quartz, scarcely, perhaps, more than 150 yards in diameter; a gradual transition of one rock into the other being observable at the junction. A few of the conglomerate strata next to those of the quartz, range at a common angle of 45°. But crossing the strata for a few yards only, they gradually acquire an inclination with the horizon of only 10°, and maintaining this position, they are terminated. Now, there is every reason to suppose, that the lower edges of the strata of the conglomerate rock are in contact with the surface formed by the upper edges of quartz. This change of inclination, therefore, from 45° to 10°, can be satisfactorily accounted for, on the supposition that the strata had acquired an addition of new matter in their descent, which may either consist in an increased thickness of the strata, or in an accession of new strata. It is thus that the increased accumulation of matter which the strata may possibly have received in proportion to their depth, would produce an elevation of the uppermost strata.

The quartz rock of Aithsting passes into the granite rock of Sandsting, at the head of Bixter-voe, by gradually losing its homogeneous appearance, and by its ingredients being interspersed in a distinct form of larger grains or concretions, until the rock is at length wholly composed of semicrystalline portions of quartz and felspar. Occasionally, however, an alternation takes place of the two rocks. To the north of Bixter-voe, the quartz rock is contiguous to gneiss; but the junction is, for the most part, much concealed by a deep moss. At Braganess, (to the north-west of Aithsness,) the line of demarcation between the two rocks is perfectly complete, no transition taking place.

The quartz rock is elevated into numerous irregular ridges, not above 600 or 700 feet high, running from east to west, and intersected by valleys.

Much of the surface of the quartz rock is concealed by a deep peat moss; but everywhere, a great display of bog iron is presented.

The strata of gneiss which, from the island of Papa Little along the north coast of Aithsting, for a distance of upwards of five

miles due west, are so associated with hornblende slate, and intimately combined with the particles of hornblende, that Dr Hibbert has given to the rock the name of hornblendic gneiss. "In most specimens," says he, "which we examine, the hornblende is either openly manifested, or is in such an intimate state of union with the felspar, as to impart to this ingredient of the rock a greenish tinge." The other ingredients of quartz, felspar, and mica are, as in all other varieties of gneiss, described to be found in very different proportions.

The gneiss, at the Nien or Ness of Brindister, is traversed with a vein of granite of very considerable size, being not less than 45 feet broad, and running from south-west by south to north-east by north. At Vementry, the veins of granite are particularly tortuous, and ramify in the most remarkable manner.

Besides granite, veins of quartz, compact felspar, felspar-porphyry, greenstone, or sienitic greenstone, are often seen. Thin interstrata, of very pure limestone, are to be seen at Braganess, West Burrafirth, and other places. The granitic veins which traverse them, are often diverted from their course in the most remarkable manner, showing great signs of distortion.

The presence of beds of hornblende slate, or of intermixed particles of hornblende, has a strong tendency to disturb the strata among which they appear. On this account, any general statement of the most prevalent line of direction would be impossible. The direction, which may possibly be the most prevalent, has been found to be from south-west by south to north-east by north. The dip was mostly to the west, at angles from 50° to 70°.

The relations of the strata are much concealed by the sea. At Vementry and Braganess, the line of direction stretches from the bluish-grey quartz rock, near Aithsness, to the granite of Vementry; consequently, the strata are opposed to the bounding lines of each of these masses, at various angles. More westerly, they only meet, under similar circumstances, the quartz rocks of this district. The invasions which take place, in the form of dikes or veins, from the contiguous mountains of granite, both in the south end of the Island of Meikle Roe and in the west end of Vementry, are very large, and are particularly seen near the junction of the gneiss and granite in the neighbourhood of the dwelling-house in Vementry.

I have frequently found, on the shore, pieces of pumice stone, which, from its small specific gravity, readily floats on the water:

these specimens, it is probable, were driven here from the volcanic rocks of Iceland.

I have also picked up, at different times, several Molucca beans, the production of the West Indies; and have seen some of the larger ones of them converted into snuff-boxes, having a top of lead or pewter affixed to them.*

The soil, in a very few places, is sandy; in some, clay; in others, a light brown mould; but, in the greater part of the parish, it consists of a deep black moss. In cold seasons, particularly in the month of May and beginning of June, the grub worm often does great damage to the corns, by destroying the roots. In 1829, I sowed a small quantity of buck wheat on the glebe, which presented a very fine appearance, till it was in blossom, when the grub attacked it, and did not leave a single stalk.

Zoology.—The fresh water lakes abound with that species of trout usually known by the name of the burn-trout, some of which I have caught weighing upwards of six pounds. The sea-trout and the burn-trout enter the burns to spawn in August or September, according to the time when the rains have swelled the burns. If the weather has been fine, and falls of rain, it is very interesting to observe the anxiety which the trouts manifest to fulfil their destination. They leap about the mouth of the burn, where it empties itself into the sea, and show distinctly that they know their particular season; and, in their eagerness to gain this end, they frequently run into shallow water, and are taken.

Trouts are often taken by setting a net across the mouth of the burn, where it empties itself into the sea, at the time of the tide of flood; and, when it has ebbed sufficiently, they are an easy prey,—being either entangled in the net, or left without the means of escape. There is another method which is often had recourse to for the same purpose, viz. "the houvie." The houvie is made of the stalks of the dock, wide at the one end, and narrow at the other. A dike is built across the burn, leaving an open space in the middle sufficient to admit the wider end of the houvie. After the houvie is firmly placed in this open space, a person, with a stick in his hand, wades down the burn, and drives the trouts before him. Having entered the houvie and reached its narrow end, they cannot turn to get out again.

In most of the friths or voes, there are haddocks, whitings, cod-

* In my account of the Geology and Mineralogy of Sandsting and Aithsting, I acknowledge my obligations to Dr Hibbert.

lings, flounders, halibut, skate, mackerel, and herrings in summer and harvest, and the cole-fish or seath, with its numerous fry called sillocks and piltocks. The sillocks do not exceed six inches in length the first year, and are known by this name till they have drunk of the first tide of summer, after which they take the name of piltocks, and will be found from ten to twelve inches long. When two years old, they are called bilyia piltocks; when three years old, steven piltocks; and afterwards they are known by the name of seath. The seath-fishing is not prosecuted in this parish.

Shell-fish of every kind are to be found in the voes or friths; oysters, large mussel or yoag, common mussel, spouts or razor-fish, cockles, smisslings, cullicks, welks, buckies, limpets, crabs, lobsters, harps, &c.

Botany.—Under this head I may observe, that wherever the moss is so deep as to admit of peats being taken, roots and branches of the birch and hazel have very frequently been dug up. The mountain-ash or rowan-tree, the hazel, the honeysuckle, the hip-brier, and willow, are natives in many of the islets or holms in the fresh water lochs. In any other situations, I believe, they could not exist; for horses, cows, and sheep, browse upon and destroy every thing that comes in their way, when they are hard pressed for food. And this may be the reason why plants of this description, and, perhaps, others have disappeared from the common range of pasture. That trees will grow and attain a considerable size, if properly sheltered and defended from man and beast, I have abundant proof. In my garden a native mountain-ash has attained to such an height, that crows have built a nest in it. And a bower or elder tree also grows in my garden, graced with a crow's nest. In the garden at Sand, formerly the seat of Sir John Mitchell of Westshore, there are plane, ash, elder, rowan, and hawthorn-trees, of considerable size. It may be remarked, that, if plantations are ever attempted, they must be on a large scale, so that the plants may afford shelter to each other; and they must also be protected by a wall, which could not only defend from the encroachments of cattle, but which would also be proof against the inroads of man. For a shrub of the size of a walking-stick, a flail-tree, or a fishing-rod, would prove a temptation too strong for the moral courage of a Shetlander to resist.

The apple-tree blossoms, and carries fruit; but I have never seen it come to perfection. It is different, however, with the smaller fruits. The gooseberry, the black, red, and white cur-

rants, thrive well, and in good seasons come to perfection, and are particularly fine-flavoured. Strawberries in the gardens, and craw-berries on the hills, ripen well and are abundant. Rhubarb, mint, and every kind of vegetable usually raised in the kitchen-garden, are raised here in perfection.

II.—Civil History.

Land-owners.—

	Merks.
The Right Hon. Lord Dundas is patron of the parish, and proprietor of	65
Andrew Grierson of Quendale,	241½
John Scott of Scalloway,	204½
Arthur Gifford of Busta,	87½
James Greig of Garderhouse,	60½
Andrew Umphray of Reawick,	49½
Smith of Greenland,	10
Andrew Irvine of Lerwick,	9
Thomas Henry of Burrastow,	9
James Mitchell, Sandsound,	4
Sir Arthur Nicolson of Lochend,	3
John Cheyne of Tanwick,	3
Robert Doull of Fogregirth,	3
Laurence Redland, Wester Skeld,	2½
Andrew Redland, Scarvister,	2
Dr James Scott,	17
Anthony Doull, Brindister,	6
Glebe, 9 merks	
Total merks,	777

There are no resident heritors, unless Robert Doull, James Mitchell, Laurence Redland, Andrew Redland, and Anthony Doul, Brindister.

Parochial Registers.—The acts or minutes of session commence in 1733, and are contained in one volume. They appear to have been regularly kept from that period, till about 1765; but between the death or demission of one minister and the admission of another, little care seems to have been taken of the register; so that now, it is in a very shattered and imperfect state.

Antiquities.—The small island, called Kirk-holm, in the mouth of Selivoe, presents every appearance of having at one time been put in a state of defence. A breast-work of earth round the most accessible parts of the island, *i. e.* on the west, north, and part of the east sides, is still visible; and the foundations of nine houses, for the accommodation of those who may have fortified themselves in it, can also be traced. Two of the houses, which have been erected at the north end of the holm, stood north and south, with their door towards the west, and measure each 38 feet long by 12 feet broad inside. At a distance of 42 feet to the southward, is the foundation of another house of 28 feet long

by 10 feet wide, standing east and west, with the door towards the north; and at a distance of 42 feet to the southward of this last-mentioned house, is the first of six houses more, which six houses stand parallel to each other, and in the direction of east and west, with their doors towards the north. All the houses are separated from each other; but the intermediate space between them appears to have been no more than sufficient to have admitted one person. The doors have been 3 feet wide.

