

STRICTURES  
AND  
REMARKS  
ON  
*THE EARL OF SELKIRK'S*  
OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
THE PRESENT STATE  
OF THE  
HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND,  
WITH A VIEW OF THE CAUSES AND PROBABLE  
CONSEQUENCES OF EMIGRATION.

---

By ROBERT BROWN, Esq.  
SHERIFF-SUBSTITUTE OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT  
OF INVERNESS-SHIRE.

---

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay :  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroy'd can never be supply'd.  
GOLDSMITH.

EDINBURGH :  
Printed by Abernethy and Walker,  
AND SOLD BY JOHN FAIRBAIRN, EDINBURGH, AND  
J. MURRAY, 32. FLEET STREET, LONDON.

---

1806.



---

## REMARKS, &c.

---

ON my arrival in Edinburgh a few days ago, a friend favoured me with a perusal of Lord SELKIRK's work, entitled, "*Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland, with a view of the Causes, and probable Consequences of Emigration.*"

Feeling an interest in the prosperity of the Highlands, where my lot is cast, I read the book with attention, and beg leave to lay before the public a few remarks upon it.

I am far from pretending to controvert any of his Lordship's theories, borrowed

A

from

from received systems of political economy, of which I do not profess to be a judge. But I am bold to maintain, that these theories are wholly inapplicable to the present state of the Highlands ; or, rather, that that state has changed so rapidly of late years, as wholly to elude their grasp.

I hope to make it evident to every candid reader, that his Lordship's knowledge of the Highlands is very superficial : that his information was chiefly derived from persons who had no partiality towards their own country ; and that his Lordship, misled by the partial examination of a district or two, made a sweeping conclusion, that all the Highlands and Isles were in the same state.

That, so far from the Highlands and Isles being overstocked with inhabitants, so as to require emigration ; these countries require the aid of new settlers to stock them properly, and to convert to profit all those sources of industry which nature presents.

That the authorities on which his Lordship founds his arguments are obsolete, and wholly inapplicable to the present  
state

state of the Highlands and Isles ; and that, in fact, no authority older than ten years is admissible.

That every industrious man may find a comfortable subsistence, for himself and family, in the Highlands and Isles : and, with respect to those who will not work, we should be obliged to the Earl of Selkirk, and others who wish to stock their estates on the other side of the Atlantic, to take them from us.

Lord Selkirk, so far as can be collected through his work, ascribes emigration, *first*, To the change from ancient to modern manners among the people ; *second*, To the rise of rents ; *third*, To the introduction of sheep, and engrossing of farms ; *fourth*, An overcharged population, which cannot find employment in their own country.—In following out his very elaborate reasonings on the subject, the facts to be adduced will enable the reader to judge how far any of these causes have produced the effects ascribed to them. It will be seen, that they are in a great measure hypothetical ; have had either no real existence, or little or no effect on emigration.

The only object I have in view, is to set the public right with regard to facts, which I state from *local* knowledge, and to leave them to draw the proper inference.

Should these observations meet with a favourable reception, they may probably be illustrated at greater length at a future opportunity. In the mean time, I shall confine my remarks principally to the nine first divisions of his Lordship's work.

But here I think it necessary to make a few observations on what his Lordship states in page 5. of the Introduction, "That he resolved to try the experiment, and at his own risk to engage some of the emigrants who were preparing to go to the United States, to change their destination, and to embark for our own colonies." In the eleventh chapter, that topic is again entered upon at greater length; and in pages 166. and 167., his Lordship quotes the names of certain settlements in America, to which the Highlanders of different districts have the greatest predilection, arising from the connection that subsists betwixt the original settlers and their relations at home. That, previous to the American war, certain colonies of Highlanders settled

ted in the provinces alluded to, may be admitted ; but that his Lordship is wholly correct in his statement, is denied.

In opposition to these representations, I beg leave to state, that, at the commencement of the American war, most of the Highlanders sided with the Royal Party, and, from the ultimate ascendancy of the Republicans, were in general deprived of their whole property in the United States, and, at the end of the war, after suffering great misery, were either obliged to return to Europe, or to remove to the British Settlements on the banks of the river St Lawrence. This they were enabled to do, by the humane interposition of the British Government in behalf of suffering Loyalists.

The bad treatment of the Loyalists by the Republicans, was resented by their countrymen at home. Of this treatment they had ample opportunities of learning from some of the emigrants who returned to the mother-country at the end of the war, and from the number of Highland soldiers who had served in America, and who were disbanded at the general peace.

It may be easily conceived, therefore,

that ever since the American war, the Highlanders, whatever predilection they had for emigrating, had none for going to the United States ; and experience has proved the fact.

The original emigrations from the Long Island, which comprehends that range of islands from the Butt of Lewis to Barrahead, had always been to those countries now forming the British Settlements. The people of Glengary, Lochaber, and most of Inverness-shire, particularly the Roman Catholics, had settled at first in Canada ; and most of the Loyalists that remained in America joined their countrymen in the British Settlements : so that, in fact, any inducement that can arise from the connection subsisting between the first settlers and their countrymen at home, operates directly towards diverting the current of emigration to the British Settlements.

Of the number of vessels that went with emigrants from the Highlands, betwixt the termination of the American and the commencement of the late war, I cannot at present speak with precision ; but I am certain, that the greater part of them were bound for the British Settlements. From  
Skve



Skye I know but of two which sailed for North Carolina, though I know of many others from the Long Island and Fort William that went to Nova Scotia, and other parts of the British Settlements. These particulars I may yet be able to ascertain; but I am enabled, by a communication made by a Gentleman of respectability in the service of the Honourable Board of Customs, and other means, to state more minutely the number and destination of the emigrant ships during the late emigrations of 1801, 1802, and 1803.

In the year 1801, a Mr George Dunoon from Pictou, carried out two cargoes of emigrants from Fort William to Pictou, consisting of about seven hundred souls \*. A vessel sailed the same season from Isle Martin, with about one hundred passengers, it is believed for the same place. No more vessels sailed that year; but, in 1802, eleven large ships sailed with emigrants to America. Of these four were

A 4 from

\* Upwards of fifty passengers died in one of these ships on her passage. I saw the ships when at Fort William: they were much crowded. When the passengers landed in America, they were shut up in a point of land, and all communication betwixt them and the rest of the country people cut off, to prevent the contagion of disease from spreading.

from Fort William, one from Knoidart, one from Isle Martin, one from Uist, one from Barra, one from Moidart, one from Greenock. Five of these were bound to Canada, four to Pictou, and one to Cape Breton. The only remaining vessel, which took in a cargo of people in Skye, sailed for Wilmington in the United States. In the year 1803, exclusive of Lord Selkirk's transports, eleven cargoes of emigrants went from the North Highlands. Of these four were from the Moray Frith, two from Ullapool, three from Stornaway, and two from Fort William. The whole of these cargoes were bound for the British Settlements, and most of them were discharged at Pictou. Since that time, several vessels have sailed from the North-west Highlands with emigrants, but the whole of them were for the British Colonies.

What must the public, therefore, think of the disinterested and laudable desire of the Earl of Selkirk, to change the current of emigration from the United States to the British Settlements? Those who are unacquainted with his Lordship's patriotism and integrity, may be disposed to impute his statements to a desire to allay the prejudices

judices of his countrymen against emigration, while he effects his object in stocking his transatlantic estate with emigrants. But I am disposed to ascribe these statements entirely to his ignorance of the decided propensity, which the Highlanders have for the British Settlements. When, out of twenty-five vessels at least, only one, or at most two, sailed with emigrants for the United States in 1801, 1802, and the early part of the year 1803, previous to the departure of Lord Selkirk; what are we to think of his claim to merit for changing the current of emigration, or of the disinterested sacrifices he has made, to *induce* the people to go to the British Settlements? In fact, his Lordship and his agents, as if they knew the predilection of the people, were more assiduous and successful in procuring emigrants in those districts which had never sent colonies to the United States, than in those which had.

I have no hesitation in saying, that, had his Lordship wished to stock a property in the United States, in place of Prince Edward's, he would have found it difficult to procure a single cargo in the North Highlands,

lands, unless, perhaps, from Skye alone. Whereas, by settling his colony in a place to which the Highlanders had the strongest predilection, he found it easy to procure the number of settlers he wanted. If his Lordship, as he says, has given great advantages to the people *to induce them* to go to the British Settlements, he must have been imposed upon, as those people, without any of the inducements held out by his Lordship, if disposed to emigrate at all, were previously determined to go to the British Settlements.

Lord Selkirk and his emigrants furnish the strongest proof of the preference, given by the Highlanders, to one colony in place of another. His Lordship's original intention was to settle his colony near the Falls of St Mary. The people of the Long Island signed his subscription papers, supposing the place near to the other British Settlements, and ignorant that the Falls of St Mary were one thousand five hundred miles from the mouth of the river St Lawrence ; but when, at the payment of the first instalment of the freight, they became acquainted with the geography of the country, they insisted on being settled  
near

near their countrymen, and Lord Selkirk's agent was obliged to acquiesce,

I shall quit this part of the subject by observing, that it would have been wiser in his Lordship to have made no claim of merit for having changed the current of emigration. He should have been entirely silent on that topic ; as what he has advanced upon it, betrays a want of inquiry, or his patriotism would not have led him to attempt what had been already done to his hand.

*I. Independence of the Highland Chieftains in former times. P. 9.*

Under this head is presented a view of the relative situation of landlord and tenant previous to the year 1745, which is admitted to bear a faint resemblance to the truth. But the general picture which his Lordship exhibits of the ancient Highlanders, has all that colouring which poets give to the golden age ; and to the modern Highlander presents an old friend with a new face.

His Lordship seems to regret the change  
that

that the Highlands have undergone, and insinuates a wish to transplant a portion of the ancient spirit to the other side of the Atlantic, which savours more of enthusiasm than of sound policy. A different and more correct view of the state of the ancient Highlanders, would evince, that, instead of the description which he has given of the comparative happiness of these people under the old system of clanship, the very reverse was the case. A people without industry ; subject to no law but that promulgated by their chiefs ; exposed to the most barbarous of punishments at their arbitrary will, to the confiscation of property, to the miseries of domestic warfare, to theft and plunder, and to all the other ills inherent in a barbarous state of society ; cannot possibly be held up as enjoying even a tolerable degree of human happiness.

It is only matter of regret, that the Highlands continued so long under the old system, after the rest of the kingdom had changed for the better ; and it may be safely said, that the suppression of the rebellions in 1715 and 1745, but particularly the latter, (although attended with  
much

much misery to many individual Highlanders of those days), were the most fortunate events that ever happened to their country. To the lower orders these events were peculiarly propitious, as they were followed by their gradual emancipation from a state little better than slavery; and, by rendering industry secure, paved the way for the acquisition of wealth. Nor are they now insensible of this great change: they contrast their present state with that of their forefathers, and draw the proper inference.

II. *Change in the Policy of the Highland Proprietors subsequent to the Rebellion 1745.*  
P. 21.

The author is correct in stating, that the present generation of proprietors are more intent on obtaining an adequate return in money for their lands, and less disposed to sacrifice their real interest, than their predecessors, whose ambition, warranted by sound policy, it was to retain a numerous body of idle adherents. What was sound policy at one time, might prove gross folly

at a subsequent period, when circumstances were completely changed.

