

PARISH OF ARDNAMURCHAN.*

PRESBYTERY OF MULL, SYNOD OF ARGYLE.

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L.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Names.—BEFORE the Reformation, three parishes were comprised in the portion of country now known as the parish of Ardnamurchan. At the establishment of the Protestant Church, these appear to have fallen under the care of one minister; but the united parishes, according to a practice not unfrequent, received as a common name, not that of all or any of the three parishes, but that of the chief of five districts within its bounds. This was Ardnamurchan, naturally the most fertile, and consequently, before the resources of the less arable, though now perhaps not less valuable districts, were discovered, by far the most populous,—a precedence which it still holds to a considerable extent. Some consequence farther accrued to it from the castle and residence of the ancient Lords of Ardnamurchan and Sunart being situated at its western extremity, as are also, since the Reformation, the parish church and dwelling of the minister.

The ancient and perhaps poetical name of Ardnamurchan was "Rìochd na Sorcha," (*the kingdom of Sorcha*), an appellation for certain districts not singular in the Highlands, and which would claim for it in remote antiquity certainly not less extent than in modern times it possesses as a parish. Its present name is understood to signify the "*Promontory or heights of the great seas*," (Aird nam Mòr Chuan,) though some may fancy it to be "Aird nam Mur Chumhan," the "*promontory of the narrow seas*." Certainly both are strictly significant of its character and position, for to the westward it throws a bold and striking headland of sterile rock far into the sea, so as to form a remarkable boundary be-

* Drawn up by the Rev. Angus McLean, late minister of the parish of Ardnamurchan.

twixt the open ocean and the many narrow straits and lochs to which the Sound of Mull is, from the west, the inlet.

Situation and Extent.—Two districts, Ardnamurchan and Sunart, are in Argyleshire; the other three, Moidart, Arasaig, and South Morir are in the county of Inverness. The measurement of the former is 87,753 acres Scotch, that of the latter the writer has in vain tried to procure. It is in all probability a good deal more than that of the Argyleshire portion of the parish. The extent of the whole is estimated in the last Statistical Account at 200,000 acres, a moderate computation.

Boundaries.—The parish is bounded on the south-west by the northern end of the Sound of Mull; on the south, by Loch Sunart, which winds eastward betwixt it and Morven. At the upper end of this loch, both parishes are conterminous for a mile or so. On the east, it is bounded by the district of Kingierloch, in the parish of Lismore; on the east and north-east, by those of Ard-gower, Lochiel, and Locharkaig, in the parish of Kilmalie, the boundary line passing, it is said in the old Statistical Account, “over a range of ten mountains, by as many alternate ascents and descents;” certainly over a country rugged and mountainous in the extreme. On the north, it is bounded by Lochmorir and the river issuing from it, which divide it from Northmorir, in the parish of Glenelg; and on the north-west and west, by that part of the Atlantic which washes the opposite shores of Skye and the Small Isles.

Topography.—It is difficult to take a connected view, or to communicate a general idea, of a parish of such vast extent and diversified conformation. It may, however be described as a broad stretch of rugged mainland, branching into the sea in several points and promontories, the most southern of which the noted headland of Ardnamurchan, is by far the most prominent.

In attempting a particular description, it may assist imagination to follow the immemorial division into districts, which appears to have been determined at some remote period, according to great natural landmarks. The peninsula or district of Ardnamurchan, properly so called, consists of a range of rather low hills, running from the well-known point in an easterly direction to the distance of about twenty-four miles, nowhere less than four and a-half, nor exceeding seven miles in breadth. For ten or twelve miles from the point, the hills are of the secondary or transition series, and in some places afford pasture of the finest quality. A large portion,

comparatively, of the coast, consists of productive arable and several well-cultivated farms, while little wood is to be seen. Beyond this, the country assumes the bolder and more precipitous aspect of the gneiss or mica slate formation; the pastures become coarser; woods of oak, birch, and hazel, especially on the south, through which scanty patches of cultivated land are seen at distant intervals, clothe the nakedness of the rocks, and cover the lower part of the hills down to the waters of Loch Sunart. At its junction with Sunart, Ardnamurchan slopes gradually on the south into a low neck of land, across which the line of demarcation extends for three miles, from the beautiful Creek of Salen on Loch Sunart to the west end of Lochshiel. On the north, its eastern extremity is a moss flat of great extent, upon which the hills abruptly descend, and which is bounded by the river Shiel, the boundary betwixt this district and Moidart.

Sunart.—In some old records, it is written Swynefort or Swyniford. Hard by its western extremity, but in Ardnamurchan, there is a creek where boats or galleys might be drawn up or moored, called Swinefort, which in Gaelic means the port or landing-place of Swin, Swen, or Sweno; in the tenth century, a king of Denmark, an apostate from Christianity, having been driven from his kingdom took refuge in Scotland, where, during his exile, he again embraced the true faith. If this Prince landed at Swinefort, or resided in the district, both may have been named from that circumstance. At any rate "Suain Mac Righ Lochlunn," "Swin Prince of Denmark," is a name well known in Highland tradition, and it appears certain that Sunart is compounded of "Suain" and "Aird, height or eminences." Suaine, however, also, in Gaelic, means rest or sleep. The exceeding stillness of the land-locked waters of Loch Sunart may have suggested the name given to secure and tranquil Suain and also to the district. This district is a continuation of Ardnamurchan, and is in mean breadth not less than 10, nor in length than 25 miles. The character of its rocks and soil is the same with that of the contiguous portion of the latter; but its mountains rise to a greater height; its valleys are wider and deeper; its scenery altogether cast in a grander mould; and its declivities more amply wooded. For a few miles, it presents the aspect of one mountainous ridge, which, as we proceed eastward, expands. The coast on the south trends to the south-east, and on the north for a much greater distance to the north-east, so as to give a far greater breadth at its eastern than

western extremity; and while an unbroken range of high mountains may be traced overlooking Loch Sunart on the one hand, and Lochshiel on the other, the intermediate country, especially as we approach the boundary, consists of an irregular assemblage of huge hills, circular valleys, and glens.

Moidart, pronounced in Gaelic *Muidard*, ("Mud," an old Gaelic word for sea spray, and "Aird," heights, literally the heights of sea spray, a most descriptive designation,) about 25 miles long, with a breadth all along probably of 10 or 12. It lies parallel to Sunart along the whole extent of Lochshiel, and to Ardnamurchan, for a few miles west from that lake, jutting out in several bold and craggy headlands in that direction into the ocean. Washed on the west and north by the sea, and on the south by Lochshiel, and the river which constitutes the western outlet of that lake, it is, like Ardnamurchan and Sunart, bounded on all sides by water except on the eastern end, which rests partly on Arasaig and the parish of Kilmalie. Both sides present a nearly unbroken chain of mountains, but the space between baffles description, consisting of

"Craggs, rocks, and hills confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of some former world."

These, all resting on a high mountain range, are covered with scanty grass and heath, the uniform brown of which bleak pasturage is varied only by the gray and often precipitous rocks, the shadows of some dark ravines, and the grayish-green of hollows where the accumulated washings of the rocky masses form a deeper and less barren soil. There are, however, valuable plains and valleys in this interesting district, which shall yet be noticed.

Arasaig and South Morir.—*Aras*, place or dwelling-place; *aig*, a harbour or bay, the place of the harbour; *morir*, *mor*, great; and *thir*, pronounced *hir*, land, the great or mainland. The first is descriptive of the best known and most fertile part of Arasaig; the second would naturally have been conferred on the district by the islanders, being, as it still is, a common resort for island craft.

These districts being divided by no well-defined natural demarcation, may be described as one. They constitute together a portion of country twenty-four miles long by fifteen broad, the western parts of which, like those of Moidart, project seaward, in several rocky points and headlands. The hills on the sea coast are generally rather low, though rugged and sterile. Farther back, without losing, but rather gaining, with respect to the latter cha-

racteristic, they rise to a great height; and the whole of the remaining country is composed of immense mountain ranges, whose sides, jagged with huge rocks, or broken into precipices, overshadow deep and dark valleys which wind between. This, which lies northward of all the other districts of the parish, exceeds all in the wild and savage grandeur of its scenery. It, however, contains some extensive and good sheep pastures, and some green fields and cultivated land on the coast, which delight the eye, as well as woods, chiefly of birch, which give beauty and shelter to the shores of Loch Morir and Lochoranua.

Hydrography.—Loch Sunart, an arm of the sea, about twenty-five miles long, bounding the parish on the south, is an offset of the Sound of Mull, at its junction with which it is about six miles in breadth, and becomes gradually narrower until, six or seven miles inland, it appears to terminate at the group of islands formed by Carna, Risga, and Oransay. Between these, the tide rushes with great velocity into a land-locked and generally smooth expanse, constituting the greatest portion of the length of the loch, varying from half a mile to two miles in breadth, and much from the straight line, in consequence of the points of Dungallan in Ardnamurchan and Airderinish in Morvern projecting in opposite directions. The water here has generally the brown colour of the many mountain streams which flow into it, and has all the appearance of a fresh water lake enclosed by high and rocky mountains, abrupt rocks, and wooded promontories, without any visible traces of the parent sea except the ebb and flow of the tide, the seaweed laid bare at low-water, and an occasional porpoise or smaller fishes pursuing their prey. At about six miles from its head, it again contracts into a narrow strait of no great length, and again expands, retaining a breadth varying from a quarter to half a mile until it terminates. There is a very correct chart of this arm of the sea, in the possession of Sir James Miles Riddell, Bart.

Loch Moidart runs into the district of that name for about four miles from west to east. Its depth does not appear to be great; and great part of its bottom is laid bare at low water. The sea enters by narrow channels on each side of the island Shana in its mouth. Steep and lofty mountains, whose scathed and naked peaks are generally enveloped in clouds, embosom the innermost and greatest sheet of water, which, almost always calm, even when the open sea is most wildly agitated, reflects from its placid sur-

face tall and fantastically-shaped rocks, wood-crowned heights, and all the most striking features of Highland scenery; while, as if to contrast human mutability and grandeur passed away with the vast and unchangeable creations of Almighty power, the high gray turrets of Castle Tyrim, a stronghold of the Clanranald, now in ruins, are seen from many different positions,—a memorial of the times when the shout of armed clans and the clang of the conflict disturbed the silence of these still waters, and now peaceful solitudes.

Loch-nan-Uamh, an open unsheltered arm of the sea, is situated betwixt Moidart and Arasaig. It is about four miles in mean breadth, for about the same distance of its length, until, at the headland of Ardnish, it becomes narrower, and terminates, three or four miles farther on, in a small bay beyond Barradale. Loch-ainart, five or six miles long, generally less than a quarter of a mile broad, winds betwixt Ardnish and Moidart, and terminates at Kinchregan in Arasaig. It is a branch of Loch-nan-Uamh. The course of both is from west to east.

Loch-na-Reaull, immediately north of the point of Arasaig, is in length about three miles or upwards, being from north-west to south-east: it is a shallow expanse of about one and a-half or two miles in breadth.

Loch Shiel.—Of the inland lakes, which abound in all parts of the parish, this is, in every respect, the most important. It fills the lower part of the entire valley which divides Sunart and Moidart, is computed at twenty-five to twenty-seven miles in length, varies from 200 yards to three-quarters of a mile in breadth, but in the greater part from a quarter to half a-mile. At its west end, it is shallower, and reposes on a bed of fine sand (as do the great moss flats contiguous,) similar to that of the sea-shore, about two miles distant. About six miles to the eastward, it becomes deep, and, from the character of the country, retains, it is probable, great depth on to its eastern end. Its water has the usual dark-brown colour of lakes similarly situated, but is clear and pellucid in a glass vessel, pure and pleasant to the taste. Its elevation above the sea cannot be great, for the river by which it flows into the Western Ocean is navigable, except during great drought, for open boats. From its eastern end, it discharges its waters, in considerable volume, by a stream a few miles long, through the parish of Kilmalie into Lochail, a branch of the Liune Hiloch.