As there are no springs of water in the holm, a tank or reservoir appears to have been formed for the reception of rain-water, or of water brought from the adjoining ness.*

There are five burying-places in the parish, viz. at Sand, West Skeld and Gruting in Sandsting, and at Twatt and Aith in Aithsting. Though at two of them only, viz. Sand and Twatt, is it certain that churches have been built, yet it is more than probable that, while the Roman Catholic religion flourished in the islands, there have been churches or chapels in the immediate neighbourhood of them all. In addition to the church or chapel and burying-ground at West Skeld, there are the ruins of a burgh or fort. From the ruins which still appear, we are warranted to infer, that it was a place of very considerable dimensions; but what these were, or in what form the burgh itself was constructed, cannot now be ascertained. It was built of blocks of red granite, without cement. In the eighth century, and while defended by a band of brave and trusty warriors, we may suppose it affording protection to the lives, and the goods and gear of the udalmen around; but in the nineteenth century, its venerable ruins may be

* Tradition says, that in 1588, one of the Spanish Armada was lost in what is called the deeps or haddock-sand, a few miles to the southward, that the crew took shelter in the holm, and that they fortified themselves in it, till they should know the reception they were likely to receive from the natives. This tradition is supported by the fact, that a particular spot where the fishermen set their lines, and where the ship is said to have foundered, is known to the present time by the name of the ship. Tradition further says that, in gratitude for their preservation, and the friendly reception they met with, the crew built a church at Sand, about a mile and a half from the holm, and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin. It appears to have been a very neat and substantial building, with a chancel or choir on the east end, separated from the body of the church by an arch extending from one side to the other. There does not appear to have been any hewn stones made use of in the building; but such stones as had the plainest and smoothest surface were placed on the outer and inner sides of the walls,—the heart of the wall filled with boulder or round stones, and cement, apparently of burnt shells, and of thin consistence, and all the empty spaces completely filled up. The roof was thatched. After the Reformation extended itself to Sandsting about 1600, the kirk at Sand was converted into a Protestant church. Between 1760 and 1770, this church was allowed to fall into a state of great disrepair. What the lairds, or the people, or both, in the first instance preserved, the fury of the ocean has been fast destroying. The chancel or choir is nearly washed away.

seen stuck up in the walls of the dwelling-houses, office-houses, yard dikes, &c. of fifteen families in the village.

About a mile to the westward of the two Culswicks, and on the summit of a precipitous cliff of red granite, of several hundred feet in height, stands a burgh, or rather the ruins of a burgh, which still, though recently demolished, presents the appearance of having been in former days a place of very great strength.*

A burgh, built on a low neck of land, and formerly surrounded by the sea, is to be seen immediately below the present dwelling-houses of Nunsburgh.

Another burgh stands in the middle of the voe of East Burrafirth, a few hundred yards from its mouth, and opposite the dwelling-houses. Whether this burgh was built on an islet or a foundation forced for it, I cannot say. The voe is not deep where it stands, and there is no spare space around it.

There are several other ruins in the parish; but, as all of them are to be met with on the tops of rising grounds only, the most probable conjecture regarding them is, that they have been watch-towers: and this conjecture is supported by the name given to the particular spots which these ruins occupy,—for instance, "the wart" (which, no doubt, is a corruption of ward) of Reawick; "the wart" of Brouland, &c.

In his notices of Shetland, Mr Pennant observes, "that the Norwegians had anciently their ward-madher or watchman, a sort of sentinel who stood on the top of a vord-hill, and challenged all who came in sight." We know that it is customary with foreigners to change *w* into *v*,—thus, ward, vard or vord, Shetlandice, wart.

There are several tall unhewn stones standing in different parts of the parish.† The purpose of these cannot be stated with certainty.

* See description of this burgh by Dr Hibbert.

† I may mention the tradition respecting two standing stones in the neighbourhood of West Skeld, which will show how little credit is to be given to tradition when unsupported by some collateral evidence. These two stones are said to be the metamorphosis of two wizards or giants, who were on their way to plunder and murder the inhabitants of West Skeld; but, not having calculated their time with sufficient accuracy, before they could accomplish their purpose, or retrace their steps to their dark abodes, the first rays of the morning sun appeared, and they were immediately transformed, and remain to the present time in the shape of two tall moss-grown stones of ten feet in height. All the ancient buildings which have been erected, and large stones which have been raised upright, about which there is no particular tradition, are uniformly ascribed to the agency of the Picts, or Peclts, as they are called, or to evil spirits.

Since writing my account of the antiquities of the parish, I have been put in pos-

Barrows or Tumuli.—In several parts of the parish, there are the remains of several barrows or tumuli, probably of Scandinavian origin, some of which I have opened, but could not congratulate myself on my researches, they having been opened before. In some, I have found bones partly consumed by fire, pieces of charred wood, and parts of the urn in which the bones had been deposited. The urns appeared to have been rudely wrought out of a coarse sandstone, and others out of a soft stone called kleber. In some cases, there is every reason to believe that the body had been burned at the spot where the ashes had been collected, and placed in the urn; because the stones which were found to surround the urn, over which the tumulus was raised, had been subjected to the action of a strong fire. In other cases, the urns have been placed on a dry piece of ground, covered with a flat stone, and a little earth thrown over them. Of this latter description I have one in my possession, which I found under the foundation of the glebe dike. It measures 12 inches over the mouth, 10 inches over the bottom, and is 10 inches deep. It contained a quantity of half-burnt bones, and was covered with a pretty heavy stone, flat on the side next to the urn. Unfortunately, it was partly broken before I discovered it. There is, however, enough remaining to show its shape and workmanship.

I have discovered two other urns on the glebe, filled with a black unctuous earth, but so much decayed, that no part of them could be lifted. Out of one of them I removed the earth, and found, lying at right angles in the bottom, four pieces of broken stone axes.*

session of a quern or hand-mill, dug out of the ruins of the burgh at Easter Skeld. It is 13 inches in diameter, and 2¼ inches in thickness. It appears to have been formed in the same way as the hand-mills now are, or rather it has been the model by which they have been made. It has groups or grooves cut for the sile to rest in, and an hole for the handle. I have recovered the half only of the under stone, the dimensions of which have exceeded a little those of the upper stone. They are both made of the same kind of stone (micaceous schistus) as the millstones now in use are made of.

* I subjoin Dr Hibbert's description of these instruments, and then add the observations I have to offer:—

"The ancient weapons of war discovered in Shetland are of stone. That such were used by the Teutonic tribes of Europe in the eighth century, and probably very long before, is evident from the fragment of a prose-romance written about that period, in the Saxon dialect of the Teutonic. This manuscript, which is preserved in Cassel, was first printed in Eccardi Comment. de rebus Francise Orientalis, and it has been reprinted with a Latin and English translation, in an interesting work lately published in Edinburgh, entitled, "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities." From this very curious document, two or three disjoined passages may be given, by which we may see the reference which is made to the Teutonic burgh, and to the arms contemporary with this early kind of fortress:—'I heard it related that Hiltibrant and Hatubrant with one mind agreed to go on a warlike expedition. The relatives (sons

Modern Buildings—Churches.—From the time of the Reformation till the year 1780, there were two churches in the parish, viz. one

of the same father) made ready their horses, prepared their war-shirts, (shirts of mail), girded on their swords (which were fastened) at the hilt with chains.

——— " well give now, (turn thou this to good) wielding God, quoth Hiltibrand, whose word is done. I wandered summers and winters sixty out of (my) land; there they detached me among shooting people (archers); never in any burgh, (city, castle), fastened they my legs; (but) now my nearest relation will hew my neck with his bill, (battle-axe) or I entangle his legs, (tie him like a captive.)

———" said Hiltibrand.—Good fellow citizens, be judges who it be that this day must quit the field of battle, or who will have both these brunies (hauberks) in his possession.

" Then they first let ashen (spears) fly with rapid force, that they stuck in the shields. Then they thrust together, resounding stone-axes; they wrathfully heaved white shields."—Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.

These extracts, from a composition of so remote a date as the eighth century, may be considered as illustrative of the general mode of warfare adopted at that time by the Saxon and Scandinavian tribes of Europe, among whom a greater similarity of language and manners then prevailed, than was to be found at a later period. The first of the offensive arms of the Teutones of the eighth century was the Battle-axe. It appears that these axes were constructed of stone. The heroes of the Teutonic romance are said to have " thrust together resounding stone-axes;" these weapons being expressed in the original by the term Staimbort, from Stein, a stone, and Barte or Barde, an axe. In Shetland, numbers of stone axes have been discovered, which are wrought from a remarkably compact green porphyry, probably derived from Scandinavia. In a note, the Doctor remarks, " the stone contains, along with quartz, a considerable portion of felspar in its composition, and probably some little magnesian earth; it resembles a rock that I have seen associated with serpentine, as well as a substance that is used in the construction of some of the stone hatchets of the South Sea Islands." In form, the Shetland steinbarte, or stone axe, is of two varieties; it is either single or double edged.

Single-edged Steinbarte.—This variety has one cutting-edge, generally of a semilunar outline, and tapering from opposite points to a blunted extremity or heel. In some specimens, both sides are convex; in others, one side only, the other being flattened. All the edges, except the broad sharpened margin, are bluntly rounded off. The single-edged stone axes of Shetland vary much in their dimensions, being from four to eight or ten inches in length; their breadth proportionally differing. When the Shetland steinbarte was used in war, its blunt tapering extremity may be supposed to have been introduced within the perforation made into some wooden or bone haft, and afterwards secured by overlapping cords, formed of thongs of leather or of the entrails of some animal; twine of hemp not being then in use. Another kind of steinbarte has been said to occur in Shetland, the sharp edge of which describes the segment of a circle, whilst the chord of the outline is thickened like the back of a knife. Probably its blunt edge was fixed within the groove of a wooden or bone handle, so as to form a single-edged cutting instrument.

Double-edged Steinbarte.—The blade of this instrument is a stone completely flattened on each of its sides, and not more than the tenth of an inch thick; it is of an oblong shape, having one blunted margin perfectly straight, and when the stone is held in such a position that the dull edge is the uppermost, we have the form of a blade presented, in which the two narrow edges are irregularly rounded off at their angles, so that one edge is much broader than the other. Every part of the margin but that which constitutes the summit of the outline is sharpened; by which means, there is a great addition made to the extent of the cutting edge. The blade is five inches and a-half long, and from three to four broad. Mallet, in his History of Denmark, describes a battle axe of two edges, as used by the ancient Scandinavians, and he adds, that, when it was fixed to a long pole, it constituted a halbert. In reference to this observation, I have supposed a long staff with the extremity so penetrated at one or two inches from the summit, as to form a long groove four inches in length, through which the stone blade with the blunt side kept uppermost, may be drawn half-way, and then secured to its station by means of cross ligatures. The whole would then present the form of a two-edged battle-axe. Antiquaries have remarked that this weapon was probably in use from the earliest period; but since it was in the course of time wielded by the Trabants, or those who stood upon guard in the castles of their

at Sand in Sandsting, and another at Twalt in Aithsting. The minister officiated at each every alternate Sabbath. The present kirk was

kings, it was named a halbert, from the Teutonic, *hale*, a court, and *barde*, an axe. In the true spirit, therefore, of archaiological reasoning, it may be pronounced that the blade of this variety of the Shetland steinbarte and the hypothetical handle to which it is fastened, constitute the rude form of the northern halbert.

The blades of steinbartes are very abundantly found in Shetland. Not unfrequently, several of them are discovered buried together, thus indicating a little armoury, from which a number of weapons might be distributed on an emergency, by the hand of some chief to a small band of natives met together, on the alarm of common danger. Assemblages of these weapons have been found in the parishes of Walls, of Delting, and in the Island of Unst. In Northmavine, says Mr Low of Orkney, seven were discovered under ground, disposed in a circular arrangement, with the points of each directed towards the centre of the ring:—it is a pity that the number of these weapons was not nine, corresponding to the nine wounds of a lance in the form of a circle, which the deified Scandinavian hero Odin gave himself, when, by an act of suicide, he showed an example of death to his surrounding followers. At any rate, the circular arrangement of the weapons remains, indicative of a mystical allusion, and that is quite sufficient to provoke an antiquarian inference.

