

PARISH OF ARROCHAR.

PRESBYTERY OF DUMBARTON, SYNOD OF GLASGOW AND AYR.

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I.—TOPOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY.

Name.—ADOPTING the statement given in the former Statistical Account, Arrochar, formerly written Arrocher and Arroquhar, “ signifies a high or hilly country; it is generally pronounced in the Gaelic language *Arrar*, which is a contraction of *ard thir*;—*ard* signifying high, and *thir* a country.” The name is very descriptive of the general appearance of the parish, which is high and mountainous, and presents very little low or arable ground.

Extent, &c.—The parish is about 15 miles in length, exclusive of the farms of Ardleish and Doune, which lie on the east side of Loch Lomond, and commencing about two miles beyond its most northern point, extend down its eastern shore five or six miles, and form the boundaries of the properties of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, Bart. and His Grace the Duke of Montrose, and also of the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. The mean breadth of the parish may be computed at 3 miles: and it contains a surface of somewhat more than 48 square miles. It is bounded on the east by Loch Lomond, the farms excepted which stretch down its eastern shore, which are bounded by the counties of Perth and Stirling; on the south, by the water of Douglass and part of the parish of Luss; on the west, by Loch Long, and part of Argyleshire; and on the north, by the parish of Strathfillan in Perthshire.

Topographical Appearances.—Its form is peculiar; towards the upper and lower ends of the parish; there is a considerable extent of mountainous country, while from Tarbet on Loch Lomond side, to Arrochar on Loch Long side, there is only a small isthmus of not more than a mile and three quarters. Ben Vorlich is the highest mountain in the parish. It is distinguished for the richness of its pasture, its rare and varied botanical productions, and rises about 3000 feet above the level of the sea. The parish is so mountainous, that there is only a small proportion of arable ground, not more than from 300 to 400 acres.

There are no caves that require any particular notice. Tradition says that there was one of considerable extent in Ben Vorlich, and another of smaller dimensions, on the farm of Stuckindroin, the scene of some tragical event.

The extent of coast along Loch Lomond on the east is nearly 14 miles, and on the west along Loch Long about 3 miles. The shores of Loch Lomond are sandy, flat, and occasionally rocky, with many most beautiful headlands. There are small bays at Cambusnaglass, Farkin, Tarbet, Inveruglass, Ardvorlich; and there are three islands in Loch Lomond, which may be considered as belonging to Arrochar.

The climate is generally mild, but variable. Frosts, though occasionally severe, are seldom of long continuance. Snow seldom lies above a few days upon the low grounds. Colds in winter and spring are sometimes general, and then they usually assume the character of influenza; inflammatory attacks were more frequent some years ago than at present. Typhus fever occurs occasionally, but has been confined almost always to one family, and never extended to more than two families in any one season, for upwards of twenty years.

Loch Lomond, the eastern boundary of the parish, is 24 miles in length, and in some places seven miles broad. From Lower Inveruglass, where the parish of Arrochar commences, up to near its northern point, it is of considerable depth. Opposite the point of Farkin, about a mile and a-half from Inveruglass, it is 66 fathoms, a little farther north 80 fathoms deep; for about a mile south of Tarbet, it is about 86 fathoms deep; but about 2 miles north from it, opposite Alt Gary, it is 100 fathoms, which probably is its greatest depth; beyond that, its depth gradually diminishes to its northern end. It is almost unnecessary to add, that the scenery of Loch Lomond is singularly bold and beautiful, and for extent, variety, and magnificence, is not perhaps equalled or surpassed by any Lake in Great Britain. Loch Long, which constitutes part of the western boundary, is from 20 to 22 miles in length, and at some parts may be about 2 miles in breadth. Its depth in the immediate neighbourhood of Arrochar may be stated from 15 to 20 fathoms. Its shores are occasionally sandy, but their general character is rocky. There are several magnificent points in Loch Long, the opening of Loch Goil, and the bold and splendid scenery towards the head of Loch Long, are objects of general attraction and admiration.

There are no rivers in the parish that require particular notice.