The circumstance of this lake almost connecting the arm of the sea into which the Caledonian Canal opens to the west with the western ocean, by a short and direct line, (whereby the long and nearly circular route through the Linne Hiloch, the Sound of Mull, and round the formidable point of Ardnamuchan, would be saved,) attracted the notice of Mr. Telford, and is noticed in his report regarding the Caledonian Canal. The opening of this line of communication on the same scale would evidently greatly increase the benefit of that canal. Even the deepening of the river Shiel, and a canal, however unexpensive, connecting the lake with the sea on the east, would prove, not only locally, but generally useful. Open boats from the Western Isles are in the practice of entering the lake by the river, and taking away ladings of the timber on its banks. Fishermen from the east have pulled their boats overland from Lochshiel into the lake, and, finding their way on its waters into the western sea, have taken a full cargo of fish before companions, who took the more circuitous route, arrived at the fishing-station. The scenery of this lake at its west end is, for several miles, rather sombre, consisting chiefly of brown low hills, flats of brown moss, through which the lake winds itself. The ever-green island of St Finnan, about six miles eastward, appears an oasis in the desert. Beyond this, the lake plunges into the midst of high mountains, whose sides, generally nearly precipitous, are streaked with the foam of falling streams, or seamed with rugged ravines. Woods of oak, ash, and birch, thrive vigorously among the cliffs and promontories. The hills are occasionally green, rounded, and swelling, for many miles, but their prevailing character is stern and grand; the visitor feels a sense of loneliness, seldom broken by the sight of a human habitation, or enlivened by any sound but the dash of waterfalls or the scream of some bird of prey.

Loch Morir extends from west to east. Its wide expanse of water lies betwixt South Morir, in the parish of Ardnamurchan, and North Morir, in that of Glenelg, for a length exceeding twenty miles, and with a breadth varying from one to probably three miles. Its depth is unknown, but is probably considerable. Its elevation is considerably above that of Lochshiel; its colour much the same. Like Lochshiel, it fills the lower part of an extensive valley, bounded by high and steep hills, but without any great flats on its shores. Some arable grounds on the gentler slopes are seen at a distance, and woods thriving vigorously at frequent

intervals; and though the mountains present the bleak and speckled aspect of patches of rock and heather contending for the mastery, their huge bulk saves them from the charge of tameness, and some excellent sheep grazing from that of utter barrenness. The scenery of the west end is well-wooded and interesting, and from thence the lake lies open to eastward for about fifteen miles, a wild, dreary, yet magnificent prospect.

Loch Beoraig, situated east of the arable part of Meoble, in the glen of that name, is from two to three miles long. Loch Eilt, about the same length, is the largest of a chain of small lakes in the great glen, which extends from Lochainart towards Glenfinnan. There is also a lake of considerable size in the valley of Glenhuirich in Sunart. Of lakes of all sizes there are said, in the old Statistical Account, to be 300 in the parish, the correctness of which statement there is no reason to doubt.

Rivers.—Of these the most important, in every respect, are those flowing from Loch Shiel and Loch Morir. That from the east end of the former flows into the parish of Kilmalie; that from the west end, about two miles long, having the broadest channel, and probably the greatest volume of water, flows into the Western Ocean, into which Lochmorir also pours its waters in a fine stream, apparently of much the same volume and length. The river Mioble, flowing into Morir, and of Pollock, flowing into Loch Shiel, are also considerable streams.

Mountains.—The only hills of which, so far as the writer could ascertain, the altitude has been taken, are those in Sunart, mentioned in the last Statistical Account, viz. Ben Rusepol, 2661 feet; Scur Dhoniel, 2730 feet; Scour Choinieh, 2364; Creach bhunn, 2439; Glaschoiren hill, 1920. The mountain ranges, of which it may be remarked, that they generally, if not always, run in an eastern direction from the sea coast, require a more particular examination and a more scientific description than it was in the writer's power to bestow.

Valleys.—Near the eastern extremity of Sunart, the beautiful and fertile valley of Strontian opens to the south, upon the arm of the sea which bears the name of that district, and retires inland for about five or six miles; first, in a westerly and then in a northerly direction, where, on one side, it is covered with some fine natural oaks. At its opening, the prominent objects are the flourishing plantations, the tasteful grounds and picturesque residence of the proprietor, and so far forward, as to be situated on the shores of Loch

Sunart, a neat and comfortable inn. Farther back, on the same or east side of the valley, are seen the well-managed farm and excellent farm-house and offices of Drimantarran, an extensive flat of improved and productive moss; and, on the other, far up the lower slopes of the hills, to the upper extremity of the glen, the dwellings and well-cultivated crofts of numerous cottagers. Close by the quiet stream which divides the valley, and tolerably centrally situated, stands the Government church, and at some distance northward, overlooking the place of worship, and the most populous part of the glen, on a sheltered yet elevated situation, the low-roofed manse of the minister. The level part, which is not many yards above the level of the sea, is nowhere above a few hundred yards broad; but the tops of the bounding hills are several miles distant, so that they do not overhang but shelter the valley, which is consequently warm, sunny, and cheerful. Opening in the opposite direction upon Loch Shiel, immediately on the other side of a high mountain range, and little, if at all, above the same level, is another valley of some miles extent from north to south. The hill sides are here precipitous, and overshadow the strath below, and there is a wild and sombre grandeur in the scenery, well and beautifully relieved by some acres of level and good land, and the neat little arable enclosures and farm-house of Pollock, situated where the hills, whose cliffs are there adorned with partial coverings of birch, expand, and receive into their bosom a magnificent bay of Loch Shiel.

Glenahurich is a valley in Sunart of some note, containing a lake of considerable size, a good farm-house, and remarkably fine sheep pasture. It is situated a few miles north of Strontian. To the same district also pertain about two miles of the great glen, which runs from the head of Loch Sunart to the shores of the Linne Hiloch, and which connects the peninsula composed of Morven and Kingerloch with the mainland.

Glenaladale.—About six or seven miles east of Pollock, a valley of this name in Moidart opens to the south upon Loch Shiel, the flat or strath being about 300 yards broad, but little above the level of the lake, and consisting of some tolerable arable and improvable pasture. The hills which confine it are towards Loch Shiel, green, rounded, and swelling. It is about two miles long, running from south to north.

Kinlochmoidart.—At the head of Lochmoidart, which indents the western extremity of this district, the high bounding ranges

which inclose the lake continue to run inland, and form the first part or opening of a valley, about seven or eight miles long. The level land here is about 200 acres in extent, (the soil moss about two feet thick on a bed of clay,) extending about three-quarters of a mile along the head of the loch, and about the same distance back into the glen, with a quarter of a mile in mean breadth. It is all good and productive arable, though still capable of much improvement, to which the greatest obstacle is its slight elevation above the level of the sea. Some fine old sycamores and other trees around the embowered and sequestered residence of the proprietor, attest the maturity and great size to which forest trees are there capable of arriving. Groves of vigorous larches and firs, and woods of oak, birch, and ash, profitably adorn the lesser eminences and the slopes of the high mountains. Where the plain of Kinlochmoidart terminates on the east, the valley takes a north-easterly direction, and we come upon the farm of Lochans, and a small lake not more probably than ten or fifteen feet above the level of the sea, the flat land being about 150 yards broad, chiefly swampy, yet improvable ground. After this, the valley, under the name of Glenforslan, contracts, until, at about a mile from its upper extremity, beyond a farm-house of that name, the level ground ceases, and the stream fills the entire bottom. This last is not the least valuable part of the glen. The hills, though steep, are covered with a depth of soil uncommon in such situations, and of course with grass of superior quality.

Glenraig.—About six miles from Kinlochmoidart, a valley of this name runs for about two miles from Lochnanua to the south, requiring no particular description.

Glenmeuble.—This is a long deep and dreary valley, situated in the wildest and central parts of Arasaig, extending from Lochmorir on the north-west, towards Glenfinnan on the south-east, for at least ten miles. The only habitable portion is the farm of Meoble, situated at its north-eastern extremity, where there are some acres of tolerable arable and considerable plain. South-east from this, its lower part is for three miles occupied by the waters of Loch Brosaig, a lake about a quarter of a mile broad, beyond which the windings of the glen are soon lost in the misty recesses of precipitous and overhanging hills.

It would be interminable and bootless labour even to allude to all the valleys in a parish of such vast extent, consisting, as it does, almost altogether of hill and glen; but one more may be men-

tioned, as connected with the general structure of the country. It extends from Glenfinnan, at the east end of Lochshiel, in a north-eastern direction for some miles, when it is intercepted by a mound, or lower mountainous range, connecting the higher ranges on each side. Beyond this, the valley meets with no similar interruption, until it terminates at the head of Lochaylort, distant ten miles from Glenfinnan. This is the neck which joins the whole of Moidard and part of Arasaig to the mainland.

Moss Flats.—At the west end of Lochshiel, and in close neighbourhood, there are three extensive flats of this description.

The Moss of Kinkaw, extending from the west end of that lake to the sea shore, and along the eastern bank of the river Shiel, is, according to an old survey of Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, fully seven square miles in area. Another, the moss of Achaneilein, with a mean breadth apparently of about three-fourths of a mile, stretches along the south side of Lochshiel for upwards of five miles from near the eastern boundary of the first. The greater part of both is a perfect quagmire, or quaking moss of unknown depth, through which progress can only be made by leaping from one tuft of stunted heather and coarse grass to another; but many hundred acres of both, especially along the margin of the lake and the sea shore, are highly improvable; the moss, only two or three feet deep, reposing upon a bed of sand. Right opposite to the Moss of Achaneilein, on the north or Moidard side of Lochshiel, is situated the Moss of Langal, a plain of 679 acres, all capable, at a moderate expense, of being converted into highly productive arable soil. The moss rarely exceeds three or four feet in depth; the substratum is sand, which, when brought to the surface in trenching, soon decomposes the peat. With the help of a marly shell sand, found in considerable quantities in the bed of the river Shiel, at the western end of this moss, and some sea ware, good crops of potatoes have been raised, although the ground was not broke up until the previous winter. On the hill slopes to the eastward, there are 400 acres of the same description, equally susceptible of improvement.

At Inveraylort, in Arasaig, there is a considerable flat of improvable moss, not unlike that of Langal in quality, but not probably exceeding fifty acres in extent.

Betwixt the west end of Lochmorir and sea shore of Arasaig, there is another great moss flat of many hundred acres, a great proportion of which, it may be presumed, from the success with

which a few patches have been cultivated, is improvable, and may yet, with the other great mosses of the parish, should the resources of the Highlands come into notice, attract a small share of the enterprize and capital so lavishly expended on distant colonies and foreign lands. The moss last mentioned, it will be noticed, is situated similarly to that of Kintrà, in so far as to lie betwixt a great lake and the sea, but with this difference, that it is separated from both by low hills. There are many other mosses of considerable size in the parish.

Caves.—On the north coast of Ardnamurchan there are several caves, which are sometimes thought worthy of a visit; as also, on the shores of Lochnanua, “the Loch of Caves,” in Arasaig. Three of these the writer has entered. One about 300 feet long or upwards, enters on the land side of a precipitous mass of rock, on the farm of Glendrian, in Ardnamurchan, and so nearly approaches the sea on the other, that the rise and fall of the waves, as they tumble and boil without, is heard distinctly at its inner extremity, which is coated with spar. It is generally extremely narrow; the sides, which rise to a great height, are far inclined from the perpendicular, and correspond with the dip of the mica slate rocks, out of which it seems cleft. Another, not far to the eastward, much of the same description, terminates in a small chamber about ten feet high, and about ten feet by four in length and breadth, coated with white spar slightly tinged with brown. The numerous projections on the sides and roof are translucent, and appear, when lighted, somewhat of an amber colour. The sea enters at high water, and access is difficult. On its first discovery, not a great many years ago by some boys in pursuit of goats, many stalactites, thick as a man’s arm, and several feet long, hung like icicles from its roof and sides. Unfortunately, the exciseman of the district happened to be a man of taste, and, impelled by that love so common to tourists, of appropriating objects, the value of which, any where else but where they are found, it is difficult to discover. Accordingly, he broke and took away all the stalactites. Another cave, in Suerdale Charrach, also on the north shores of the same district, nowise remarkable in itself, was, in past times, visited by sick people for the recovery of health. A shallow cavity, in the interior, contains about a quart of water, which, though completely removed, soon forms again in a manner supposed to be miraculous, by oozing through the moist rock. Of this the visitor drank, and left, as an offering,

a small piece of money, or any article of little value. A few years ago, some pins, needles, metal buttons, and an old halfpenny might be seen there, the last tribute to expiring superstition. At Baradale, in Arasaig, a cave is shown as one of those rude fastnesses which gave shelter to Prince Charles Stuart after his defeat at Calloden, a purpose for which it is well adapted. It is in a rock of mica slate, and within expands into an apartment of considerable size, floored with jagged and uneven stones. Yet here, in damp and utter darkness, the unfortunate Prince took refuge for three days. There is another cave, on Lochanua, not now well known, where he also concealed himself. Another, in Ocal, in Ardnamurchan, is said, on its own account, to be well worth a visit. Of course, in a parish of such extent, there are many clefts and fissures running into the rocks, which it would be tedious to mention. All are on the sea shores, and many the haunts of wild pigeons.