Regarding the people by whom these stone-axes were used, the natives of Shetland have not the least tradition, and this circumstance is a proof of their great antiquity. They are supposed to have dropt from the clouds, endowed with the power of protecting the houses in which they are preserved from the effects of thunder; hence they are commonly named thunder-bolts, &c.—Iter ii. Some of the stone-axes, as Dr Hibbert observes, are of green porphyry, but I have seen some of them formed out of a remarkably compact grey-coloured stone. And even the green porphyry in some of them, from a particular chemical action to which they have been exposed, have, in a great measure, lost their distinguishing tint, and become of a whitish grey-colour. I have specimens of the stone axe of various dimensions, from 5½ inches to 6, 8, 10, and 15 inches in length. The cutting edge of the smallest is two inches, and of the largest 3¼ inches broad; and they gradually taper to a point at the opposite extremity. All the specimens in my possession are convex on both sides, but more so on the one side than on the other.

I have some steinbartes of an oval figure, and others of an heart-shape, with the apex considerably shortened, both formed of the two kinds of stone above mentioned. The largest of the oval ones is 8¼ inches long, and 4 inches deep. The cutting edge extends to two-thirds of its circumference, and the remaining third is rounded off, apparently for the purpose of holding in the hand. The heart-shaped one has a cutting edge in every part. I have one different in shape from either of these two; it describes almost a semicircle on the one end, and draws towards a point at the other. The semicircle, and as far as the point have cutting edges; the back is half an inch thick, nearly straight, and rounded off. Several stone axes, on removing the surface of the ground, were found lying together, a short time ago, within the dikes of Stonadale.

It has been maintained, that the larger steinbartes were used as warlike weapons. This may have been the case; but that they were inserted in an haft or handle, appears to me very doubtful. From their tapering shape, no thong could have secured them in such a position, and having no neck which the handle might grasp, the act of lifting it to give a blow, would even be sufficient to cause it slip from its place.

Neither is any proof to be deduced from the appearance of the thin and broad-shaped steinbartes, that they ever were used as halberts. To have rendered them efficient as a weapon of war, not only must the haft have been grooved, but there ought also to have been a corresponding groove in the steinbarte, to retain it in its place, something after the manner of dove-tailing in wood. As there are no marks indicating this to have been the case, the steinbarte ought to have been perforated, that it might have been firmly secured in the groove of the handle.

The larger steinbarte may have been used both as an offensive and a defensive weapon; either by throwing it from the hand, or striking with it, when the combatants came to close quarters—and the smaller steinbarte, it is probable, was formerly used for domestic purposes, and held a similar place in the eighth or ninth century, which a knife does in the nineteenth. That they are a very ancient instrument is without

built in 1780, and was intended as a centrical kirk for the whole ministry. To have been so it ought to have been placed at Œfirth, about two miles farther north. It is seated to accommodate 437 persons, allowing about sixteen inches to each person.

Mansion-Houses.—The mansion-houses of proprietors are only three in number, viz. Sand House, Garder House, and Reawick. Sand House was built in 1754 by Sir Andrew Mitchell of Westshore, Bart.* The house, gardens, &c. have been, for about forty years, the property of the present John Scott, Esq. of Scalloway; but they are fast falling into ruins.

Garder House, a miniature resemblance of Sand House, was built by John Cumming, son of one of the ministers of the parish, about 1760, on four merks of land, rented for many years after at L.4 Sterling per annum. It is now the property of James Greig, Esq. writer in Lerwick.

Reawick is a plain modern building of six rooms, the property of Andrew Umphray, Esq. a minor.

Mills.—There are about fifty mills in the parish driven by water, and querns or hand-mills without number.

Ploughs.—When my predecessor, the Rev. Patrick Barclay, wrote his Statistical Account of the parish in 1797, there were fourteen ploughs, of a construction peculiar to Shetland, in the parish. There is not one of that description in it now, and they are fast falling into disuse throughout the island.

III.—Population.

In 1733, the population was	967
1755,	911
1775,	1223
1792,	1285
1801,	1493
1811,	1617
1821,	1884
1831,	2177

doubt; for even tradition itself is silent, both as to the time when and the people by whom they were used.

* At that time it must have been a very elegant house with two wings, and the requisite office-houses. In front, and extending the length of the house, is a flower plot, on each side of which is a garden of considerable extent, which has been tastefully laid out—in a line with the outer walls of the gardens, and towards the head of the voe, is an enclosure of about three acres. The beautiful old castle of Scalloway, built by Earl Patrick Stewart about 1600, was spoiled of much of its ancient grandeur, by having its dressed freestones torn from their place, to supply door and window jambs and lintels, and corner stones for this mansion. But the spoliation of the castle, though its foundation was laid in blood, and every stone of its walls told of oppression, was not permitted to proceed without a fearful warning. While the work of demolition was busily going on, a voice, it is said, was heard to declare, "They might pull down and build up, but the fourth generation should never inhabit!

No. of males under 7 years of age,	229	No. of females under 7 years of age,	221
from 7 to 15,	192	from 7 to 15,	198
15 to 30,	258	15 to 30,	268
30 to 50,	201	30 to 50,	264
50 to 70,	96	50 to 70,	151
above 70,	39	above 70,	39
Bachelors and widowers above 50,	21		
	1036		1141

The number of births during the last seven years is	191
deaths do. do.	148
marriages do. do.	92
fatuous persons,	12
deaf and dumb,	2
families,	425
inhabited houses,	277

No family of distinction or of independent fortune resides in the parish, and of proprietors of land of the yearly value of L. 50 and upwards,—there are six.

Character, &c. of the People.—The people in general are of the middle stature, and well-proportioned, having brown or yellow hair. Their features are rather small than otherwise, of an agreeable expression, and have nothing of that harshness which is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon descent. Both sexes manifest an insatiable curiosity for prying into the concerns of others; and with an acuteness scarcely to be credited, and a perseverance worthy of a better object. When the direct question and sly insinuation have failed, nothing daunted they will renew their efforts, and, if still unsuccessful, they will substitute their own conjectures for the information withheld.

They are hospitable to a proverb, and would share their last morsel with their neighbour, or even with a stranger whom they had never before seen. They have a great volubility of speech, and are no mean adepts in flattery, when they think it will promote their particular views. Though many carry their passion for dress to an unbecoming and even an extravagant length, it gives me much pleasure to bear testimony to their general sobriety of conduct, and attention to the external ordinances of religion. They may, with truth, be said to be a church-going people, and I trust many of them have felt the power of religion, are living under its influence, "and asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward."

IV.—Industry.

Arable Lands.—There are 777 merks of arable lands in these united parishes; but the extent of a merk of land cannot now be ascertained. Originally it must have been very small, and have com-

prehended the infield or bear-land only. From the additions made by successive tenants, the merk of land has increased, in many cases, to eight or ten times its original extent. Besides the original arable land, and the successive additions made to it, there are no fewer than one hundred and four "outsetts" in the parishes; that is, when a tenant finds himself unable to pay his former rent, or when a newly married couple can obtain land in no other way, they fix upon some particular spot in the common pasture,—obtain leave from the principal proprietor of the nearest arable lands, and enclose as much ground as they think will support their family; and such an enclosure is called "an outsett." Sometimes, the proprietor builds the dwelling-house and dikes, and charges rent from the time of entry; at other times, the tenant builds these, and sits rent free, for seven or nine years.

Agriculture.—Agriculture may justly be said to be in its infancy in the parish; and as long as the landlords continue to reduce the farms to the least possible size, no improvements can be expected. Farms which formerly were possessed by one or two tenants, are now occupied by five or six. There are only three ploughs in the parish,—one on the glebe, drawn by two oxen; one in Reawick, and one in the island of Papa-Little, each drawn by four ponies. The plough used on the glebe is of Small's make; the other two are made in Lerwick, after a pattern by Morton, Leith-walk. The Shetland plough, so minutely described by my predecessor, the Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his Statistical Account of the parish, is not now used. All the lands in the parish, with the exception of those just mentioned, are turned over with a small spade peculiar to the country. The harrows in general use are made of two parallel pieces of wood, about three feet long, with from eight to ten wooden teeth in each piece, and are connected at the ends by a cross bar of eighteen inches long. These are drawn by a man or woman, with a rope tied to each end of one of the parallel pieces or sides. There are some lands in the parish, on which even a wooden harrow has never been used. Instead of which, after the ground is delved, sown, and manured, a besom of heather is procured, and a person sweeps mould, seed, and manure overhead.

Crops.—The crops raised are potatoes, oats, and bear or big; and the old distinction of infield and outfield is still continued. On the infield-land bear (having four or six rows of grain on the head) is sowed year after year, if we except as much of it as will grow the one-half of the potatoes the family may require. The

infield, when laboured for a crop of bear, is always well manured, from a compost of cow's dung, earth, and sea-weed, when it can be got, prepared during the previous summer and harvest, and laid on the top and turned under. Dung is very seldom laid on that part of the infield which is laboured for potatoes, from an opinion that the potatoes are softer and more watery when the land has been dunged, than otherwise. By this management, it is evident that the land must be greatly exhausted, and must require a very great addition to the usual quantity of manure, to yield anything like a tolerable crop, the following year. In some places, the infield has been sown with bear, year after year, and has never been known to produce any other crop, or once permitted to lie ley.

The outfield is uniformly laboured to oats, with the exception of as much of it as will grow the remaining quantity of potatoes required for the family. Sometimes, though rarely, a little outfield bear is tried on the land that was laboured to potatoes, the previous year. All the outfield is manured, whether intended for a crop of oats or potatoes; but with this difference, the oats are sowed first, and then the manure is carried and spread, and both are harrowed in together; whereas the manure for the potatoes is spread on the stubble, and delved under. Sometimes, the potatoes are planted in the furrow, and covered with the next feal; and sometimes, the ground is delved first, and the potatoes dibbled in afterwards. The manure for the outfield is composed of cow's dung, earth carried from the hill during the summer or latter part of harvest, and sea-weed, when it can be got. These are laid, in alternate layers, in small heaps over the lands intended to be brought under crop in the spring. When the voar or seed-time arrives, these are delved down and well mixed, as required; and when a piece of ground is delved and sowed, some carry this manure in straw baskets, called "cashies;" others spread it with their hands, and one yokes himself or herself into the harrow. The ground delved in the course of the day is generally sowed, manured, and harrowed in the evening.

Potatoes.—In some places, especially in those situated near fresh-water lochs, the potatoes are liable to be injured, and sometimes destroyed, by mildew; but in general, they are a good crop, and much dependence is placed upon them. About a fourth part of the arable lands is cropped with potatoes. There is a great variety of potatoes in the parish; but the best, both as regards quality and quantity, is of a light red colour, streaked with white

The method of cleaning the potato crop is rather imperfect. A little before or about the time the shoots begin to break the clod, the top weeds are turned up with the hand-hoe or spade, which is called "shovelling the potatoes;" and having lain for a few days to allow the weeds to wither, a double draught of the wooden harrow is given to turn up such weeds as may not have been sufficiently exposed. When the stems are advanced about six inches above ground, the hand-hoe is again employed, for choking or laying the earth to in drills. This is the last operation till they are taken up. The return, in ordinary seasons, of the potato crop may be stated at from ten to fifteen, and their price at 1s. 6d. per barrel.