The water of Falloch, which rises and falls into Loch Lomond at its head,—of Inveruglass, which runs into Loch Lomond at Upper Inveruglass,—of Douglass, which enters the same at Lower Inveruglass, with the water of Linnhe that flows into the head of Loch Long,—are not remarkable for either length, depth, or breadth. There are several small but beautiful cascades in the parish.

Geology and Mineralogy.—Except where in one or two places it is traversed by a whin dike, mica slate is the only rock formation of the parish,—extending from the sea level to the summit of the highest hills; the schistose laminæ are usually in parallel layers; but the section made by the new road along Loch Lomond to the foot of Glen Falloch presents them in every variety of contortion. Nor can there be any where a better field for studying the peculiarities of this primary rock so prevalent in the mountainous regions of our country. So far as we are able to judge, there are no indications of minerals, iron excepted; and these are but few and not very distinctly marked.

Zoology.—White hares and ptarmigan are to be met with on Ben Vorlich. Several of the farms rear sheep of excellent quality. In Loch Lomond, salmon, salmon-trout, pike, perch, powans, usually called fresh-water herrings, and eels, are to be met with. In Loch Long, there are salmon, salmon-trout, cod, sethe, lythe, ling, whittings, skate, halibut, flounders, soles, with herrings in their seasons, and almost all the varieties of white fish. Muscles are found in great abundance towards the head of Loch Long, oysters but in small quantities, limpets, wilks, buckies, spout-fish; but crab-fish or partans are seldom met with, in any degree of perfection.

Caterpillars are occasionally troublesome in gardens, and several years ago they attacked, in immense numbers, and with great voracity, the oak woods; and in many places the foliage was utterly destroyed.

Botany.—On Ben Vorlich, the following are among the more interesting plants:

Statice armeria	Saxifraga stellata	Oxyria reniformis
Juncus biglumis	———— oppositifolia	Circæa alpina, vars. α and
———— triglumis	———— hypnoides, var.	β . Hook.
———— trifidus	platypetala	Lysimachia vulgaris
Luzula spicata	Hieracium alpinum	Lobelia Dortmanna
Vaccinium uliginosum	Gnaphalium supinum	Lythrum salicaria
Epilobium alsinifolium	Carex stricta	Solidago virgaurea
Draba incana	Rhodiola rosea	Hypericum Androsæmum
Saxifraga nivalis	Cnicus heterophyllus	Parnassia palustris
———— aizoides		

II.—CIVIL HISTORY.

Land-owners.—Sir James Colquhoun of Luss, Bart. is proprietor of almost the whole parish. The only other (and the *only resident* proprietor) is John M^cMurrich, Esq. of Stuckgoun, whose property, though not extensive, is one of singular beauty and value.

Parochial Registers.—There are no parochial registers of a more remote date than 1761. They are not voluminous, and have not been particularly well kept.

Within these few years a number of houses have been erected for sea-bathing quarters; for which Arrochar presents excellent opportunities.

III.—POPULATION.

The population of Arrochar in 1755 amounted to 466
 1791, 379
 1831, 334 males, 226 females.
 Total 560.

The population has, of late, increased considerably. This arises from Arrochar having been of late years divided into smaller farms, and from the number of feus that have been taken. So lately as 1817, the land was almost all in the hands of one individual.

The yearly average of births for seven years may be stated at 12, marriages 3. No register of deaths has been regularly kept.

Number of persons under 15 years of age, as nearly as can be ascertained,	147
from 15 to 30,	54
30 50,	143
50 70,	50
70 and upwards,	14

There are 105 families; 96 inhabited houses, and 6 uninhabited houses, at least for one part of the year; but three of these are usually occupied during the summer season. There are no fatuous, deaf, blind, or dumb persons in the parish.

English and Gaelic are generally understood; but while there are no individuals that cannot speak and understand English, there is a considerable number that have no acquaintance with Gaelic. Within the last forty years, Gaelic has rapidly lost ground, and will, ere long, as in other parts of Dumbartonshire, be known here only as a matter of history.