Coast.—The coast, the extent of which, considering how deeply and frequently the land is indented by lochs, cannot be estimated at less than several hundred miles, is, so far as can be seen from shipboard, generally bold and rocky, especially the headland of Ardnamurchan, which, from its position, is thrown much in the course of mariners. When the wind is high, and blows from the open sea, as it generally does on one part or other of this iron-bound promontory, its aspect is very formidable. The sea rises with the abrupt and irregular motion occasioned by strong tides, so very dangerous to open boats; breaks in huge masses of boiling foam and showers of spray against the rugged barrier of naked rock, while no creek or landing-place, where even life could be saved, though there are in fact several, is visible.

North of the point of Ardnamurchan, the coast inclines suddenly inward and eastward, so as to form, with the point of Arasaig bearing east north-east from the former, a deep and wide bay, the shores of which, presenting all around a seaward frontier of rock, high ranges, and rocky headlands, seem everywhere inaccessible. At the point of Arasaig, where the land again juts considerably to the westward, the coast, though rocky, is comparatively low. Here, however, ledges of low and numberless sunk rocks extend to the northern boundary of the parish, guarding the mouth of Lochnakeaulf and the sandy shores of Lochmorir, with a barrier line of breakers advanced about three-quarters of a mile into the sea.

ARGYLE.

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Headlands and Islands.—The headland of Ardnamurchan is not only the most noted in the parish, but on the whole line of coast betwixt Cape Wrath and the Mull of Cantire, being the westernmost part of the mainland of Britain. From the era of Somerled to the reign of James VI., it constituted a geographical boundary between the Western Isles, which were denominated Northern or Southern, according to their position in respect to this promontory. As might be expected, vessels are not unfrequently cast on shore in some of its indentations, or dashed to a thousand fragments on its rocks. At a creek on the extreme point, as wild and desolate a spot as can well be conceived, a few green mounds, among the brown and withered herbage, indicate where the mutilated bodies of shipwrecked seamen rest below. The advantage of erecting a light-house here will, it is believed, not be denied by any one. The only other headland, of more than local notoriety, is Rheu Arasaig, or the Point of Arasaig, which projects considerably to the westward, and is a place of call for the steamers plying from Glasgow to Skye and the Long Island.*

The only island worth noticing is Island Shona, which nearly blocks up the mouth, and occupies great part of Lochmoidart. It is about three or four miles long, by about one and a-half broad, mostly composed of masses of rock, rather scantily covered with heath and wood, but exhibiting here and there spots of great verdure and fertility. The dwelling-house and surrounding scenery of the residence of a respectable family on this island, are very beautiful.

Sands.—Wherever sandy beaches are found, they seem to be formed in great part, sometimes, though rarely, entirely of decomposed particles of the adjacent rocks. This, however, is generally largely mixed with minutely broken shells, often with clay, and more or less according as the situation is exposed to, or sheltered from the violence of the sea, with mud, the residue of decayed sea-weed, and the vegetable deposits of streams. Two kinds of shell sand, in high repute as manure, are found in banks above, or beds under the surface. One seems to be a collection, pure and unmixed, of common shells, minutely broken by the

* The other headlands most noted are, Ardnish, in Arasaig; Smirapary, in Moirdart; Ardriminish, Sunna, Sron Chloinn Ghilleis, Rutha Ghlinn Borodail; Dunggellan, in Ardnamurchan.

force of the waves. Of this there is a bank at Ardtoe, in Ardnamurchan. The other, and the most valued, is formed of small coral like pieces, having often several branches similar to that substance, and marly matter, and is found in layers about a foot thick under six or seven inches of common sand at Kilchoan and Ardtoe, in Ardnamurchan. At the latter place, it has been found to answer on being well worked with a trowel, without any admixture, as a tolerable plaster for the dry stone cottages of the inhabitants. The chief deposit of this sand is an inexhaustible bank at the ledge of rocks which run across the mouth of Lochnakeaul, in Arasaig, whence it is conveyed to the distance of fifty and sixty miles. There is also a bed of marly shell sand, totally different from either of those just mentioned, found at the west end of Lochshiel.

Sands of Kintra.—West of the great moss flat of Kintra, situated betwixt the sea and Lochshiel, and bounding the flat in that direction, extends the beach or sands of Kintra. This is an expanse not less than two miles square, nearly circular in form, over which the sea flows only at high water, and to no great depth, consisting of fine light-coloured sand, the debris of primitive rocks, mixed with large proportions of shell sand, decomposed land and marine plants, some clay, and doubtlessly a great quantity of animal matter derived from the mussels, cockles, and other shell-fish with which it abounds. The sea being admitted by a narrow inlet, seems very capable of exclusion by an embankment; the streams from inland are equally susceptible of being collected into a canal for conveyance of materials to and from the very margin of the great moss. The substance of the moss and the sands affording the best manure for each other, seem placed by nature in juxtaposition for mutual improvement, and present an inviting field for the investiture of great capital. At the head of Loch Moidart, there is also an extent of beach exposed, at low water, about one and a-half mile long and a-half broad. It is chiefly composed of deep soft clay, mingled with the substances just mentioned, as component parts of the sands of Kintra. There is also a beach of considerable extent at the head of Loch Ainort; one of white silicious sand on the coast of Loch Morir; and another of the same description at Sunna, near the point of Ardnamurchan.

Meteorology.—No meteorological record has been kept in the

parish, except observations with the thermometer and barometer, (from which the following has been obtained,) kept by Colonel Robertson Macdonald of Kinlochmoidart.

| | 1834. | | 1835. | | 1836. | | 1837. | | 1838. | |
|------------|---------------|------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | Mean of Ther. | Bar. | Mean of Ther. | Bar. | Mean of Ther. | Bar. | Mean of Ther. | Bar. | Mean of Ther. | Bar. |
| Jan. ... | ... | ... | 37 | 29.9½ | 36½ | 28.9½ | ... | ... | 35½ | 29.4 |
| Feb. ... | ... | ... | 43½ | 28.9 | 37 | 29.9½ | ... | ... | 32 | 29.4 |
| March, ... | ... | ... | 44 | 29.2½ | 43½ | 28.9½ | ... | ... | 44 | 29.3 |
| April, ... | ... | ... | 48 | 29.4½ | 44½ | 29.4½ | ... | ... | 45 | 29.3½ |
| May, 57 | 29.3 | ... | 50½ | 29.5 | 58 | 29.6½ | ... | ... | 53½ | 29.5½ |
| June, 62 | 29.3 | ... | 63 | 29.3 | 57½ | 28.8 | 60 | 29 | ... | ... |
| July, 63½ | 29.4 | ... | 64 | 29.3 | 58 | 29.2 | 61 | 29.1½ | ... | ... |
| Aug. 61 | 29.2 | ... | 62½ | 29.2½ | 56 | 29.3 | 59 | 29.3 | ... | ... |
| Sept. 59½ | 29.4½ | ... | 55½ | 29.1 | 52½ | 29.1 | 54½ | 29 | ... | ... |
| Oct. 47 | 29.4 | ... | 46½ | 28.8 | ... | ... | 47½ | 29.3 | ... | ... |
| Nov. ... | 29.4 | ... | 40 | 29.7½ | ... | ... | 43 | 29.0½ | ... | ... |
| Dec. 44 | 29.3 | ... | 39½ | 29.3½ | ... | ... | 40½ | 29.2 | ... | ... |

The climate is undoubtedly temperate, though exceedingly variable. Snow, which scarcely ever falls heavily, seldom lasts longer than twenty-four hours on the low grounds, though on the higher hills it may continue for months. Frost is generally not severe nor of long duration. The great drawback of the climate is frequent and violent gales of wind, which greatly interrupt, and render perilous travelling by sea, a common mode of communication; sometimes they do much damage to standing crops, and, it is believed, destroy winter grass and foggage more than the cold of that season. Providing shelter from the wind could be obtained, it is the opinion of competent judges, that any plants or flowers grown in South Britain might be raised. Sometimes, however, frost, during night, blights the blossom of fruit trees in the end of April and beginning of May.

Diseases.—The prevailing complaints are, common colds, influenza, erysipelas, and diseases of the stomach. Pulmonary consumption was, for some years, rather prevalent in the valley of Strontian, and scrofula in the Inverness-shire districts. The last has been accounted for by intermarriages with persons constitutionally liable to that disease, to which it is said the people have no reluctance; but as there is no ground for the supposition that they were at any former period more scrupulous, it may with more probability be attributed to the moist and variable climate, operating on constitutions relaxed by scanty and innutritive diet. Rheumatism and inflammatory ailments, though attributable in some degree to the climate, are not so frequent as might be expected. Infectious fevers are of frequent, in truth of annual occurrence;

but in every case, at least for the last ten years, have been imported from the great towns of the south, generally by home sick convalescent patients, to whom the steamers now afford every facility to return to their homes. Experience of their fatal effects has happily taught the people such caution, that these diseases now seldom spread beyond the family afflicted. Upon the whole, the climate with all its inconveniences, is very healthy.

Geology.—So far as the writer can ascertain, there has been no geological survey of the parish. About ten miles of Ardnamurchan, east from the headland or point, appears to be of the trap series; in this it accords with the opposite coast of Morvern, and that of Mull on the sound of that island. The prevailing rocks are whinstone.

With these are interspersed extensive beds of limestone of a fine-grained slaty rock, of light greyish blue colour, and some hard sandstone. The west face of the headland is in many parts penetrated by numberless whin dikes, or veins of basalt, intersecting each other in all directions, of one striking instance of which, a correct plate is given in Dr Macculloch's third volume on the Hebrides. The rock, however, is not limestone, as there represented, but hard sandstone of a similar colour. Organic remains in the fossil state are contained in great quantities in a rock at the point of Ormsaig Big, on the south side of this headland. In a neighbouring hill, pitchstone is found, and glance coal in the hill of Bensheand. Iron and copper ores are said in Sir Alexander Murray's Survey, to exist in the same neighbourhood. The foundation of the older or primitive rocks, on which the foundations above-mentioned rest, protrude in many instances on the sea shores, and are distinctly traceable on the north coast especially, for miles, from a place not far from the point. To this series belongs the whole wide extent of the parish, with the exception, perhaps, of a few small superincumbent masses of crumbling rock near Lochna-keaul, the country being composed of gneiss, mica-slate, a fine-grained kind of the latter, which quarries into broad, tolerably smooth flags, and at Strontian of granite. Here, as is well known, lead ore abounds, as well as Strontium, so named on account of its being there first discovered. Traces of lead ore are also found in the hills of Dallella, and Lachans in Moirdart.

Soils.—These where arable, with the exception of some parts of

Ardnamurchan, are light and friable, consisting of decomposed mineral and vegetable particles, washed from the mountains by the rains or streams, or of reclaimed moss. In some cases, they are gravelly and stony to a degree betokening utter barrenness; but these yield by no means the worst crops.