Oats.—The oats in general use are the grey-bearded or old Scotch flaver. The grain itself is sweet, but, from the very imperfect way of manufacturing it, the meal is never entirely freed from the black beard and dust. Within these few years, a number of families in the parish have made trial of small quantities of Angus-shire early oats, obtained from the glebe, and they acknowledge that this is superior to the other, both in grain and straw. Notwithstanding these advantages, they refuse to use it as their general crop, from the idea that it is more liable to be shaken by the wind. This I have not found to be the case, though no other kind of oats have been sown on the glebe for many years.

The way in which corn is prepared for meal is this:—every family has a small oblong kiln built in their barn, called a "cinny," which will dry about an half barrel of oats at one time. This kiln is furnished with ribs of wood. These are covered with oat-straw, called "gloy," and the grain laid on the top. In an opening about one foot square, in the end of the kiln, a gentle fire is kept up, till the grain is sufficiently dried. It is then taken off the kiln, put into a straw basket, made for the purpose, called a "skeb," and, while it is warm, well rubbed under the feet. This operation is intended to separate the beard and dust from the grain. It is next winnowed between two doors, or in the open air; put into another straw basket called a "budy," and carried to the mill and ground. When brought home from the mill, two sieves, a coarse and a finer, are made use of, to separate the seeds from the meal; and it is twice sifted over, before it is fit for use. The coarse seeds taken out with the coarse sieve, the first time the meal is sifted, are given to the cows; and the finer seeds taken out with the finer sieve, the second time it is sifted, are reserved

for sowens. There is another kind of meal, called "burstane," prepared by drying the grain very hard in a pot. This is usually ground on the quern or hand-mill.

The price of seed-oats is from 9d. to 1s. per stone of 17 pounds; and the price of meal is generally from 1s. 6d. to 2s. for the same weight. The merchants, when taking meal in barter for their articles, usually allow 1d. per pound.

Bear or Big.—Bear or big is generally cultivated in preference to barley, being esteemed more hardy, and less liable to be shaken. There are two kinds of bear, one having four rows of grain on the stalk, and the other having six. This latter kind is much shorter in the head than the former. Bear is prepared for meal in the same way as oats; but it is allowed to cool, after being taken off the kiln, before it is rubbed. Seed-bear is sold from 10d. to 1s. 3d. per stone of 17 pounds; and bear-meal from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. per stone. The manure of the bear-land is always prepared during the previous summer, so that it is allowed to rot for eight or ten months, before it is used; and, instead of being laid on the top of the delved ground, it is delved under.

Wheat.—Wheat is a grain which has very seldom been attempted to be raised in the parish. In 1821, a small quantity of spring wheat was sowed on the glebe, which strawed most abundantly, but was light in the grain. The following spring, another trial was made, with seed from the former year's produce; but still a light crop as to grain, though the straw was abundant. More sun, less fog, and a longer summer are required, before wheat crops can be cultivated with any prospect of success.

Cabbage, &c.—Cabbage, turnips, carrots, &c. thrive well in the gardens, but have never been cultivated to any extent in the fields. Cabbage are used as food for both man and beast, and considerable quantities of them are raised. Some families plant upwards of 3000. They are all of the late or winter cabbage, and their cultivation is confined entirely to the yards or gardens. Turnips of every description seem to agree well with the soil and climate; but when a few of them are sowed in the fields, they must be taken up when the other crops are taken into the barn-yard. Carrots, &c. come to great perfection, and are particularly well flavoured. The want of enclosures, however, prevents the cultivation of these and other crops, which might be raised with advantage.

Rotation of Crops.—Such a thing as a rotation of crops has

never once been thought of, either by landlord or tenant. The want of enclosures, and the small size of farms, are adverse to such a practice.

Obstacles to Improvement.—It must appear, from what has already been advanced, that this parish, and the islands in general, are very far behind in agriculture. Both soil and climate present great obstacles to improvement. None of the lands of the parish lie upon limestone, and no lime is used as a manure, either simply or united with other substances. The lands are all laid in run-rig, whether they are the property of one or more proprietors, and this is the cause of much private, as well as open strife among the different possessors. While this system is continued, an insurmountable obstacle is raised against every attempt at improvement. To obviate this, I have suggested to several of the landlords to lay off a certain portion of land to each tenant, in one spot, and to build his house on his own ground, and in a situation the most convenient. If this system was to be adopted, the tenants would soon see the necessity of division dikes between their little farms, and, I am convinced, would soon raise them. The lands also would be better drained, and rendered capable of a more improved system of husbandry. While a spirit of emulation would then be excited, small enclosures would spring up, enriched with a regular succession of healthy and luxuriant crops. If the laird could be prevailed upon to adopt this course, his astonishment at the change that would soon be perceptible would be great.

Among the obstacles to improvement, must not be omitted the present ring-fences. These are, nowhere, efficient; and it is only during the summer and harvest months that they are kept in tolerable repair. As soon as the corns are put into the yard, every "grind" or gate is set open; the dikes, in many cases, pulled down and suffered to continue in that state, till the young corn appears several inches above the ground. In the meantime, cows, horses, and sheep, are allowed to pasture at freedom, and swine root up and destroy what years of the best husbandry could hardly repair. There is little labour spent in draining; and the few drains that are, being only surface drains, are filled up in winter, and the lands, of course, become a complete mire; so that, were it not the great quantity of new earth yearly carried from the hill or common, and formed into a compost with cow's dung and sea-weed, and laid plentifully on the land, no crops could be expected.

The farms, in most cases, are very small, not exceeding three

or four acres, and therefore the tenant cannot be supposed to leave much unlaboured to acquire ley strength. The tenant also holds his small farm by such a precarious tenure, (from one year to another), that little, if any improvement, can be expected from him. And it is no uncommon thing, when a tenant has made all the improvement that could be expected from his slender means, that an offer of additional rent is made to the landlord, and he (the tenant) must either agree to pay the additional rent or remove, without any compensation. Under such a policy on the part of the landlord, spirited exertions in improving the lands can never be expected from the tenant. It may be observed, that the want of leases tends to keep the tenants in a very servile state. The landlord's will becomes the tenant's law, and if a disposition to resist should manifest itself, it is immediately subdued by a threatened warning of removal. Even in the few cases where there are missive tacks, the tenant can hardly be said to sit securely. There are so many ways by which the strong can get the better of the weak, that the saying, "the weakest are always driven to the wall," is verified to a considerable extent here. But perhaps the occupiers of small farms are not arrived at that stage of civilization, when it might be considered proper, or even safe, to trust them with all the immunities a tack would confer.

In some cases "grassums" are taken, the injurious tendency of which has been felt, wherever they are known. They deprive the tenant of the earnings of his toil,—they damp his ardour in improvement, and afford him no additional security; while all that can be acquired in this small way, will "bulk little in a holed pocket!"

The houses, in general, are mere huts; and if the landlord puts up a dwelling-house once,—tenant after tenant must be content to occupy it as he finds it, or to repair or build anew to himself. Few, if any of the landlords, build any of the office-houses; and the tenant always builds and keeps in repair, such as that repair is, the dikes around his farm. The great object of the landlord is to get his rent for his land, which, in many cases, it must be confessed, he has considerable difficulty in obtaining; but, at the same time, he cramps not the labour of the tenant with any restrictions, as to management, and leaves him at full liberty to employ, as the implements of his husbandry, the plough, the spade, or the snout of the swine.

The climate and situation present formidable barriers to any thing like extensive improvement. The former can never be de-

pended on for twenty-four hours together, and the latter is very damp, unsheltered, and, in many places, liable to be blasted both by mildew and sea-spray; so that the most promising crops, in one hour, may be destroyed for both man and beast.

Woods.—There is a tradition that this country was, at one time, covered with wood; and this tradition is supported by the circumstance, that pieces of wood are found imbedded very deep in the moss. I have found some branches of the birch, from six to eight feet long, about ten feet under the surface to the northward of the glebe. In different parts of the parish, there are to be found the creeping willow, the honeysuckle, the mountain-ash or rowan-tree, and the hip brier. The crawberry on the hills is very common, and in ordinary seasons comes to perfection. There are a few plants of the blaeberry which, in some seasons, blossom, but seldom carry fruit. Gooseberries and currants (red, white, and black,) in favourable seasons, ripen well in the gardens.

Cows.—An occupier of three merks of land will keep four milk cows, and in some cases six; and in some very favourable situations, from twelve to sixteen. The young cattle pasture on the hills or common scathold from the end of May till the beginning of November. On the hills or common scathold, an unlimited privilege of pasture is allowed; and a tenant who, during the summer months, can keep from four to six milk cows, will, during the winter, fodder from twelve to fifteen head of cattle, young and old. The milk cows pasture on the grass inside of the town in summer till twelve o'clock, when they are milked and driven to the hill; and in the evening, are again taken inside of the town, where they feed a few hours, are milked, and put into the byre during the night. The young cattle, when they are driven to the hill in the end of May, are never allowed to enter within the town dikes till about the month of November, when they are taken in and set to the band for the winter. It is a practice too prevalent, indeed I may say, general, to lay on more cattle than can be well supported; and the consequence is, that part of the stock is frequently lost for want of food, and part of it is barely able to walk. It is evident that, by laying on too much stock, the people are great losers, as they can neither bring an adequate price for their cattle, if sold at Whitsunday, owing to the miserable condition in which they are, nor does the milk yielded repay even the expense of their half-starved keeping; the summer being well spent before the cattle have thrown off their winter coat, and assumed any thing like a decent appearance.

The cows, when compared with those of a more southern latitude, are small; but, when on good keeping, give much more milk than could be expected from their size. Some of those on the glebe give about five quarts in the morning, three at midday, and five in the evening. The general food of the cows in winter consists of a small "hallow" or "wap" of straw between two, night and morning; and if they are confined to the house by bad weather, they get as much at noon. The cows in calf, in addition to their stated diet, as above, get a few cabbage or potatoes cut down and mixed with a little bear-chaff or coarse seeds; and frequently, in room of these, a little meadow hay. All the cows are horned, and of every colour; but no attention whatever is paid to the rearing of a proper breed. Though the cold, bleak, and unsheltered pastures, and the want of a sufficiency of food, stint the animal in its growth and alter its form; yet much good would result from the lairds taking an active interest in the concerns of their tenants, by offering small premiums for the best stock in general, or the best bull; or by not allowing any animal to be kept as a breeder, which had not previously been approved of.

The weight of a cow, when fed for slaughter, may be from 1½ to 2½ cwts. Cattle bought for slaughter are not considered a good bargain, if the beef exceeds 1½d. or 2d. per lb. A cow in calf, at Whitsunday, if she can be recommended as a good one, will sell for L. 3 Sterling, and sometimes a little more. A farrow cow at the same season, Whitsunday, will sell from L. 1, 10s. to L. 2. 5s. Sterling; but at Martinmas they may be purchased cheaper. Allowing on an average only three milk cows to each family, there will be in the parish not fewer than 1122.

Those who keep four or more cows on their farms, churn once every day during summer; but the quantity of butter obtained is not in proportion to the frequent churning. The cream is never gathered and churned. When the operation of churning is advanced to a certain stage, an heated stone is dropped into the churn, by which means the labour is shortened, and an addition made to the quantity, though not to the quality, of the butter. Part of the curd thus becomes incorporated with the butter, and presents a spotted (white and yellow) appearance. By very few, indeed, it must be acknowledged, is any attention paid to the dairy. This may arise partly from a portion of the rents being made payable in butter, and partly from want of proper milk-houses, and

due attention to the milk-vessels. So that one of the old country acts would require sometimes still to be enforced, which ordains, "That no butter be rendered for payment of land rent, or for sale, but such as is clean from hairs and claud, and other dirt." The lairds, as part of their land rent, and the tenants, for their own use, consume the greater part of the butter that is made in the parish; and the little that is sold will bring from 5d. to 6d. per pound of sixteen ounces.

