

Minerals.—Hard whinstone prevails in this parish, yet there is frequently ironstone and granite, and in one farm abundance of limestone and marble. The qualities of the Tiry marble are now well known; it is sometimes pure white; sometimes red and white, or white and green; and sometimes variegated with numberless figures. It is to be hoped a correspondence will be continued, a market procured, and a marble work carried on.—There is also a lead mine at Croftapoll in Coll.

Animals.—The hill of Ceannharra, the west point of Tiry, is very remarkable for a great number of large natural caves, frequented, in time of hatching, by innumerable flocks of sea-fowls. The height of some of the caves 160 feet, the sea bellowing in below, and thousands of fowls, with discordant notes, crowding upon the cliffs, form a hideous scene. In other magnificent caves, the raven, the hawk, or the eagle, build their lofty nests. Separate from all these, the pigeons have chosen their habitations: Hither their enemy, at the risk of his life, descends a very unpleasant stair, carrying fire and a bundle of straw, to which he sets fire. The smoke suffocating them, they fly into the flames, attached to the light, apparently the passage to escape; thus numbers of them are caught. At the distance of 6 leagues westward from this hill, lie a cluster of unhospitable rocks, called Sceir-mhor, to which young adventurers, before sun rising in a calm summer day, go in quest of sport. The skins of the sea-calves, the old inhabitants of these rocks and seas, which they kill with clubs or bullets, commonly measure from six to eight feet in length.

Three forts of wild geese frequent these isles. About the beginning of April, they all go off to places of greater security and shelter for hatching, and return as soon as their young

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are able to accompany them. When feeding in the meadows, or fields, they are sure to keep at a distance from rocks and dykes, and have constantly a sentinel. When flying they form an angle about 45 degrees inclined. The geese in the angle leads the rest, till he changes his place, and a neighbour succeeds him. Swans also, in smaller companies with their melodious march, come as passengers upon the lakes. Many thousands of gray plovers are seen together, especially upon the reef or great plain; they observe the same season with the wild-geese in hatching elsewhere. The green plovers hatch in the island. Rails are very numerous. Moult coloured swallows inhabit the sand banks. The cuckoo is very rarely seen. Magpies, and many other birds which are upon the mainland, never appear. There are neither serpents, toads, frogs, weasels, nor venomous creatures of any kind. Rabbits are numerous, lodging in the sand in the east end of Coll; and a couple of hares introduced there, about 7 years ago, are increased to many hundreds*.

Climate,

* *Antiquities.*—There are many signs of Danish invaders having for some time possessed these isles. Among these are Fingalian and other tales repeated by the inhabitants, mentioning engagements and the names of chieftains. At this day they point out their burying-places, whence the ground derives its name. Nor are their *duns*, forts, or watch-towers, less remarkable. There are 39 remains of them in the two islands, generally built on rocks, round the whole coast, and within sight of some other. They are said to have been used, when an enemy appeared, for suddenly alarming the country by the signal of fire. There are two walls without any appearance of lime or other cement. The inner is circular, and the outer often assumes the figure of the rock on which it is founded. The whole of these isles and a considerable part of the mainland were named *Inysleibh-Gaul*, which signifies the isles or places of security for strangers.

There are 15 remains of old chapels or churches, at some of which are burying-grounds and crosses still to be seen. There

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