Circumstances have occurred, which fully justify the present race of Highland proprietors for acting as they have done, in endeavouring to turn their lands to the best account, by exacting for them an adequate rent. But, if it is inferred, that this has arisen from a disposition to oppress on the part of the landlord, producing discontent and emigration on the part of the tenant, such an inference is wholly fallacious.

The Earl of Selkirk may have observed, in other parts of the kingdom, the effect of rent in stimulating the industry of the tenant; and that, in fact, the farmers in other districts have only become wealthy and independent after their lands were charged with a fair and adequate rent. He may be assured, that the same causes produce the same effects, in the Highlands, as in other districts.

The abolition of feudal services, and imposing an adequate rent on the land, has not only produced a more vigorous cultivation, but a considerable extension of the cultivated surface.

An



An assertion is made, (*p.* 24.), that some proprietors, from vanity or tenderness, still retain their people, by the sacrifice of their pecuniary interest. But, in fact, no examples have occurred in the course of my acquaintance with the Highlands, of proprietors maintaining their dependents in feudal idleness, against their own interest ; though there may be, perhaps, a solitary instance, of some small proprietor, the doubtful claimant of high ancestry, who has the vanity to affect the pomp and state of his grand ancestors. Even such vanity is not unaccompanied with some good effects. It generates a disregard of, or rather a contempt for, useful industry, and it also leads to pecuniary embarrassments, which ultimately bring the estate to the hammer.

These estates are commonly transferred to men who have made money in trade, or in the East or West Indies. Such new proprietors are well qualified to repair all the mischiefs which the ridiculous affectation of chieftainship had produced. In place of a gang of idle menials, which his exsublimity kept about his person, and of lazy and slovenly tenants, who, in place of cultivating,

cultivating, wholly neglected the land ; the new proprietor excites, and liberally rewards, useful industry ; and effecting the improvement of the estate on an enlightened and prudent plan, contributes to the permanent capital of the nation.

To save repetition, it may be proper to remark, that the change which his Lordship sometimes describes as advancing, and sometimes to be at this moment at a crisis, is already past. The change alluded to, is from the wild and disorderly state of feudal barbarism, or rather of clanship, to the security produced by the extension of the power of general government and law ; a change from idleness and rapine to peace and industry. This change, I maintain, is now effected ; and all that his Lordship says about it, in the progress of his work, convinces me, that he has formed his opinion more from books, or from tradition, than from actual inspection of the state of the Highlands.

### III. *Consequences*

III. *Consequences of this change on Population, through the prevalence of Pasturage, Sheep-farming, and engrossing of Farms.* P. 26.

It may be admitted, according to Lord Selkirk, that in the ancient state of the Highlands, the produce of the land was mostly consumed by its occupiers. But to give full effect to this observation in support of his theory, his Lordship ought to show, that the Highlands have already arrived at such a degree of improvement, as admits no farther extension of the cultivated surface; and that even the cultivated surface itself is subjected to that superior culture he describes, so that it can be managed by few hands. But so far is this from being the case, that the cultivated surface of the Highlands bears but a very small proportion to the surface that might be profitably cultivated; and, what is actually cultivated, is very far from having arrived at the refined mode alluded to by his Lordship.

His Lordship justly observes, that highly refined agriculture, that approaches to gardening, will employ a considerable population;

pulation ; and, he might have added, that agriculture in an infant and improving state, will require additional hands ; but this he has not done, choosing only to make use of that side of the argument which is suited to his own purpose.

In this part of his work, his Lordship seems to apply the conclusions deducible from one or two Highland districts, which he compares with the mountains of Cumberland and Wales, with those on the borders of Scotland and England, and the hills of Cheviot and Tweeddale, to the whole Highlands and Isles.

Some of his remarks are very just, but are utterly inapplicable, when extended beyond the districts where they originated. The mountains between Scotland and England never were so populous as at present, having been the theatre of perpetual feuds. The introduction of sheep, with the culture of green crops, has increased their population.

The mountainous Highland districts have never been populous ; for, in fact, the great mass of Highland population has always been accumulated on the sea-shores of the Mainland and Isles, or on the numerous

merous bays and lochs which intersect that country. The remaining, and lesser division of the population, in the interior of the Highlands, remote from the sea, is situated in glens and valleys, intersected by rivers, or on the margin of fresh-water lakes, which can only be considered as extensions of rivers:

There may be some truth in what his Lordship asserts, that it may be more for the interest of a landlord to consign large tracts of land to one tenant, and to dispossess the small occupier, where such land is situated in an inland country: I say this may be done in certain cases; but I could quote instances in the interior Highlands, directly in the face of his Lordship's whole argument. These cases refer to the conduct of gentlemen, who, having stocked their mountains with sheep, without dispossessing a single tenant; and, being influenced by no nonsensical ideas about clanship, invited strangers to settle upon their property; built houses for them; furnished them with seed, and with lime or marl during a limited period. These occupiers had a portion of waste land assigned them, rent free during a cer-

tain period ; after which the rent was to rise progressively during the existence of their tenures \*. Such bargains, as far as they have come to my knowledge, have uniformly proved beneficial to both the parties. While the landlord laid the foundation of progressive increase of wealth to himself or family ; the tenant also, by having the full advantage of his industry, soon emerged from poverty to comparative wealth, and thus added to the permanent capital of the nation.

Nor is the engrossing or enlarging of farms, when crops are the principal object, so hurtful to population as his Lordship seems to apprehend ; provided this engrossing have the effect of extending the cultivated surface, and of rendering the former arable lands more productive. It is true, as his Lordship justly states, useless mouths may be discarded ; but the joint operation of capital and skill, will put in motion a greater proportion of useful labourers. A man cannot drain swamps, inclose fields, remove stones and other obstructions, and substitute useful crops in place of barren heath, without employing  
more

\* *Vide* APPENDIX.

more hands than operated before. In other districts it has been found, that engrossing of farms, against which there was so much outcry, when accompanied with an increase of produce, occasioned more hands to be employed on these farms, than when they were occupied in patches by a number of small tenants. For confirmation of this fact, his Lordship is referred to the late Reverend Dr Robertson's treatise on the size of farms, published by the Board of Agriculture, and to the survey of Mid-Lothian by George Robinson, Esq.

Such districts of the Highlands, therefore, as are favourable for the production of crops by the improved mode of agriculture, as the principal object, are likely to suffer no diminution of population by the enlargement of farms. But, exclusive of sheep-farms, we shall have occasion to show, that by far the greatest proportion of that country is best adapted for farms of various, though mostly of small size.

His Lordship always talks of the numbers which the land already cultivated can sustain, and infers that the number of mouths exceeds the produce. But he

never says a word of the large tracts of land, embosomed in these mountains, which are better adapted for cultivation than the lands actually cultivated, and whose produce might sustain a much more numerous population.

The roads now making, at the joint expence of government and of the proprietors, will open a communication with many valleys now inhabited, and produce an extension of their cultivation. They will also lay open other valleys, which never have been cultivated, nor even inhabited. They will remove one grand objection of his Lordship to the farther extension of cultivation in the Highlands; because, by these roads, every disposable article may be conveyed to a very beneficial market.

These numerous tracts scattered through the Highlands, are, in general, adapted for the occupancy of small tenants, where their labour will not interfere with the sheep system on the mountains. Lest this assertion may appear gratuitous, or hypothetical, reference may be made to some of the Highland districts of Argyle, Perth, and Inverness, where it is actually reduced to practice.



practice. Want of roads is the reason why many small farmers, in such situations, keep the excessive number of horses remarked by his Lordship. Where every thing must be carried on the backs of horses, a great number are necessary to do the work on particular emergencies. But where good roads are made, a single horse and cart can carry more than all their cavalry. Thus the interior mountains may be stocked with sheep ; while a numerous race of cultivators may find employment in the valleys, and on the level ground on the sides of rivers and lakes.

The islands and sea-coast on the north-west of Scotland, exhibit a different character from the inland countries; and may, in general, be regarded as best adapted for agriculture, and the rearing of black cattle.

From tradition and history it appears, that the islands, and sea-coast of the West Highlands, were inhabited long before the internal parts of that country. The situation is well adapted for the human race ; and the Chronicle of Mann, with the fragments of ancient Scottish and Norwegian history, which have reached our times,

evinced, that, at a very early period, these countries were inhabited by a numerous and hardy race of people. The climate is by no means so unfavourable for the raising of corn crops as is commonly imagined; and both soil and climate are admirably adapted for the potatoe, and every species of green crop. The pastures are of the best quality; and the seas around are well stocked with fish.

It is a curious fact, that the population of the isles and sea-coast of the Highlands of Scotland, remained stationary during a period of at least seven hundred years, and only began to increase at a period not remote from our own times.

The apparent cause of this fact is, that, before the abolition of heritable jurisdictions, the inhabitants were involved in constant petty warfare with each other, which rendered both their lives and their property insecure. Occupied with these contests, only a very small portion of their time seems to have been devoted to the cultivation of the ground, to fishing, or to any other useful employment. Since this great revolution, however, in the political state of the Highlands, the population has  
been

been rapidly increasing, which may be ascribed to the now quiet and peaceable state of the inhabitants ; to the improvement of barren lands, and the universal use of that valuable root, the potatoe ; to the introduction of the cod and ling fishery ; and lastly, to the universal practice of inoculation, to counteract the dreadful ravages of the small-pox.

In *p.* 35. Lord Selkirk argues, that agriculture cannot be properly conducted, unless the land produces much more than is necessary to maintain those who are employed in its cultivation ; and he goes on to show, how the interest of the landlords must necessarily impel them to throw several of these small possessions into one, and to adopt measures by which superfluous mouths may be diminished.

In a champaign country, capable of being turned up by the plough, it is evident that this reasoning is perfectly conclusive. There, though no superfluous mouths may be fed, yet, we have observed, that extended cultivation will still require additional labourers. As, in such situations, the principal product must be grain, it is evident, that if much more is not raised than is necessary to feed those engaged in the cultivation

vation of the land, the landlord need not expect any rent, because there is no surplus from which it can be paid.

But the situation of the districts, now under consideration, is very different from this. It is not possible, as asserted by his Lordship, *p.* 35. "that one man constantly employed, might accomplish all the work of cultivating several of these small possessions." In fact, the only practicable mode of subjecting a number of these small possessions to one man, would be, by consigning them to a person under the denomination of tacksman, who came in place of the proprietor, and the people under him continued to cultivate their small possessions as before ; and the only difference felt by the latter, would be a more rigorous exaction of services, than when they held immediately of the proprietor. This was the mode adopted while chieftainship was the order of the day ; and, as very justly observed by his Lordship, it was intended to provide for younger sons, and other near relations of the family, who, at that time, had no other means of provision. But when such grants expire, they are now seldom renewed ;

newed ; and the policy of our Highland proprietors has lately taken a different direction ; which is to make all, even the smallest occupants, hold immediately from themselves.

That a number of such small possessions cannot yet be occupied by one active cultivator, may appear from the following statement of facts.

In the Isles, and on the north-west coast of Scotland, the cultivated fields are generally of small extent. They are bounded, and so much intermixed with rocks, rivulets, and marshes, that few of them are at present capable of being cultivated by the plough. Though there are many extensive tracts of level land, which never have been touched ; many marshes, and wet grounds, of excellent soil, which might easily be drained ; and many mosses which might be improved, and all these subjected to the plough : the assertion is not far from truth, that, in these districts, two-thirds of the lands actually cultivated, must for some time to come be wrought by the spade, in place of the plough. While the spots, selected for cultivation, are pitched upon from other views than  
the

the disposable produce arising from culture, this must continue to be the case, and the cultivator must persevere in using the spade, in place of the plough. But, from the rapid changes which have lately taken place, the liberal policy of landlords, joined to the extending knowledge and improving sagacity of tenants; the time does not seem very remote, when all the land produce necessary for the sustenance of a very numerous population, may be raised, even in these regions, by means of the plough.