Mines.—Though traces of lead are found in many parts of Su-nart, only the mines of Strontian have been worked. These deserve a more scientific and particular description than can here be given. They consist of two veins; one, termed steel ore, on account of its hardness and iron grey colour, is said to be rich in silver; but is difficult to smelt, though producing excellent lead. The direction of this vein is from south-east to north-west, with a slight dip to the north. The working or vein is about eight feet wide, the walls granite, and an opening having been made on the slope of the hill in which it is situated, it is entered by a level passage through this without a shaft. On the other vein, there are several openings or shafts, some of which are 100 fathoms deep. This vein is at one spot thirty feet wide; its bearing a few points more to east and west than that of the former, and its dip slightly to the south. It is crossed from north to south by a whin dike, nineteen feet wide, besides others of less size. The walls are granite or gneiss. There are various riders, as the miners term them, of quartz, apart from the walls, rising abruptly in the very centre of the vein, and splitting into parts for several yards, and terminating at once. These are left by the miner, but the blue stone or calc spar, in which the galena is imbedded, is totally removed, and the ore afterwards separated before smelting.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

There appears to be no doubt that the entire parish formed part of the possessions of Somerled, the celebrated Thane or Regulus of Argyle, whose mainland conquests, moreover, are supposed, with great probability, to have been the dominions of his ancestors. After his death in 1164, it would seem that the superiority of these lands had been wrested, by the efforts of successive Scottish Kings, from the descendants of that warlike and able chief. At any rate, the first authentic notices of them are grants of Alexander III. in 1263, of Ardnamurchan and Maruin to Angus Mac Isla, and of the lordship of Garmoran to Allan MacRuari, both heads of powerful houses descended from Somerled. Moirdart, Arasaig, and South Morir, with adjacent districts to the north, had by this time been formed into the lordship above-mentioned,

while it would appear that Ardnamurchan and Sunart were included in the province of Engadia or Argyle, an arrangement which was retained, when with the extension of the royal authority, the whole kingdom was divided into sheriffdoms. According to tradition, Ardnamurchan was the possession of "Muchdragan Mac Ri Lochlunn," a tyrannical and licentious Norwegian Prince, who claimed an abominable privilege, against the toleration of which in Scotland there is conclusive evidence adduced by Lord Hailes, which the following narrative corroborates: A man named "Evun Cleireach," "Evun Clerk," the celebrated beauty of whose wife had attracted the notice of Muchdragan, having received intimation of an intended visit from the latter, well knowing the infamous consequences, prepared, by a singularly bold and ingenious expedient, to maintain the honour of his family, and avenge the insult. On the day appointed, he alone met the Lord of Ardnamurchan and his retinue, on the northern side of Benhianda hill, at the foot of which he resided, armed solely with his "Tuaghairm" or battle axe, and dressed in a cassock or long shirt, sown so loosely in its different parts as merely to retain its shape. As they rested conversing on different sides of the path, Evun suddenly, by a dexterous cast, sunk his battle-axe in the skull of the unsuspecting Norseman, and fled up a hollow which led to the summit of Benheand, pursued by Muchdragan's followers. His loose sown robe did him noble service. When near the summit the foremost pursuer seized it, but the piece, as was intended, coming away with him, he fell back on those immediately behind, and tumbled with them down the hill. One or more met the same fate, and Evun, though in a state of nudity, escaped to the southern foot of Benheand where, during the previous night, he had concealed his wife and family in a six-oared boat, and plied oars and sails, without once casting anchor, until he arrived in Islay. The hollow up which Evun ran is still called "Glac na Coiridh," the hollow of the race or pursuit, the hill itself, "Bean na hurchrach," the hill of the cast or throw. The cairn erected on the spot where the Norse leader was slain, is still known under the name of "Carn Mbuckdragain," Muchdragan's cairn, and the rock at which Evun embarked, under that of "Sgair chul Eilhin," the rock of the nook of Evun. Evun having taken refuge with the IarI Islach, Lord of Isla, the latter was induced, by his representations, to send his son John with an armament to take possession of Ardnamurchan; from which John or Ian are descended the clan Ian, so long the pro-

prietors of Ardnamurchan and Sunart. History confirms the occupancy of this district by John, the son of Angus Mor, on whom tradition bestows the designation of Iarl or Earl of Islay, as well as the fact of the former being the progenitor of the clan Ian of Ardnamurchan. The grant of 1283 marks, though not with the precision of modern charters, the date of the passing of Ardnamurchan into the possession of John of Isla, for that event may have preceded, or followed it in times when royal charters were often merely the confirmation of rights already assumed, or a means of obtaining them along with the more powerful agency of the sword. The somewhat remarkable tradition of a Norse noble being in possession about this period, is not invalidated by the fact of the predominance of the native race having been completely established on the mainland districts by the valour and talents of Somerled about a century previously, or the cession of the kingdom of the Isles itself to the Scottish king in 1266. Ardnamurchan, projecting so far into the open sea, was in the direct course of every Norse invasion, and the centre of the Norwegian principality of the Isles; and being, moreover, connected with the mainland only by a narrow isthmus or tarburt, over which boats were not unfrequently drawn from sea to sea,—(a circumstance which suggested to Magnus Barefoot the stratagem by which the more valuable and extensive peninsula of Kintyre was made part of that principality,) may have anciently been held as part of the Norwegian territories. At any rate, Muchdragan may have held of the king or some great Gaelic chief. The district may, therefore, with all probability, be considered as the last footing of the once victorious Norwegians on the west continent of Scotland, while in the deed of Evun we behold the final blow to the relics of their power. Angus Og, son of Angus Mor, above-mentioned, the faithful adherent of Bruce, was confirmed in the possession of the district by that monarch. Of him his brother continued to hold the lands, and transmitted them to his descendants, who possessed them as holdings from the Lord of the Isles, with their other domains, until the forfeiture of the latter in 1493, when the clan Ian became vassals of the crown.

There seems to be no doubt that the district of Sunart was, from the time of their accession to Ardnamurchan, in the possession of this family; its position, in the absence of any documents showing it to have been held by any other, warrants the assertion. About 1498, claims to it were asserted by another branch of the house of

Somerled, at which period the right of M'Ian, the actual possessor, was established by royal charter.

The high rank of this family in the Highlands and Isles was maintained by no mean share of ability. When James IV. visited the Highlands to quell the insurgent nobles of the forfeited lordship of the Isles, M'Ian, whose castle in Ardnamurchan the King had selected to receive the homage of the island chiefs, displayed uncommon zeal and intrepidity in support of the authority of the Crown, and, singularly enough, against the head of his own house, Sir John of Islay, and Sir Alexander of Lochalsh, the heir of the Lord of the Isles. The first he apprehended in Islay, with his three sons, and took to Edinburgh, where they were executed. He was concerned in the assassination of the latter. His unscrupulous loyalty procured him high favour and rich rewards from the King, but drew upon him the fierce vengeance of the houses of Isla and Lochalsh, who, after the death of James IV., united their forces, wasted his lands with fire and sword, sacked his castle, and slew himself and his two sons in battle, some time before 1519.

Moriada, his grand-daughter and heiress, resigned, (it is not known for what cause,) with consent of her husband, Robertson of Strowan, the superiority of Ardnamurchan and Suinart to Archibald, Earl of Argyle. For about sixty years thereafter, the heiress retained possession, in complete independence of the Earl, either on the plea of their Crown charters, or, more probably, on consuetudinal right and Gaelic rules of succession.

Feuds, however, arose among the leading men of the clan. "Angus mor mac vic Eain," uncle of the chief Donald Conallach, endeavoured to hold possession of Suinart on his own account. A reconciliation having apparently been effected, the latter passed through Suinart to visit Allan nan Creach, "Allen the forayer," Lord of Lochiel, to whose daughter he was betrothed; and on his return, with only an ordinary retinue, was laid wait for and foully murdered by his savage uncle at a pass in the north of Ardnamurchan, still named "Faohil Dhonuil Chonallach." It is said that Lochiel, on seeing his daughter weep, exclaimed, "For every tear you shed, I will give cause for ten." It is certain that Angus Mor was soon after met by this chief in Morven, and there was slain by an archer in his train, who nailed his hand to his forehead as he raised his visor to take a better view of the enemy.* This took

* The death of this ferocious warrior, as related by tradition, was characteristic. As he lay dying, he requested Lochiel to receive his sword, being unwilling to yield

place in 1596, and while the clan Ian were thus weakened by intestine broils, the occasion was seized by Argyle to enforce the not forgotten deed of Moriada. A negotiation appears to have been commenced, of which it was the basis. The title-deeds of the heir of Macvic Eoin came into the possession of Argyle, tradition says, by his having found them with a burghess of Edinburgh; with whom M'Ian left them as a pledge for a debt incurred in educating his son. In 1602, M'Ian became, by a special agreement, vassal of Argyle, and in a few years it would seem that the superior acquired the rights of actual proprietor. The clan were, as might be expected from their ignorance of feudal rights, refractory. Mr Donald Campbell of Baslerick, afterwards Sir Donald of Ardnamurchan, a man of uncommon depth of policy and inflexible resolution, was appointed by Argyle, his commissioner, to reduce them to obedience. Campbell, by a combination of cruelty and insult, soon goaded the clansmen to violence, and, in 1624, twenty-two years after the contract with Argyle, we find them driven to absolute desperation, and above 100 of their fighting men, in an English ship which they had seized, carrying terror as pirates throughout the north-western coasts of Scotland. The close of their history followed speedily. They fell under the vengeance of Government and chiefs whose lands they had plundered, and were either extirpated by the sword, or driven into exile with an unsparing severity which left not even their name behind. Sir Donald Campbell became proprietor of Ardnamurchan, and the race of Ian were no more seen in the roll of Highland clans. The lands being thus most effectually quieted, they were re-peopled by Sir Donald with the clan Ian, and clan Henry, or Hendersons of Glencoe with their followers, who came in a body to take possession of Ardnamurchan, while Sunart appears to have been replenished by families of the clan Cameron. If we add to these a sept of M'Kenzie, introduced afterwards by Campbell of Lochnell, we have the clans most prevalent to this day in both districts.

In 1644, the celebrated Alexander M'Donald, son of Coll Ciotich, or the left-handed, commander of Montrose's Irish troops, landed in Ardnamurchan, ravaged the country with fire and sword,

it to one of inferior station. As Lochiel approached, he made a blow at him with such force as to cut several ant-hills in its sweep, though it missed Lochiel. The armour in which he died was long retained at Acharn in Morven. His shield is still preserved at Laudal in that district. An old man in Ardnamurchan, still alive, though approaching 100 years, has often seen and put on his mail-shirt.

and retained possession for a considerable time, though his garrison in the castle were assailed by one of Argyle's most intrepid and able partizans. Sir Donald died * without issue, the lands consequently reverted to the superior, and came soon afterwards into the possession, it is believed by purchase, of Campbell of Lochnell. While the estate was in possession of this family, the inhabitants suffered no violence from without, but were in a state of great internal disorganization, the arm of legal authority being weak and ineffectual. In evidence of this, and of the manners of the people nearly two centuries ago, two incidents may be worth recording.

The clans located in Ardnamurchan and Sunart felt the tie which bound them to the heads of their tribes, little weakened by residing on the lands of another proprietor. A widow of the clan Cameron having been dispossessed of a farm in Ardnamurchan by a tenant belonging to another sept or family of the same clan; her husband's brother, a bold and fiery character, applied to his chief, Lochiel, for redress; but failing in this, resolved to effect his purpose by open force. With his eldest son, he proceeded at once to the residence of the new tenant, who, well knowing their object, advanced to meet them with his son, and first fired upon the assailants. The elder assailant brought his enemy to the ground at the first fire mortally wounded, while the sons engaged each other with their swords; but, as he hastily approached, his foot slipped, and he fell forward upon his prostrated opponent, who received him upon the point of his sword, and, as they both lay in their blood, said, with a mixture of feelings it is difficult to analyze, "Here are two gallant falcons on one spit." The son of the assailant alone survived, having slain his antagonist, and the affair ended by the re-installment of the widow in her farm, which remained in lineal possession of her descendants until about six or seven years ago. At this time, it is singular that a direct descendant of the other party in the tragedy above mentioned, managed to obtain possession, and that the occupancy of the farm, though decided as such cases now a-days usually are, was contested by the parties, chiefly from motives connected with the feud of their ancestors, affording a solitary instance, in so peaceful a district, of the cherished remembrance of such ancient quarrels, embittering the intercourse of private life.