Into the butter-milk, or "bleddick," is poured a quantity of boiling water, by which means the curd is separated from the serum. The former, called "kirn," is supped with sweet milk; the latter, called "bland," is used as drink, and is sometimes kept for several months, when it acquires a strong acidity.

Ponies.—The Shetland poney is now so generally known as to require no particular description. It is of every colour, white, black, brown, grey, dun, cream, chesnut, and piebald, and of every size, from 28 to 44 inches. There are a great many of them kept in the parish, but very little work is performed with them. Few bring home even their peats with them, preferring the old practice of bearing them home on their own backs in a "casie." * Ponies are sometimes employed in carrying feals from the hill, to mix with cow's dung for composts; but are kept principally for storing. It is a rare occurrence to see an individual riding to church. In good keeping, it is well known that many of the Shetland ponies are of high mettle. "When the shelty is in his winter or spring garb, it is difficult to suppose that his progenitors were the same animals which travellers have described as prancing over the arid tracks of Arabia;—the long shaggy hair with which he is clothed has more the appearance of a polar dress, or of some arctic livery, specially dispensed to the quadruped retainers of the genius of Hialtland."† Instead of the sleek skin and handsome appearance which he displays with so much spirit in the summer months, in winter he is covered with a shaggy coat,—his symmetry disappears, and all his motions are dull and languid. Notwithstanding all the privations he undergoes, he frequently lives to a great age. I have seen some upwards of thirty years old, and even at that age capable of performing a pretty long journey. No attention is paid to the breed. On the contrary, if one is remarkable for proportion or size, as it will fetch the best price, it is the one which

* *Casie*, a straw basket used for carrying peats, manure, &c.
† Hibbert's Zetland.

is first sold. The poney is subject to few diseases. The most common are gravel and spavin.

They vary in price from L. 1, 10s. to L. 6 Sterling. If proper attention was paid to the breed, I am convinced there would be found nowhere a finer race of animals. A considerable number of them are yearly exported to Scotland and England. Formerly, Orkney men were wont to come over and barter linen for ponies; but none of them have been in the practice of doing so for many years. Between Orkney and Shetland there is less communication now, than there is between Shetland and any other part of Great Britain.

Sheep.—The number of sheep kept in the parish is very great; but what that number is, it is impossible to say. As every tenant exercises an unlimited privilege of pasturage on the hills or scathold, unless the few who drive their sheep into the same "cruive" or "pund," no other person can possibly know the number of sheep belonging to each individual.

The native breed of sheep is very small, being in weight about 20 or 24 lbs. of mutton, and carrying a fleece of from 1 to 1½ lbs. of wool. They are of the small-tailed race, and it is very rare to see a ewe with horns. They are of various colours, viz. white, black, grey, "catmogged," brown or "moorit," black and white, in equal proportions, or "Shilah," and piebald. Every neighbourhood has a particular pasture or scathold, on which their sheep feed, and each person knows his own sheep by their "lug-mark." That is, one has a hole in the ear, another a "rift" or slit, another a "crook" or piece taken out of the ear, behind or before, &c. The same is the case throughout the parish, and no two persons in the parish are allowed to "lug-mark" their sheep in one way. Every neighbourhood has also a "cruive" or pund, into which they drive their sheep, for the purpose of smearing them, taking of the wool, marking the lambs, and keeping them tame. When a stray sheep is found, the person who finds it takes care of it for a year and a-day, and if, after due proclamation at different churches, the owner is not discovered, it is sold, one-half of the price going to the persons who found it, and the other half to the poor of the parish in which it was found. Those whose sheep pasture promiscuously are called "Scat-brither;" and those who have a few sheep pasturing in any place when they reside at a distance from it, or perhaps not in this parish, are called "outscat holders."

The native breed of sheep in several places are beginning to be crossed with black and white-faced rams. Where the pasture is sound, either of the crosses answers very well, as both mutton and wool are improved in quantity; but, wherever the pasture is deep and wet, they are invariably found not to be so hardy, or to thrive so well as the original breed. Such of the lambs as are strong, whether of the native or crossed breed, are allowed to follow the ewes during the winter; but those that are not considered strong enough to stand the winter out, are taken into the house and fed till about Whitsunday, when they are again driven to the hill. Some build small houses for the purpose of keeping their lambs in during the night, and in which they feed them, night and morning, with hay or cabbage, and occasionally with a few coarse seeds and cut potatoes; but the more general practice is to keep them around the fire in the dwelling-house. No shelter is provided for the sheep to which they might resort when inclement weather sets in; and no provision is made for their support, when snow and frost prevent them from obtaining their ordinary scanty fare.

When food is not to be obtained on the hills, instinct seems to direct them to another quarter. I have seen them when the tide began to ebb, hastening to the sea-shore, feeding upon the sea-weed growing on the rock or cast upon the beach, and when it began to flow, returning to the hills again.

An ewe for slaughter will sell for 4s. or 5s.; a wedder from 6s. to 8s.; a ram lamb for 1s. 6d. to 2s.; and a ewe lamb, of the middling size, from 2s. to 2s. 6d. The cross-breed sell considerably higher, but their mutton is neither so delicate nor their wool so soft. The wool is of various prices, from 6d. to 1s. 3d. per lb. of sixteen ounces. It is not shorn, as in other places, but torn from the sheep's back by an operation called "rooing." For the most part, two, and sometimes more persons pull the wool from the poor animal at one time. Sometimes, this is done with little trouble and as little pain; but at other times, it may be said to be indeed a painful operation.*

* It would appear, as Dr Edmonston, in his History of Zetland, remarks, that the sheep-flocks must have been much greater, at an early period than they are now. In a translation from the original Danish, in the Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica, Antiquarian Society, are these words, "Observe, that in the year of our Lord 1328, the 25th day of July, did Giafaldr Ivarson of Hialtland, pay to the Reverend Lord Audfin, the Lord Bishop of Bergen, and Swein Sigurdson, Comptroller of the King's household, the tenths due to the Pope, viz. 22 cwt. of wool, less than 16 pounds, according to the standard of Hialtland, being 36 span Hialtland weight of wool."

The rams are generally let to the ewes about the beginning of December.

The principal diseases to which the sheep are liable, are the Vinster, the Rot or green-sickness, the Sturdy, the Liver complaint, the Water or Quarquabus, the Blindness, and the Scab.*

Swine.—Every family keeps one, and many families keep two swine, which they feed and kill about Candlemas, for their own use. Several also keep herds of swine, which are sent to the hill or common pasture during the summer, and are again admitted into the farms, as soon as the potatoes are reaped, to dig up and to turn down, in short, to commit every species of destruction at pleasure. When driven to the hill for the summer, they have no other food than such as they can procure for themselves, and consequently the best parts of the pasture are rooted up and destroyed. Roots of plants and earth-worms constitute the principal food: but occasionally birds' nests afford a savoury morsel; but still more, a young lamb or a weak sheep. The native breed of swine is very small, with a long nose very cartilaginous, and small ears standing upright; and when he puts on his winter covering, a more ugly animal can hardly be conceived to exist. He has a profusion of long stiff bristles, and underneath a close coat of coarse wool. Of his bristles and wool a very strong and elastic rope is made, which is used for tethering horses and cows. Notwithstanding his revolting appearance, when well fed, he would disgrace no board. He is very delicate pork.

A great improvement in the breed, both in appearance and size, has lately been introduced by means of swine brought to the islands by some of the Greenland ships. A young swine, fifteen days old, and of the native breed, costs from 1s. to 1s. 3d.; and one of the same age, but of the improved breed, from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 8d. A full grown swine, that is, one of from one to two years old, and of the native breed, when fed, costs 8s. or 10s.; but some of the improved breed have sold as high as from L. 1 to L. 1, 10s. The usual selling price of pork, when fresh, is 2d. per pound.

A young swine is here known by the name of a runny or grice; one fed about the fireside, a patty; one with young, a silik; and a boar is called a gaat.

They are liable to a complaint called the gricifer, which deprives them of the use of their hinder legs. They very seldom if ever recover of it.

* A particular description of these diseases will be found in the manuscript.

Rent of Lands.—The rents of the lands in the parish are made up of so many different items, that it is almost impossible to ascertain their exact amount. These consist of cashies, fowls, days-works, butter, bear, schoolmaster's salary, teinds, seat-rent in church, scatt, land-rent, and, in some cases, fishing profits. But, including outsets, they may be fairly stated at L. 1, 10s. Sterling per merk, which will make a total rental of the parish of L.1165, 10s. Sterling.

Rate of Wages.—The Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his Statistical Account, has stated, that "men servants get from L.15 to L.18 Scotch," that is, from L.1, 5s. to L.1, 10s. Sterling, "for three-fourths of the year." In summer they are employed in the ling-fishing, and the boys on beaches. The men get from L.12 to L.24 Scotch; boys from L.6 to L.10. Women servants get from L. 12 to L. 8, sometimes less, when they get liberty to spin and knit stockings, for their own behoof and emolument, at leisure hours. The yarn is generally spun at night, when they would be otherwise idle; and, when carrying dung, or travelling on the road, they are always knitting. Their service to the master is often very inconsiderable. Artificers are seldom paid by the day, and are always maintained by the employer. A mason has from 10d. to 1s. 2d. a-day; his servants, 6d.; wright, 10d.; tailor, shoemaker, and boat-builder, are paid by the piece, and generally earn 8d. or 10d." The wages usually given to a man for about ten weeks on the ling-fishing is from L.2 to L.2, 10s. with victuals; and for a boy to assist in curing fish on a beach, with his victuals, 10s. or 12s. Sterling; and without victuals, about L.1. When he gets his food, he is bound to do any kind of work required, when not employed with the fish. The wages of a man-servant, for farm-work, is from 12s. to L.1 Sterling for three months; women servants generally get 8s. for three months. The usual term of service is three months. The servants are in no respect improved, since my predecessor wrote; neither will there ever be good servants, while the present system is pursued. They do not consider the obligation as mutual, but regard it as lying altogether on the side of the person who employs them. And when there is occasion to reprove them for having done wrong, the frequent answer is, "I have no occasion to serve; I can go home."

The wages of a mason, with his victuals, 1s.; and without victuals, 1s. 6d; a wright with his victuals, 1s.; and without victuals, 1s. 6d;

a tailor with his victuals, 1s. per day. Making a pair of shoes for a woman, 10d.; for a man, 1s. and 1s. 2d. Boat-builder, 1s. for every foot of keel in small boats; but when larger, the price advances. A slater charges about L.1, 5s. per rood, or 2s. per day, without food.

The wages of a man for farm-work, in spring or harvest, is 6d. a-day with victuals; and a woman's wages 4d.

Very few of the servants take any interest in their masters' service. With the greater part of them, the principal concern seems to be, to work as little as possible, and that not always in the best manner; while meal-time and pay-day are well attended to.