It is true, that the whole, or greatest part of the corn raised on these possessions, is consumed by the cultivators themselves, and there is no overplus from which the landlord's rent can arise. But, even the commanding authority of Dr Adam Smith, will not bear out his Lordship in the conclusion he labours to establish, that it is the interest of landlords to throw a number of these small possessions into one; since their true interest, in the districts under consideration, consists in multiplying these small possessions as much as possible. While the spade continues to be the instrument of cultivation, this has been  
shown

shown to be impracticable ; and what is about to be stated will sufficiently evince its impolicy.

With this instrument a man, by means of his own personal labour, and the assistance of the other branches of his family, can rear and maintain, on a small portion of ground, a numerous offspring, though he cannot afford a surplus to pay rent. But, when it is considered how small a portion of land (which in the Highlands is far from being unproductive) is sufficient to supply the wants of a family ; and in how short a time the industrious man may execute the necessary labour in raising and cutting down his crop ; it must appear evident, that he has a considerable portion of vacant time, which he may devote to other employments, from the savings of which he may be enabled to pay the landlord a fair and adequate rent for his possession, however small. Such employment the industrious man, whose residence is near the sea-coast, may at all times have, either in the manufacture of kelp, or in prosecuting the cod and ling fishery in spring and summer, and, in most places, by applying to the herring fishery in the latter end of  
harvest.

harvest and beginning of winter. To each holding there is also annexed a portion of waste pasture, on which the tenants rear cows, and in some cases sheep. It is evident, therefore, that tenants, in such situations, have many resources, both for subsisting themselves, and paying a rent, independent of the corn produce of the land.

It is manifest, that dispossessing small occupiers, and letting large tracts to one cultivator, cannot be adopted in situations where the land is chiefly cultivated by the spade; for in such cases the land, until it undergoes a farther improvement, cannot be cropped except by the holders of small portions.

A numerous and increasing population increases the quantity of cultivated land, which would otherwise remain waste. In many parts of the North-west Highlands and Isles, the quantity of cultivated land has been doubled within the memory of many people alive, by the improvement of moss and barren ground. When an increasing population requires an addition of cultivated land, it is common for the inhabitants of farms on the coast, to take in a large tract  
of



of adjacent moss, which, being all manured with shell-sand or sea-weeds, of which there is always on these coasts an inexhaustible abundance, in the course of being cropped for two or three years, will equal in value any other part of the farm. A still more common practice is, when tenants become too numerous on the cultivated part of a farm, for one or two of them to remove to some other part on the sea-coast, and there form a new settlement. In the course of fifteen or twenty years, by the accession of new settlers, and by the early marriages of the children of the first settlers, this new colony equals in population, and value, the original farm from which it was detached. It is a fact worthy of notice, that in one parish of the Long Island, about forty years ago, the east side of the country which borders with the sea, and is there wholly moss, had only about ten families settled upon it. Instead of ten families, that tract has now a population of nine hundred souls; while the population of the other side of the parish, instead of being diminished, has increased. In other parishes of the Long Island, though the numbers cannot be so exactly

exactly ascertained, the population has increased from the same cause, and at least to an equal extent.

As the land already cultivated bears but a very small proportion to the extent which is capable of culture, it will require an increased population, and a length of time, to effect the necessary improvement. The people have no occasion to cross the Atlantic to cultivate waste lands, because they can be furnished with abundance of employment, in this way, at home.

The fisheries may be carried to a much greater extent, and employ a large addition of hands. The small holdings, and mode of culture, already established on the shores of the North-west Highlands and Isles, have laid a foundation, on which may be built a system similar to what is already established, in convenient situations, along the southern shores of the Moray Frith. There a brave and skilful race of fishermen occupy small lots of land, which they cultivate, chiefly with the spade, when fishing is impracticable. From the superior abundance of fish, and their near contiguity to every shore, there is no extravagance in predicting, that this immensely  
varied

varied and extensive line of coast, may come to be stocked with a numerous swarm of intrepid fishermen, who will enrich themselves and their country, and add unconquerable strength to the bulwarks of the nation. But, as this subject may be reconsidered, it is only necessary to state; that, notwithstanding some hints to the contrary, thrown out by his Lordship in the progress of his work, no person experimentally acquainted with these seas ever doubted, that the quantities of fish that may be taken are utterly unlimited. The kelp manufacture also, may be highly improved; and even on the present system of management, its quantity may be greatly increased, and would employ a proportional addition of hands.

I have thus described extensive tracts of country, where the whole or greatest part of the arable produce, contrary to Dr Adam Smith's opinion, is consumed by the cultivators; yet, contrary to his Lordship's opinion, so far is it from being the interest of proprietors to turn off these small occupants, and to enlarge the farms, in order to get a greater rent, that they could get

C

but

but a trifling rent indeed, without these small tenants.

The progress of industry, and of population, may come to effect a separation between farming and other occupations ; but at present neither can be carried on by the tenantry, to advantage, without the other.

Sheep-farming shall be considered afterwards. It is now only necessary to state, that the whole of his Lordship's reasoning, on this subject, is purely hypothetical, without being applicable to the condition and circumstances of the Highlands ; that engrossing of farms, where it can be of advantage to the proprietor, instead of being hostile, is favourable to population ; and that the greatest part of the Highlands and Isles does not admit of this engrossing. His conclusion, therefore, that it is the interest of landlords to turn off their small tenants, falls to the ground.

#### IV. *Situation*

IV. *Situation and Circumstances of the Old Tenantry : choice of Resources when dispossessed of their Farms : Emigration preferred ; for what Reasons ; limited in Extent.*

The Author having, in the preceding sections, erroneously, as we have endeavoured to show, represented the change of manners, the rise of rents, the engrossing of farms, and sheep-farming, as the means by which the people were thrown out of employment, and deprived of subsistence ; he comes now to represent emigration as the most eligible mode of obviating these evils, or rather following as a necessary consequence.

The change from barbarous to more civilized manners, has been already considered, and has been shown to be highly beneficial to the people, and therefore could not form any reasonable motive for emigration. The rise of rents and engrossing of farms, have been also considered ; and what has been said on these heads need not be repeated.

We come now to consider the introduction of sheep-farming as a cause of emigration; and hope to make it evident, by undoubted facts, that other causes must be found for emigration, than sheep-farming, or any other assigned by his Lordship.

It is certain, that in the North Highlands at least, emigration commenced before sheep-farming was introduced. It began some time previous to the commencement of the American war, on the estates of Lord Macdonald, Clanranald, and Glengary. On the first of these it originated in a general combination among the tacksmen, to obstruct certain measures which Lord Macdonald considered advantageous for himself, and the body of his people. On the second, it was occasioned by certain ill-timed quarrels betwixt the Protestants and Catholics, on religious topics, which showed more of zeal than Christian charity, on the part of the former. On Glengary's estate, it was caused by several of the cadets of his family, attempting to outwit each other in securing beneficial leases of the best parts of that property.

At that early period, the tacksmen had considerable influence over their subtenants  
and



their inhabitants, to an extent which would have required some generations to replace,

Many of the Highland emigrants, particularly from Skye, adhered to the royal cause, and suffered severely from the ultimate ascendancy of the Republicans. The settlers in Quebec, Montreal, and other colonies on the river of St Lawrence, though their country did not fall under the dominion of the United States, yet suffered severely in the conflict.

To these causes, therefore, and to the panic struck by the convulsions in America, may be attributed the almost total suspension of the rage for emigration for many years.

To those unacquainted with the real state of the Highlands, and who are perpetually stunned with the hue and cry against high rents and sheep-farming, it may appear somewhat surprising when they are informed, that of the number of emigrants who have gone to America from the country which lies to the north and west of the tract of the Caledonian Canal, a great part of them have emigrated from districts which are not yet, nor are ever likely to be, subjected to the system of sheep-farming.



ing. From Argyleshire, where sheep-farming was first introduced, fewer emigrations have taken place, than from other districts where this system had not been adopted. If facts, therefore, are to be of any use in settling our opinions on matters of this sort, we must reject all arguments as fallacious, which ascribe emigration to sheep-farming. In fact, emigration originated, in the North Highlands, from the causes which have been assigned.

The late flame of emigration first began to be kindled along the tract of the Caledonian Canal, by certain religious itinerants, who addressed the people by interpreters, and distributed numerous pamphlets, calculated, as they said, to excite a serious soul concern. The consequence was, that men who could not read began to preach, and to inflame the people against their lawful pastors, whom they never had suspected of misleading them. They next adopted a notion, that all who were superior to them in wealth or rank, were oppressors, whom they would enjoy the consolation of seeing damned. Lastly, many of them took into their heads, that all labour, not necessary for the support of ex-

istence, was sinful. When the fumes of discontent had thus been prepared, through the medium of fanaticism, to which, it is known, the Highlanders are strongly attached; at last those levelling principles, which had long been fermenting in the south, made their way among them, and excited an ardent desire of going to a country, where they supposed all men were equal, and fondly flattered themselves they might live without labour. This spirit, fostered and nursed by the emigrant agents, men who carried on a regular and profitable traffic by transporting their countrymen, was not long confined to one district, but soon found its way over the whole Highlands and Isles. To these, and not to the causes assigned by the Earl of Selkirk, I am disposed to ascribe the origin, progress, and late violent eruption of the rage of emigration; a rage, which, if various causes had not contributed to counteract, again threatened to depopulate the Highlands.

Lord Selkirk continues, under Head 4., to argue, that the farming of large sheepwalks, and the throwing of several possessions into one, for the purpose of agriculture

ture and rearing black cattle, must have the effect in general of turning great numbers adrift, who cannot apply themselves to any other employment than that to which they were formerly accustomed.

It may be granted, that, in times past, several proprietors, blind to their true interest, were too ready to join with their hill or sheep pasture, low ground capable of maintaining a numerous population. But the case is now very different. Crofting of the low grounds has been found so profitable to proprietors, that no sooner is the current lease of a sheep-farm expired, than a survey is made by professional men, who lay out into lots of considerable extent the whole low cultivated grounds, or such grounds as are judged fit subjects for culture. These are inclosed, and are afterwards, with some muir-pasture, let to tenants on a lease of from nine to thirty years. The first year the tenant pays, perhaps, a rent of 5 s. *per* acre ; the second, 7 s. 6 d. ; and so on, until the rent may amount to 20 s. or 30 s. *per* acre. By these means, the burden is light, while he is building his houses, and improving his lands ; but, towards the end of the lease,  
when

when the subject becomes more productive, his rent increases with his ability to pay. In the lease, the mode is sometimes expressed by which the tenant is to cultivate his lands ; and the size and dimensions of the dwelling-house are also pointed out. If this be executed according to the plan, the tenant is entitled to a premium in money from the landlord when the house is finished, or to remuneration at the end of his lease. As sheep always prefer upland pasture, and never descend to the low ground except during storms of snow, it has been found by experience, that where low cultivated grounds had been incautiously subjected to sheep, they have run wild, and are covered with heath or brushwood, and yield very little assistance to the sheep. It is hence the interest of the proprietor to restore them to a rotation of cropping, by the crofting system. It is also the interest of the sheep-farmer ; for cultivated land, besides supporting its own stock, can afford a much greater supply in hay, turnips, or other green food, for his sheep, during a hard winter, than they could derive from the  
same

same land in a wild and uncultivated state.