* There is a portrait of Sir Donald at Airds, the mansion of the inheritor of his title and estates, Sir John Campbell of Ardnamurchan.

MacIán Ghier, a notorious thief and robber, resided in Ardnamurchan. Of his crafty and nefarious exploits, many stories are still told. He stole in one night the cattle of the neighbouring Isle of Muck, and shot to death the proprietor, a brave and strong man, while defending his property. He is said to have been tried for the crime, and escaped the gallows by the evidence of Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochnell, whom he had prepared as the unconscious instrument of his exculpation. Sir Duncan swore that MacIán Gheir, whose manners were remarkably mild and insinuating, was, on the night in question, in Mingary Castle, and, at the time, he fell asleep at his bed-side, relating a "squelachd" or tale, and that when he awoke in the morning he was there also, when he resumed the thread of the story. This deposition was perfectly true, but the deponent was not aware that, during the interval, the robbery and murder had been committed, a fact not impossible.

In the beginning of the last century, Ardnamurchan and Sunart appear to have come into the possession of Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, Bart. an extraordinary man, whose sagacity readily discovered the chief points of civil and industrial improvement of which these lands were susceptible; but whose over-speculative and sanguine temperament, transgressing the bounds of sobriety and sound sense, rendered his efforts abortive, and were probably the cause of his pecuniary embarrassments. By him the vegetable and mineral resources of the estate were thoroughly investigated; a minute census of the population and account of the stock taken, and preserved in a curious document yet extant; the estate itself was subjected to an accurate survey, a chart of Loch Sunart, published by a Lieutenant Bruce, to which notes were appended, evidently from the pen of Sir Alexander Murray, and plans of harbours and other improvements prepared by the latter. A system of draining and irrigation was commenced upon an immense scale, of which some useful traces are yet visible; and the lead mines of Strontian were let by him to the York Building Company. These mines are well understood to have been worked at a far earlier period, though said by Sir Alexander to have been discovered by himself in 1722, and held forth to the public as "the most wonderful discovery of the age." But it is certain that, through his instrumentality, operations commenced with great spirit, and on a large scale. An English mining settlement, which employed 500 individuals, was established with all its accessories of buildings, ma-

chinery, and roads. A village was built, and named New York, after the custom of settlers in other remote colonies; and many of the arts of peace, hitherto unknown, were introduced among the warlike Highlanders. Of all this Sir Alexander Murray had just reason to feel proud. These mines continued, until about twenty years ago, the source of considerable revenue to the proprietor and the company, and of profitable industry to numerous families employed by the proprietor until within a few years back, notwithstanding that the ploughshare has long ago obliterated every vestige of New York, and the English workmen, unless we except a few of their descendants (undistinguishable except by their Saxon names,) supplanted by hardy and industrious natives. Sir Alexander and some of his tenants were much harassed by the destruction of their cattle, and other annoyances,—a fact accounted for by his zealous loyalty to the reigning family.

In 1715 and 1745, many of the inhabitants of these districts joined in the insurrections of these periods. On the suppression of the last, a ship of war came to lay waste the country, but the minister and factor succeeded, by their representations, in saving the inhabitants from the indiscriminate cruelties to which the Highlanders were at the time subjected. The abolition of heritable jurisdictions at this era does not appear, for some time, to have been followed by the better protection of the national laws and functionaries. Depredations on cattle were frequent in Ardnamurchan and Sunart, the robbers coming principally from districts farther inland. This chiefly arose from the exile and death of so many chiefs and gentlemen, who (clan feuds and forays having ceased long before) were the natural and most influential magistracy. The mass of the people, however, were, even at this period, orderly and docile, to a certain extent industrious, and under the influence of their religious instructors; and the depredators, who were never numerous, either died, or soon found that the age of their vocation had gone.

The Inverness-shire districts of the parish appear to have remained in the possession of the family of Allan Mac Ruari, until 1337, when they came to be inherited by Amie, the sister of the last heir-male. This lady married John of Islay, Lord of the Isles, and by this union the race of Somerled was continued in the male as well as female line. From Ranald, the son of this John, are descended the Clanranald, a bold and resolute clan, who maintained, in many fierce conflicts, their Celtic privileges, and the

honour of their high descent. By them was fought at Loch Lochy the celebrated battle of Blar Leine, in which Ranald the stranger, the legal heir, but repudiated by the tribe, was slain, and his brother, Ian Muidartach, established in his place. In the possession of the descendants of the last, the whole lands, with the exception of a few small portions, remained, until not many years ago, when the estates of Moidart and Arasaig were sold by the present chief, Ranald George MacDonald of Clanranald. Still extensive tracts remain in possession of cadets of that house. In 1715, the inhabitants of this part of the parish followed their chief in the insurrection of that year. His death, at the battle of Sheriffmuir, is honourably recorded in Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*. All that is known of this chieftain attaches a romantic interest to his character. He is said to have been trained to arms in the wars of the continent, and once that he lay wounded on a field of battle, to have been conveyed thence, and carefully attended, until his recovery, by an Italian lady, named Penelope, whom he afterwards married, and who accompanied him to Moidart. That he was a disinterested, zealous, and gallant adherent of the Stuart family, is unquestionable. He stormed and retook his castle of Eilein Terim from the troops of the Government, and, rather than it should prove of use to the enemy in subjugating the country, this ancient stronghold of his race was, by his orders, destroyed by fire. The warlike character of the people, their well-known attachment to his family, and the almost inaccessible nature of their country, probably induced Prince Charles Edward to select it for the commencement of the insurrection which excited such terrific interest in 1745 and 1746. This selection, whatever may be thought of the prudence of the undertaking itself, was made with judgment. In truth, the very local scenery was appropriate. In the dusky recesses of these mountains, the footsteps of the arming clans were unheard; their mustering unnoted. Glenfinnan, where, in a few days after his landing, Charles gave his banner to the winds, was of all places the best fitted for the purpose. It is a plain at the east end of Lochshiel, encircled by rugged mountains. Upon this plain, as on a common centre, open the mouths of several wild and shadowy glens, through which the first squadrons of the Highland army marched to the rendezvous. Through these glens also, notice of the event was transmitted to all the tribes of the north; and those whom prudence might yet cause to linger, roused to arms by the stirring announce-

ment. After the discomfiture of the Highland army at Culloden, these districts were laid waste with fire and sword, and subjected to the fullest measure of the vengeance which, although perpetrated by the army of civilized Britain, rivalled the savage cruelty of the most barbarous age. The only remission was experienced by the families of some unfortunate gentlemen, through the generous exertions and influence of Campbell of Airds, the inheritor of the estates, but neither of the unrelenting disposition nor crooked policy, nor of any of the darker features of character of Sir Donald of Ardnamurchan.

In all probability, the Reformed religion was introduced into the parish, under the protection of the noble family of Argyle, whose services to the Protestant faith, and enlightened patriotism, far more than counterbalance, though they do not, in any shape, palliate their share in the unscrupulous and cruel policy of times of confusion and turbulence. In 1639, the record of the synod of Argyle begins. In that year we find a minister of the Church of Scotland, already established in Ardnamurchan. The Reformation, so far as regards the eradication of Popery, was successful in Ardnamurchan and Sunart, the districts under Argyle influence. One clergyman, however, was all with which the Church of Scotland could supply a parish, where there are twelve places of worship. After the final settlement of the Church in 1688, there were, in consequence of the extreme paucity of Gaelic preachers, long vacancies in the parish, supplied only by occasional deputations from the ministers of Lorn and Argyle. Protestant Episcopacy seems to have prevailed for some time before and after the Revolution, a minister of that persuasion being stationed in Ardnamurchan; but the members of that sect seem, with few exceptions, soon to have merged in the establishment. By the appointment of missionaries on the Royal Bounty, the means of religious instruction received a powerful addition, but still the districts in Inverness-shire were left under the care of one assistant minister; and even on the erection of the churches lately built and endowed by Government, only a small part comparatively of that wide portion of the parish could, without undue extension of the bounds of the adjoining Government minister, be attached to his church. It is, therefore, more matter for wonder, that the parishioners in Argyleshire should, from the period of their first conversion, (notwithstanding the strenuous and elsewhere successful efforts of the Romish priests, continued until the latter part of the last century,

have been retained in the possession of Protestantism, than that the light of the Reformation should not have been extended to those in Inverness-shire. In that rugged and secluded quarter some influential families of old descent, and the whole of the aboriginal inhabitants, are Roman Catholics; of the Protestants, who amount only to a sixth part of the population, very few heads of families have been born there.

There are no maps or plans of the whole parish, but it is believed, all the landed proprietors have plans of their estates. In the possession of Sir James Milles Riddell, there is a curious collection of the works of Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, entitled "The true interest of Great Britain displayed," in which there are maps, plans, and statements illustrative of the statistics of his estate in the parish. In the possession of the same gentleman there is also a "plan of Loch Sunart," with a map of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, published by Alexander Bruce in 1733, dedicated to General Wade, Commander-in-Chief in Scotland; also in possession of Mr Campbell of Lerax, near Oban, "The Anatomy of Ardnamurchan and Sunart," the result of a minute survey of these districts taken by Sir Alexander Murray. To these two last allusion has already been made. The parochial registers extend not back beyond fifty years, and are very defective, being irregularly kept, and referring only to portions of the parish.

Eminent Persons.—The personages connected with the parish renowned in Highland chivalry are numerous. Characters distinguished by civil eminence are few. Among the latter, Sir Alexander Murray, for his activity and eccentric intelligence, is remarkable. Alexander M'Donald, or, as he is generally designated, "Alaster MacMhaighistin Alaster," from his father, Episcopal minister of Ardnamurchan, was a native of that district, and in the year 1745 parochial schoolmaster and elder of that parish, when he embraced the Romish religion, and took arms for the Prince. He was a celebrated bard, and left behind him poems of exquisite beauty. He has been justly reprehended for the indecency of some of his productions, but it is due to his memory to state, that, for these in his latter days, he was deeply penitent. Dr Donald MacLean, M. D., was also born in Ardnamurchan, where he long resided. He inherited from his father, a worthy and much respected individual, and an extraordinary humorist and wit, no small share of his peculiarities, and was a man of talent and information, particularly distinguished by his knowledge of

Highland antiquities. He wrote for the London Literary Gazette some light and amusing sketches of Highland superstitions, and was also the author of a treatise on diseases of the nerves. Constantly occupied with schemes for the public benefit, some of which he communicated to Government, and for one of which, at least, he received the thanks of the late Duke of York, he neglected, as too often happens with such persons, his private affairs, and at last fell a victim to the use of opium. His humanity having never been appealed to in vain by the poor of the western part of Ardnamurchan, where he resided, and his professional skill and time always at their disposal; the inhabitants gratefully contributed to his comfort, when an inmate of a lunatic asylum.