The inhabitants are shrewd, moral, and professedly religious. Poaching in game and salmon fisheries are now almost unknown.

IV.—INDUSTRY.

There are fourteen farmers. The servants are generally shepherds, though they also assist in the ordinary work about the farm, and may amount to about 16. Cottars are occasionally but not permanently employed in farming occupations. There are no

manufactures. There are 3 grocers, 7 public-houses, 5 of which are worse than useless, and ought to be abolished; but two are necessary,—the inns at Tarbet and Arrochar. There are 3 tailors, 6 shoemakers, 3 smiths, one master wright with 2 men. 23 individuals are employed in the herring-fishing.

Agriculture.—The parish consists of 31,011 English or 24,809 Scotch acres. There may be from 300 to 400 acres under constant or occasional cultivation. It does not appear that more ground could be cultivated with advantage. The number of acres under natural wood must be very considerable; but the amount has not been ascertained. The oak woods are regularly thinned, and are in good order.

Rent.—The average rent of arable ground may be stated at L. 1, 10s. per acre. The average rent of grazing is L. 2 for an ox or cow; ewe or full-grown sheep, 2s. 6d. to 3s.

Wages, &c.—Farm-servant's wages may be stated at L. 20 per annum. Labourer's wages vary from 9s. to 12s. per week; wrights and masons, 15s. and 16s. per week. The sheep are of the black-faced breed. Cattle are either reared upon the ground, or brought when young from Argyleshire.

John M'Murrich of Stuckgoun has reclaimed about 50 acres. The general duration of leases is nine years. Farm-buildings and enclosures are capable of considerable improvement. There are no mines; but there are two small whinstone quarries, formed from the whinstone dike that stretches from Loch Lomond to Loch Long.

Fisheries.—Herring fishing employs 23 hands, and is sometimes pursued with great success. Herrings are usually in Loch Long towards the beginning of June, and are in great perfection from the end of that month till the middle or end of July. When the fishing fails on Loch Long, the fishermen go to Lochfine, and follow the occupation till the end of the season, in the neighbourhood of Tarbert, and from Tarbert they go onwards to the vicinity of Campbelton. Each boat upon an average will clear from L. 30 to L. 60. There are usually three hands in an ordinary sized wherry.

Produce.—The annual thinning and felling of woods may yield about L. 300; of fisheries, L. 320. The amount of sown produce the writer has been unable to ascertain. Small quantities of kelp were manufactured some years ago; but, from not affording a remunerating price, the manufacture has been abandoned.

Navigation.—No vessels of larger size belong to the inhabitants than small fishing-boats. A steam-boat regularly plies from Glasgow to Arrochar, during the summer months, and vessels with coals and lime from Glasgow and Ireland come to Loch Long Head; and wool is frequently forwarded from this to the Liverpool market.

V.—PAROCHIAL ECONOMY.

Market-Towns.—No market-town in the parish. The nearest market-towns are Helensburgh and Dumbarton,—the one seventeen miles and a quarter, and the other twenty-two miles distant. There are two small villages or clachans.

Means of Communication.—There are a daily post, and two carriers weekly. Steam-boats ply regularly, both on Loch Lomond and Loch Long during the summer months, commencing towards the middle of May, and ceasing about the middle or end of October. There are no mail or heavy coaches. But a coach runs for about three months in summer, every lawful day, from Inverary in the morning to Tarbet, and from Tarbet in the afternoon to Inverary. Chaises, gigs, and carts can at all seasons be readily procured at Tarbet or Arrochar inns.

The roads, with the exception of two miles on Loch Long side, are excellent. The roads on Loch Lomond side are about fifteen miles in length, and present singularly beautiful and splendid scenery. Bridges, with one exception, are in good repair.

Ecclesiastical State.—The church is situated rather at a corner of the parish; but the great body of the parishioners are at no great distance; some families are at the distance, however, of ten or twelve miles. The church was built in 1733, and will soon require a general repair. It is seated for about 300. The sittings are *all free*. The manse was built in 1837, and is an excellent house. The glebe contains about nineteen acres; but, with the exception of little more than three acres, is all hill ground, and of inferior quality. It is not worth more than L. 9 annually. The stipend is L. 231, with 12 bolls meal. This also includes communion elements. The teinds are exhausted. There are no government churches, no chapels of ease, no catechists, no Dissenting chapels, and no *Dissenters* within the parish.