This practice, which only commenced in the North Highlands about ten or twelve years ago, is now becoming universal. It is constantly observed in the letting of farms not formerly under sheep, and in re-letting those formerly under that stock.

The cutting off of a low tract of arable land, or a flat of dead moss, seldom or never interferes with the value of the sheep-farm, from which it has been detached; while it creates almost a new estate to the landlord, and consequently a vast increase of revenue.

The situation of the tenant is also greatly bettered. Instead of a listless being, sleeping in the fields in summer, wrapped in his plaid, and fed on the simple fare of milk or whey, and not unfrequently subsisting on the blood of live cattle; instead of dozing in winter in a miserable smoky hut, pervious to the inclemency of the elements, and feeding on flesh often little better than carrion, and at all seasons threatened with starvation; he is now active, industrious, and in all respects another being. He enjoys a comfortable house, built with  
stone

stone and lime, and has the luxury of glass in his windows. The labour of his hands, during a few months of the year, insures a sufficiency of produce to maintain himself and family. The sale of cattle, of which he may rear and dispose a few annually, and the wages he may earn while he is not employed upon his farm, provide a fund for paying the landlord's rent; for providing the extra conveniencies of life, or even, perhaps, for accumulating into a small capital.

The current wages usually paid to labourers, are now nearly equal to those paid to the same description of men in the south country. Even in the most remote of the Western Isles, the current wages of a labourer are 1s. 6d. *per* day.

It is a curious fact, that scarcely an instance has occurred, where a crofter, *i. e.* a person who holds a distinct lot of land, has shewn the smallest disposition to emigrate. This clearly shews this mode of occupancy to be suitable to the genius and circumstances of the people; and were it universally adopted, in all proper situations, it might become an abundant source of population.

It

It is to be observed, in regard to those tracts in the North-west Highlands and Isles, held by tacksmen, though not stocked with sheep, nor calculated for that stock, that most of them are approaching rapidly to a different system of management. In many districts, the tacksmen's farms are falling fast into the hands of small tenants, who, instead of being cottars, or subtenants, as formerly, now hold directly of the proprietor. The proprietors of most of the estates on the Long Island, and other islands, have greatly ameliorated the situation of their people, by this mode of management, while, at the same time, they have much increased their incomes.

Lord Selkirk seems to lay particular stress on the statistical account given by the minister of Harris, regarding the state of possession in that country. It is therefore necessary to offer a few explanatory remarks respecting that parish.

A few years ago, Mr Hume of Harris, on his return from India, visited his estate for the first time after his accession to it. The estate was then, with the exception of twenty-three small tenants, wholly held in lease by tacksmen. The whole income  
amounted

amounted only to L. 895 *per annui*; and so little prospect had he of augmenting his rent-roll, that he resolved on a sale of the whole property at a very moderate price.

On farther consideration, it occurred, that his estate might be of greater value than he was, at first, inclined to believe. He saw a numerous body of tacksmen, who occupied only small shares of their farms, living in affluence and splendour, and amassing considerable wealth, on the labours of the subtenants and cottars. It occurred to him, that by letting the farms to the subtenants and cottars themselves, he might relieve his people from many vexatious burdens, and pocket the profits, formerly intercepted by the tacksmen. This resolution was no sooner formed than executed. He let all his arable farms to small tenants, at specified money rents, and abolished all kinds of services or duties.

The first year he received about one hundred and eighty new tenants upon his list, and raised the rent to L. 3500. The next year, some new openings occurring, he received about fifty additional tenants, some of them from other estates, and was thereby enabled to raise the rent to up-  
wards



wards of L. 4000 *per annum*. A considerable part of his estate is yet under lease; and it is likely, as the leases expire, that the remainder is destined to undergo a similar change; and that his income will be very much increased by the change.

On Clanranald's estate of Uist and Benbecula, a similar change has been lately effected; and most of the lands are held by small tenants directly from the proprietor. These pay a specified money-rent, and are subjected to no services, or burdens of any description, except the making of kelp; for which they receive a high rate *per ton*. This change has enabled Clanranald, not only to augment his rent-roll, but also nearly to double the quantity of kelp manufactured upon his estate, which is made solely on his account.

The estates of Boisdale, Barra, and the still more extensive estate of North Uist, belonging to Lord Macdonald, are mostly rented by small tenants, and, by the judicious management of these proprietors, yield very great revenues, considering their extent. The Island of Lewis, Lord Seaforth's property, with the exception of some hill-pasture let to shepherds, is most-  
ly

ly occupied by small tenants. The system of crofting having been already adopted with success on small tenant farms, is likely to be pursued in these districts, until each tenant shall have a separate division to himself.

The extent of these crofts is often considerable, and equal to the ordinary farms in many of the lowland counties; and should the possessors exert the necessary degree of labour and address in bringing them under cultivation, they may in time become farms of no inconsiderable value, and raise the rank of their holders, from the situation of crofters, to that of respectable farmers.

Here, however, it may be proper to remark, that extensive properties ought not to be without a few tacksmen of respectability, although they should not be adapted for sheep-farming. All great estates contain tracts calculated for rearing numerous herds of black cattle, and where an improved system of agriculture may be introduced with success. Such tracts should be let to people of education and capital, who, besides answering other good purposes,

ses, form a link in the chain of gradation from the landlord to the cottars.

In general, the greater part of the islands on the west coast of Scotland, can only be advantageously managed under small tenants ; and it is not likely the proprietors will be induced to turn away their people, and to sacrifice at least one-third of their rents, merely because the Earl of Selkirk has chosen to assert that it is their interest to do so.

*V. Political Effects of Emigration. Highlands hitherto a nursery of Soldiers, &c. P. 60.*

Under this head Lord Selkirk remarks, “ That, independently of depopulation, that nursery of soldiers, which has hitherto been found in the Highlands, cannot continue.”

It is very true, that the old system of recruiting cannot now be followed in the Highlands, any more than in other parts of the country ; and it is highly proper that that practice should be discontinued. Formerly, when a proprietor wanted to raise a certain number of men, he had only

D

to

to send round his ground-officer, or bailiff, and collect all the young men on his estate. A list of those who were supposed fit for the purpose was made up, and, in a few days, they were sent to the head-quarters of the regiment.

Lord Selkirk does not seem to be aware, that the recruiting service is every where on a different footing from what it was formerly. The introduction of a militia into Scotland, the system of volunteering, the army of reserve, and that of defence, besides the demand on the younger part of the community to fill up the vacancies which war, sickness, and other casualties occasion in our armies, have produced a great change in the quality and organization of our forces. These levies being enforced by law, the Highlands, while their population continues, must contribute their share, and actually have contributed with other parts of the kingdom. And will Lord Selkirk be bold enough to assert, that the Highlanders, now an industrious and moral race, are worse soldiers than their fathers, because they are less barbarous? They are now better clothed and fed than formerly, and, of course, are abler bodied men. In the militia all the requisites

sites concur, to which his Lordship ascribes the excellence of the old Highland regiments. They have their countrymen for companions ; are officered by their natural superiors ; and are in every respect equal, if not superior, to the old regiments, which his Lordship praises so highly.

Even recruiting in the Highlands, by a popular character, and by men of influence, is still attended with some success ; and a Sergeant *Kite* can yet find opportunities of exerting his oratorical talents to advantage, and of increasing his followers.

The enthusiastic spirit of clanship, to which his Lordship ascribes the excellence of the old Highland regiments, might produce powerful effects, when success in fighting depended more on individual skill and intrepidity, than it does now. It is well known, that success now depends on exact obedience on the part of the men, on scientific tactics, and inventive genius, on the part of their leaders. It is probable, that the habits of familiarity between the men and their officers, prevented the old regiments from acquiring that exactness of discipline, which is necessary for success. Accordingly, they never were superior

to other regiments in regular battle, and they shone chiefly in daring and desperate enterprises, where they came into close contact with their enemy, where individual skill and valour were of more use than regular order, and where the matter was decided by their claymores. His Lordship need not fear, that as long as men continue in the Highlands, soldiers will be found; nor are they likely to be the worse for the substituting of regular discipline instead of wild desperation. Nor is the prediction, which seems calculated to rejoice the heart of Bonaparte, "That the Highlands will be stocked by a few shepherds and their dogs \*," likely to be so soon realized as his Lordship expects. On the contrary, by the extension of agriculture and fisheries, they will continue to be stocked by a brave and hardy race of men, who are both able and willing to defend their country, by sea, as well as by land.

This is now an armed nation; and, under the divine blessing, an armed nation, if led by men of vigour and ability, cordially united among themselves, and determined to risk all for the safety of all, cannot

\* See p. 30. of Lord Selkirk's Book.

not be subverted. In such a crisis, whatever credit may be due to the philanthropy of those who preach emigration, certainly none is due to their wisdom or policy. Is Lord Selkirk so blind as not to see, that, if this nation be subverted, his colonies must fall under the all-grasping domination of Bonaparte? Removing the people will enable him to subdue them in detail; whereas, keeping them at home will oblige him to encounter them in mass. Even the American States, owe to the majesty of the British Navy, the prolongation of their existence. It is well known Bonaparte took Louisiana from Spain, in order to make it a depôt, from which he might reduce the Americans to be his vassals and tributaries, and might extirpate every thing that bore the semblance of liberty from the new continent, as he has done from the old.

Were an attempt made to instigate and encourage a great part of the active population, to abandon the Highlands, by some unfortunate merchant, who had been ruined in trade; by a farmer, who had been turned out of an extensive farm, through the pique of a landlord or his factor; or

by some reduced fencible officer, at the end of a war, who could obtain no employment, unless he descended to the rank of a labourer :—I say, by such a description of men, the promoting and carrying on the emigrating trade for their bread, might admit of an excuse.

But what are we to think of one, who has a great stake in this country ; who has never experienced adversity nor detraction ; whose genius and talents are universally admired, at such a crisis as the present, becoming the advocate for emigration ?

*VI. Emigrations of the Highlanders intimately connected with the progress of National Prosperity: not detrimental to Manufactures nor Agriculture. P. 75.*

It has already been demonstrated, that there is no reason for emigration, on account of the measures that have been adopted to increase the productiveness of the arable lands. It remains to be shown, that laying the mountains under sheep, does not afford any strong motive for emigration.

The



The only animals which pastured these mountains, (formerly covered with wood), were deer, roes, goats ; and these were objects of sport, rather than of profit. Black cattle seldom ascended them ; or, if they did, ran the risk of breaking their bones, but could not find subsistence upon them. The pursuit of game rather obstructed than promoted agricultural pursuits, as it furnished a casual subsistence, which rendered the produce of the earth less necessary. It also afforded an excuse for a more agreeable species of labour than wielding the spade, or holding the plough.