Antiquities.—Of these the most curious are, the vitrified forts, of which there are several, the largest and most remarkable being situated in Eilein nan Gobhar, in Lochaylort. On this islet, an abrupt and irregular mass of fine mica-slate, are two works of this description, within a few yards of each other, one of an oblong figure, 140 paces in circumference, the other 90 paces and circular. The walls which, in some parts, are seven or eight feet high, are composed of stones of various sizes heaped confusedly, and cemented by vitrified matter, nowhere solid or compact. At the entrance to the largest, there are the remains of a facing of common stone imbedded in cement, which probably extended, at one time, all round the fort. Within, the area is not level, but a deep hollow like an inverted cone, and strongly resembling the extinct crater of a volcano.*

The Castle of Mingary, the ancient hold of Mac Ian, is situated on the southern shore of Ardnamurchan, about five or six miles from the point. Its shape is rather irregular, being adapted to the site; it is broadest on the land side, on which it is protected by a foss, over which there was once a drawbridge, and narrowest towards the sea which it overhangs. On this side the rock has been scarped and rendered perpendicular. There is an entrance on the north or land side across the west end of the ditch, and another on the south, communicating with the sea by a narrow exposed stair hewn out of the rock. On the top, there is a rampart with embrasures all round, and several loop holes in the lower parts of the building. The interior consists of a large house of

* It is a fact which the writer has seen exemplified, that common sod subjected to strong heat fuses into a substance similar to the cement of vitrified forts. This being much more easily effected than the fusion of stone, corroborates the generally received opinion, that these works were buildings of the ancient inhabitants.

three stories in the modern style, the broadest part of the old wall forming the back, with other buildings on the other sides, an open space or court being left in the centre. These were erected, it is said, by Campbell of Lochnell, more than a century and a-half ago. The floors, rafters, and boards of the roof are all of massive oak, the slates of an extraordinary size, fastened by oaken pins. When or by whom this castle was built is unknown. In 1493, James IV. granted a charter from this castle, and in 1495, again held his court to receive the submission of the nobles of the forfeited lordship of the isles. It is supposed by Gregory to have been razed to the ground by Sir Donald of Lochalsh in 1517; but it is most probable that the greater portion of the outer wall, which is of great strength, thickness, and apparent antiquity, was left standing on that occasion. In 1588, it was besieged for three days by Sir Lachlan Maclean of Duart, one of the most daring warriors and ablest leaders of the Highlands, aided by 100 soldiers of the Florida, a ship of the Spanish Armada, which had taken shelter in the adjoining harbour of Tobermory. The siege was raised in consequence of the approach of the northern clans under the orders of Government. In 1644, the garrison of Sir Donald Campbell in this castle were forced to surrender to Montrose's general, Alaster Macdonald, by the simple expedient of piling the thatch and timber of all the houses in the vicinity against the walls and setting them on fire. On this occasion, unwonted guests were brought to this rude hold. On his way thither, Alaster had captured the vessel in which three Scottish ministers, who had been preaching the gospel and spreading the covenant in Ireland, were returning to their native country, Messrs Weir, Hamilton, and Watson, whom, with the wife of the first, and several other respectable passengers, he, on the 15th July, imprisoned in Mingary Castle. Here they seem to have been destitute of all comfort but the consolations of religion. Their sufferings were terribly aggravated by an unsuccessful attempt of the Marquis of Argyle to liberate them. During seven weeks' leaguer by his troops, their food was rye bruised between stones, and the green muddy water collected on the bartizans of the castle. On the 3d of September, Mrs Weir was liberated, and on the 23d, all the captives, except the three ministers, who were kept close, by Alaster's orders, with the view of exchanging them for his father and two brothers, then prisoners with Argyle. Mr Weir's constitution soon gave way under the pressure of hopeless captivity and deficient

accommodation, and on the 16th October, this eminently pious and zealous man "died in great peace and joy." "Mr Hamilton and his father-in-law, Mr Watson, spent a gloomy winter in that secluded and cheerless castle. Mr Watson sunk under his sufferings and died in the month of March following; but Mr Hamilton was graciously preserved until, after many efforts on the part of the General Assembly and the Scottish parliament to procure the release of this esteemed minister, he was at length, by an exchange of prisoners, liberated on the 2d May 1645, after an imprisonment of ten months." (Orthodox Presbyterian, July 1837.)

Castle Tirom, the castle of the Clanranald, a building 130 yards in circumference, in shape adapted to the rock on which it is built, is situated on an islet in Loch Moidart, named Eilien Tirom or dry island, being connected with the mainland by a narrow neck, overflowed only at high water. Its tall battlements or turrets, with the surrounding scenery, give it an imposing appearance. Being never repaired since burnt by Clanranald about 1715, it is a total ruin, only the exterior walls and a few vaulted chambers within now remaining. There is a tradition that the troops of Cromwell penetrated to this remote fortalice and held it for a time.

At Ormsaig mor in Ardnamurchan, there are some large stones so placed as to resemble a rude altar, round which a circle of smaller stones may be traced. It is called "Griadal Fhinn," Fingal's Griddle. There are also in different parts a few rude obelisks or upright stones, and stone coffins have been found containing, as usual, coarse earthen urns. At Ormsaig beg there are the remains of a very small tower, dignified by the name of "Cas-tial due nan Clior," the black Castle of the Minstrels.

Of ancient places of worship there are numerous vestiges. At these, the inhabitants still continue to bury their dead. At Eilien Finnan in Lochshiel, the walls of the ancient parish church, dedicated to that saint, are still standing. It appears to have been a small rude edifice, rudeness remarkably characterizing the tombs of the common people around. A very sweet-toned, angular, antique hand bell remains on its stone table or altar; and until within a few years since, the alleged skull of the warrior who slew Ranald the stranger at Blarliene, by stratagem, marked by deep dints from the sword of Ranald, to whom tradition attributes unmastered prowess. At Ardnafuaran in Arasaig, the church of Kilmaria, dedicated to the virgin Mary, also the church of a parish

before the Reformation, still remains though ruinous. It is of much more recent date, and larger size than that of Finnan.

Modern Buildings.—Of these, Arasaig House is the most costly and elegant. It is a handsome mansion-house, built by the present chief of Clanranald, of polished freestone, a material imported at great expense, with interior accommodations befitting the seat of a distinguished family. The present parish church is a durable and well constructed edifice, built after a plan by Mr Burn of Edinburgh. The stone chiefly used was a micaceous rock, brought by sea from primitive rocks about twelve miles to the eastward,—the buttresses, belfry, and sides of windows are of freestone from Glasgow. The farm offices of Drimantorran, near Strontian, are worthy of notice for their extent, and admirable adaptation to their purpose. The residences of the proprietors are generally plain comfortable buildings suited to the climate, the more recently erected showing a due regard to ornament.

At Glenfinnon, a tower with apartments attached was erected by the late amiable and much lamented Alexander MacDonal of Glenaladale, in commemoration of the event which took place there in 1745. The inscription, which he did not live to see placed, was written by Dr Donald Maclean, already alluded to, highly approved by the late Sir Walter Scott, and translated into Latin by the late celebrated Dr Gregory of Edinburgh. The relative and successor of Glenaladale, Angus MacDonal, Esq. has of late improved this monument, having removed the buildings annexed, so that the tower stands singly on the plain, and erected on the summit a statue of the Prince, to whom the gentlemen of his family were ardent adherents from the day of his landing, and not more in the hour of his fleeting triumphs than when a hunted wanderer in the caves of Arasaig and wilds of Moidart.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the Argyleshire districts, as taken by Sir Alexander Murray in 1723, amounted to 278 families,—408 men, 444 women, 500 children; total, 1355.

In 1795, according to the last Statistical Account, they amounted to 470 families,—1218 males, 1334 females; total, 2552. Families, numbering 124 individual members, emigrated to America in 1790 and 1791. Since then, individuals and single families have been constantly emigrating to the low country or the colonies. In 1837 and 1838, not less than twenty families left Ardnamurchan and Sunart chiefly for Australia. Allowing the Inverness-shire districts the same proportion as Ardnamurchan

and Sunart in 1723, the population would have been 1056 souls. Families, to the number of 572 individuals, emigrated to America in 1790 and 1791. Yet the last Statistical Account gives a population of 375 families,—908 males, 1082 females; total, 1990. About five years ago, thirteen families, amounting to about 70 individuals, emigrated to Canada. In 1837 and 1838, families, amounting to about 100 individuals, sailed for Australia.

The whole population is rural; there is not even an approach to a village, except at Ardnafuaran, in Arasaig.

| | |
|---|------|
| The yearly average of births, for the last seven years, taken from the parochial registers in the Argyleshire or Protestant districts, is | 90½ |
| Yearly average for do. of deaths, | 44 |
| Do. marriages, | 16½ |
| The number of persons under 15 years of age, in the Argyleshire districts, no return being procured from the other districts, | 1358 |
| Number of persons betwixt 15 and 30, | 834 |
| 30 and 50, | 614 |
| 50 and 70, | 383 |
| above 70, | 122 |

The number of families of independent fortune residing in the parish is nine; of these, only one, viz. the sole proprietor, resides in Argyleshire. The number of proprietors of land of the yearly value above £50, is ten. All are considerably above, none under that value.

| | |
|--|-----|
| The number of unmarried men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50, in the Argyleshire districts, | 64 |
| Number of unmarried women upwards of 45, | 104 |
| men, bachelors, and widowers, upwards of 50, in the Inverness-shire districts, | 37 |
| Number of unmarried women upwards of 45 in do. | 134 |
| The average number of children in each family is | 5½ |
| The number of insane in the Argyleshire districts, | 5 |
| fatuous in Do. | 7 |
| blind in Do. | 3 |
| deaf and dumb in Do. | 5 |
| The number of insane in the Inverness-shire districts, | 3 |
| fatuous in Do. | 2 |
| blind in Do. | 5 |
| deaf and dumb in Do. | 6 |

IV.—INDUSTRY.

No reports of the surveys of the Inverness districts could be procured; but the following is the result of a survey of Ardnamurchan and Sunart, obtained from the proprietor. The acres are Scotch:—

| | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| Cultivated, or only occasionally in pasture. | { | Arable by the plough, | Acres: 2,071 |
| | | Do. spade, | 2,069 |
| | | Pasture, | 10,371 |
| | | Moss flats, | 2,690 |
| | | Moor, | 67,472 |
| | | Planting, | 2,599 |
| | | Lochs, | 499 |
| Total, | | | 87,738 |

It is supposed, by an intelligent gentleman intimately acquainted with the parish, that the arable land might be doubled with a profitable application of capital.

No estimate could be procured of the land under natural wood. The common indigenous trees are oak, birch, hazel, sauch, ash, and alder. Planted, the various kinds of firs, planetree, oak, and ash. Both plantations and woods appear to be well managed, though, by several modes, sometimes the young wood is enclosed for seven or ten years, the tenant receiving an allowance for the loss of the pasture enclosed, which, being always wintering, is very considerable. In other cases, cattle are excluded from the woods for fifteen or twenty years, and the woodlands then only pastured lightly, while, in others, the woodlands are enclosed permanently and never pastured at all. The last method is most subservient to appearance, that first mentioned to profit; for, when profit is the object, the sacrifice of so much low land, where wintering is so much wanted, is thought bad management. The woods are thinned periodically. The oak, from the value of its bark, is held in most esteem.

There is no arable land let separately. Some would estimate the proportion of rent applicable to it at L.1, 5s. to L.1, 10s. per acre, others at 10s. to 15s. Probably 15s. per acre may approach nearest the truth.

The value of grazings varies according to the nature of the soil, situation, and other circumstances, some farms being considered fairly rented at the rate of L.2, 10s. per head of black-cattle, and 3s. 6d. per sheep yearly, while others are not considered profitable at L.1, 10s. for black-cattle, and 1s. 6d. for sheep. The average rent over the parish is estimated at L.1, 15s. per head of black-cattle three years old and upwards, L.1 under that age, and full-grown sheep, 3s. 6d.

Sheep and Black-Cattle.—The former are the black-faced, the latter chiefly the Argyleshire breed. Considerable improvement has been made on the breed of sheep by means of tups from the south; but, it is believed, the sheep stock generally can never, owing to the poverty and thinness of the soil, and consequent inferiority of pasture, be made equal to that of some neighbouring parishes. A great part of the land is better adapted for black-cattle, consequently a great number are kept, and fully more attention has been paid to their improvement than to that of the sheep.

With regard to the management of stock and the cultivation of

the ground, there is much diversity, in some cases arising from the nature of the country, in others, from the circumstances of the occupants. In some parts of Ardnamurchan and Moidart, there is neither horse nor plough,—the rocky and broken surface precluding either. The sharp-pointed spade only is used in turning up the soil, and every article, even the sea-ware and other manure, carried on the back in creels suited to the age and strength of the members of each family. These are by no means the most destitute of the class of small tenants and cottars.

In other farms, where the ground is more level, the number of horses appears to be extravagant, seven or eight being kept for labour, which three, if not two, tolerable plough or cart horses could accomplish. They are, however, hardy horses or ponies, of 12 or 13 hands, which are, at all seasons, in the open air, and are subsisted at not more expense than the smallest number of stable-fed work-horses of the country, which could be substituted.