The usual charge for grazing an ox or cow, for about six months in summer, is from 6s. to 8s.; the owner of the animal providing a tether. A young cow or ox foddered during the six winter months, costs about 5s.; and a cow in calf, for the same time, from 8s. to 10s. Nothing is paid for foddering a farrow cow, her milk being considered to pay daily for the fodder she eats. When a cow in calf is given out, on the condition that the calf is to be reared, the person who receives her keeps her till Michaelmas, and then returns her, the calf remaining, which is afterwards considered "havers" property; that is, the calf itself and its store to belong in equal portions to the owner of the cow and the person who reared the calf; and when sold, the price to be equally divided.

Fisheries.—The fisheries consist of ling, cod, and herring. The ling-fishing is carried on in boats of about 18 feet of keel, and manned with six men. This fishing, twenty-five years ago, was much more extensive than it is now. At that time, thirty-six boats of the above description were engaged in it; now, there are only eight. The boats fish from the island of Papa Stour, as being much nearer the "haaf," or fishing ground. And before they commence fishing, perhaps eight or ten days, they repair to the island, and put in order the huts which are to shelter them, when on shore, during the fishing season. Fishermen are allowed by law to build huts for their accommodation, while prosecuting the fishing, on any unenclosed or uncultivated land, at a distance of not more than 100 yards above high water-mark. These huts are very rudely built; and the wood, pones, or divots, which form their roof, must be transported to the island. The usual practice is to carry home the roofs of the huts, when the fishing-season is over.

The usual time for commencing the ling-fishing is from the middle of May to the beginning of June, and it continues till Lammas.

When the men leave their homes on Monday morning, they carry with them a haddock-line, about 900 fathoms long, baited with mussels, which they set on their way to the fishing station, that they may procure bait for their long lines. Haddocks are always preferred as bait for the ling, when they can be procured. But when these are not to be got, they take the young seath, called piltocks, which generally abound about the shores in summer; and if these should fail, they bait their hooks with a piece of cod, tusk, or ling. The boats leave their stations for the haaf about ten o'clock A. M., and reach the fishing-ground about six o'clock P. M., during which time they will have run from forty-five to fifty miles, so that the highest land is only as a speck in the horizon, or as the fishermen express it, like a whilly* on the water. Every boat is furnished with a fleet of tows or lines, which may be thus described, one tow, bught, or line, fifty fathoms; sixteen tows, bughts, or line, one packie; six packies one fleet. A fleet of tows, then, is the number of lines which a boat carries. Every fleet of tows has four buoy ropes, of from 90 to 100 fathoms each, to which are attached stones of about 16 lbs. weight, called kappie or bolta stanes, to sink the lines, and keep them steady at the bottom. But besides these, every line has a sinking stone to itself, about 2 lbs. weight, called a bighter. The four buoy-ropes are provided with sheep skin buoys. The hooks are made fast to a piece of line about four feet long, called a toum, and these are made fast to the tows, at a distance from each other of five fathoms; so that on a fleet of tows, there are 960 hooks. The fishermen having arrived at the spot where they intend to set their lines, one man cuts the bait to the proper size, which is called sneezing the bait; and two men bait alternate hooks, while the others row the boat in the direction the lines are intended to be laid. When the last buoy is put over the side of the boat, the men remain by it about three or four hours, if the weather be favourable, before they begin to haul in their lines. If the weather threatens, they commence immediately to haul in, and always do so by beginning at the last buoy. One man hauls the lines, another strikes the fish as they come to the surface, with a clip† or huggie staff, and takes into the boat, cavils‡ the fish, and

* "Whilly," the smallest size of boat.
† "Clip or huggie staff," a large iron hook fixed on a short wooden handle.
‡ "Cavil," to take the fish off the hook.

snoods* the hooks, and a third man guts and takes off the heads. The other three andow or shough† the boat.

When the men come ashore in the afternoon of the following day, with eight score of ling, they consider they have made a good haul. This would average 16 cwt., for which they are allowed 5s. per cwt. They seldom make more than two trips to the haaf in the week; but when there is an appearance of fine weather, after hauling their lines, they bait their hooks, and set a second time. When the fish are landed, the fishermen have no more concern with them. They are split, salted, and dried at their landlord's expense. As soon as the boat arrives at the beach, one man goes to the lodge or hut, kindles a fire, and acts as cook; while the others land the fish, and see them weighed.

There is only one proprietor in the parish, whose lands are let on a fishing tenure. His tenants man seven boats, and caught, last year, about eight tons of dried ling, which sold for L.18 Sterling per ton. The boat and materials are divided into six shares, one of which the landlord, for the most part, holds, putting in a feed man, to whom he gives two lispunds of meal, and L.2 Sterling. The provisions which each fisherman takes with him for the season, are two lispunds of meal, two ankers of potatoes, a pork-ham, or a smoke-dried sheep, and an half lispund of dried bear. Of this, when knocked in a stone trough, which is carried to the fishing station with their other necessaries, they make broth. They have very little spirits either at sea or ashore, being precluded from the use of that article by the high duty to which it is liable. Their usual drink is water, unless when they carry with them from their houses on Monday morning, a small cask or jar with bland.

Johnsmas (24th June, O. S.) is regarded by the fishermen as an holiday. Again, before striking their tents at Lammas, and bidding adieu to the busy, bustling, perilous occupations of the summer, the fishermen who have been accustomed to associate together during the season, meet and take a parting cup, when the usual toast on the occasion is, "Lord! open the mouth of the grey fish, and haud thy hand about the corn." This meeting is known by the name of the fishermen's foy. After this, having nothing more to detain them, their huts are unroofed, bag and baggage are bundled into the boat, and wafted on the wings of a favourable breeze, they hasten to enjoy the smiles of their wives, and the innocent

* "Snood," to wrap the toum round the book, so that the line may not be raveled.
† "Andow or shough," to row the boat stern foremost.

prattle of their bairns, and in them forget for a time the toils and privations of a fisherman's calling.

Cod-fishing.—The cod-fishing is prosecuted in sloops of from 18 to 40 tons burden, of which there are eight in the parish, making a tonnage of 224 tons. They carry from nine to twelve men each, who hire the sloop for the fishing season, which begins at Whitsunday and ends at Lammas. The owner of the sloop receives as hire, the half of all the fish caught, and oil made from their livers, and is bound to put and keep the sloop in a sea-worthy state. He also cures the fish, and the men pay for the curing of their half, at the rate of 2s. Sterling per cwt., which is deducted when accounts are settled at the end of the season. It is always understood that the owner of the sloop is to have the preference, on equal terms, to the purchase of the men's share of fish and oil. Sometimes, a few men purchase a small sloop in partnership, and fish with her, taking in the additional men required, either as sharesmen, or giving them a fee, and sometimes giving them half share and half fee. All that is required to the prosecution of the cod-fishing in a sloop, are two lines, about 100 fathoms, a lead of 3 or 4 lbs., with a scob, that is, an iron rod bent, two feet and a half long, passing through the upper end of the lead, to each end of which rod is affixed a short toam and hook, baited with the large muscle or yoag. The weekly supply of bait is from 1600 to 2200. The usual price paid to the persons who dredge the bait is from 4d. to 6d. per 100, the expense of which is divided between the owner and men. The quantity of cod caught in a season varies from 5 to 18 tons, and the price paid in the country, for sometime, may be said to have been stationary at L.10 per ton.

The men, for provisions, have 8 lbs. of oatmeal baked into cakes weekly, and two-thirds of a barrel of potatoes, and a supply of smoked pork or mutton for the season, and as much fresh fish as they choose to make ready. The fish heads and small fish are carried home for the weekly-supply of their families.

The men are bound to bend the rigging and sails, and ballast the sloop before going to sea; and when the fishing is over, unrig and dry ropes and sails, heave the ballast, clean the vessel, and draw up and secure her for the winter. The fish livers are now melted into oil, and divided between owner and men.

Herring-fishing.—The attention of the British Government seems to have been directed, at an early period, to the fishing

and curing of herrings. Bounties were held out as a stimulus to engage in this trade; but while, on the one hand, it was patronized and apparently encouraged, the restrictions laid on the outfit of the vessels to be employed in it, not only cramped the energies of the fisherman, but even deterred him from prosecuting a fishing which, he plainly foresaw, would involve him in difficulty and debt. The consequence has been, that never, till very lately, has any attempt been made unless in the dead water in the voes, to set an herring net. Mr James Garrick in Reawick, was the first in this parish who set a spirited example in the herring-fishing. He purchased a few second-hand boats from Wick, each of which carried about twenty nets, and with these was very successful. The herrings caught are of an inferior quality, being mostly spent, and the season being too far advanced before the fishing commences. The cod-fishing is carried on till Lammas, and the herring-fishing does not begin till after the middle of August. Last year, upwards of 700 barrels of herrings were caught. The general price given for herrings when boat and nets belong to the fishermen is 6s. 6d. per cran. But when boat and nets are provided and kept in repair, for these the owner retains the half, and pays the fishermen 2s. 6d. per cran for their half. In this case, the fishermen incur no expense and no risk. This fishing continues about six weeks, and during that time, some of the boats have caught 180 crans.

Manufactures.—Formerly, a great quantity of kelp was manufactured in the parish, perhaps not less than 130 tons. But since barilla was introduced, kelp has declined so much in value, that the price obtained cannot now pay for the making of it.

V.—Parochial Economy.

There is no market-town nearer than Lerwick, which is distant about sixteen miles, with two arms of the sea intervening. No post-office; and when a letter is to be sent or received, a person must be sent expressly for the purpose to Lerwick, the post-town, to whom is paid from 1s. 6d. to 2s. Sterling, according to the state of the weather. There is nothing resembling a road in the parish, unless a piece which I made some years ago, through the glebe, and carried on about half a mile towards the kirk. But there is a decided disinclination to walk on the road, because it wears the rivelins too fast, and because a road would imply a restriction to a particular path; whereas the Shetlander's delight is to range uncontrolled, and "to wander as free as the wind on his mountains." The fences are very inefficient, and being built, for the most part,

of feals, and intended to last for a part of the year only, they may be mentioned as one of the obstacles to improvement.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish church is very inconveniently situated, as before observed; and a considerable proportion of the population is distant from it about seven miles of marshy road, and many of them impeded by arms of the sea. The kirk is seated for 437 persons; and no free sittings allowed.

The manse was built in 1817; a very insufficient and inconvenient house,—so much so, that when the presbytery and heritors met to have it declared free, an heavy fall of rain having taken place during the previous night, stepping-stones were laid along the passages and lobby, that they might not wet their feet. Two years after, it received a new roof. The ends of the joists have twice been rotted out of the walls, and two floorings laid, since that time. The manse was finished with the very worst description of planted fir from the north of Scotland. The office-houses have stood condemned, by the report of tradesmen, for a number of years.

The glebe is nine merks, and would rent at about L. 12 Sterling. It is not good land; but its hill privileges are extensive and good. The stipend payable from the lands in the parish is L.115, 9s. 6d., and from Government L.42, 17s. 2d. Sterling, including L. 8, 6s. 8d. for communion elements.

There are two Independent meeting-houses; to one of which no preacher is appointed, and the other has not been opened for some years,—the members being so very few, they meet in the preacher's dwelling-house. This individual has the small sum of L. 5 per annum allowed him by the Congregational Union, and acts as factor to one of the principal proprietors. In the other, worship is sometimes conducted by a regular preacher; but for the most part, one or more of the members "divine the word,"* as they feel disposed. The numbers who are joined with the Independents, may be stated about 40.