The depriving the small tenantry of the use of these mountains, ought not to have increased, in any considerable degree, their disposition to emigrate. The mountains of the Highlands are now almost wholly applied to the purpose for which they seem best calculated, and are likely to continue under their present system to a period very remote. They must necessarily yield the greatest revenue from sheep-farming, which is already arrived at its greatest extension, if we except a few dreary districts in Ross and Sutherland, where few marks of the cultivating hand

of man can be discerned. In corroboration of what is said as to the sheep system having arrived at its utmost extension, it is a fact, that, while certain parts of the country were stocking with sheep for the first time ; the price of lambs in the Highlands was as high as 10 s. 6 d., and even 12 s. a-head, while the price of a wedder did not exceed 20 s. No new tracts were laid under sheep in the Highlands in 1804 and 1805 ; and the consequence is, that lambs, for want of the former demand, sold for these two seasons at from 5 s. to 6 s. a-piece, while the wedder rose as high as 24 s.

In spite of all his Lordship's arguments, the population of the Highlands has no chance of decreasing. It has lately increased with astonishing rapidity ; and, in proportion as habits of industry acquire confirmation, the objects of pursuit are multiplied and varied, the increase of population must advance in a higher ratio.

Nor can it be supposed, as argued by his Lordship, that an increased population will diminish the disposable produce of the Highlands. Highland produce, such as black cattle, sheep and wool, have now a  
sure

sure and permanent market. A Highlander cannot now enjoy the luxury of flesh meat, and warm clothing, unless he create, by his industry, something which he can exchange for them, at their market price. He is in a very different situation from his ancestors, who could procure these luxuries by the chase, or for nothing. Hence the situation of the modern Highlander necessarily impels him to industry : and the effect of his industry must be to multiply, instead of diminishing, the disposable products of the Highlands.

In *p.* 78. Lord Selkirk argues, that emigration from the Highlands, by diminishing the numbers of the people, and the consumption of provisions there, will leave a greater disposable produce, to feed and increase the population of the manufacturing towns. “ The effect of the change would only be, to transfer the seat of population from the remote valleys of the Highlands, to the towns and valleys of the south, without any absolute difference of numbers.”

The general assumption is perfectly just, that the disposable produce of the Highlands promotes the population of other districts ;

districts; but that this produce would be increased by diminishing the numbers of the Highlanders, is not only erroneous, but contrary to fact. Notwithstanding the cry that has been raised against stocking the mountains with sheep, it is a fact, that, since that event took place, the black cattle exported from the Highlands have constantly increased, both in numbers and value; and they are now superior, in both these respects, to what they were at any former period. In proof of what is here asserted, reference is made to the registers of customs levied on cattle, at the markets of Falkirk, Down and Dunbarton.

It is not meant to ascribe this fact to the introduction of sheep, though the sheep certainly contributed their share in producing the effect. When the cattle toiled for a miserable subsistence on the mountains, they never got beyond the condition of bare skeletons; and in winter many died. Since they were confined to lower grounds, and situations adapted for them, the progress of agriculture has provided straw, hay, and green food, the cultivation of which is rapidly advancing, for them in winter and spring. From the luxuriance  
of

of the herbage, the districts adapted for cattle, might maintain a very great stock during summer ; but they cannot be subsisted in winter without the labours of husbandry. Husbandry cannot be carried on without people ; and, were the people removed, or diminished in number, the amount of black cattle exported must suffer a proportional diminution. On the contrary, as the numbers of the people increase, and they will necessarily increase by the improvement and extension of agriculture, the amount of cattle exported must increase in proportion. His Lordship uniformly admits, that the tending of cattle affords more employment than the management of sheep. But the combination of pasturage with agriculture, from which this increase of cattle has resulted, must continue to employ an increased population. Thus his Lordship's conclusions are not only in diametrical opposition to facts, but even to his own premises.

The frequent burning of the stunted wood, coarse grass, heath and other shrubs, with which the mountains were covered, has, in many cases, rendered the same extent of pasture capable of maintaining  
double

double the number of sheep it could do when that stock was first introduced. Hence the introduction of sheep, without diminishing cattle, has created an entirely new fund of disposable produce, which is perpetually increasing ; so that the value of Highland estates is likely to rise to an amount far beyond what their owners yet dream of. This cannot be effected in the way proposed by his Lordship, by removing the people ; but by encouraging them to become industrious at home.

Towards the conclusion of this section, his Lordship states, That the Highland proprietors used all their influence, and even applied to Parliament for legislative interference, to prevent their people from leaving them. Now, I boldly aver, that this statement is in direct opposition to fact. The Highland proprietors used no influence : they did not apply for any legislative interference : they left the people to the freedom of their own will ; and the only interference they showed, was a disposition to provide settlements, on their property, for persons who seemed qualified to promote their mutual advantage.

## VII. *Means*

VII. *Means that have been proposed for preserving the Population of the Highlands: Improvement of Waste Lands, &c. P. 91.*

The great national utility of improving waste lands, is admitted by all who have thought on the subject. Without improvement, what are now the most fruitful parts of the country would have been a desert. All the arguments brought by his Lordship, to show that waste lands cannot be advantageously improved by the Highlanders, in their own country, apply with additional force against their improving waste lands in the colonies. It is certain, that an acre can be brought into cultivation at much less expence in the Highlands than in America, and, when in good order, is of far greater value than the same extent in the colonies. Much yet remains to be done in the Highlands; and if the people cannot be profitably employed in reclaiming waste lands in their own country, why remove them to a situation where they must reclaim waste lands or starve, and must contend with many obstacles

stacles that do not occur in their own country?

His Lordship frequently talks of the habits and prejudices of the Highlanders, and their incapacity for other labour besides the cultivation of land. But I will venture to assert, that a Hebridian, who never saw a tree in his own country, when plunged into the abyss of an impenetrable forest, must feel a greater violence done to his habits and prejudices, than if he were set to work in a cotton-mill, or even to be made a weaver of gauze. He must cut down and remove these trees, before he can turn over the soil; whereas, in his own country, he has only to turn over the soil, apply manures, and sow his seed; operations of much less difficulty than those he must encounter in the colonies. In the colonies, the land is always most fertile at the first breaking up, but soon degenerates into a *caput mortuum*; but at home, by the repetition of manures, the land increases in fertility the longer it is cultivated.

In p. 92. it is insinuated, That waste lands cannot be advantageously brought into cultivation in the Highlands; and this opinion  
is



is strengthened by a note from the survey of the northern counties respecting the Black Isle, or the extensive district situated between the Friths of Beaulieu and Cromarty. But the writer of that note, though he saw a fact, did not see a reason for it. No limestone, or marl of any kind, have yet been discovered in that district. A gentleman of property and enterprise in that district, who attempted to extend cultivation, found that bringing lime from Sunderland, with a distant inland carriage, made its cost exceed its value. Having no other manure but the dung of his cattle, which is hardly sufficient to keep up the fertility of the lands already cultivated, he found, that diverting a portion of this to the waste, was only robbing the land already in culture, went not far in improving the new ground, and produced inferior returns from a more extensive surface. But, in the Highlands in general, and particularly on the west coast, limestone, clay, and shell marl, are found in great abundance. Along the sea-shores, shell-sand, and sea-weeds may be got in any quantity. In favourable situations, it can be demonstrated, that waste land may be brought into cultivation

tion at much less expence, and may be made to yield more valuable returns, than in America \*.

Of the plans adopted by different proprietors for carrying on the improvement of barren lands, Lord Selkirk seems totally ignorant. He fixes on an individual instance, and rashly extends from it a sweeping conclusion to the whole Highlands. We have already shown, that the slow progress made in improving the extensive tract

\* That bringing land into cultivation, and continuing its culture, requires far more severe labour and expence, while the returns are of far inferior value in America, to what they are from well managed land in the Highlands, appears evident from Parkinson's Tour in America.

If that gentleman, being a returned emigrant, be suspected of exaggeration, reference is made to the printed proposals, long ago circulated in this country, by the late illustrious Washington. That gentleman was reckoned the best farmer in America; yet he offered to let his land in farms, with the slaves, live-stock, and implements upon it, for a rent so very low *per* acre, that even a Highland laird would think himself mocked were he to receive such an offer for his cultivated land, from a man who furnished all the stock and implements himself. Low as his terms were, it does not appear he ever prevailed on a single farmer to take a lease of his land. In America, the labour of clearing land of wood is immense. The returns are tolerable for a few years, after which the land becomes good for nothing, and the settler is obliged to proceed in the clearing of new land. Thus, after a life of severe and incessant toil, he commonly dies as poor as when he began.

tract called the Black Isle, was owing entirely to scarcity of manure. The Caledonian Canal, and the roads now constructing, will facilitate the conveyance of calcareous manures from districts where they abound, to places where they are wanted, and will forward the improvement of the Black Isle itself. But to hold up one or two solitary examples as the general practice, is only calculated to mislead.

To enumerate the various modes of improving waste lands, which have been adopted by different proprietors in the Highlands, would occupy a volume. Suffice it to say, that each adopts the plan he thinks most conducive to his interest; and, in general, their plans are attended with an adequate degree of success.

The facts which have been stated, render it obvious, that it is the true interest of the proprietors of the north-west coast and isles, not only to retain the original population, but to encourage its increase. By doing so, instead of stony fields, glens full of brushwood, and bogs, and barren tracts of moss, they will have cultivated fields and green pastures. Their country will acquire a hardy race of people, fit for

the ordinary avocations of rural life, and who will contribute their share towards supplying the army, and navy, with useful soldiers and sailors.

Though the Earl of Selkirk's patriotism be entitled to much praise, in wishing to divert emigrants from the American States to our own settlements; yet surely his Lordship will not go the length of asserting, that a man in Nova Scotia or Prince Edward's, is as valuable to his country as a man in North Britain. Foreign settlements may be wrested from us, and the inhabitants may become our enemies. But though matters should not come to that extreme, a man in Britain, in these perilous times, can assist in the defence or aggrandisement of his country, to which a colonist cannot contribute.

As to the fisheries, it is asserted, that the holding of lands is incompatible with the occupation of a fisherman. This subject is treated with great want of information. To support his argument, his Lordship quotes a paper given in to the Highland Society, by Mr Melville of Ullapool. To all his arguments I shall only oppose a few facts, concerning the actual state of the fisheries.

fisheries. The cod and ling fishery is carried on all along the sea-coast of the Long Island, from the Butt of the Lewis to Barra-head, but most successfully towards the extremes of that range ; also around the island of Sky, the islands of Canna, Muck, Tyre, Coll, Mull ; and, in general, all along the coast of the Mainland, from the Point of Ardnamurchan to Cape Wrath. The boats employed are generally commissioned from Peterhead, or are built at home on the same construction. The price of these boats, with sails, masts, oars, &c. is generally from £. 15 to £. 16 each ; and a proper set of lines and hooks for each boat, will cost from £. 12 to £. 14. The usual fishing banks lie along the coast, at the distance of from one to four miles from the land. In the month of February, the fishermen of each district meet to arrange the business of the season. At these meetings, they enact their by-laws and regulations, divide themselves into companies of five persons, being the complement of men to a fishing boat, which is usually the joint property of the concern, and ballot for the different stations on the fishing banks, which each boat is to occupy for the sea-

son. They then commence the fishing, which generally lasts until the month of July. At that time the quality of the fish becoming worse, and the shoals leaving the banks for other parts of the sea, the fishermen conclude for the season. It is no uncommon thing for a successful boat to have caught, in this time, from sixteen to eighteen hundred fish. These fish are sometimes sold to merchants in the country, who keep salt stores, and other necessities for the fishermen. But, in many instances, and, in particular, the inhabitants of Barra and Uist, carry the fish in their own boats to the Greenock or Glasgow markets. During the harvest and tempestuous months of winter, it can easily be conceived, that the fishermen must relinquish their fishings in the open seas, and apply themselves to some other occupation. Farming a small piece of land is therefore a great object to a fisherman. On it he raises as much potatoes and corn as will maintain (with the assistance of the refuse of his summer's fishings, or what he may occasionally kill in moderate weather during winter) himself and a numerous family. Add to this the milk of two or three cows, which

which are maintained on his division of land, and his situation will be found not only comfortable, but enviable, when compared with that of a peasant in many parts of Scotland. During the harvest, as may naturally be supposed, the fisherman is employed in securing the crop; and when winter approaches, he, with the other members of his family, collects sea-weed, shell-sand, and other manure; prepares and turns up his ground, intended for crop, and leaves it to be sown by his wife or other members of his family, while he again renews, in spring, his usual occupation.