Sometimes land on the steep sides of hills is seen diligently cultivated by the small tenants, which certainly no capitalist, from motives of profit, would crop; while elsewhere land easily and profitably improvable is left waste. In the one case, this arises from the crowded state of the population in localities not naturally adapted for agriculture, and the necessity, in the absence of better employment, of raising some crop at any rate; in the other, not from any paucity of labour, but from inability to wait for the profits of the undertaking if they attempted it, and insufficient assurance of reaping the profits if they did. When the extent of their lands admits of it, small tenants, commonly after potatoes, sow their land with bear, and then oats,—the soil, after being well manured for the first, producing very good bear, and rather inferior oats, which last, however, constitutes the best provender for cattle. When their land is not of sufficient extent to raise the three crops above-mentioned, they are compelled, in order to obtain a greater quantity of food, to confine themselves chiefly to potatoes.

The stock, especially the sheep-stock of this class, is of an exceedingly inferior description, and very ill managed. This, so far as their poverty permits, they are endeavouring to remedy, as yet without much success. In the cultivation of the ground, however, they have, in some parts, advanced considerably.

Ten years ago, there was not one cart in the possession of the small tenants in the district of Ardnamurchan, and, in some parts,

four horses, with a man at their heads walking backwards, after the ancient fashion, might be seen in the plough. Now, carts are not uncommon, several good iron ploughs are in use, additional manure is made, and crops are more abundant. With all their disadvantages, the small tenants have hitherto paid to the full as high rents as the large farmers,—the money being procured by the joint exertions of the different members of their families.

On the lands farmed by the proprietors, or let to large tenants or tacksmen, the system of management, both as respects tillage and stock, is far better; in some cases, as good as in any part of Scotland. With some exceptions, the farm-buildings and enclosures are defective, those of the small tenants miserable. Leases run from seven to nineteen years.

The principal improvements have of late years taken place on the estate of Ardnamurchan and Sunart; not to mention two Government churches which have been built on this property, to which the proprietor has given glebes of six acres each; also three Assembly schools, to which he has given crofts, and on the accommodations of which he has expended L. 370,—a good deal has been done in reclaiming waste land, building, enclosing, and other agricultural improvements. At Drimantarran on this property, Mr M'Donald, the late enterprising tenant (who contributed most of the facts under this head, and the estimate to be given of the gross returns of the parish,) has brought into cultivation and enclosed 25 to 30 acres of moss, varying from three to nine feet depth. The land was drained, trenched, and limed, at L. 13, 5s. per English acre, manured with sea-ware, and fenced at an expense not included in the above sum; and being planted with potatoes, yielded twenty returns. Towards this the proprietor contributed L. 5 per acre, and half the expense of the stone fences. Two piers were, a few years ago, erected by the British Herring Fishery Society, one-third of the expense being contributed by Sir James Milles Riddell, and the whole of an excellent road through the moss of Kintra, by which both are connected. One of the piers is of some use. The road, already beneficial, bids fair to be still more so to the property. The piers being situated on the north and south shores of a neck separating Loch Sunart and the bay of Kintra, it was fancied that, as the point of Ardnamurchan would thereby be avoided, the intercourse betwixt the northern isles and the south would be drawn to this line of communication. About thirty English acres of moss have been brought

into an excellent state of cultivation by Mr M'Donald of Loch-shiel, close by his residence, at an expense of L.18 per acre; and also a considerable extent by General Sir Alexander Cameron of Inveraylort. These essays have not been made on the moss the best subject for improvement. The greater part of the improvable lands of this description might probably be reclaimed at L. 10 or L. 12 per acre. The obstacle to these improvements, and the gradual advancement of agriculture and industry generally, is chiefly the want of capital. The high rent of land, however, renders any expensive undertaking on the part of the tenant generally imprudent. To these may be added the injudicious distribution of the bulk of the people; the want of leases on the part of the small tenants; their holding their lands in common and not in separate lots; their constant practice of sharing their possessions with the married members of their families, to which no practical check has yet been given; the consequent inadequacy of the land held by each family for its support; and the miscellaneous nature of the employments by which they eke out a subsistence. Dye-works and other manufactories, in or near Glasgow, afford as uncongenial employment as could well be imagined with the habits of a rural population; yet on these great numbers of the small tenants and cottars, and the members of their families, of the district of Ardnamurchan, find their most profitable occupation; while the inhabitants of other parts engage in various and far-sought employments. This state of matters tends certainly to develop the beautiful moral spectacle of the combined efforts of relatives cheerfully devoted to the support of their kindred and family, but drains away the earnings which would otherwise accumulate and form little capitals, at the same time that the commixture of employments prevents the formation of habits of steady industry, with the advantages resulting from the constant prosecution of a single branch and a permanent residence.

The remedy seems evidently to lie in such measures as shall promote a proper subdivision of labour, such as the enlargement of the possessions of small tenants to an extent that will require and repay their undivided attention; the total abrogation of holdings in common; the absolute prohibition of farther subdivision among their families. To effect this, either such an accession of capital to the parish as should suffice to call forth its latent resources; or, as that cannot be calculated on, the emigration at the expense of Government of such as have no sufficient employ-

ment at home, is absolutely necessary. Much may also be done by leases, which will insure to enterprise and industry the fruits of exertion; and the improvement of stock by premiums and otherwise. Neither, with the view simply to industrial improvement, can more powerful remedies be applied than the increase of the means of religious instruction and education.

Quarries and Mines.—The only quarries worked are those of Laga and Strontian. From the former, a fine micaceous rock, very abundant in the parish, has been carried by sea fully fifty miles' distance, to erect piers at Corran ferry on the Linne Hiloch; and from the latter, excellent granite, which has long been used by the proprietor, has been conveyed to erect the mansion-house of Mr M'Lean of Coll, near Tobermory, twenty miles distant. The lead-mines of Strontian, already adverted to, were let previous to 1722 to the Duke of Norfolk and Co. About this time they were transferred to the York Building Company, and have been worked ever since until the conclusion of the last war, when, either owing to the fall of the price of lead, or, as some say, the withdrawal from business of the members of the Company which then held them, the work was discontinued. Since then, the miners have been occasionally set at work by the proprietor, but chiefly with a view to their own subsistence. In 1836, they were again let, and operations seemed for some time to be carried on with spirit; but, either from want of capital on the part of the lessee, or the unproductiveness of the mines, the attempt miscarried. The rent paid before the termination of the war was one-eighth of the produce, which paid the proprietor L.1000 to L.1500 per annum.

Fisheries.—The only salmon fishing worth notice is that of the river Shiel, belonging to Sir James Milles Riddell and Alexander MacDonald, Esq. of Lochshiel, whose properties the river divides. The annual rent is L.150. Loch Sunart once abounded with herring, but for twenty years back, few have been caught there. In Loch-nan-Uamh in Arasaig, and Loch Moidart, considerable quantities of that fish have been netted of late years. The fisheries of cod and ling, and other fishes caught by the hook, on the north coasts of the parish, promise, at some future period, to prove a plentiful source of industry. They are, however, at present merely in their infancy as branches of traffic, though considerable quantities of such fishes are obtained by the inhabitants as food for their families.

Navigation.—There are only two decked vessels, one about 50, the other about 20 tons burden; ten or twelve sailing boats, varying from 3 to 8 tons; and innumerable row boats, almost every family possessing one.

Agricultural Association.—An Association for the improvement of horses, black-cattle, and sheep, in Ardnamurchan and Sunart, and some contiguous districts in Argyleshire, meets annually at Strontian, of which Sir James Milnes Riddell is preses, and which has had much success in promoting its object.

Produce.—Annual gross return of raw produce, the prices calculated according to the average of the last twenty-five years previous to 1833.

| | Value pertain- ing to Ardnamurchan Sunart. | | | Value pertain- ing to Moidart, Arasaig, &c. | | | Gross value. | | |
|---|--|-----------|----------|---|----------|----------|---------------|----------|----------|
| | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. | £. | s. | d. |
| 12,000 stones wool, of 24 lb. @ 8s. per st. | 2,000 | 0 | 0 | 2,800 | 0 | 0 | 4,800 | 0 | 0 |
| 2,000 bolls oats, @ L.1 | 1,300 | 0 | 0 | 700 | 0 | 0 | 2,000 | 0 | 0 |
| 700 bolls bear, @ L.1, 10s. | 750 | 0 | 0 | 300 | 0 | 0 | 1,050 | 0 | 0 |
| 50,000 barrels potatoes, @ 3s. | 5,250 | 0 | 0 | 2,250 | 0 | 0 | 7,500 | 0 | 0 |
| 60,000 stones of hay, @ 10d. | 1,666 | 13 | 4 | 833 | 6 | 8 | 2,500 | 0 | 0 |
| Pasture of 60,000 sheep, @ 2s. 6d. | 3,125 | 0 | 0 | 4,375 | 0 | 0 | 7,500 | 0 | 0 |
| Do. of 6000 black-cattle, @ L.1, 10s. | 6,000 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 0 | 9,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Gardens and orchards, | 50 | 0 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 0 |
| Woods and plantations, | 500 | 0 | 0 | 500 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Fisheries, including herrings, | 150 | 0 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 0 | 300 | 0 | 0 |
| Mines at present extinct, | 1,500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,500 | 0 | 0 |
| Kelp, | 400 | 0 | 0 | 2,600 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Total, | L. 22,691 | 13 | 4 | 17,658 | 6 | 8 | 40,350 | 0 | 0 |

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—The nearest market-town is the village and sea-port of Tobermory, in Mull, about five miles south from the barbour of Kilchoan, in Ardnamurchan, and with which there is much communication.

Post-Offices.—There are three post-offices: one at Strontian, to which there is a daily post; another at Arasaig, to which there is one three times in the week; and a third at Kilchoan, to which there is a runner to and from Strontian twice in the week.

Means of Communication.—About sixty miles of good high road have been made; but this is very far short of what is required to complete the public lines, exclusive of the internal communication of districts and properties. There are two lines of communication with the parish by land, viz. the road which runs from Arasaig by Glenfinnan on the north, to Fort-William and the Caledonian Canal; and that from Strontian on the east, to

Corran Ferry. By these, cattle and sheep are driven to the southern markets. The steam communication is, however, chiefly adopted by travellers of all descriptions. By the Glasgow steamers, to which access is had at Tobermory and the point of Arasaig, some cattle and sheep, and great quantities of eggs, are sent to the south, and the greater part of the oatmeal, groceries, hard and stone-wares, and other manufactures for the use of the parish imported.

Harbours.—Notwithstanding the rugged aspect of the coast, there are several good harbours. The Bay of Glenmore, on the south of Ardnamurchan, about half a mile west from the first narrows or group of islands in Loch Sunart, affords excellent anchorage, and, were it noted in charts, would prove of much importance to vessels unable to beat into Tobermory in a gale, as, in every respect, a better resource than that often resorted to, of running out to sea.

The small harbour of Kilchoan, about five or six miles west on the same coast, is of great utility, being the principal point of communication with Tobermory, and is occasionally the resort of craft conveying the cattle of some western islands to the main land. A pier, built on the ledge of rock forming its southern wing, and a perch on a rock, only visible at low water, at its mouth, would not only improve this harbour, so as to render it in a ten-fold degree more locally useful, but would confer a public benefit. Within not many years, a Prussian ship and an English brig, whose valuable cargoes were totally lost, of an united tonnage amounting to 700 tons, ran ashore there and were wrecked; but had the erection recommended taken place, they would have been preserved undamaged.

At Ardtoe, on the north coast of Ardnamurchan, there is a safe small bay, which one of the piers already alluded to was meant to improve.

At Island Shona, in the mouth of Lochmoidart, there is a secure and excellent anchorage, and many creeks for fishing-boats, which are resorted to in the cod-fishing season by several crews from the southern Highlands.

In Loch na Keaul, in Arasaig, there is a good anchorage, though not easily accessible even to craft of moderate draught of water, in consequence of numerous shoals and sunk rocks. It is, however, a good deal frequented by craft from the islands, and sloops conveying to market the products of the country; the

mansion-house of Arasaig, the dwellings of several respectable families being contiguous, and the stores which supply the population with imported necessaries, being on its shore.