There is one Methodist meeting-house, in which sermon is appointed to be once a month, but is not regularly given. The members in communion with the Methodists are between 50 and 60. Both Independents and Methodists have not manifested the greatest desire to promote the religious instruction of the people of Sandsting, because, instead of building their meeting-houses in the

* A favourite expression of some of their members.

most destitute quarters of the parish, they have placed them within a mile from the Established kirk.

Divine service at the Established kirk is generally well attended; and the average number of communicants may be stated at 500. Neither Independents nor Methodists are increasing in numbers; they are rather declining. Their meetings are pretty well attended in the evenings, or when there happens to be no sermon at the parish kirk.

Education.—There are nine schools in the parish, viz. one parochial, one Assembly, two from the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and five supported by individual subscription. The parochial school was built in 1803, and cost L.105 Sterling. The accommodations provided are barely what are appointed by law, in number; but, in quality, would not be considered by any unconcerned person to approach near to it. The school and school-house have thatched roofs, which, by some agreement entered into between the teacher and heritors, the former is bound or has agreed to uphold. For this he is allowed some fractional part of a penny. About one rood of barren mossy ground was set off for a garden, which was valued to the proprietor from whose lands it was taken, at L.6 Sterling, including peat ground. All that it is capable of producing, are a few dwarf cabbages, or a few sheaves of gray-bearded oats. The accommodations for a number of years have been in a state of great disrepair; but the teacher is to blame, in not having applied to the Quarter Sessions to enforce such repairs as competent workmen should declare necessary. The schoolmaster has a salary of L.26 Sterling per annum. Branches of instruction taught are, reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping. Stated fees for reading, 1s.; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 1s. 6d.; and book-keeping, 5s. All the fees received would hardly amount to L.1, 10s. per annum.

The five schools supported by individual subscription are at Sand, Aith, Clousta, Culswick, and West Burrafirth. The three former are taught by men who, besides common reading, can instruct their scholars in writing and the first rules of arithmetic. The two latter are taught by women who profess to teach reading only. At these five places schools, on a permanent footing, are much needed; and a small salary, if certain, would secure the services of teachers at these stations, qualified for all the duties which would be required of them. At present, they are supported by the families in the respective quarters; but as soon as the teachers can

turn their labour to better account, the schools are thrown vacant, and, before other teachers can be provided, the children have lost a great part of what they had learned. I may here be allowed to observe, that a school situated in any particular district in the parish can benefit only that particular district in which it is placed. The parish is very extended, and the population is placed, for the most part, around the outskirts of it. For this reason it is that the benefits of a school are confined to those alone who reside in the immediate neighbourhood of it. The people in general manifest an anxiety to have their children educated; and yet, when they have the means in their power, do not improve them to the extent which they might. There are no children arrived at an age capable of being instructed, who cannot read.

Charitable Institutions.—A fund was established in 1810, called "The Shetland Fisherman's Fund," which had for its object the relief of old and decayed fishermen, and the widows of fishermen. Its supporters at first were the more wealthy in the country, and an yearly payment of 2s., in addition to 2s. paid by every fisherman on his being enrolled a member. Aged fishermen have been receiving from 5s. to 7s., and widows 14s. yearly. It is managed by twelve general directors, one representing each parish, and by parochial committees.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The relief afforded to the poor arises altogether from church-door collections, the amount of which may be stated at L.10 Sterling. Out of this, the average number of poor persons who receive aid is about 25, and the extent of aid afforded to them varies from 3s. to 12s. yearly. Housewives, who are active and industrious, receive occasionally a small sum as a reward for their activity and industry. The small sum allowed to the stated poor would be altogether inadequate for their support if the people did not, in addition to the Sabbath offerings, contribute cheerfully in another way. The kirk-session divides the parish into as many sections as there are poor persons. In each of these, a poor person is stationed, who generally remains in each family one day for every merk of land which they rent, and receive victuals and lodging; while the small pittance received from the session is laid out in the purchase of clothes.

There are more applications for admission to the poor's roll than can be sustained, and the receiving of parochial aid is considered no degradation.

Fairs.—That the people may obtain a more ready sale for their

extra stock of cows and horses, I have sometimes advertised and superintended a sale at Whitsunday and Martinmas, which is the only resemblance to a fair ever held. At both these seasons, a number of persons, from the neighbouring parishes, attend, especially from the parish of Tingwall.

Ale-houses.—There are two ale-houses,—one in Sandsting, and the other in Aithsting; but no bad effects are apparent from them. There is no propensity in the people, generally, to indulge to excess in spirituous liquors.

Fuel.—Peats are the only fuel used in the parish; and they are abundant. In digging for peats, there is abundant evidence that mountain-ash or rowan-tree, birch, hazel, and willow or saugh, have, at one time, flourished over a great portion of the country.

Miscellaneous Observations.

Neither rye-grass nor clover are cultivated, nor can be raised with any degree of success, till dikes are built, capable of defending from the encroachments of man and beast. Both these plants spring up naturally in many places,—the former called *acre-a-bunk*, and the latter *smorra*. There is a considerable quantity of bog-meadow ground, the grass of which is cut yearly about Lammas, and dried for hay. In general, it is much wasted before it is stacked; from the idea, that if the juices are not, in some measure, washed out before it is put together for the winter, it will take heat and rot. The scythe in use does not exceed fifteen inches, and some are not more than twelve inches in length. It has a straight haft, with one handle, and the mower stands nearly upright. The upper part of the haft rests on the bend of the arm; the left hand holds the handle, and the right hand grasps the haft. Some mowers wield the little instrument very dexterously, and cut down more grass than could be imagined, with such a diminutive tool.

The sickle is of very small dimensions. I have seen the reaper make from thirty-five to forty cuts with it, before the hand was filled with corn. Both scythe and sickle are made in the parish.

Cottages.—The cottages are of rather a rude description; and in wet weather, somewhat difficult of access, if there be any desire to keep the feet dry and clean. They are usually built of stone with dry mortar, and over the couples and rafters is laid a covering of pones or divots, and sometimes of flaws. Over these is laid a covering of straw, which is secured by ropes of the same material, or of heather, called "simmins." The dunghill occu-

pies a place as near the door as possible, that it may be enriched with the general soiling. And frequently before the door of the dwelling-house can be reached, a passage must be made through the byre. For the most part, the furniture is so arranged as to form a but and a ben; but chimneys are little known. Instead of these, some houses have from two to six holes in the roof to admit light and allow the escape of smoke. The better to promote this latter, a piece of feal or divot, or two pieces of board joined at right angles, called a skyle, is placed on the weather side of the hole; and instead of mounting on the roof every time the wind shifts, some have a pole reaching down inside, by which this operation is performed. The order for doing this is "skyle the lum."

When an opening is left for a window, it is sometimes filled up with a bladder, or untanned lambskin freed from the wool, stretched on a frame. In the but or kitchen end of the house, in addition to the family, there are usually two dogs, as many cats, a patty swine, a calf, and some half dozen of caddy lambs. *

Value of Land, &c.—The Rev. Patrick Barclay, in his account of the parish, remarks, that "the superiors formerly had many ways of procuring property in Shetland. Patrick, Earl of Orkney, in a disposition of the lands of Sand to Jerom Umphray, narrates, that he had evicted seven merks of that land from Powl Nicholson in Cullswick for stealing a swine, and that he had evicted six merks from ———— in Cullswick for stealing bolts from his Lordship's trood,—probably some piece of wreck which had been drawn into Cullswick. In that same disposition, the Earl grants receipt for the money from Jerom Umphray, at the rate of L. 17, 16s. Scotch," L. 1, 9s. 8d. Sterling, "per merk land, being full land's price at the time." The lands in Sand now rent at as much yearly per merk as the sum above specified to have been their purchase-price in 1600.

About 1700, an island, with fifteen scores of sheep, was purchased for the sum of L. 30 Sterling, the yearly rent of which is now about L. 60 Sterling. In 1633, an ox for slaughter cost L. 1; a fat sheep from 2s. to 2s. 6d. In 1738, a lispund, or 36 lbs. of meal, cost 1s. 8d.; a cow in calf, 17s. 6d.; fee of precentor and session-clerk, 10s.; officer, 5s.; presbytery-officer, 1s. 3d. 1746, dues of proclamation, 6d.; making a grave,

* "Lambs wintered and fed in the house; a lamb which has lost its dam, and is reared on cow's milk, is also called a caddy.

6d. 1748, a cow in calf, L. 1, 3s. 4d.; nursing a child twelve months, 16s. 8d. 1750, front seat in kirk capable of accommodating six or eight persons, 1s. 4d.; beef, mutton, and pork, three-farthings per lb.; a goose, 5d.; and a fowl, 2d. 1758, an ell of Shetland claith or blanketing, 10d. 1779, eggs per dozen, 1d.; and salted tusk, 1d. each. 1780, bed and board in Lerwick per day, 6d.; slater's wages, 1s.; and server, 6d. per day. 1781, woman-servant's wages for six months, 6s. 8d. 1782, a pair of shoes for a woman, 2s. 6d.; for a man, 3s.; voar (three months in spring), fee for a man, 5s. 1783, 100 herrings, 6d.; grazing a cow, 1s. 6d.; making a suit of clothes, 5s. 6d.; butter, (one lispund, or 36lbs.), 7s.; a fat wedder, 2s. 6d.; an ewe, 1s. 6d.; a hen, 2½d.; a cock, 1½d. Most of these articles now cost double of what is stated above.

Weights and Measures.—The instrument in general use for weighing is called a "bysmer:" It weighs from one to twenty-four merks. One and one-fourth or half-pound make a merk, and twenty-four merks make one lispund. The lispund weight varies in different parishes, and even in different parts of the same parish, from 32 to 40 lbs. Dr Barry, in his History of Orkney, has given a particular description of the "bysmar," which I shall here transcribe. "The bysmer is a lever or beam of wood, about three feet long; and from one end to near the middle, it is a cylinder of about three inches diameter, thence it gently tapers to the other end, which is not above one inch in diameter. From the middle, all along this smallest end, it is marked with small iron pins, at unequal distances, which serve to point out the weight, from one merk to twenty-four, or a lispund. The body to be weighed is hung by a hook in the small end of the instrument, which is then suspended by a cord* around it, held in the hand of the weigher, who shifts it towards the one end or the other, till the article he is weighing equiponderates with the large end, which serves it as a counterpoise; and when they are in equilibrio, the pin nearest the cord points out in the marks the weight of the subject weighed." Grain and meal manufactured in the parish are weighed, and bought and sold by "bysmer" weight."

Measures.—These are a "can," by which oil is measured, and which contains one gallon; the anker, or third part of a barrel, by which potatoes are measured; and the ell, by which Shetland "claith" is measured.

* This cord is tied round the ends of a round piece of wood, about four inches long, and held in the hand, and is called "the snarl."