Without a land holding, the fisherman could not carry on his business. In a situation where every one rears *only* what is necessary for himself, he could not find a market at which to purchase either corn, potatoes, or even a drop of milk. Even if there were an opportunity of purchasing these articles, before one half of the year was over, the savings of his summer's fishing would be exhausted, and he and his family would be left to starve during the other half. Or, suppose farther, that the fishing should fail for a season, what is to become of the fisherman without

lands or any other employment? He must be ruined.

The landlord has an interest in encouraging fishing, because a fisherman can pay a higher rent for a piece of ground, than a man who should occupy it without following that employment. To the latter it produces no more than to the former; while, on the other hand, the fisherman can afford to add to the original value of the lands, a part of the profit arising from the produce of a neighbouring fishing bank.

Experience has always shown, in every instance in which it has been tried, that the establishment of villages will not at present succeed; and the reason is obvious. A settler in one of them cannot be accommodated with lands, and without this he will never adventure in the fishing business.

A village was some years ago established at Stein in Skye, and attempts were made to settle fishers there, but without success. The late General Macleod sold a number of lots of his estate in that vicinity. The highest brought him about £. 8000, and the lowest £. 2000. These lots were  
purchased



purchased by intelligent men of moderate fortunes. They foresaw, that, although the British Society were likely to fail in establishing a fishing in one of the most favourable situations in the Highlands, they might profit by their errors. Accordingly, on their entering into possession of the lots, which took place at Whitsunday 1800, they removed the tacksmen, who held the lands, at what was to them a high rent, and let it to such as they found willing to adventure in the fishing. To the surprise of many, they obtained from a numerous body of tenantry, a rent by which their properties yielded a return of six to seven *per cent.* of the purchase money. These tenants have applied themselves successfully to the fishing, and will, when the current leases expire, give a considerable augmentation.

As a farther illustration of what was said concerning the crofting system, and the necessary connection of agriculture with the fisheries, it may be stated, that Mr Macdonald of Staffa, according to my information, has reduced completely into practice this system of subdividing, and portioning out into lots, a considerable part

of his estate in the islands of Mull and Ulva. He has been so successful, that, in the short space of five years, he has not only doubled the value of that part of his property, and rendered the situation and condition of his tenantry (who, with their families, now amount to from eight hundred to one thousand souls) more comfortable, but has increased their numbers one-third. These tenants, if the question should now be put to them, will answer, that they would rather continue as they are at present, with each his *own portion* or lot of land, and paying the *increased rent* they now do, than take the lands, in promiscuous occupancy as formerly, for nothing. Mr Macdonald has been uniformly in the habit of giving leases to all his tenantry of every description, the duration of which depends on the extent of improvements they engage to perform. Besides the improving of his lands, Mr Macdonald has shown the most *indefatigable perseverance* in encouraging his tenants to embark in fisheries ; and such has been his success in this, that, during spring 1805, I am informed, three Ulva boats, with five tenants in each, commenced the cod and ling fishing

ing in April, and, by the month of July last, had caught upwards of three tons *per* boat ; making in all nearly ten tons of well cured and well dried cod and ling, which they sold on the beach under their houses, to vessels which came for the purpose, at the rate of £. 22 to £. 23 Sterling *per* ton, making in all the amount or value of their ten tons of fish £. 230, which, when divided amongst fifteen, leaves to each fisher's share £. 15, 5s. Thus, this species of occupation yields a return of upwards of £. 5 *per* month to each ; and as the outfit and expence of their lines and hooks seldom exceeds 40s. to 45s. *per* man, it will be found that there remains, at the expiration of three months, a *clear profit* of about £. 13 to each fisher, being, in general, about *twice*, and in some instances, three times the amount of the rent they pay annually for their respective lots of land.

That these lots of land are not so small, nor, in general, so unproductive as some people imagine, may appear from this, that there are several of Mr Macdonald's tenants, who, preferring to follow out the improvement of their lots of land, in the first instance, to the fisheries, have

have this last year sold such quantities of potatoes and grain, as did much more than pay their rents, and that, too, raised from lots or portions of *farms*, which formerly, with a similar number of tenants, never were known to raise a crop sufficient to supply themselves\*.

On the coast of Lewis, a very great number of the small tenants follow the cod and ling fishery; while, in the village of Stornaway, which has been established one hundred and fifty years, there are not six fishing boats in all. In many parts of Lewis, an equal number is fitted out by the tenants of a trifling farm. It is needless to say any thing of the villages of Tobermory or Ullapool, for scarcely a boat is fitted out, for this species of fishing, at either; while all along the sea-coast of the Mainland, and in the numerous isles, boats are successfully employed by the tenantry who reside in the vicinity of the sea. Whatever may  
be

\* I understand Mr Macdonald, who, I hope, will excuse my mentioning it, has been in the practice, during several years past, of keeping a regular journal of the improvements carrying on upon his estate. It contains much valuable information concerning the cod, ling, and herring fisheries, and the best modes of carrying them on with vigour and success, which it might prove useful to lay before the public.

be Lord Selkirk's opinion, or that of practical men, as he calls them, experience shows, that they have formed very erroneous opinions, which they must retract when they are divested of prejudice, and acquire more correct notions from existing facts. It has already been hinted, that not only in the West Highlands, but along the shores of the Moray Frith, the fishers are accommodated with small lots of land ; so that the reverse of his Lordship's doctrine is clearly established by fact.

As to the herring fishery : In so far as it can be carried on by boats, it must be by people residing in the Highlands, who have a holding of lands. The herring fishery is much more precarious than the cod or ling fishery. Some years the fish visit the coast in smaller quantities than in others. Some years they only remain a few months, or even a few weeks. These circumstances point out strongly the necessity of a small farm, even to those who are possessed of boats and materials for this kind of fishery. Without this their situation must prove truly unpleasant, and their sustenance precarious. At most, the fishing lasts only a few months in the year ;

so

so that during the rest of the year the fisherman may work at his farm ; and when he is at the fishing, the farm labour may be carried on by the remainder of his family.

In the Isle of Mann it is the small farmers who carry on the herring fishery. A few of them join stocks, and purchase a boat, which is generally from fifteen to twenty-five tons burden, and half decked. They procure a sufficient train of nets. At first they go far out to sea, and afterwards follow the herrings when they approach the coast ; and their operations are generally successful. As it is only for a certain period of the year that the fishing lasts, they contrive to carry on their farming concerns, it may be said, almost without interruption.

So far from the fisheries being incapable of affording employment to many additional hands, (as hinted *p.* 184.), it is a certain fact, that, were the salt regulations so framed, that this necessary article might be procured free of all duty, and restraint of every kind, colonies of Dutchmen, and even of Americans, with large capitals, have expressed a desire to settle in the

West

West Highlands, and to prosecute the fisheries. The period of the herring fishery is likely to be extended, by adopting the method pursued by the people of the Isle of Mann, who, like the Dutch, go out and catch them in the open sea, early in the season, and continue the pursuit after they come upon the shores, or into bays.

With regard to manufactures in the Highlands, none are yet established. Thirty years ago, the cotton trade had not found its way from England to the low country of Scotland ; and, previous to that period, some gloomy-minded political writer might have argued, as our Author does respecting the Highlands, against the probability of establishing manufactures there. There is not only a possibility, but even a probability, that manufactures may find their way into the Highlands at no remote period. The soil and climate are well adapted for the growing of flax ; and the linen manufacture has made considerable progress in some districts in the Grampians. Hemp might be raised, and manufactures established, of all the cordage used in the fisheries. Suppose the woollen manufacture should go no farther than the spinning

ning of the wool, this would convey to it much additional value, and give ample employment to the women.

Coal may be brought to every part of the coast by sea, and the roads now making will facilitate the carriage of it into the interior. The turf is generally good, and is always at hand in aid of the coal. Were the spinning established, it might soon lead to the weaving, dying, and dressing of the cloth : and pure water is more necessary for the latter operations, than mineral fuel.

VIII. *Emigration has no permanent Effect on Population, &c. P. 110.*

With regard to what his Lordship states, *p.* 111, 112, &c. respecting the population of the Highlands, and the implicit deference he pays to the work of Mr Malthus on the principle of population; not having had an opportunity of consulting that work, which I doubt not may be as valuable as his Lordship represents it, I shall only beg leave to state my own ideas on the subject.



I conceive that population will always advance in every country, in proportion as the means of subsistence, to be procured by labour, continue to increase. Additional population, as long as there is a subject on which to operate, from which additional means of subsistence may be procured, will constantly continue to provide a fund for the maintenance of its future increase. Nor will this progress meet with interruption, until all the land is reduced to the highest state of garden culture, sometimes mentioned by his Lordship ; from which it is not possible for additional labour to extract more means of subsistence. To that state, some districts in China, and Japan, seem to have arrived ; and as these people seem to have an insuperable aversion to leave their country, the exposition of infants is permitted as a corrective of an over-crowded population.

But, though his Lordship often insinuates, is he prepared boldly to assert, that the Highlands have arrived at that state, where additional labour cannot increase the means of subsistence, and provide for an increasing population ?

So far is this from being the case, that  
many

many additional hands are necessary, fully to occupy the land and fisheries. The Highlands and Isles, like America, can only be regarded as countries yet in a state of infancy, where the cultivated land is not brought to yield half the value it might do, and consists merely of a few patches interspersed among deserts, capable of being cultivated with equal, or with greater advantage. The fisheries, too, are even more in a state of infancy, than the cultivation of the land. And will any man say, it would be wise to abandon such ample means of subsistence, and increased population, and send the people to fell trees in America?

His Lordship may rest assured his prediction is not likely to be soon accomplished, that "the misery of the people would thus in time produce the effect which emigration is now working, and reduce their numbers to a due proportion with the employment that can be given them." According to our noble Author, *this misery of the people*, is to operate by inducing them to abandon the propagation of the species. But these people, who never experienced any thing approaching to the state of absolute

solute famine, foreboded by his Lordship as connected with obedience, are not likely to rebel against the first law of nature, in consequence of any prospective representations of starvation his ingenuity may exhibit to their view. In the Highlands, the poorer classes, from early attachments, generally marry at an early period of life. Many, not worth L. 20 in the world, marry at eighteen. As long as industry continues, there is no danger of population decreasing; and while such an ample field remains for the extension of industry, every addition made to industry must increase population.