Divine service is exceedingly well attended. In summer, the church is generally crowded to overflowing, and is felt *then* to be much too small; and, in the winter, when the weather is favourable, it is filled. Probable average of communicants, 216. No

religious societies; but collections are occasionally made for religious purposes, which have always been liberal.

Education.—There are one parochial, one privately endowed school, and a charity sewing school, to the teacher of which the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge gives a salary of L. 4 annually. In the parochial school, the ordinary branches of education are taught. In the private, in addition to these, practical mathematics, geography, Latin, and Greek are taught. The parochial teacher enjoys the maximum salary, and also receives L. 5 or L. 6 out of the bishop's lands, Dunkeld. The school fees must for a number of years have been very small. In the parochial school, the fees are, for reading, 3s. per quarter; reading and writing, 4s.; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 5s. The teacher has the legal accommodations.

The salary of the private teacher is L. 25 annually, which is paid by John M'Murrich, Esq. of Stuckgoun, a gentleman to whom the parish of Arrochar is under no common obligations. The fees in this school are, reading, 2s. 6d.; reading and writing, 3s.; reading, writing, and arithmetic, 3s. 6d.; and Latin, 5s. per quarter. Fees may amount annually to betwixt L. 15 and L. 20.

There are no persons in the parish between the ages of six and fifteen, that cannot read and write. There are three families towards the head of the parish, whose children can neither be benefited by the parochial nor private school.

Literature.—There is a small parochial library. No Friendly Societies, and no Savings Banks.

Poor and Parochial Funds.—Nine may be stated as the average number of the poor. The largest sum given, and that to a pauper, who is perfectly helpless, is L. 15; the lowest, L. 1. Collections for the poor average for several years, L. 30. These, with interest of money, L. 6, 6s., marriage and mortcloth dues of L. 2 per annum, have always proved sufficient for the support of the poor. For repairs upon houses allotted to the poor, funeral expenses, &c. the sum of L. 48, 6s. 2½d. was distributed last year; considerably the highest sum that was ever in one year expended for the support of the poor. There have been some remarkable instances of reluctance on the part of the poor to receive parochial aid. The old church officer, who was for upwards of two years confined to bed, had the utmost horror of coming upon the *poor's-box*; and, from his salary being continued, from marriage dues, from the kindness of the benevolent, and from that disposi-

tion which was indicated by his own significant expression, "*Providence is large, and I'll no come upon the poor's box,*"—he lived and died without receiving a farthing from the session, and he had safely husbanded, for many a long day, a guinea to pay for his coffin. It is to be feared that the feeling so remarkably exhibited by him is *gradually*, if not *rapidly*, diminishing.

Inns, &c.—There are two inns, one at Tarbet, which is too well known to require any favourable notice; another at Arrochar, which has been lately built and opened, and is also under excellent management. These are necessary for the accommodation of travellers, who come from all quarters to visit the splendid and beautiful scenery of Inverary, Glencroe, Loch Long, Lochlomond, and Loch Kettwrin. There are five other public-houses, which, from the facilities they present, have a most pernicious influence, inducing and maintaining habits of intemperance. It were well for the interests of the community that these were instantly and for ever put down.

Fuel.—Coal is the common fuel,—which is usually shipped at the Broomielaw. The average price, at present, may be stated at 8s. 6d. the 12 cwt., carriage included.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

Within the last twenty years, the population has considerably increased; and if the system of feuing is continued, there is every probability that a few years only will elapse, when Arrochar will become much more extended as a watering-place than it is at present. The character of the people, during the same period, has also considerably improved. A better conducted system of education, based upon Scriptural principles, has been introduced: and the establishment of a Sabbath school, which has been in existence for upwards of twenty years, and the regular church-going habits of the people, have, it is hoped, been attended with the most beneficial consequences.

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