

PARISH OF MORVERN.

PRESBYTERY OF MULL, SYNOD OF ARGYLE.

THE REV. JOHN M'LEOD, MINISTER.

I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—It is somewhat mortifying, at the outset of this Account, to forego, in behalf of Morvern, a claim which has tended to vest it with no small degree of interest. Morvern, however, is not the land of song, as many erroneously suppose, and, though no doubt a part, formed no more than a part of the far-famed dominion of Fingal and his heroes. The term Morvern, indeed, is one introduced only in days of modern refinement, and substituted for the less poetical, but more graphic appellation of Mhor Earrain, (usually Morvern,) by which, in the uncorrupted language of its native inhabitants, the country is still designated.

At a very remote period, the district seems to have been known, though perhaps comprehending under the name a greater extent of territory, as *Ceann Albin*, the promontory or extremity of Albin. This appellation was then peculiarly applicable as the Linnhe-loch, which bounds Morvern on the south-east, formed the line of separation between Drim-Albin, the territory of the northern Picts, and Dalriada, the southern part of Argyleshire, the territory of the Scots. Thus, in an agreement between Edward Baliol, and John of the Isles, of date 1335, confirming to the latter certain lands

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which King Robert Bruce had, in acknowledgment of more disinterested allegiance, conferred on his father, Angus Og, of the Isles, we find among other lands disposed, "*Insulam de Mulle, Insulam de Skye, Insulam de Lewis, Terram de Ken-Albdan,*" which latter term appears from the subsequent parts of this and the tenor of other deeds, not only to have included, but to have specially referred to the district now in question. Even at that remote period, however, the term Morvern, as it is sometimes written, Mor-marne, is more frequently used. Several etymologies of this term have been suggested. With deference, the following is submitted.

It appears that one of the provinces into which Scotland was anciently divided, was Garmoran or Garbh-Mor Earrain, in other words, the rugged mainland or continent. Of this province, as originally marked out, Morvern formed a part, and was then included as a portion of the district, still known as the "*Garbh-chriochan,*" or the rugged bounds. A second province of Garmoran was, at a much later period, marked out of more limited extent. From this second province Morvern was excluded. It seems, however, to have still in part retained the name Mhor Earrain, the mainland or continent,—a distinctive appellation which its insular character and appearance rendered the more requisite, and of similar import with Morar or Mor-Thir, still applied to other parts of the ancient principality of the Isles in the northern district of the parish of Ardnamurchan.

Extent and Boundaries.—The parish is situated in the northern district of the county of Argyle. Its greatest length, taken from east to west, has been computed at 20 miles, and its greatest breadth at 15 miles. It contains about 85,369 acres, or 133 square miles, and presents, (exclusive of the two islands of Oransay and Carna, annexed to it,) a sea coast little short of 100 miles in extent. From the above statement it will appear that the parish is on three sides bounded by water. The eastern or land boundary is only 12 miles in length.

Towards the centre of the parish a second peninsula is formed by the approximation of Lochalin from the south, and Loch Teagus, which branches off from Loch Sunart on the north. These lochs approximate within about six miles of each other, while of this intervening space, upwards of two miles are occupied by the fresh water lakes of *Airi Innis* and *Daoire nam-mart*,—these also connected by a considerable stream; and discharging their waters into Lochalin.

Islands.—The only inhabited islands forming part of the parish

are Oransay and Carna, both situated in Loch Sunart, the northern boundary. The former is a barren, rocky, and narrow island, about two miles in length, and so much intersected by bays and inlets as to be in several parts of it nearly intersected by water. It curves towards the land at both ends. At the northern extremity, it is accessible on foot at certain periods of the tide, while at the south end by a deep, clear, though narrow channel, it gives admittance to Druimbuy Loch, which separates it from the mainland,—a loch now little known or frequented, but which presents one of the safest anchorages even on the west coast.

Carna lies a short way to the north-east of Oransay, at the immediate entrance of Loch Teagus. It is considerably elevated. The summit is rocky and broken; but this island affords, at the same time, by its verdure and fertility, especially on the east side of it, a pleasing contrast to its somewhat forbidding looking associate.

Mountains, &c.—The highest mountains are Ben-eaddan, Benna-hua, Si'ain na Rapaich. Ben-eaddan is 2806 feet above the level of the sea. Towards the summit it is accessible by a singular flight of steps formed by excavations in the rock, known to the inhabitants of the country, as Ceumanan-Fhin, or *Fingal's steps or stair*. The north-east side of the hill, though covered with verdure in the memory of persons still living, is now completely exposed, and presents ample opportunity to the geologist of examining the different strata and formations of the mountain.

Climate.—The climate of this, as of every other district on the west coast, is extremely variable. Upon the whole, however, it is characterized by great mildness. In the immediate proximity of the Atlantic, the lofty pinnacles of Mull interposing, and the prevailing winds westerly, the country must obviously have its full share of the prevailing moisture of the west coast; and, accordingly, in so far as observations have been made, the quantity of rain here equals, though it is hoped it does not surpass, that which falls at Greenock, being, as it is understood, from 30 to 36 inches annually. The country, however, is not subject to heavy snows; and, though there are occasional falls of considerable depth, yet, surrounded and indented as the parish is by water, they are not of long continuance. The greatest fall of which there is any record took place in the year 1782, still memorable as the year of the "great snow." The fall commenced on the 7th of March, and suspended all spring operations. Its long continuance may be judged of by the fact, that an individual, who had been interrupted in

ploughing by the commencement of the storm, found, on resuming his field operations, that a small bird had snugly nestled in the folds of a horse collar, which, with a degree of carelessness more common than creditable, he had suspended from an adjoining tree. In sheep and other stock, heavy losses were sustained; but, notwithstanding the lateness of the seed-time, the crop is said to have been abundant and productive. But the climate, though moist, is not unhealthy. Frequent instances of longevity occur, and many have never, in the course of a protracted lifetime, been known to require medical aid. No doubt, under the influence of a climate so moist and variable, rheumatism and pulmonary diseases are frequent; but the frequency of these, as also of dyspeptic complaints, (to which latter the inhabitants are more particularly subject,) is to be attributed to the nature of their food and clothing and modes of life, more than to the influence of climate.

Hydrography.—The principal lakes are those of Airi-Innis, Daoire-nam-Mart, and Tearnate. That of Airi-Innis is the largest. In length it is about two miles, by half a mile in breadth.

The country throughout abounds with streams and torrents, which present, in their rambling course, many interesting features. There are many cascades worthy of notice. Those of Ardtornish and Kenloch, as also that on the water of Achleck, in other respects a very uninteresting stream, are specially referred to, as abounding in all those features that render similar objects so very attractive. The falls of Ardtornish occasionally present a very singular appearance, sufficient to account satisfactorily for the descriptive appellation given to their interesting and picturesque locality, *Ard-Thor-n'eass*, or *the high cliff of waterfalls*. These cliffs overhang the Bay of Ardtornish, which is formed on the one side by the low green point, on the extremity of which the ruins of the castle are situated. They are of great height, wooded underneath, towards the south broken and precipitous, interspersed throughout by very curious trap formations, and, in some places, crested by basalt of great regularity. Several streams descend from them; but, in ordinary weather, the body of water is not sufficiently great, especially from the bold character of the surrounding scenery, to produce any very imposing effect. To be seen to advantage, these falls must be viewed during the prevalence of south-westerly gales, and their usual accompaniment, heavy rains. They then, indeed, present a most striking and singular appearance,—the two elements, as if in envious contest, vying for superiority. From the impending eminence, the several streams descend with great rapi-

dity; but, just when about to dash in sparkling fury over the giddy precipice, they are interrupted in their course; uplifted by the opposing gale and showered backwards, a dense cloud of foaming spray. Again, the wind subsides, but only for a moment, as if to display, in another form, its commanding superiority,—for it may be, as the descending torrent approaches the base of the rock, the white column is seen gradually condensing, till at length the wind, gathering all its strength, carries it upwards to the verge of the precipice, whence, after a momentary but vain struggle, it is dispersed by the resistless blast, and showered, as if in sportive triumph, up into the air.