There is no objection to a part of the people leaving the country; and all those who are not disposed to labour, can be well spared. The only danger to be apprehended, is such a ferment as prevailed before the American war, and has been revived of late, which may induce the people, naturally of warm tempers, and ready to lend a greedy ear to seductive representations, to emigrate *en masse*. The Highlands would then become, what his Lordship predicts will happen, occupied by a few shepherds and their dogs. It is extremely ab-

surd to argue, that this chasm would, in time, be filled up by the propagating energies of the remaining stragglers ; who, by previous emigrations, being relieved from the terrors of starvation, his Lordship thinks, will labour more assiduously in the manufacture of the species. Were any great mass of emigration to take place, it would require, at least, a century to fill up the chasm, while all the improvements now going on must be at a stand. This important part of the empire requires a numerous and permanent population ; and we have shown, that, in place of decrease, it affords ample means of increase.

It has been formerly noticed in these Strictures, that the population of the Highlands has considerably increased since the year 1745, and the causes of that increase are already assigned. But it is very far from being true, that the population of the Highlands is yet at its utmost limit, as great part of it contains the means of maintaining an increased population. An instance is given by Lord Selkirk of the increase of the population of the Long Island, consisting of the parishes of North and South Uist, and Barra. By Dr Webster's account, they  
are

are said, in 1755, to have contained five thousand two hundred and sixty-eight people; at the date of Sir John Sinclair's survey, eight thousand three hundred and eight. The writer of these Strictures can add, from having made a return of the population lists under the late act of Parliament, of these three parishes, and other opportunities of local knowledge, that the population, previous to the late emigration, exceeded ten thousand. And it is not improbable, that, in ten or twelve years, the deficiency created by the emigration will be replaced. But it by no means follows, that the increase of population increases the poverty of the people, as insinuated by his Lordship. The very reverse is the case. The people are become much more industrious, and, instead of idleness, apply themselves to hard labour. Formerly, when population was thin, the crops were trifling and scanty; and for want of winter food, it was no uncommon thing, in a severe season, for a tenant to lose many, or all of his cattle. Even the small rents were seldom, or never, paid with any degree of punctuality. It was formerly a regulation on many great Highland estates, that no

F 2

tacksman

tacksman should take a subtenant or cottar on his farm, until the laird's small tenants' farms were fully occupied by them. This condition was often engrossed in the tacksman's lease. Nor was it uncommon, when a tenant took half a penny of the lands on a farm not fully stocked with people, to get a farthing of lands *gratis*. I have had occasion to look into the books of some former factors of Highland estates, and have observed, not unfrequently, that they deduce, from the amount of the rent-roll, considerable sums for lands lying waste and unoccupied.

The present punctuality of the payments of rents on some Highland estates, is uncommon in the south country; and instances of distress in levying the rents, in the Highlands, are extremely rare. Lord Selkirk seems anxious to establish, that the tenantry, and richer sort of the commonality, are the least industrious body of the community \*, the least capable of being directed to any new pursuit. This is surely a doctrine that was never promulgated by any one but himself, and common

\* See page 117.

mon sense would lead us to disbelieve it. The fact is, that in the Highlands, as in every other country, riches and industry go hand in hand.

There is a good deal said about the changes that the sentiments of the tenants in the Highlands have undergone, on account of the rise of rent, and other local causes. The reasoning here shows a want of knowledge of the present sentiments of these people.

The fact is, that in the Highlands, there are few men alive now, who were born at the Rebellion; and the new generation differs widely in sentiments from their fathers. To the present race it is a matter of indifference who is the proprietor, or whether he is resident, or is familiar or distant in his manners. The great object with them, is to have their lands on terms which will enable them to live comfortably, to pay their rents, and to be dealt fairly and justly with by their landlord, or his factor. The landlord is only respected by his tenants, in proportion to the happiness they enjoy under him, and the good he does amongst them.

IX. *Prejudices of the Highland Proprietors against Emigration: mistakes from which they arise.* P. 126.

The prejudices of the Highland proprietors, are said by Lord Selkirk, to be in direct opposition to their interest. This is certainly paying them a compliment, to which they have no title. The fact is otherwise. The Highland proprietors, whose lands are not adapted for sheep pasturage, have an interest in a throng population; and of that they have such experience, as weighs more with them than his Lordship's plausible arguments.

Recruiting in the Highlands is now completely at an end, on the former plan; and his Lordship cannot point out an instance of any one proprietor, who sacrifices the substantial contents of a rent-roll, for a parade of idle retainers. That such proprietors as have a throng, and useful population, should show a certain degree of solicitude in retaining their people, is not at all surprising.

Lord Selkirk goes on to assert, that the prejudices of the proprietors are strengthened



ened by the clamour of certain persons amongst their dependants and neighbours, who have motives of pecuniary interest for their conduct. This is an unjust assertion, and can be easily refuted. It is obvious, that the persons here aimed at, are the lesser heritors, the principal tacksmen, and the factors.

As to the first class, which is not numerous, they are in general resident proprietors of small income. No class of men are better judges of the value of land, or are more disposed to turn it to the best account. They cannot afford to let their lands in large lots, at an easy rent, to tacksmen or wealthy farmers, who, from their style of living, cannot afford high rents. On the contrary, their lands are generally let in small divisions to working tenants, or fishermen, and, in proportion to their extent, are more populous, and rented at a higher rate, than those of the greater heritors. To them, therefore, it can be no object, that a great landed proprietor should have a throng population. On the contrary, it is their interest that the greater heritors should let their lands to a few individuals only, as their own tenants would

by that means be held in more request ; engross the different employments that the country affords ; raise their wages at pleasure ; and, in the end, afford to pay them a higher rent for their lands, than they can pay under the present order of things.

As to the tacksmen, it is easy to show that it is not their interest that the small tenants should be retained. There is no class of men they dread more than the lower, or working class of the community ; and experience shows, that except where they occupy sheep-farms, or farms solely adapted for black cattle, their numbers are daily diminishing, while their lands fall into the hands of small tenants, who, in the Isles, and on the sea-coast of the Highlands, for reasons formerly explained, can afford to pay a higher rent than the gentry. The consequence of this is, that these two orders of men are constantly at variance with each other ; and instances could be pointed out, where the tacksmen have entered into combinations with a view to send off the lower orders to America, that, by getting rid of a formidable rival, they might have the field to themselves. That the tacksmen, therefore, do promote the  
retention

retention of a population, which is daily extending, and threatening to turn them out of their holdings, is, to say the least of it, extremely improbable.

With regard to the factors, the allegation is equally erroneous. It must be admitted, that formerly, when the factors in the Highlands were generally near connections of the Chieftains, armed with their authority, and the once formidable office of baron-bailie, their power was considerable, and their situation enabled them to manage the people, so as to amass considerable fortunes. But the Highland proprietors, who must, in general, be allowed to have clearer notions of their true interest, than is admitted by Lord Selkirk, have long ago corrected this error. Instead of natives of their own estate, they employ strangers, generally men brought up to business in the south or east of Scotland, or more frequently people from England. To these they allow handsome salaries, and make it a condition of their appointment, that they shall not follow any kind of business, (not even farming), except the one for which they are purposely engaged.

This description of men, unconnected with the tenants of the estates they manage;  
in

in general ignorant of their language, and often objects of their jealousy; it is not to be supposed, are the most likely to enter into dealings or traffic of any kind, even if it were permitted. And should any one have the temerity to act otherwise, it is not to be supposed, that the ancient race of inferior gentry, who consider men of that description as intruders and innovators in their country, would allow him long to prosecute such a traffic, before they made his conduct appear in such a light to his constituent, as would soon procure his dismissal. But setting these considerations aside, is it reasonable to suppose, that a factor, unless he saw it to be for the advantage of his constituent, would prefer a numerous race of people on an estate, to a few substantial tacksmen?

He generally receives a certain percentage of his employer's income; and it may easily be conceived, that if a large estate of £. 8000 or £. 10,000 a-year was let to twenty or thirty tenants, the duty of the factor in uplifting the rents, and of superintending the internal management of the estate, would be much more agreeable and easy, than to collect the same rent from

seven

seven or eight hundred tenants, and to enter on a complex management of a numerous population.

When the fact, therefore, is inquired into, it will be found, that throughout the whole Highlands, to the north of the tract of the Caledonian Canal, the Highland factors have no business to attend to but one. And Lord Selkirk cannot specify a single factor in the North-west Highlands and Isles who is engaged in trade, and more than two he cannot point out, who have farms ; and even these farms are not extensive, nor have kelp attached to them. His Lordship cannot therefore apply his reasoning, as to the conduct of factors in former times, to those of the present day, unless *he visits the iniquities of the old Highland factors on their successors, to the third and fourth generations.*

The principal situation for kelp, is in the Long Island. The manufacture of kelp was introduced by certain Irish adventurers, about fifty years ago. Before that time, the manufacture of that article was wholly unknown on the north-west coast of Scotland. Some native individuals, profiting by the example of the Irish,

rish, commenced the kelp business themselves, and, having gained considerably by the undertaking, the system became general.

The kelp manufacture has gradually extended from that period, down to the present time, and on some estates in the Highlands, affords now no inconsiderable share of the revenue arising to the proprietor. The Lewis is said to be capable of producing 450 tons annually, the Harris 650, North Uist 1500, South Uist 1500 tons, and Barra 250; in all 4350. This quantity may be considered as a fair average in favourable seasons. The land rent of that tract exceeds £. 13,000, but is below £. 14,000 *per annum*.

The kelp, after deducting the charges of manufacture, the freight to market, commission to agents, &c. has, for these last seven years, yielded a clear profit of from £. 4 to £. 5 *per ton*; but, taking £. 4, 10s. as a medium, the income arising to the proprietors of the Long Island, who now make the kelp, with a very few exceptions, on their own account, will, from that article, amount to £. 19,575.

The manufacture of kelp is at all times,  
and

and particularly in a rainy season, a difficult and precarious business, and can only be carried on in the months of June, July, and the two first weeks of August.

In the islands of North and South Uist, where the quantity of kelp is most considerable, in proportion to the extent of population ; about two tons is at an average allowed to each head of a family, or a stout working man. A great part of that kelp is made from cast or drift ware, which comes ashore on the west coast, after a gale of westerly wind.

This ware, if not instantly secured, is often drifted back again to the sea ; and although it may afterwards return to the shore, it is in general found, in a few days, to have lost so much substance, as to be utterly unfit for its original purpose. It requires three hundred and fifty horse loads of ware of this description to make a ton of kelp ; and it may easily be conceived, that, without a number of hands always ready on the watch to secure the floating ware, no great quantity of kelp could be made from that ware.

The rest of the kelp in these islands, is made on the east coast, from the growing  
ware

ware found in the bays and arms of the sea, and often on sunken rocks, at some distance from the shore. Great part of this ware is cut, and floated ashore on rafts and in boats, and is attended to the maker with no inconsiderable degree of toil and risk. To expedite the business, and for mutual convenience, the kelpers generally form into small parties, make a joint stock of their ware, and divide the manufacturing price at the end of the year. The making of kelp is a dirty and disagreeable employment, and must, if the present race of people were to leave the country, be given up altogether.

Let any man conceive, how a labouring man in the south, or other parts of the kingdom, would relish to go out, at the ebb of the sea, to his middle in salt water, to cut the ware, and continue during the flood up to the neck in that element, dragging ashore the ware which he had previously separated from the rocks ; and from that extreme, be obliged to go and suspend himself over the burning, or the working of the fluid materials of a kelp-kiln. After all, be obliged to go to sleep in the clothes he wrought in during the day, under the roof of a miserable and uncomfortable



comfortable shealing. Notwithstanding what his Lordship insinuates, none but the present race, are capable of undergoing the hardship. But although that were not the case, is it rational to suppose, that, if an estate were so far depopulated, as to have no more hands than what were necessary for carrying on the farming operations on Lord Selkirk's scale, that a proprietor could collect six or seven hundred hands every season, from other parts of the kingdom, to make his kelp, when none of them, allowing even £. 4 *per* ton, could gain more than £. 8 in a season ; a sum scarcely sufficient for transporting them from the south to the Highlands, and back again ?