Superstitions.—A considerable number of the people believe in and practise many superstitious rites. The fishermen, when about to proceed to the fishing, think they would have bad luck, if they were to row the boat "withershins" about. They always consider it necessary to turn her with the sun. Neither do they give the same name to most of the things in the boat, and to several on shore, by which they are usually known. But superstitious observances are not confined to the men only, their wives also share in them, and even carry them to a greater extent. These are practised chiefly, in attempting to cure diseases in man and beast, or in taking away the "profits" of their neighbour's cows; that is, in appropriating, by certain charms, to their own dairy, the milk and butter which should have replenished that of their neighbour. I shall subjoin a few specimens.*

* *Wresting Thread.*—When a person has received a sprain, it is customary to apply to an individual practised in casting the "wresting thread." This is a thread spun from black wool, on which are cast nine knots, and tied round a sprained leg or arm. During the time the operator is putting the thread round the affected limb, he says, but in such a tone of voice as not to be heard by the bystanders, nor even by the person operated upon,

"The Lord rade.
And the foal slade;
He lighted,
And he righted.
Set joint to joint,
Bone to bone,
And sinew to sinew.
Heal in the Holy Ghost's name!"

Ringworm.—The person afflicted with ringworm takes a little ashes between the forefinger and thumb, three successive mornings, and before having taken any food and holding the ashes to the part affected, says,

"Ringworm! ringworm red!
Never mayest thou either spread or speed;
But aye grow less and less,
And die away among the ase," (ashes,)

at the same time, throwing the little ashes held between the forefinger and thumb into the fire.

Burn.—To cure a burn, the following words are used:—

"Here come I to cure a burnt sore;
If the dead knew what the living endure,
The burnt sore would burn no more."

The operator, after having repeated the above, blows his breath three times upon the burnt place. The above is recorded to have been communicated to a daughter, who had been burned by the spirit of her deceased mother.

Fey Folk.—It is a practice with some to burn the straw on which a corpse has lain, and to examine very narrowly the ashes, from a belief that the print of the individual's foot, who is next to be carried to the grave, will be discovered. The straw is set on fire, when the body is lifted and the funeral company are leaving the house.

Elf-shot.—A notion is prevalent in the parish, that when a cow is suddenly taken ill, she is elf-shot; that is, that a kind of spirits called "trows," different in their nature from fairies, have discharged a stone arrow at her, and wounded her with it. Though no wound can be seen externally, there are different persons, both males and females, who pretend to feel it in the flesh, and to cure it by repeating certain words over the cow. They also fold a sewing needle in a leaf taken from a particular part of a psalm book, and secure it in the hair of the cow, which is considered, not only

as an infallible cure, but which also serves as a charm against future attacks. This is nearly allied to a practice which was at one time very prevalent, and of which some traces may perhaps still exist, in what would be considered a more civilised part of the world, of wearing a small piece of the branch of the roan-tree, wrapped around with red thread, and sewed into some part of the garments, to guard against the effects of an "evil eye," or witchcraft,

"Roan-tree and red thread
Will drive the witches a' wud."

When a cow has calved, it is the practice with some, as soon after as possible, to set a cat on her neck and draw it by the tail to the hinder part of the cow; and then to set it on the middle of the cow's back, and draw it down the one side and pull it up the other, tail foremost, that the cow may be preserved while in a weak state, from being carried away by the "trows." This is enclosing the cow, as it were, in a magic circle.

As the trows are said to have a particular relish for what is good, both in meat and drink; so when a cow or sheep happens to turn sick or die, it is firmly believed that they have been shot by an elfin-arrow, and that the real animal has been taken away and something of a trowie breed substituted in its place. And some who have been admitted into the interior of a trow's dwelling, assert that they have beheld their own cow led in to be slaughtered, while, at the same time, their friends on the surface of the earth, saw her fall by an unseen hand or tumble over a precipice. Sometimes, also, the trows require a nurse of their children, for it would appear, they too have a time to be born and a time to die, and therefore females newly confined must needs be watched very narrowly, lest they be carried off to perform the office of wet-nurse to some trowling of gentle blood, who has either lost its mother, or whose station among her own race, exempts her from the drudgery of nursing her own offspring.

There is one place in the parish, called "Trolhouland," a name which indicates the superstitious notions with which it is associated: it signifies "the high land of the trows." The internal recesses of knolls are considered the favourite residences of the trows, and they are seldom passed without fear and dread by the inhabitants of the upper world. And when, after nightfall, there may be a necessity for passing that way, a live coal is carried to ward off their attacks. For many centuries, the same superstitious belief has prevailed in Norway, that certain places were the favoured haunts of malevolent genii. There is their "Trolhetta;" and in Iceland, "Troladyngiar," and "Trollakyrkia."

Taking away and recovering Milk and Butter profits.—That a person may take away and procure for herself the summer profits of her neighbour's cows, it is the practice to go clandestinely and pluck an handful of grass from the roof of the byre, and give it to her own cows, thereby supposing that the milk and butter which should have been her neighbour's, will by this means become hers. And, in order to regain the profits which are supposed to have been taken away, it is usual to milk in private a cow belonging to the person who is suspected of having taken them, and thereby to get them back.

Neogle.—There is also a "trow" called a "Neagle," somewhat akin to the water-kelpie of other lands, who makes his appearance about mills, particularly when grinding, in the shape of a beautiful poney. That he may attract the attention of the person who acts the part of the miller, he seizes and holds fast the wheel of the mill; and, as is natural, the miller goes out to examine into the cause of the stoppage; when, to his astonishment, a beautiful poney saddled and bridled, is standing, and ready to be mounted; who but an old miller could let slip such a fair opportunity for a ride? But if he should neglect warnings, and unguardedly put his foot in the stirrup, his fate is sealed. Neither bit or bridle avail him any thing. Off goes the poney, bog or bank arrest not his course, till in the deep sea he throws his rider and himself evanishes in a flash of flame. But some millers are proof against the temptation, having been taught caution by the fate of others; and instead of taking a ride, salute his Neogleship with a fiery brand through the lightning-tree hole, which makes him immediately scamper away.

Such are some of the prevailing superstitious notions, which have no doubt been derived from the early Scandinavian settlers, and which, there is as little doubt, were fostered and made gain of, till the time of the Reformation, by the lower orders of the Roman Catholic clergy. And, if they should still retain a hold, to a certain extent, in the minds of some of the more ignorant, we need not be much surprised. But that those who have received a more liberal education, and consequently should be better able to appreciate the truths of Christianity, should lend their influence to foster such notions, would hardly be credited in the nineteenth century, if facts did

not confirm the allegation against them. The following document, which I obtained possession of at the kirk door before it was made public, and which was issued and signed by four members of the Morton Lodge in Lerwick, requires no comment. Though for certain reasons I withhold names, the authors justly deserve to be held up to general scorn.

"At a meeting held in Morton Lodge, at Lerwick, upon the 18th day of August 1815, it was reported and faithfully declared upon oath, by M. B. in Easting parish in Shetland, that an woollen web, the property of M. B., shirts and other things also of great value belonging to M. B.; as also, many suits of mutches, which belonged to M. B.; all these, as above stated, has been stolen from the green of C. during the first part of this present month. Notice is hereby given, that cruelty forms no part of masonry, yet justice to the injured party must be done, and that if these things so stolen are not returned back before next meeting of masons upon that business, or at furthest, in fifteen days from this date, a calamity of a severe nature may fall on all that parish in which the present crop may be blasted by storm, and the person or persons guilty shall be publickly led throw the parishes in the neighbourhood on day light, and that by evil spirits not seen by others. This paper to be intimated at the kirk door, that none may plead ignorance. Given under our hands at Lerwick, by authority of Morton Lodge."

I shall add one instance more of superstitious belief, which appears to have taken a firm hold of the mind of the Shetlander, at a very early period; and which, like the others above enumerated, still retains its hold, though, perhaps, under some modifications. It is called "casting the heart." It has long been believed, that when a person is emaciated with sickness, his heart is worn away, or taken away by some evil genii. A person skilled in "casting the heart" is sent for, who, with many mystic ceremonies, melts lead, pours it through the bowl of a key or pair of scissors, held over a sieve, which is also placed over a bason of cold water. The lead is melted and poured again and again, till it assumes something like the appearance of an heart, at least the operator strives to convince the patient and his friends that this is the case. It is worn, suspended from the neck, next the skin, that the cure may be completed. The ceremony, as described by Miss Campbell of Lerwick, is as follows:—

"When people are afflicted with consumptive complaints in Zetland, they imagine that the heart of the person so affected has been wasted away by the enchantment of the fairies, or witchcraft of some other evil beings. Old women, and sometimes men profess to cure this disease. The patient must undergo the following curious and very ridiculous operation: He is directed to sit upon the bottom of a large cooking pot, turned upon its mouth; a large pewter dish is placed or held upon his head; upon the dish a bason or bowl is set nearly full of cold water; into this water the operator pours some melted lead through the teeth of a common dressing comb. A large key is also employed in this operation. All this is performed with many strange incantations and gesticulations. If the lead falls into a shapeless lump, they declare that the heart and lungs of the patient are completely wasted away; that they will have infinite trouble, and perhaps, after all, will not be able to bring back the heart and lungs to their natural and healthful form. The lead is again melted, and run into the water through the teeth of the comb; it most likely assumes some shape, which the operator assures the spectators is the exact form of the patient's heart in its diseased state. The lead is repeatedly melted, and poured through the comb into the water; every time it is asserted to be more and more like the natural heart and lungs, and the bewitchment, of course, is rendered weaker and weaker. The patient undergoes this three times, with some days between each operation. When the last cast of the lead is over, the operator shows it round, and points out how exactly every part of the heart and lungs are restored to their natural and proper shape. If the patient dies (perhaps his death is hurried on by the fatigue and agitation occasioned by this mummery), his death is ascribed to some oversight in the strict performance of all the relative parts of this casting of the heart. The moon must be at a certain age, and it must be performed at a certain turning of the tide and hour of the night; numberless other things must be attended to. The operator will take anything they please to give, if it should be the half of all their goods and chattels, but he must not touch money. He appoints, however, a particular place, where a Danish coin, worth fivepence current in Zetland, is to be laid (as many as they like—the more the better, no doubt); this money is for the fairies, who come, it is asserted, and take it away; but the poor honest operator must not, and will not finger it, otherwise his trouble would come to nought, and the spell that bound the patient would be firmer than ever.

This operation of casting the heart is performed to this day in some parts of the Zetland Isles, and implicit belief placed in its efficacy. The patient must wear the lead, which has been used, in his bosom, for some time after the operation."—Miss Campbell's Harley Raddington.

Even so late as the beginning of the last century, visitors were frightened to approach the shores of Shetland, for fear of being brought under the influence of the spells of witches and warlocks: And by the old country acts, the ranselmen were enjoined to seek out and bring to condign punishment, all persons who made use of any manner of witchcraft, charms, or any other abominable or devilish superstitions. The signs by which persons might be discovered were, their being devilish, fearful and abominable cursers; takers away of their neighbour's profits; charmers and healers of some, and casters of sickness upon others; and who led damnable and abominable lives, contrary to God's commandments. As long as the islands were subjected to the Pope, in matters of faith, crosses, and benedictions, and amulets and prayers and pilgrimages were sufficient to prevent or to cure all the effects of the black arts. And even after the Reformation had been introduced, it was found no easy matter to shake the general belief in the efficacy of many of the Popish ceremonies; and, hence, many were ready to supply the place of the Catholic priests,—to pretend to cure diseases,—to "tell away pains,"—to counteract the effects of an evil eye or an evil tongue,—and to promise all manner of success in worldly affairs.