The largest stream is Gear-Abhain, formed by the confluence of several smaller streams, which, issuing from the parallel glens, Glen-Dubh and Glen Geal, are received into a valley intersecting these glens at right angles at the lower end, and carried onwards till joined by the flow of water from the lake of Airi-Innis, when they form what is properly termed the Gear, or short river, which, after a brief but sparkling career, joins the sea at Lochalin. At the last point of junction referred to, a strange phenomenon is occasionally or rather very frequently exhibited. The principal channel is of some breadth, and of very gentle descent, and the body of water, on reaching an opposing bank, is divided into two portions, one of which turns at an acute angle, and flows into Lochalin in a southern direction, while the other flows in the very opposite direction into the lake of Airi-Innis, which continues to receive it until, by the augmented flow of the other tributary streams by which it is replenished, it acquires a sufficient elevation to repel the current referred to backwards by the very same channel, and to force the whole body of water in the same direction onward to the sea. There is thus presented the strange phenomenon of a stream flowing, it may be, for several days in one direction, and again for several successive days in the very opposite.

In cool and refreshing springs the country everywhere abounds. Their average temperature may be taken at 40°. Some of them, especially on the south side of Loch Teagus, are very strongly impregnated with the sulphate of iron, and one, it is said, with that of copper.

Scenery.—The outline of Morvern, especially as viewed from the Sound of Mull, is no way striking, for though several of the mountains are of considerable height, yet, when viewed in connection with the bold ranges of Appin and Mull, they are of a tame and undefined character. There are, however, certain portions of the

scenery, more especially inland, which present very striking features. Sir Walter Scott has rendered Ardtornish famed in song,—nor has he overlooked

—dark Mull! thy mighty Sound
Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
Part thy swarth hills from Morvern's shore.

The same distinguished writer, in a note appended to his *Lord of the Isles*, has borne testimony to the interesting character of the scenery, which he has hallowed by his poetical descriptions.

“The Sound of Mull,” he observes, “which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller.”—“In fine weather,” he again adds, “a grander or more impressive scene, both from its natural beauties and associations with ancient history and tradition, can hardly be imagined.” Nor is the valley of Unimore, which intersects the parish, less striking, whether approached by the aptly-named Lochalin, or by the yet more interesting and not less beautiful Loch Teagus. It is overhung on the one side by a range of bold and precipitous rocks, on the other by the mountains of Ben-eaddan and Ben-na-hua, while its lakes, as if conscious of the strong protection thus afforded, rest in quiet serenity underneath, reflecting the softened and picturesque beauty by which they are more immediately surrounded. There are many flowers born “to blush unseen,” and there are many scenes of loveliness which the rambling tourists of modern times have never yet sought out. But Unimore has not escaped notice. Its beauties have been depicted by one,—the best qualified of living men to appreciate and delineate the magnificence of Highland scenery,—one whose pen has hallowed many a once neglected scene, which, in the course of his interesting but too unobtrusive excursions, he has visited.*

Morvern and morn, and spring and solitude,
In front is not the scene magnificent?

Look o'er the edge of the bare precipice!
Forgotten are the mountains; and your heart
Quakes and recoils, as dizzying down and down
Ventures your eyesight, often shut in fear.
Nor daring to become familiar
With that strange world withdrawing from your gaze,
Most awful in its still profundity.
Nor of this steadfast earth! Why tremble so?
Hold by the rock, lest wild imaginings
Do tempt you headlong o'er the battlements
Plumb down to undiscoverable death
Unto the bottom of that blind abyss.
What a terrific distance from the sky!
There might the floating eagle's self feel fear,
But look again, and with a steadied gaze,

* Professor Wilson.

And lo! the dangerous is the beautiful,
The beautiful, indeed, the true sublime,
What an abyss of glorious poetry!

— beauty nowhere owes to ocean
A lovelier haunt than this! Loch Uin-mòr!
A name in its wild sweetness to our ear
Fitly denoting a dream-world of peace!

Geology, &c.—Geologically Morvern is divided into two distinct portions,—the one of the trap, the other of the primitive formation. The former consists of a bold mountain range, commencing at Ardtornish on the south, and extending along the Sound of Mull to the north-west boundary, in breadth about five miles. The mountains are generally tabular, and, in some parts, very precipitous, exhibiting trap columns of great regularity. Inland, the country is very distinctly defined, an extensive valley forming throughout a line of demarcation, and pointing out the two formations from the Linnheloch to Loch Suinart. The prevailing rock in the lower portion is trap. Sandstone and limestone of the very best quality are found on the shores of Lochalin, and in that neighbourhood very favourable appearances of coal have also been observed. On the shores of the gleebe, there is a very remarkable and well-defined vein of pitchstone interspersed with trap; and a short way onward, to the north, a very singular trap rock forms a striking object,—the vein of which it forms a part is discernible from the shore upwards, a considerable way towards the summit of the adjoining eminence, in some places rising many feet above the surface. The portion referred to appears to stand quite alone, and, though only about three feet in thickness, it extends in length to 20 yards, and is in height 30 feet, with an opening through one end of it of 5 feet in diameter. Highlanders are not much versed in geology. The theory held by some of them, “that whin dikes constitute the ribs by which the earth has been held together,” has not sufficiently accounted, in the present instance, for this strange formation; and, accordingly, in legends of olden times, it is said, that a famed lady, of great physical power, had, with a degree of public spirit worthy of all imitation, contemplated the magnificent project of connecting Morvern and Mull by a bridge. The rock in question was laid or selected as the foundation, and the first arch was to rest on the green island directly opposite. She proceeded so far with her good undertaking as to burden her broad shoulders with an enormous load of stones, when unfortunately the pannier in which she carried them gave way, and, thus discouraged at the outset, she abandoned an undertaking which, if completed,

would have saved the writer, among others, many a buffeting from wind and storm. An old tumulus of very great size is still pointed out as Carn-na-Caillich, or *old wife's cairn*; and is indicative of the capacity of the pannier, and of the power of this famed female architect.

In the interior or upper district, the prevailing rocks are gneiss and mica slate. Ben-eaddan, Ben-na-hua, and Ben-na-guirmeag, consist of tabular masses of trap, and repose in marked pre-eminence on, or at least, on the verge, of high ranges of primitive rock, in the district of that formation.

Mines.—At Lurg in Glen-Dubh, a glen which runs parallel to Loch Suinart, lead-ore of considerable richness is found. The ore was first discovered, upwards of a century ago, by Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, who also had the merit of discovering the neighbouring mines of Strontian. Having let the latter, of which he was himself proprietor, on lease to the Duke of Norfolk, who afterwards made them over to the York Building Company, he obtained from the Duke of Argyle a lease of the Glen-Dubh mines, and caused them to be wrought for some time with considerable vigour by a company styled “The Morvern Mining Company.” These mines are referred to, and their position marked out, in a very curious chart of Loch Suinart, published in Edinburgh upwards of a century ago, bearing the following magniloquent title, “A Plan of Loch Suinart, &c., become famous by the greatest national improvement this age has produced; surveyed by Alexander Bruce, 1733.” The chart is accompanied by copious explanatory notes, and bears two engraved views; the one, of the establishment at Strontian, and the other of the Morvern Company’s depôt at Liddesdale. It is dedicated in complimentary terms to General Wade, and concludes a strange “corollary of remarks” by the following couplet:

“Regnat Georgius Secundus,
Præficit Georgius Wade.”

At Ternate, on the estate of Ardtornish, copper mines were at one time, and, it is believed, at a much earlier period, in operation. There are still, in that neighbourhood, favourable appearances of this very valuable mineral.

Quarries.—The freestone quarries of Lochalin and Ardtornish have been found to produce stone of the very best quality and appearance. Stone from these quarries was used in the construction of the Crinan Canal locks; of late years, in erecting a very handsome and substantial mansion-house for the proprietor of Lochalin;

as also in the erection of the very conspicuous, and, it is hoped, very useful lighthouse, built on the southernmost point of Lismore.