At Drimandarach, near Borødale, and in Lochaylort, there are said to be good anchorages.

In Loch Sunart, there are many places where there is good holding ground; but those chiefly frequented are the Harbour of Strontian and the Creek of Salin, which last has been much improved by the pier lately built there.

These were places of call for a steamer, by which, for upwards of twelve months, there was, until of late, direct communication with Glasgow.

At the extreme point of Ardnamurchan, there is a small creek into which a sloop, caught by a gale, ran some years ago, and was preserved undamaged during the winter. From its situation, it may be desirable it were better known.

Ecclesiastical State.—The parish, ecclesiastically, is divided into five portions; the district of the parish church, two Government church districts, now parishes *quoad sacra*, a district under the care of a missionary minister, and a large extent of country under that of the assistant.

1. The parish church district, the western portion of the peninsula of Ardnamurchan, contains two places of worship; one at Kilchoan, on the south, about four or five miles from the point; another at Kilmorie, on the opposite or north coast. At these, since the Reformation, the minister has been in the practice of preaching alternately. Remains of ancient churches indicate that they had been places of public worship for ages prior to that era.

The principal church has always been that of Kilchoan, at which the largest attendance can be given, and of course was built with a view to secure that object, and not with reference, geographically, to the parish at large.

In 1831, this church, having been long in ruins, was built of new on another and better site. It is an excellent commodious edifice, capable of containing with ease upwards of 600 persons, an extent of accommodation, however, which was by no means desired at that station, it having been given on the ground that the hearers of Kilmorie, who are all from six to ten miles distant, could attend there. The church was built by the heritors, under protest that it should be considered full legal provision for the whole parish of Ardnamurchan, but accepted by the presbytery

only as accommodation for the people who can assemble there, ~~via~~ the congregation of Kilchoan. The Church of Kilmorie was anciently of considerable extent; its foundations only can now be traced. The present house was originally built of dry stone, at the expense of the last minister; was pointed inside and out with lime, furnished with windows, and other repairs, at the cost of the present incumbent, and is supplied with thatch partly by him and the hearers.

The population of this district was, at last census, 1490.

2. The *quoad sacra* parish of Aharcle consists chiefly of the eastern portion of Ardnamurchan, adjacent to the district of the parish church, but comprises part of Sunart and of Moidart. The Government church and manse are situated pretty centrally at the west end of Lochshiel, twenty-three miles distant from the parish church. The minister occasionally preaches on week days at Kinlochmoidart, six miles distant from the former. The population is 2026; of these nearly 1200 are Roman Catholics.

3. The mission of Laga is a tract of ten or eleven miles long of the coast of Loch Sunart, being partly in the parish church district, and partly in the parish of Aharcle. The missionary rents a small farm from the proprietor, and receives L.60 per annum from the Committee on the Royal Bounty. The preaching house, built entirely at his expense, is a dry-stone thatched house, situated midway between the parish church and that of Aharcle.

4. The *quoad sacra* parish of Strontian constitutes the eastern and larger portion of Sunart. The church and manse, thirty miles distant from the parish church, are situated in the valley of Strontian, in the midst of the most populous part of the district; but the minister occasionally preaches at Polloch on Lochspeil, five miles distant. The population amounts to 1154 by last census.

5. The district of the assistant, consisting of by far the largest division of the parish, embraces the greater part of Moidart, and the whole of Arasaig and South Morir; and has two places of worship, one forty-six, the other fifty-six miles from the parish church. The first, situated at Polish near Inveraylort, is a tolerable thatched house, built by subscription, which, being inadequate, a considerable share of the expense has fallen on the assistant. The last is a school-house at Ardnafuaran in Arasaig, built by the late proprietor, Ranald George Macdonald, Esq. of Clanranald. These stations have been well selected, in order to insure the largest at-

tendance. The assistant receives, by virtue of a decret of augmentation, from the parish minister, L.55, 11s. 1d., and L.30 from the Committee on the Royal Bounty, with L.5 for communion elements. Population—Protestants, 200 ; Roman Catholics, 1334 ; total, 1534.

In all districts, public worship is attended by the whole adult population, with exception chiefly of the old or infirm of several remote hamlets ; but the amount of attendance is considerably affected by the weather, particularly where there are neither roads nor bridges. The average number of communicants throughout the parish is 736.

Catechists.—A beneficial increase of the means of religious instruction has been, of late years, obtained in the appointment of three catechists,—one who receives L.8 per annum from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Sunart ; another paid a like sum by the Synod of Argyle in Ardnamurchan ; and a third, to whom the Synod gives L.10 per annum, labours among the widely scattered Protestants of the Inverness-shire districts. These catechists are all crofters or small tenants in the parish, who, by means of their small salaries, are enabled to perambulate their respective districts during the summer and winter seasons ; and, being men of sense and piety, are doing much good.

The manse was built above fifty years ago by some private arrangement betwixt the heritors and the incumbent ; but was not accepted by the presbytery until 1829, when it was thoroughly repaired, and such additions made to it and offices attached as rendered it a commodious residence.

The extent of the glebe is probably 27 English acres, of which about 6 now are arable. The yearly value will be about L.10 or L.12.

In 1822, the Court augmented the stipend to 304 bolls, half meal half bear, L.20 communion elements, and L.55, 11s. 1d. to pay an assistant. The heritors prefer paying the whole teinds, which amount to 112 bolls 2 firlots meal, and L.196, 5s. 1d. Sterling. Deducting from this L.55, 11s. 1d., paid annually to the assistant, the minister receives 112 bolls 2 firlots meal, and L.140, 14s. money. The victual stipend has hitherto been paid by the Linlithgow boll and the fiar prices ; but it is not yet ascertained whether the minister is not entitled to the measure of the parish, a boll of ten stone, the point to be established being whether that was the measure by which the teinds were valued.

Collections for charitable or religious objects have not been made yearly in the churches, on account of the poverty of the people. The amount collected for these purposes during the last seven years will average about L.4, 10s. per annum.

In the Argyleshire districts there is one family of Episcopalians, besides that of the proprietor, Sir James Milles Riddell; three or four individuals Anabaptists; and two or three Roman Catholic families. The profession of the whole remaining population is that of the Established Church, the number about 3279, according to last census. In the Inverness districts there are only two denominations, that of the Church of Scotland, and of Rome. The former amount to 300, the latter 2058.

Roman Catholic Chapels and Priests.—There are five Roman Catholic chapels, and two officiating priests; under the jurisdiction, it is believed, of the bishop residing in Glasgow. The priests, it is said, receive a small salary from Rome; but their chief pecuniary resource is the fees charged for their administering their seven sacraments.

Education.—In the parish church district, there are the parish school at Kilchoan; an Assembly's school at Kilmorie; a Gaelic school, kept in operation during the winter months at Achnaha, by means of L.5 from the Synod of Argyle, and which is meant to itinerate among the remote hamlets; a Gaelic school, supported, for the present, at a similar expense, during the same season by a private individual; total, four schools. In the parish of Aharcle, an Assembly school at the church; another at Kinlochmoidart. In the parish of Strontian, an Assembly school, also in the neighbourhood of the church. In the district of the assistant at Ardnafu-aran, a school of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge.

It appears, therefore, that there are only seven schools on a permanent foundation in the parish. Eight additional are required to render education accessible to all the inhabitants. Until this year, there were generally one or more schools taught in addition to those mentioned, granted, however, only for three years at a time by benevolent Societies.

In the Argyleshire districts, the number betwixt six and fifteen years who cannot read or write is 246; the number above fifteen in that predicament, 843. In the Inverness districts the number of the former, 416; in do. the number of the latter, 892.

Literature.—There are small collections of books, chiefly Gaelic, for the use of the people at the parish church, Arasaig, Abaracle, and Strontian,—also libraries at the different Assembly schools, provided by that venerable body. The people, however, do not as yet make as much use of them as might be expected of their intelligence, and it is to be feared, until they enjoy more of the ease and comfort of better circumstances, will not speedily acquire a relish for the intellectual gratification of reading.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial relief, hitherto has been about 90, in the Argyleshire districts. The average yearly allowance, 5s. 6d. from the session, and a stone of oatmeal occasionally from the proprietor. In the Inverness-shire districts, there has not been as yet any roll of paupers, the collections at church being a mere trifle there; and in Ardnamurchan and Sunart, with the exception of the amount specified, the poor have been entirely supported by private charity, by far the greater portion of which is derived from their humble neighbours and relatives; resident proprietors and other respectable families, though charitably disposed, being few. The church collections for the poor in Ardnamurchan and Sunart average about L.18 annually. To these have been added occasionally fines paid to the session, and small sums taken from the parochial funds. No other public provision has hitherto been made for the ordinary poor; but insane paupers requiring medical treatment in asylums, and safe custody, have been provided for by a voluntary contribution among the heritors, paid according to their valued rent. In this way, during the last five years, L.57 has been expended, the insane persons being sent to the Inverness Infirmary, or Glasgow Lunatic Asylum. In 1839, from the increase of pauperism, and the increasing inability of the people to relieve it, it will be necessary to make provision for the poor by a parochial assessment, unless the heritors, as there is little reason to doubt, will supply the funds by a large voluntary contribution. The only parochial fund, strictly speaking, is a sum of L.21, the residue of L.25 for several generations in the hands of the session, the origin of which is not known. There are, however, bequests to particular districts, one of L.30 from the late Mr Cameron, Glenboradale, another of L.50 from his brother, Mr Allan Cameron, both gentlemen tacksmen, natives of Ardnamurchan, who left these sums to the poor of Ardnamurchan and Sunart; also sums amounting to L.56, left by Mr and Miss MacDonal of Morar to the Inverness-shire districts of the parish, and neighbouring districts in the parish of Glenelg.

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The greater part of these bequests has been now expended. Applications for parochial relief are seldom, if ever, made, except on good ground.

Fairs.—Of these there are two; one holds at Strontian in May and in October as a market for cattle and sheep, and is attended by the people of Morven and Kilmalie, as well as those of the parish. Another holds at Arasaig at such times as to correspond with, and not to interfere with that of Strontian, and is also a sheep and cattle market. Formerly there were several small fairs, called *Fanks* in the parish, which the principal cattle-dealers never attended, as they frequent those of Strontian and Arasaig. The abolition of the small markets has been beneficial.

Inns.—There are three good inns situated at Strontian, Arasaig, and Glenfinnan, and four of an inferior description at other places. Of most of the latter, the best that can be said is that they are necessary evils.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Were the writer of the last Statistical Account to revisit his parish, what, perhaps, would most forcibly arrest his attention in the external surface of the country, would be the plantations of forest trees, and improved fields of moss below the range of the sheep walks, contrasted with extensive tracts of outfield arable relapsing into their original barrenness, in consequence of being included in these pastures. He would be not less struck with changes in its social aspect, the absence of congenial society for himself, of the beneficial influence of superior knowledge and station in the elder-ship; and the snapping of the link which connected the great landed proprietors with the mass of the people, arising from the almost total disappearance of the gentlemen tacksmen. He would be gratified by observing certain improvements in industry and agriculture, but would be astonished to find far less command of money, and far less of the comforts of life throughout the parish at large. He would view with unmingled satisfaction the government churches, the four Assembly schools, the three catechists, and the synod schoolmaster, the total transfer from himself of the responsibility as well as labour of extensive districts, to able and efficient brethren, the ordinances of the gospel administered in churches, instead of, as in his day, and long afterwards in the missionary districts now parishes, under the shelter of a rock, in a barn or a hovel; the successful diffusion of intellectual and scriptural education in so many formerly destitute localities. He would find religious knowledge more general and correct, the assumption

of the externals of religion without its substance, more frequent; but the people, upon the whole, improved in religion and morality. He would from its absolute necessity, and the public attention directed to Highland population similarly situated, look forward with hope to some amelioration in their circumstances, with respect to comfort and independence; and in the powerful efforts of the church, and the better spirit of the age, he would rely with confidence for such addition to the means of religious instruction and education, as shall long before the next Statistical Account is penned, make still further inroads on the sway of ignorance and immorality.

Drawn up 1838.