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SUTHERLAND, a northern maritime county of Scot­land, is bounded E. by Caithness, S.E. by Moray Firth, S. and S.W. by Ross and a part of Cromarty, and N. and W. by the Atlantic and the North Sea. The area is 1,297,846 acres, or nearly 2028 square miles. The northern and western shores are broken and irregular, in some cases deeply indented, and in the north-west, at Cape Wrath, near Durness, at Whiten Head, and farther south at the island of Handa there are ranges of wildly precipitous cliffs. Numerous islands stud the larger inlets on this coast; the only ones inhabited in 1881 were Oldney with four persons and Roan (in Kyle of Tongue) with forty-three ; Handa, which had eight inhabitants in 1871, had none in 1881. On the north coast the principal sea lochs are the Kyle of Tongue, Loch Erriboll, and the Kyle of Durness, and on the west coast Loch Inchard, Loch Laxford, the various branches of Eddrachillis Bay, and Loch Inver. The eastern shore is low and comparatively regular, the only inlets being Loch Fleet and Dornoch Firth. With the excep­tion of the narrow plain along the east coast, various stretches of low ground on the west coast, and the low grounds adjoining the rivers and inland lochs, the surface consists chiefly of a succession of irregular elevations of from 500 to over 3000 feet in height. Much of the western district adjoining the coast from Cape Wrath southwards is occupied by Archæan gneiss, forming a series of bare rounded knolls. Resting unconformably on the gneiss are deposits of grits and sandstones, generally regarded as of Cambrian age, rising into wild cliffs between Cape Wrath and the Kyle of Durness. These are succeeded unconformably by Silurian strata, specially developed in the neighbourhood of Durness and Erriboll ; in the former region they form a basin occupied chiefly by the limestone series, containing a remarkable collection of fossils, and at Erriboll, from which the strata at Durness are separated by a great dis­location, they present a remarkable series of horizontal dis­placements. Towards the east the gneiss is intermixed with granite and syenite, which cap the summits of a few of the mountains. Outliers of Old Red Sandstone also occur in this eastern mountainous region, sometimes in masses of coarse conglomerate. The highest mountain summit in Sutherland is Benmore Assynt (3273 feet), the culminating peak of a fine range of Silurian quartzites and limestone rocks lying to the south-east of Loch Assynt, while to the south-west are the picturesque conical summit of Canisp (2779 feet) and the curious Suilven (2399 feet) with its forked top. The next highest and most picturesque series of mountain groups occurs in the north-eastern region, south of the Kyle of Tongue,—Ben Hope, a rounded mass with imposing precipices rising near Loch Hope to a height of 3040 feet, while to the eastward is the picturesque Ben Loyal or Laoghal (2504 feet), formed of granite, and south from it, near Loch Naver, the great bulk of Ben Klibreck (3154 feet). Numerous other summits attain a height of over 2000 feet, but the greater proportion of the mountain­ous region consists of elevated moorlands, bleak and un­interesting, except when the heather assumes its purple tints in autumn. In the lower region along the shores of Moray Firth the Old Red Sandstone occurs resting uncon­formably on the crystalline series of rocks, and is in turn succeeded by an interesting series of Jurassic strata, which, faulted against the older formations, are exposed along the coast from Golspie to Helmsdale. In this series, at Brora,

some seams of coal have been worked, but the presence of iron pyrites greatly lessens its value. Limestone is wrought in various districts, and there are a number of quarries for building stone. Small quantities of gold have been found in some places.

Sutherland has a much greater proportion of its area occupied by water than any other large county in Scotland, the parish of Assynt being completely honeycombed with lochs and tarns. Loch Assynt, the largest of these, 10 miles in length, and narrow and irregular in outline, is entitled to rank, from its picturesque creeks and the grandeur of the adjoining mountain scenery, as the most beautiful loch in Sutherland. Loch Shin, extending 17 miles throughout nearly the whole of Lairg parish, from south-east to north-west, is towards the centre overhung by mountain masses, but otherwise is without interest to any but the angler. It is succeeded northwards by a series of lochs,—Griam, Merkland, More, Stack, Garbadmore, Garbadbeg—extending through the centre of the parish of Eddrachillis. Lochs Merkland and Griam occur, like Loch Shin, in the course of the river Shin, a tributary of the Oykel, which last forms the southern boundary of the county with Ross and falls into Dornoch Firth ; Lochs More and Stack are in the valley of the Laxford, running north-westward to Loch Laxford. The Dionard or Grudie flows northwards to the Kyle of Durness, and the Hope, after expanding into Loch Hope, about 10 miles in length, falls into Loch Erriboll. The Borgie, which in its course forms Loch Loyal and falls into Torrisdale Bay; the Naver, which flows from the loch of that name through a fertile strath to the sea at Betty- hill of Farr; the Strathy; and the Halladale are the prin­cipal other rivers flowing northwards. Those entering Moray Firth are the Oykel ; the Helmsdale, which reaches the sea at the town of that name ; the Brora, which receives various tributaries before it expands into Loch Brora, 3 miles from its entrance into the sea at Brora ; and the Fleet, flowing into Loch Fleet.

*Agriculture.—*According to the agricultural returns of 1886 only 3110 acres out of 1,347,033 were in cultivation, less than a fortieth part of the whole area. The best land is that adjoining Moray Firth, where agriculture is in a very advanced condition. Along the river valleys there are, however, many fertile patches. At the beginning of the 19th century the crofters occupied almost every cultivable spot throughout the county ; between 1811 and 1820 they were ejected from their holdings to the number of 15,000, and, according to the statement of Hugh Miller, “compressed into a wretched selvage of poverty and suffering that fringes the county on its eastern and western shores.” The homes they left were, he says, “improved into a desert”; but in the opinion of those who made the alteration these mountainous parts were as “much calculated for the maintenance of stock as they were unfit for the habitation of man.” The crofters in Sutherland are now (1887) chiefly confined to the western seaboard, the number of crofts, all on the estates of the duke of Sutherland, amounting, according to the *Report of the Crofters Commission,* to 1238, and representing a population of 6190. The general agricultural condition of the county has been much improved by successive dukes of Sutherland, aided by the liberality of the Government in the advancement of money for the construction of roads and bridges ; and within recent years large reclamations have been made, in order to obtain a wider area for the growth of fodder and turnips. The following table gives the number and acreage of various classes of holdings in 1875, 1880, and 1885 :—

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tear. | 50 acres and under. | | 50 to 100 acres. | | 100 to 300 acres. | | 300 to 500 acres. | | 500 to 1000 ac. | | Above 1000 ac. | | Total. | |
| No. | Ac. | No. | Ac. | No. | Ac, | No. | Ac. | No. | Ac. | No. | Ac. | No. | Ac. |
| 1875 2505 | | 11,994 | 29 | 2069 | 42 | 6939 | 9 | 3576 | 4 | 2212 |  |  | 25S9 | 26,790 |
| 1880 2498 | | 12,539 | 34 | 2541 | 40 | 6661 | 15 | 5730 | 5 | 26S9 |  |  | 2592 | 30,160 |
| 1885 2512 | | 13,232 | 44 | 3259 | 41 | 7399 | 14 | 5224 | 5 | 2S99 | 2 | 8050,2618 | | 40,063 |

In 1885 of the class of holdings not exceeding 50 acres in extent 68 were between 20 and 50 acres each, 661 between 5 and 20, 1764 between 2 and 5, and 19 between 1/4 and 1 acre.

Out of the 33,110 acres under tillage in 1886 there were 10,343 under corn crops, 5052 under green crops, 8861 rotation grasses,