Zoology.—There are no animals found in this parish but such as are common to the whole district; nor does it appear that any, formerly existing, have become extinct, unless, indeed, we except squirrels, with which the woods are said at one time to have abounded. Red deer pay only occasional visits; and the blue or mountain hare, though not extinct, is rarely seen. The parish is not remarkable for breeding any particular species of stock, but, in common with the adjoining districts, produces strong and enduring ponies, and the very best description of the short-legged, straight-backed, and round-bodied West Highland cattle. The old and indigenous breed of sheep, small hardy animals, has been superseded by the black-faced or Linton breed; and these, of late years, have been, in some instances crossed by Cheviots. Goats, a profitless, and (since increased attention has been paid to the growing of timber,) a destructive stock, are rarely tolerated, though a few still wander in the more inaccessible mountains.

The parish is much infested by all kinds of ground vermin, from the cunning fox down to the nimble weasel; which circumstance, along with the general introduction of sheep, in some degree accounts for the yearly increasing scarcity of game, just in proportion to the yearly increasing rigour with which the moors are protected. From the rugged character of the country, and its proximity to the forests of Lochiel, it abounds throughout with foxes, insomuch that the parish fox-hunter, whose usefulness, like that of more important functionaries, is not a little impaired by the extent and character of the territory assigned them, succeeds in killing nearly at the rate of thirty annually. They are of the black-legged kind, the swiftest and most destructive of the species. The fox, however, is not worse than he is called, and is, no doubt, guiltless of many crimes laid to his charge; for, just as in the household, every missing tea-cup is charged against that mysterious personage "Nobody," every missing lamb is charged against the fox, while there is no mention of the carelessness of the shepherd. And there are other depredators. The eagle does not always soar in midway sky. The prowling cat and the active martin tire of game and poultry, and, like other refined epicures, make every effort to procure the other delicacies of the season. The former will steal forth with wary tread in the still May morning, and, without shaking a dew-drop from the beather, or inter-

rupting the carol of a lark, will seize upon the unresisting lamb ere he has enjoyed one sportive gambol in the morning sunbeam; while the latter, waiting, with keen twinkling eye, his opportunity from his ivy-covered crevice, will spring forth, as if on wing, and seize upon his unoffending prey before it has exchanged a parting bleat with its watchful dam. Nor is the honesty of the unpretending badger fully established. From certain equivocal appearances in his churlish abode, strong suspicions have been entertained against him; but it is right to bear testimony,—and the testimony is borne by one as free from malice as from partial counsel,—that the proofs of his sheep-stealing propensities are far from being conclusive.

We are also much infested by moles. The plausible theory, that, by a mutual and well-defined understanding as to the division of labour, moles and crows co-operate in improving hill pastures, is not, here at least, confirmed by experience. The moles, to do them justice, are rigidly attentive to their share of the compact, but there is abundant proof of the negligence of their supposed associates, who, on repairing here daily from Mull, (for which island they exhibit an unaccountable predilection,) are found, in place of attending to the useful occupation of spreading mole-hills, to misspend their time in the agreeable, and to them, not altogether profitless amusement of picking up shell-fish and dropping the same on the rocks underneath; or, in company with more congenial associates, eagles, hawks, and ravens, enjoying a more substantial repast on the carrion of the mountain. There is, however, the less cause to complain of such petty annoyances, as a freedom from others of greater magnitude is enjoyed. There are few snakes, and these not very venomous; and, above all, the enviable but somewhat inexplicable exemption referred to in a former account is yet enjoyed, for Morvern has at least this advantage over districts in other respects more favoured, that it is wholly free from those pests of civilized society, rats. Others may exercise their ingenuity in accounting for this fact; the long and the uninterrupted enjoyment of the privilege has operated, as in matters of heavier responsibility, in rendering us the more unreflecting on the subject.

Fishes, &c.—The Sound of Mull is not remarkable either for abundance or variety of fish. The usual kinds of fish are caught, and occasionally in great plenty, with the exception of haddock and whittings, which, strange to say, seldom appear in the Sound

of Mull, though caught in great abundance in the Linnhe Loch and Loch Sunart.

The herring fishing has of late years failed in Loch Sunart as elsewhere, though it is believed a greater degree of expertness in deep sea fishing would enable the people in that neighbourhood to secure a larger supply. The only regular salmon fishing is that of Lochalin, which is neither valuable nor productive, being let, with reservation of the rod-fishing, at the annual rent of L. 16 Sterling.

Attempts have been made, but hitherto with little success, to establish salmon-fishings along the sea coasts. At the estuaries of the different streams, sea trout and other fish are caught, and along the shores the usual variety of shell-fish is found. The coasts, and more especially the lochs, are frequented by seals, and their more interesting and less demure looking associates, otters. The latter, on descending from the mountain lochs, journey along the sea coasts, calling at the accustomed places of resort, (which, at stated intervals, are ranged along, with almost as much regularity as the stages of a turnpike-road,) and may be seen regaling themselves at one time on the scaly salmon, at another partaking of a less palatable repast in the slimy entwinings of a conger-eel.

Birds.—Sea-fowls of the migratory and other kinds are not wanting; and while in the woods, the thrush and the linnet strive to charm us into a forgetfulness of the ills of life, their allied tribes of the deep are seen busily engaged in their own avocations. In the calm summer day, the watchful curlew is seen wading in the shallows; the drowsy heron, as if lost in vague contemplation, stands perched on the projecting cliff; the sportive diver appears and disappears, as if undecided in his choice of elements; while others congregate with sbrill triumph in the wake of the tumbling porpoise, darting now and again with steady piercing aim on their scaly prey underneath. In winter, too, the "herdsman of the deep" sends forth in hollow accents the forebodings of tempest; the sombre "scart" flaps his wings, as if rejoicing at the announcement; while the more aërial tribes soar on high with graceful evolutions, as if preparing to herald the approaching storm.

Attempts have occasionally been made to tame and domesticate some of the wild animals of the country. The martin, the most social of them all, has frequently taken his place with great composure at the fireside. But he seldom attains to advanced age,

He loves to wander forth and to revisit the scenes of his youth, while his good intentions of returning are frustrated by the unsparing terriers, which, regardless of the insignia of distinction by which he is usually decorated, think him fair game when found on the mountain, with whatever restrained courtesy they may have treated him at home. Efforts have also been made to gain upon the surly wild cat, but in vain. The first peep of his kitten eye is an averted look of fraud and fierceness, and he remains a surly wild cat to the end, making every advance with a seeming reservation of displaying, when he pleases, his natural ferocity. Of all pets, perhaps the otter is the most useful, if not the most interesting. An old respectable person, who some years ago rented the ferry and small inn of Lochalin, had succeeded wonderfully in training a magpie, which repaid the expenses of her education, by not unfrequently subjecting her preceptor to the very unnecessary trouble of paddling to the opposite shore, where, in place of the expected passenger, he found his docile pupil perched upon a rock, chuckling with hearty mirth at the success of her imitations. The same individual caught an otter, which, in a short time, became the most expert fisher on the coast, reserving, of course, as is the wont of all fishers, a sufficiency for self-consumption. Luxury, however, exercised its enfeebling influence. The otter became unduly fond of comfort, and, upon a certain unhappy night, would insist on sharing with a sturdy Barra fisherman, who had taken up his abode in the house, the comforts of a Highland blanket. An affray, it is said a desperate one, ensued. The otter was not at the time the greatest sufferer, but unfortunately afterwards forfeited its life to appease the wrath of the offended Isles' man.*

* The country abounds in many anecdotes illustrative of the instinct of the sheep and terrier dog; but, under no training, perhaps have these valuable animals exhibited greater sagacity than under the discipline of a poor enthusiastic lover of their race, well known in the district by the name of Allan-nan-Conn. Allan, in early life, had exhibited dog-stealing and other accompanying propensities; but, being a tall and active, though a gaunt and peculiar-looking person, he was received as a regimental recruit at a time when the only indispensable qualification was, in Highland phrase, "fitness to cover a battle-field and drown a bullet." He was conveyed to Stirling, and paraded for inspection. A Highland officer of some rank, who happened to be going the rounds, recognized him as an old acquaintance, but Allan significantly declined any farther conference till the muster was over. The inspecting officer, the late Sir Ralph Abercromby, it is said, took his rounds. Allan, who had got a hint from some of his comrades to look fierce at him as he passed, drew himself up to the full height of his stature and scowled fiercely, on which the officer in question characterized him as a "fine erect looking fellow." He did not, however, long relish the restraints of a military life; and, though not till the impression of his being more rogue than fool had been somewhat severely tested, he returned home from London, like many other travellers, not much wiser than when he went abroad.

Botany.—A knowledge of the very interesting science of botany is not professed; but there is every reason to conclude that few, if any, of the rarer species of plants are found in Morvern. No doubt there are many plants possessing medicinal properties, which, from an ignorance of their nature and efficacy, are unnoticed and disregarded, just as there are on every hand, sustaining promises, from which, under a similar unacquaintance with their potency, we fail to derive comfort. To some extent, however, a knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants, at one time very general, is still possessed in the Highlands; nor is this surprising,

On his return, he at once resumed his former and more congenial pursuits. The red coat was superseded by garments not overly well adapted to his form; sometimes the shooting jacket of a slender squire, and at other times the cassock of an ecclesiastic. Over these he wore a loose cloak, suspended from his shoulders, while a military cap was perched upon his unusually sharp and pointed forehead. Round his waist he fastened a girdle, above which, in most enviable proximity, one or two whelps enjoyed free egress and ingress, and, perhaps, as lawyers say, all other privileges, while curs "of all degrees" followed in the rear. Thus attired, Allan, with the aid of a huge pike staff, moved along with no very measured strides. When or where he taught his dogs, no person can well say. He spent much of his time in the mountains. He paid frequent visits to the houses of the resident gentry, presenting some who had the good fortune to enjoy his favour, with spars and minerals picked up on his rambles, and giving others, in whom he felt, as in the case of the writer, a peculiar interest, the benefit of his experience and advice. At night, he repaired to the houses of the poor, where, as he archly remarked, he received distinctions which his wealthier friends denied him,—“a share of the best room in the house, and of the best food at the table;” but where, not unfrequently, in utter disregard of the proverbial caution against lying down with dogs, he found it necessary to assign to each of his followers his own place in administering to his nightly comfort. Thus, though we might suppose, not in the most improving society, his dogs became “highly accomplished.” He addressed them in no unusual accents, but in the ordinary conversational tone, and yet he secured at all times their most implicit obedience. When about to leave a house, one was sent out to judge of the weather, which, if his report was favourable, returned, giving a most significant grin, as if moving a departure; but, if he thought unfavourably, he crouched under his master's chair. When a movement was agreed upon, the followers were marched forth in regular array, not presuming, on pain of the pike staff, to pass in front of any one engaging the favour of their master. Such departures were not always of the peaceable kind. Less mannerly dogs sometimes interfered. Allan, on these occasions, allowed his train great latitude, with the exception of one steady determined-looking old follower, which, by way of marking a disrespect he was far from feeling, he had named after the judge ordinary of the district, who had signally overlooked his qualifications as a wood officer, to the office of which his ambition aspired. “The Sheriff,” as the dog was called, was bound to observe strict neutrality, and was never allowed to interfere till the affray became somewhat desperate. On one of these occasions, witnessed by the writer, a young whelp, regardless of what was passing, was frolicking about at some little distance. Allan, on the restoration of order, despatched one of his followers to bring, as he said, that “foolish little child” with him. The dog set off, but the “foolish little child” could not be induced to relinquish his amusement. The messenger returned, and received the imperative orders, “if he will not come, take him.” He did so, carried the whelp in his mouth, and laid him at his master's feet, from which degrading position he was immediately transferred to the “region beyond the girdle.” But poor Allan has departed. His ruling passion was strong even in death. To the last he suffered not his followers to be removed, assuring his humane attendants that he was uncertain whether or not he could again return; but, if ever man did, he would, to punish those who had overlooked his qualifications as a forester.

in a country unhappily left, in such matters, in a great measure to nature's unaided resources.

Highlanders are not much skilled in domestic economy, and few of the indigenous plants are used by them here for culinary purposes. We must, however, except the "tussilago" and "agrimony," which are often substituted for tea, and followed, perhaps, by as innocuous effects as the mixture of the renowned Howka.

Owing to the high price of wool and other causes, home-made cloths are not now so much worn as they formerly were. The comfortless fustians and other inferior cloths of the south are substituted in place of them; but in former times, and to some extent still, the dyes used in preparing the graceful tartan and the homely plaiding were extracted from plants and roots of native growth. For instance, the top of the heather was used for dyeing green; the bark of the alder and root of the bramble and water-lily, for black; crotal, or a spongy substance growing on rocks and trees, for brown, &c.

According to tradition, the parish was at one time covered with wood, insomuch that, from the line of road leading along the coast, only two views of the sea could be obtained. This statement may be somewhat exaggerated, but not extravagantly. So late as the year 1746, in the memory of persons but recently removed, who, according to their own graphic description, saw the country "as one red ember;" great quantities of timber were, in enforcing the sad policy pursued at the time, consumed by fire. In all the mosses, the remains of trees are dug up. On the mountain sides, huge trunks of oak yet remain, some of which, after exposure to the rains and storms of centuries, still measure upwards of ten feet in circumference. There are also extensive coppices. During the period occupied in cutting the Morvern coppice woods, previous to the sale of the Argyle estates, it was computed that from L.8000 to L.10,000 were expended on the various operations connected with the cutting, &c. of them. There are yet extensive ranges of valuable oak and ash in strict preservation; but, for the benefit of the much-indulged sheep, the wood-axe is aimed at almost every other description of timber. Along the shores of Loch Sunart, the heights are thickly wooded, chiefly with birch; the sombre hue of which during the gloom of winter beautifully contrasts with the deep green of the unchanging holly.

The planting of wood was successfully tried at a very early pe-

riod. There are yet standing, in all the maturity of age, trees, with which the Episcopal clergyman, before the introduction of the Presbyterian form of worship, adorned his residence; and there is at Ach-a-charn an avenue of trees, of size and height sufficient to quiet any desponding fears which the proprietors of modern times may entertain as to the fate of the several plantations by which their respective properties have of late been tastefully ornamented. The avenue referred to, consisting chiefly of lime and plane trees, was planted about 150 years ago by Mr Cameron of Glen Dessary, the then proprietor of this picturesque property. He resided at Ach-a-charn, and occupied a house of very peculiar construction; formed of oak beams placed at regular distances; the intervening spaces being closely interwoven with wicker-work. The outside was wholly covered with heath, and the interior was divided into several apartments, and finished in a style of taste and elegance corresponding with the enlightened refinement of the occupants.

The trees seemingly best adapted to the soil and climate appear to be the plane, larch, ash, and oak. Strange to say, the Scotch fir, an indigenous tree, a specimen of which grows on one of the loftiest pinnacles overhanging the Linnhe Loch, and which, for many years, has afforded protection to an eagle nestling with great good taste among its branches, is not found to thrive. Firs, no doubt, have been sometimes injudiciously planted, being mixed with quick growing larches; or, from a mistaken idea of their hardihood, placed in situations too exposed for plants so top-heavy; but, to the dry and parching winds of March, the failure of this tree is to be mainly attributed.

On the estate of Drimnin, there is a very peculiar specimen of the weeping ash, a description and drawing of which have been sent to Mr Loudon, and which have appeared, or are about to appear, in one of the interesting publications of that enthusiastic arborist.

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Morvern undoubtedly formed part of the dominions of Somerled, well known in Highland tradition as Somhairle-Machd-Gille-Bhrìde, and in history as Thane of Argyle, and was, it is believed, the first portion of the confessedly extensive, but somewhat undefined possessions of his ancestors, which he regained from the rapacious Norsemen.

The circumstances connected with this event are, by tradition,
ARGYLE.

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handed down with great minuteness, and, with a degree of accuracy in their general and more important details, amply confirmed by all the information as to the early life of Somerled, which history affords. At the period referred to, early in the twelfth century, the clan M'Innes occupied Morvern, and had suffered severely in withstanding the repeated attempts of the marauding Norsemen to reduce them to entire subjection. They were now menaced with another attack. The Lochalin galleys were moored on their shores, and the more experienced of the clan assembled to deliberate on the unhappy position in which they were placed, and to determine what course they should pursue in so critical an emergency. Various opinions were given, and various plans suggested, but unanimity when so much required, did not pervade the council, whereupon an aged individual addressed them, setting forth at detailed length the dangers to which such dissensions exposed them, and how vain it was, while each contended for superiority, to encounter a foe united as one man, and obedient to the commands of an acknowledged leader, concluding by suggesting, that, as Somerled was then taking refuge in their country, they should devolve upon him the command, and commit themselves implicitly to his guidance. This suggestion was at once agreed to, and an embassy was despatched to communicate their determination to Somerled, which on proceeding in the direction of the not very capacious cave occupied by him and his father on the shores of the Linnhe Loch, still known as the cave of Gille-Bride, found Somerled engaged in angling in the Gear-Abhain. On their first advance, he seemed reluctant to permit a near approach, and even when assured of their friendly intentions, received them with great though courteous reserve. He appeared thoughtful, if not pensive, much as he is described in an incomplete manuscript, (supposed to be of great antiquity), which, referring perhaps to this very period of his life, states "that Somerled kept musing on the low condition to which he and his father had been brought, and kept at first very retired." To the proposal of the M'Innes, he made for a time no reply. At length, he observed that he was enticed by a sportive salmon, and, if successful in landing him, he would consider it a good omen. The eager messengers stood by, the salmon was hooked, and after some bold plunges and struggles, was at length safely landed on the bank. But Somerled angled not for amusement solely. Before agreeing to accompany the M'Innes's, he proceeded under the constraint of a higher duty, to his

father's cave, there to present the food which he had thus provided for his sustenance. On parting, however, he gave directions as to a suitable place of muster, and commanded that a great, and, as the clansmen supposed, a very unnecessary number of fires should be lighted, during the following night, around their encampment, adding that he would speedily be at his post. He kept his word, and at once assumed the command for which his skill and valour rendered him so well qualified.

On surveying, as accurately as he could, the host of the invaders, Somerled at once perceived the inadequacy of his own force in numerical strength, and with prompt decision had recourse to the following stratagem: A herd of cattle lay quietly pasturing in the adjoining valley, collected there no doubt to insure their safety. The cattle he ordered to be slain, and, having made this strange preparation, he waited the advance of the enemy. The commanding position occupied by him enabled him to observe their movements, and, as soon as he saw a portion of them in motion, he caused his small force to march several successive times round the eminence, descending at each circuit into a small glen underneath, which appeared to the foe to lead towards the shore, but from which, unseen, the advanced portion regained the summit as the others were descending from it, thus exhibiting the appearance of a continuous force. After a short interval, he caused every man to equip himself with a cow's hide, again practising the former movement, and then giving his force a yet more formidable appearance, caused them to reverse their savage looking "uniform." The stratagem succeeded. The Norsemen, supposing that a large and formidable force was descending upon them, fell into great confusion, while Somerled and his gallant associates, availing themselves of this sudden panic, fell on the more advanced body with great slaughter. Two of the leaders, Borradill and Lundy, were slain in adjoining corries, which still bear their names, and another, Stangadill, was so closely pursued, that to escape the sword he leaped into a boiling linn, which, in commemoration of the event, is still known as *East Stangadill*. This achievement, sufficient of itself to inspire the M'Inneses with confidence in their leader, was soon followed up by others of a similar description. Somerled in a short time succeeded in expelling the marauding Norsemen from Morvern, and thus at length the humble occupant of the cave became the powerful Thane of Argyle. Morvern, thus recovered by Somerled, continued to form part of his

wide dominions down till the period of his death in 1164, and remained afterwards, with occasional interruptions, attendant on the troubles of the times, in possession of his lineal descendants, the Lords of the Isles. In Bruce's varied struggles, Angus Og of the Isles took a prominent part, and accordingly we find Morvern among other lands, confirmed to him in return for his important services. His son, John of the Isles, at a time when circumstances rendered the integrity of his motives questionable, joined the standard of Edward Baliol, and thus was he in his turn confirmed in possessions which mere devoted loyalty had secured to his father. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, the family of the Isles became connected with the clan M'Lean, and by a charter granted at Ardtornish in 1390, Donald of the Isles conferred on the chief of that clan, M'Lean of Duart, among other lands, those of Morvern. By this and other deeds afterwards duly ratified by crown charters, the M'Leans, though not without some interruptions, retained possession of Morvern down to the year 1680, when, from circumstances well known, it came into the hands of the dominant family of Argyle. It is said to have been the express desire of a member of this illustrious house, that a marked distinction should appear in the condition of his, from that of any other tenantry, and it was certainly in accordance with this generous wish, that the Argyle possessions in Morvern appear to have been managed. The land was at no period, highly, or even fully, rented. In 1731, when the Argyle estates constituted at least two-thirds of the extent of the parish, the rental amounted to £318 Sterling only, and though doubtless several augmentations did, at successive intervals of time, take place, it seems to have been at all times the desire of the successive members of this illustrious family to let their extensive possessions with a due regard to the comfort and well being of the people, and the right organization of society, thus securing for the smaller possessions, a class of intelligent tenantry, and for the larger, a body of highly educated and influential gentlemen.

In 1819, the Argyle estates in Morvern were exposed to sale, and, to the sorrow of a grateful and happy community, passed at this period, in all the varied subdivisions of which they now consist, into the hands of other proprietors.

Land-owners.—At present there are eleven proprietors. Three of these are resident and one partially so. The old tack leases have expired, and changes have accordingly taken place, which,

as will hereafter appear, have materially altered the state of the country, and the condition of its inhabitants.

The valued rent of the parish amounts to L.256, 19s. 11d. Five of the proprietors farm their own estates, and from this circumstance the actual rental cannot be so accurately ascertained. It may, however, be rated at or about L. 5700 Sterling per annum. The following is a list of the land-owners, according to their respective valuations: John Sinclair, Esq. of Lochalin; Mrs Beattie, of Glen Morvern; Alexander Stewart, Esq. of Glen Crebisdale; Sir Charles Gordon of Drimnin; James Alexander, Esq. of Liddesdale; John Gregorson, Esq. of Ardtornish; Patrick Sellar of Ach-a-charm; John M'Laine, Esq. of Killundin; Dugald MacLachlan, Esq. of Laudle; H. Graham, Esq. of Achbrannich; Charles H. Forbes, Esq. of Kengerloch.

His Grace the Duke of Argyle is patron of the parish.

Parochial Registers.—The parish registers are regularly kept, but they do not extend to a very early period, nor are they voluminous.

Antiquities.—St Columba, in the good old times of church extension, founded a religious establishment in Morvern; a circumstance which still gives to its locality the name of Kiel-challumchille.

The legends of the country to which is found necessary so often to refer, affirm that the revered saint and his zealous coadjutor Kilmaluag, had visited Lismore, and they narrate a very strange dialogue held by them as to the propriety of forming an establishment in that island, interesting only from its fertility. The result was, that the undertaking was for the time abandoned, and that their attention was directed towards Morvern. They crossed Loch Linnhe, and, on gaining the summit of the eminence commanding a view of the Morvern coasts, St Columba at once paused, and planting his foot on a rock on which he left its indelible impression, pointed to Kiel, and exclaimed "There is the place." Whether we believe this legend in whole or in part, it appears that the establishment in question was actually founded by the venerable saint, who, if guided by his sense of the beautiful, was in this instance successful. It is probable, however, that, while this establishment was founded by St Columba, the several buildings, the ruins of which, consisting of two very striking arches, are still to be seen, were erected at a much later period, contemporaneous, it may have been, with those of Iona. In immediate proximity to

them, there is a very handsome cross still standing in perfect preservation, while the remains of others, curiously carved, are laid upon some of the adjoining graves. They are formed of the same kind of stone of which the Iona crosses are formed, and are said, though perhaps on slender authority, to have been carried from that famed island.

The burying ground surrounds the ruins, and the day is not far gone when the ancient chroniclers of the country, seated on the mouldering slabs, narrated many very interesting legends connected with this hallowed spot, where

Now in peace the ashes mix
Of those who once were foes.

The tomb of the renowned Machd-Mhic-Ian is still pointed out. The death of this celebrated personage, more famed for personal prowess than for more estimable qualities, is recorded in history as having taken place in Morvern in 1625, in a skirmish with the Camerons, to which clan, as the murderer of his uncle, John Og-Mac-Ian, the betrothed husband of Lochiel's daughter, he had become very obnoxious. In the traditionary narrative of the event, it is said that the Camerons and the followers of Mac-Mhic-Ian were drawn out and about to engage. One of the clan Cameron, not the most powerful of them, observed Mac-Mhic-Ian uplifting his enormous helmet, upon which, drawing an arrow from his quiver, he remarked to a clansman, "though mighty this will do for him." "It is not," was the reply, "by the hand of the feeble that he will fall." The bow was instantly bent; the swift arrow winged its unerring course; and the hand of the warrior, which at that moment was passing over his forehead, was pinioned to his skull. He fell; but, for a moment regaining his strength, he arose, and expressed a desire, it is feared a treacherous one, to deliver his sword to Lochiel. But the last spark of life was fast expiring. He clenched the huge weapon, and in the ire of death, transfixed it to the hilt in an opposite bank, and fell on it to rise no more. On his tomb there is the fitting representation of a mailed warrior, with a ponderous broadsword, and his bossy shield remains still in the possession of a gentleman residing in the immediate neighbourhood of Leachd-nam-Saighid, *or the ledge of arrows*, where the tragical event took place.

Adjoining Mac-Mhic-Ian's tomb, there are several stone coffins, to which the MacInneses, as the descendants of the aborigines of the country, still maintain their claim. One of these is said to contain the ashes of a Spanish lady of rank, of whom the following account is

given: She is supposed to have perished on board of the Florida, one of the ill-fated Armada blown up in the bay of Tobermory in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. But the historical and authentic account of this event proved unsatisfactory to an imaginative people, and it has accordingly been blended with tales of fiction and romance. According to these, the lady in question, a princess, as she is designated, had seen in her midnight dreams a person of great elegance, for whom she had formed a strong and devoted attachment. Having long sought for the reality of this visionary personage, but in vain, she at length resolved to fit out an expedition, and to extend her search beyond the boundaries of Spain. In the course of her interesting excursion, she arrived at Tobermory, on board of the unlucky Florida. Here she saw for the first time Lachlan M'Lean of Duart, recognized him as the object of her search, and avowed for him her cherished attachment. This avowal, however complimentary to M'Lean, was not, as may be supposed, equally agreeable to his lady, who, in order to secure the affections and fidelity of her husband, caused the Florida to be blown up. The princess was among the sufferers, and her remains were conveyed to Kiel-Colum-Kill, and deposited in the stone-coffin in question, which is still pointed out, in connection with other legends of too detailed a character to be here inserted.

Along the sea coasts of the parish, there are the remains of several small forts or strongholds, no doubt of importance in the days of Danish invasion. On a small island in Loch Tearnate, the ruins of a stronghold also appear. There are several Druidical circles. There are also tumuli; from these urns have occasionally been dug, which, from a mistaken idea of their containing treasure, have been generally destroyed before coming into the possession of those capable of appreciating their value. Carn-na-Caillich, the huge tumulus already referred to, still remains entire. It is composed of loose stones, piled upon each other to a very considerable height, and measures 81 yards in circumference.

At Loch Teagus, on an insulated and wooded eminence, there are the remains of a vitrified fort involved in all the perplexing mysteries which render these objects so interesting.

The most conspicuous objects of antiquity are the old castles; but it is somewhat strange, that the early history of these once important buildings should be involved in very great obscurity. It is perhaps difficult to fix upon the precise era in which these buildings were erected. The probability is, that they were origi-

nally built, at a very remote period, by the aborigines of the country, and afterwards enlarged and extended by northern invaders, and more latterly by feudal chiefs.

In Morvern the castles are three in number, Ardtornish, Kenlochaline, and Killundine. The castle of Drimnin, as the comparatively unimportant building was termed, has of late years been pulled down, in preparing a site for a Roman Catholic chapel, now erected on the commanding situation which it occupied. It is pardonable to express regret that so very unnecessary a work of demolition should have taken place; but it is just to add, that, in this expression of regret, the enlightened proprietor of Drimnin now fully participates.

The Castle of Killundine, for so the uninteresting building is termed, is evidently, from its construction, of comparatively modern date. It is said to have been used as a hunting lodge by the feudal occupants of the opposite castle of Aross; and, from this circumstance, it is yet known as Caisteal-nan-Conn, or the castle of Dogs.

The Castle of Kenlochaline, consisting of a square tower, and built on a very picturesque situation overhanging the estuary of Gear Abhain, is supposed to have been erected by Dubh-Chal, a lady of the M'Innes tribe, who, according to tradition, paid her architect with the very extraordinary remuneration, a quantity equal to the full of the castle, of butter. This castle was occupied by Colonel Kitteach and his detachment of Irish troops, in 1664, and afterwards set fire to by him,—a proceeding which he himself is said to have regretted.

Ardtornish.—"The ruins of Ardtornish," say Sir Walter Scott, "are not now very considerable, and consist chiefly of the remains of an old keep or tower, with fragments of outward defences. But in former days, it was a place of great consequence, being one of the principal strongholds which the Lords of the Isles, during the period of their stormy independence, possessed upon the mainland of Argyleshire. Here they assembled what popular tradition calls their parliaments, meaning, I suppose, their 'camplenièr,' or assembly of feudal and patriarchal vassals and dependents."

It was here, as history records, that the conference took place between the commissioners of Edward IV. and those of John of the Isles, 19th October 1641, which terminated in the notable treaty, by which the Lord of the Isles acknowledged himself a vassal of the Crown of England, and promised to aid the sovereign of that king-

dom, in reducing Scotland to subjection. The site of the spacious apartment in which "the Parliament" met is still pointed out; and in the face of the rock, overhanging the bay of Ardtornish, is pointed out the precipice over which the transgressors of feudal laws were thrown,—a doom not more enviable, than that of those who suffered at the base of the Tarpeian rock.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of the Highlands has undergone many fluctuations. No doubt, in ancient times, the country was populous. While the power of the feudal chief was estimated or his possessions secured by his vassals and retainers, efforts were made to augment their numbers. At a later period also, during the prevalence of war, and the prosperity of kelp manufacture, similar efforts were resorted to; and, accordingly, almost every spot was occupied, not only along the sea coasts, but also in the inland glens. The introduction of sheep-farming, and the failure of kelp manufacture, have introduced a different system. The tenure of land, as held by the poorer classes, is simple in the extreme, and their hamlets removable with as great ease, and to others with as little detriment, as a temporary encampment, and, accordingly, humanity alone has obstructed, in causing the more general recourse to the depopulation system,—a system, let it be remembered, held at no distant period in such dread, when emigration to America seemed to offer to the people themselves so many inducements,—Morvern participated to no small extent in these fluctuations. It is evident that the population was great, previous to 1755. It appears to have come, at and from that period, to the amount at which it has, with no inconsiderable variations, continued down to the present day, or, at least, to the period of the last census.

Amount of population in 1755,	1223
1795,	1764
1801,	2000
1831,	2036
1841,	1781

But while it appears that the population of 1831, which considerably exceeds that of the present period, is not much more than that of 1795, and is not greater than the extent and resources of the country are capable of supporting, it is necessary, in drawing conclusions from these and the following numerical statements, to advert to the very different mode in which the inhabitants of the country are now located.

The fact is, the two opposite systems of depopulating and over-

peopling are here in full operation. To the former there are strong inducements. The country, undoubtedly, is, to a great extent, a pastoral district, and, of whatever improvements the soil may be susceptible, and whatever fertility it may, and, in some districts, really does possess, the variable character of the climate renders the raising of crop precarious; and, besides, the price of sheep and wool has of late years maintained an entire ascendancy over that of black-cattle and agricultural produce. Accordingly, on the sale of the Argyle estates, and the breaking up of the old tack leases, the sheep system came into more general operation. The people, though in some cases partially continued, from motives of compassion, have but slender holdings. In other cases, they have been wholly removed. This process has again facilitated the introduction of another, in one point of view, certainly the most commendable, but, on the whole, perhaps not the least pernicious in its effects; for, in place of repairing to the south, in search of steady employment, or taking the more decided and advisable step of emigrating, the dispossessed tenantry have here and elsewhere become the occupants of small allotments in wretched villages, where idleness exercises its unhappy influence over them, and lands them in penury and wretchedness.

These remarks are made, not as advocating either of the systems, or reproaching any of the respected individuals by whom they are severally practised. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages, as judiciously or injudiciously acted on. Both are to be condemned, when carried to an undue extremity. The evil effects of the allotment system are obvious; but, in addition to its more immediate, but perhaps temporary effects on the condition of the people, the other system referred to will, in all probability, yet be seen to produce evils of great magnitude. It will suspend the reclaiming of waste land, and, while the arable now or lately in cultivation will soon become overrun, as it has a strong tendency to do, with fog, heath, and brushwood, the existing dikes and farm-steadings will become dilapidated; and then, should the price of black-cattle, as it is not improbable, regain its former amount, will the acknowledgment be more readily given than at present, that a system, combining, as formerly, the agricultural and the pastoral, is of all the most conducive to the improvement of the country, the comfort of the people, and the interest of the proprietors.

of religion; but they are, it is hoped, alive to its importance, and influenced by its sacred truths.

Smuggling, now suppressed, did at one time exercise a baneful influence, though, from the manner in which this nefarious traffic was conducted, the same extent of demoralization did not follow in its train here as elsewhere. The persons engaged in it seem generally to have acquired a speculative and unsettled cast of mind; but many of them, strange to say, are yet distinguished for great sobriety, which, with the exceptions that occur here, as in every community, forms a striking feature in the character of the whole population.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

Agriculture.—From the several statements given of the extent, &c. of the parish, it will appear that the arable land bears but a small proportion to the pasture, and thus, even in those farms in which the greatest quantity of crop is raised, and to the cultivation of which most attention is paid, there is seldom more corn grown than is sufficient for the consumption of the stock maintained. In so far, however, as agriculture is attended to, a better system of husbandry has been introduced. Greater attention is paid, and especially on one, and perhaps the most improved estate in the parish, to the subdivision and better cultivation of the land, and in securing a more regular rotation of crops. Efforts have also been made, attended with considerable success, in improving moss and in reclaiming other waste lands. The usual crops are oats, barley, and potatoes; and in some farms sown grass and turnips are raised. Five of the estates within the bounds of the parish are managed by the respective proprietors, three of them exclusively, as sheep grazings. There are farms let to persons paying upwards of L.100 of rent on leases, in no instance exceeding nineteen years. Small tenants, as they are termed, usually hold their possessions without any lease.

The most common breed of sheep, as already stated, is the Linton or black-faced, in some instances crossed with Cheviots. The cattle are the pure Argyleshire or west Highland breed. The average rate of grazing, in accordance with which the following details are given, may be stated at 2s. 6d. per head for each sheep, and L.2 for each cow. The usual rate of servants' wages is, for ploughmen, single men, from L. 9 to L. 13, with rations; for house servants, from L.3 to L.4 per annum; for day labourers, 1s. 3d. per day; for masons and carpenters, 2s. per day.

Number of arable acres,	4054
pasture,	78,246
wood,	3069

Produce.—

29,000 sheep at 2s. 6d. per head,	L.3625	0	0
690 cows at L.2 per head,	1380	0	0
Sowing or 512 bolls oats, 3½ returns, at L.1 per boll,	1792	0	0
Planting of 1290 barrels potatoes, 15 returns, at 2s. 6d. per barrel,	2418	15	0
16000 stones of hay, at 8d. per stone,	533	6	8
Produce of woods per annum,	100	0	0
Fisheries, say	25	0	0
Miscellaneous produce,	100	0	0
	9974	1	8

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Town.—The market-town of Morvern is Tobermory, distant from the nearest point about four miles. It is considerably resorted to, though, from the recent formation of a village at Lochalin, neither Tobermory nor yet Oban, which, for some parts of the parish, is equally convenient, is not now so much resorted to as formerly.

Means of Communication.—The communication with the parish is now comparatively easy by means of steam-vessels. The first vessel of this description passed through the Sound of Mull, on her way to the east coast, in 1818, some of the old inhabitants expressing great surprise, that, during a long residence on the sea-coast, they had never seen another vessel of the same wonderful construction. In 1821, a steam-vessel, the *Highlander*, commenced plying regularly between Glasgow and Tobermory, calling at Lochalin, as one of the intermediate ports. Recently an attempt has been made to perform this voyage in one day, with a degree of success that leads us to hope that it may yet, under better arrangements, be successful. There is also communication with the parish by means of ferries, of which there are five statedly fixed on; three on the Sound of Mull, and two on Loch Suinart. During the winter months, the steam communication with Tobermory is less frequent; sometimes it is entirely suspended; and, consequently, during that period, a packet-boat plies between Lochalin and Oban.

Post-Office.—A post-office has, for a considerable period, been established in the parish. It is now a sub-office to Oban. Letters are despatched and received three times a week,—and such is the insular character of the parish, that our mail bag, in its progress to and from our mainland, passes through two islands and over three ferries. This annoying inconvenience arises solely from the

want of roads, which renders communication with the parish on the east or mainland side almost impracticable. There are no roads. The only approximation to a road is along the Sound of Mull, and of this line there are not above five continuous miles on which even a cart can be driven with safety. The interior is pathless. How the country should thus have remained, in so important a respect, in the rear of every other, it is unnecessary here to mention, further, than to observe that the Government grant, so beneficial elsewhere, was not accepted of under the stipulation annexed to it; and that the county line, as it is termed, does not extend to or embrace this parish. Various lines have been surveyed, all of them perhaps very good. Since this engineering process commenced, steam navigation has been introduced, and railroads have followed. There is, however, the less cause to complain, as the principal streams have of late years been supplied with very substantial bridges. Even in this respect, however, "much remains to do."

There are several safe anchorages along the coasts. Ardtornish bay, wholly free from shoals or rocks, presents, especially with north and north-westerly winds, a safe anchorage. The entrance to Lochalin is narrow, and for large vessels especially, at certain periods of the tide, which runs there with great rapidity, somewhat shallow; but the loch must still be classed among the best harbours. Underneath the village, a substantial pier has been constructed by the proprietor. Onwards to the north, there are several safe creeks and inlets for small craft, as also bays which, in quarters less favoured, would be considered very desirable places of resort. Perhaps, however, the best harbour in the parish is that formerly referred to, Drimbuy loch. It is somewhat out of the ordinary tract, but would prove, if well known, a safe retreat to many a tempest-tossed vessel, prevented by south-westerly gales from taking the bay of Tobermory, or, as has sometimes happened, by these gales, blown out of that anchorage, safe and commodious though it confessedly is. Neither Drimbuy, however, nor yet the other excellent harbours in the opposite side of Loch Suinart are, it is understood, laid down in ordinary charts,—a culpable omission (not easily accounted for) on the part of those having the charge of these useful publications.

Ecclerastical State.—The parish consists of the two parishes of Kilcalumkill and Kilumtaith, united, it is believed, shortly after the Reformation. The incumbent officiates alternately at two places

of worship, which are situated on the coast, distant from each other about nine miles, while he feels himself also called upon occasionally to preach at other stations in the interior of the district. Three farms, situated at the head of Loch Suinart, have been annexed, *quoad sacra*, to the parliamentary parish of Strontian, at one of which a missionary minister, stationed in the braes of Morvern and Kingerloch, preaches once a fortnight. The missionary is ordained, and is paid by the Committee on the Royal Bounty,—certain heritors giving the stipulated allowance for accommodations. The parish churches were built in 1799 and 1780. They are both in good repair, affording, especially from the present state of the population, ample accommodation. The sittings are all free. The glebe is supposed to contain about sixty acres, and may be rented at the value of about L.30 annual rent. The stipend consists of 127 bolls, 2 firlots, 3 pecks, and 3 lippies meal, (9 stone weight); 15 bolls, 3 firlots, 2 pecks, and 2 lippies bear; and L.15, 17s. 2d. Sterling in money. The manse was built in 1779. There are two catechists, the one paid by the Committee on the Royal Bounty, a salary of L. 8 per annum, and the other a like amount by the synod of Argyle. A Roman Catholic chapel has been erected within the last few years, through the instrumentality of one of the proprietors, within the bounds of the parish. In the close neighbourhood of the chapel, a clergyman of that persuasion is stationed. An Episcopal clergyman, residing at Fortwilliam, has been in the habit of paying occasional visits to the parish, to minister to the spiritual wants of those who still adhere, in some degree, to that persuasion; at the same time that, with enlightened liberality, they join in the ordinances as dispensed in the parish church.

The attendance at the several places of worship may be stated as follows: Number of families connected with the Established Church, 370; of Roman Catholic families, 8; of professed Episcopalian families, 2; average number of communicants at the Established Church, 450.* On the whole, the people seem anxious to wait upon the stated ordinances of religion, but various causes, such as distance from church, bad roads, and poverty, combine to prevent regular attendance.

Schools.—The parochial salary, of which the maximum is given, is divided among three teachers, and thus, from the terms or per-

* About one-third of the parishioners are prevented from attending at the parish churches, owing to distance and other physical obstructions.

haps interpretation of the school act, the heritors are relieved from all legal claims as to accommodations; and accordingly in these respects, the teachers are wholly dependent, either on their own resources or on the liberality of the proprietors. One of the teachers is entirely unaccommodated, and thus his usefulness is in a great measure impaired. During the winter and spring months, several teachers are usually employed by the people themselves in remote localities. The schools taught by these during the last winter are included in the statement about to be submitted; but with this explanation, that they have been in operation, as is usually the case, only during the winter months, and that the salary allowed has not, as may easily be supposed, been adequate to procure the services, in every instance at least, of qualified or efficient teachers. The fluctuating and unsettled state in which the parish has, for a considerable period, been kept, while undergoing a change of proprietors, attended, as might naturally be expected, by a change of system and management, has occasioned considerable difficulty in effecting arrangements for the establishment of Assembly and other schools,—while with regret it must be here also recorded, that the advantages of education do not appear in some instances to be so highly appreciated as readily to secure the very small sacrifice, if such it can be called, which the comfortable establishment of schools requires. Three additional schools are yet required. Owing to the scattered state of the population and physical obstructions of the country, it is difficult to render schools, however numerous, available, or accessible to all localities; and, no doubt, the ambulatory system, which formed part of the well-defined arrangements of the Educational Societies of the south, may, in the present state of the country, be resorted to with the very best effects, provided its operations are placed, as has not always been the case in the instances referred to, under wise and prudent control. The people, generally speaking, seem to perceive the advantages of education, both as qualifying for the life that now is and that which is to come. The effects which increased “facilities of education” have had upon their morals and conduct, would lead to a disquisition incompatible with the limits here allowed. It is obvious, however, that to the very extent to which they are becoming a reading people, Highlanders are acquiring, along with other useful information, more defined and distinct views of the great and peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. In former times, religious knowledge was, in a great measure, commu-

nicated orally, and, notwithstanding the exertions of the Established clergy and other authorized instructors, it is not surprising that opinions handed down from father to son, among a people "reformed," it may be said, more by influence than by argument, should be tinged by many errors. These errors are now gradually disappearing, as the pure source of Bible instruction is more generally resorted to, and its blessings are fully appreciated. It is to be lamented, however, that improvement in morals does not correspond, to the extent that might be expected, with the increase of knowledge.

Number of schools in the parish,—parochial schools, 3; other schools as referred to, 4; general expense of education per month, 1s. 6d.; number betwixt six and fifteen years who can neither read nor write, 252; number of persons upwards of fifteen who can neither read nor write, 339.

The branches of education usually taught are, English and Gaelic, reading, writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping. One of the teachers is qualified to teach the higher branches. Sabbath schools are regularly taught.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—The average number of persons receiving parochial aid amounts to 45, which number has not varied very materially, for a considerable period of time. It is to be observed, however, that the circumstances of the poor are now greatly altered.

The poor were not formerly supported by a pecuniary provision. They lived under the protection of the old established families, and held accommodations and received other acts of kindness from the more comfortable class of tenantry, on whom they had other claims in addition to those of humanity. Matters are now changed. Farms are joined and thrown into large tenements. They are occupied, for the most part, by persons previously unconnected with the country, and who, however humane and well disposed, (and generally they are so,) cannot be expected to minister to the wants of the poor as was formerly done, or to retain on their tenements the same number of destitute families. Consequently, numbers who, by the former system, were prevented from becoming, are now, under the present system, necessitated to become, paupers. They congregate in villages, and, when health fails or employment ceases, they have no alternative but to apply to the session, while, from the already-mentioned and other causes, such as the non-residence of proprietors, and the removal of the te-

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nantry, the session funds are decreasing in the ratio of the increase of the demands upon them, insomuch that here, after deducting the usual charges, the session funds admit only of the almost nominal allowance of 3s. for each pauper. In this state of things, matters, it is clear, cannot long remain. Doubtless the heritors will perceive the expediency and bounden obligation of forming, by voluntary contributions, a more adequate provision for the wants of the poor, otherwise the session must adopt, as they will, though with great reluctance, the only remaining alternative from which they have hitherto, through the unduly taxed benevolence of some resident families and individuals, been enabled with difficulty to abstain. During the prevalence of destitution in 1837 and 1838, large supplies of food, &c. were here as elsewhere distributed among the needy and destitute, through the patriotic and benevolent exertions of a Christian public. That the provision thus made should tend in some degree to abate, if not to extinguish that commendable reluctance to receive eleemosynary aid, by which the people of this country were distinguished, is what might naturally be expected; but it is strange that many on this ground should question the wisdom of a measure which, though attended with partial evil, has tended so largely to alleviate human misery.

Fairs.—A fair is held in the parish twice a-year, on the days preceding the Mull summer and winter markets, for the sale of black-cattle, and the hiring of servants, and the transaction of district business.

Ale-houses.—Properly speaking, there are no inns. There are three public-houses, comparatively respectable; and there are, besides, three places of inferior description where spirits are sold.

Fuel.—The fuel in general use is turf or peats, procured at very considerable trouble and expense. Those that can afford to purchase them, have coals, which here can be procured sometimes as low as 12s. per ton, including freight.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

The contrast presented by comparing the present with the former condition of Morvern, is not of a character inviting to any lengthened detail. From the subdivision of property, the general appearance of the country is, to a certain extent, improved by increased attention, in the more cultivated parts, to a more judicious system of husbandry, the formation of planted and other enclosures; but, owing to the depopulation of some, and the over-peopling of other districts, and, among other causes, the great

augmentation of rents, a corresponding improvement, to say the least, has not taken place in the condition of the inhabitants; nor are the disadvantages under which the parish was found to labour, to any extent remedied. There are yet no roads, no adequate means of religious or moral instruction, no resident medical practitioner, no regular or steady employment for the people. The statement of these disadvantages will at once suggest remedial measures. The "sheep system," however, operates, and will probably continue to do so, as a bar to agricultural and other improvements, and thus, under existing circumstances, there is little prospect of seeing the condition of the people greatly ameliorated. The conclusion, therefore, is reluctantly but maturely come to, that every facility should be afforded to the poor in this and in other parishes similarly circumstanced, of acquiring, in other regions, the independence and comfort now unhappily denied them in their native country.

August 1843.