In proportion as the population on some estates increases, so in proportion does the quantity of the kelp : and it cannot be denied, by any one acquainted with the kelp manufacture of the Highlands, that, by the adoption of more approved modes of managing and cutting, the quantity of Highland kelp will increase considerably.

Instead of sacrificing the real value of a farm, by letting it to kelp makers, the reverse is the case. Suppose two farms lying in the close vicinity of each other ; the  
one

one having no kelp on its shores, the other a certain quantity of kelp. Suppose each of these farms capable of maintaining an equal quantity of stock. The tenant or tenants of the one, will only be enabled to pay a rent arising solely from the quantity of stock they can dispose of to the dealer. The tenants of the other can dispose of the same quantity of stock ; and, by adding to the amount of their sales, a certain portion of the profits of their labours, can pay a greater rent than the former, who have not had the same opportunity of applying themselves to useful labour.

The business is now so well understood in the Highlands, both by landlord and tenant, that the extent of shore that goes along with the farm, is always a stipulated article at a set ; and the rent rises and falls in proportion to the quantity of shore given, and according as the price of the labour is raised or lowered.

On one considerable kelp estate, the proprietor being about to leave the country, and reside in England, dreaded that his people might become more remiss in his absence. To insure their industry, he raised the manufacturing price from two  
to

to four guineas *per* ton ; while, on the other hand, his lands, already sufficiently rented, were augmented in proportion, and the people remained equally satisfied as before. Had the Earl of Selkirk an opportunity of knowing the fact, he would learn, that kelp farms are frequently let to small tenants, considerably above their intrinsic value. This being the case, his arguments may amuse, but not convince, the proprietors of those parts of the Highlands and Isles, where kelp is an article of profit, that they are under the influence of an erroneous policy.

Time not permitting me to enter into the consideration of the three last sections of Lord Selkirk's book, I shall only offer a remark or two on what he says respecting the motives of the Highland Society, in "having recommended measures inconsistent with every principle of justice."

To defend the conduct of that Society is no business of mine, as they are able to defend themselves from any accusation of this sort. The *ex facie* presumption is, that a body so numerous and respectable, were actuated by views of benevolence and humanity.

The late emigration act, so far from producing the direful effects predicted by his Lordship, has only tended to insure a safe and comfortable passage to the emigrant, at whatever time he chooses to depart. It has removed the most formidable obstacle that lay in the way of emigration, namely, the terror, the misery, the distempers, and other fatal incidents attendant on a long sea voyage, in an over-crowded ship. In fact, it has rendered the way to America open and easy. Had the framers of this bill meant, that it should stop emigration altogether, they certainly have shown themselves to be very bungling politicians. By securing to the emigrant a safe and comfortable passage, without any material increase of expence, their bill is likely to operate in direct opposition to the intentions imputed to its authors, and to promote, under proper restrictions, emigration.

The act has already operated in reducing the former exorbitant profits of the emigrant carriers ; and, by the high security required to be lodged, for a due observation of the law, it has taken the business of carrying emigrants out of the hands of  
petty

petty traffickers, who were accustomed to go about and raise a ferment among the people, on purpose that they might extort exorbitant profits, by conveying those they had deluded, across the Atlantic, at the risk of their lives. By throwing the business of emigration into the hands of men of capital, such as the Earl of Selkirk, who can find the required security, and carry on the trade on a large scale, it is to be presumed the poor emigrants will always be treated with fairness and propriety, which they did not, in many cases, experience from the petty traders.

Nor has the bill operated in raising the price of a passage, so much as his Lordship represents.

Several vessels sailed from the north of Scotland last season with emigrants, and some are preparing to leave it in the course of the ensuing summer. A Mr Rabbi of London, broker and agent for James Hodges, Esq; of the house of Bouché, Hodges, and Co. Cheapstow, Monmouthshire, has engaged several cargoes of emigrants in Mull, Skye, and other districts, for Prince Edward's Isle, to whom he has sold many thousand acres, in thirty-

three and other lots, in that island, at a rate of 500 *per cent.* above the London wholesale prices. From a copy of his contract of agreement, in my possession, I find that he is to give the passage, furnish provisions, and every requisite, at the rate of £. 6 for each passenger. In the year 1801, the rate of freight to America was £. 10 *per* passenger ; and it is supposed the traders had a profit of at least £. 5 on each. But in 1802, from a competition among the traders, the freights were reduced so low as to be, at an average, from £. 5 to £. 6 ; and the rate was similar in 1803. The traders, however, by crowding immense numbers of passengers in small ships, the melancholy effects of which are but too well ascertained, still continued to draw a profit, varying from 20 s. to 50 s. a-head. Since the passing of the act, the rate has been, for 1804 and 1805, at £. 9 *per* passenger.

But Rabbi, the modern Moses, is to deliver the Highlanders out of the *house of bondage*, and carry them to the *wilderness* of Prince Edward's, without the benefit of manna, or any other supernatural assistance, for £. 6 a-head. If he is equally prudent

dent with the rest of his *brethren*, it is presumed, notwithstanding the regulations of the act, his carrying of emigrants will not prove a losing speculation. On the contrary, he will have a profit of 10 s. a-head on the passengers ; as I know that Messrs James Strong and Company of Leith, and some other merchants, have chartered their ships to him at L. 5, 10 s. *per* passenger, allowing at the rate of two tons register for each passenger, with the other statutory provisions.

But, admitting that the act has raised the expence of freight, this is more than compensated by the safety and security of the passengers, who have now a prospect of arriving in sound health in a foreign country, fit for undergoing any hardship or fatigue, and for undertaking the most active operations.

Formerly they were landed in a diseased and debilitated state, fit only for hospitals; and, before they could engage in any operation, were often obliged to spend their little capital, if not to consign themselves to hopeless slavery. But, setting these melancholy consequences out of the question, no man, who has the means, can he-

sitate which he will most cheerfully pay, the doctor's bill, or a bill of fare.

Leaving the Earl of Selkirk to realize his projects on the other side of the Atlantic, as he best can, we shall admit his accounts of his colony to be true, until some letters from his settlement appear in public, giving a different view of affairs there. It only remains to add, that the spirit and necessity of emigration, if the latter ever existed, is now in a great measure at an end.

The Highland proprietors, seeing the benefit of a useful population, are adopting the most effectual and prudent measures, for retaining the people on their estates. Some of the late emigrants themselves, who were the most wealthy when they went off, have returned to, and again settled in the mother-country, particularly in the Long Island; and they give no flattering accounts of the new land of promise. Add to this, the receipt of several letters written by the settlers, which (notwithstanding the system of espionage established in some of the colonies, to prevent accounts, unfavourable to the views of those interested in emigration, from reach-

ing



ing Europe) have got home, dissuading their connections from embarking, until they can send better accounts. Some of these letters contain the most pointed complaints against the traders in emigration; complaints which may become a subject of future investigation.

These last-mentioned circumstances have had more effect on the minds of the Highlanders, than either the emigration bill, or Lord Selkirk's book; and we may foretell, without being inspired by the spirit of prophecy, or gifted with *the second sight*, that the Highland proprietors and their tenantry, will adjust their own affairs for their mutual advantage, according to the dictates of prudence and sound policy; and, by so doing, insure future prosperity to their country, to an extent they are not yet aware of, long after the Earl of Selkirk's book has ceased to be read.



---

## GENERAL REMARKS.

---

1. **T**HE indolent habits of the Highlanders, and their aversion to steady industry, are often described by the Earl of Selkirk as arising out of the feudal institutions. But these institutions, and the spirit of clanship, have long ceased to affect, either the habits or manners of the great body of the people. The true cause of this indolence, is the ease with which a man in these regions can acquire subsistence. There are few situations on the sea-coasts, where a man, with a very trifling apparatus, may not take as many fish in an hour as will serve his family for a week. The interior lakes and rivers also  
abound

abound with great varieties of fish, many species of which might be turned to profit. A very slight degree of labour is necessary to raise abundance of potatoes, with a little grain. Milk, eggs, poultry, and pigs, are procured with little labour. These, and not the remains of the feudal institutions, or clanship, are the true causes of the indolence of the Highlanders.

The imposition of adequate rents, to which his Lordship ascribes all the discontents of the people, is every day operating as a corrective of those indolent habits, and, by stimulating industry, is raising the tenants to comparative wealth and independence.

His Lordship's mode of correcting this indolence, is more sudden and violent in its operation. He says, the people are doing no good to themselves at home, and are a burden on their landlords. He therefore proposes to transfer them to a situation, where they cannot obtain a particle of subsistence, except what they extract from the land by the most severe and unremitting labour. How men of such confirmed habits of indolence may be able to endure this violent regimen, remains to be explained.

explained. But his Lordship's specific against Highland indolence, reminds me of the mode by which I have been told idle fellows were wont to be punished in Holland, and other places. They were locked in a cellar, into which water was introduced through a pipe, and the culprit was obliged, either to pump it out, or drown.

2. With regard to the observations scattered through the work, concerning the several classes of inhabitants, the want of leases, and the dispositions of each class towards emigration, it may be observed,

That on all well-regulated Highland estates, contrary to what his Lordship states, *p.* 40. &c. the small tenants who possess a farm in common, hold each an equal share. For it has been found extremely prejudicial to allow one man to have a larger division than another, on the same farm. But this mixed occupancy of the cultivated land, and common occupancy of the pasture, is so rapidly changing into separate possessions, as has been already explained, that, had his Lordship's work appeared a few years hence, what he advances on this point would probably be less understood by the Highlanders, than his dissertations  
concerning

concerning the feudal system and clan-ship.

With regard to leases, it is clear, that the land ought always to be given to the tenants for a certain period of years. Every enlightened proprietor in the Highlands follows this practice, and grants leases averaging from nine to thirty years, and in many cases of much longer duration.

But there are often prejudices on the part of the tenants, which induce them to reject a lease, or to accept one only of a short duration. They conceive a lease to bind them down to the land during its whole currency; and the rage of emigration is one cause of their rejecting leases of long permanency. The restless and unsettled disposition engendered by this ferment, has greatly obstructed the progress of regular industry at home.

In the year 1802, leases of nine years were offered to the tenants on the estate of Clanranald; but, although no augmentation was demanded, they had formed so strong a desire to emigrate in a body, that few of them would accept of leases, choosing rather to hold their lands from year  
to

to year. In 1803, the greatest part of an estate belonging to Lord Macdonald, containing a population of four thousand souls, was offered in lease for a term of years to the tenants ; but, from the same cause, only the tenants of two farms accepted the lease, the rest choosing to possess from year to year.

3. So far is it from being the interest of the proprietors to keep down the wages of labour, whether employed in agriculture, or even in the working of kelp, (as asserted by his Lordship, *p.* 132, 133.), their interest is directly the reverse, and is generally understood to be so. A man who has the certain prospect of an adequate return in money, will labour more in one week than he would in two, were he to be called out according to the ancient, and now generally abolished system of exacting service-days. The higher the wages of labour in any district, the higher will the lands be rented. High wages enable the labourer to pay a better price for, and to consume more of, the produce of the land, if he has no small holding ; and if he possess a small portion of land, high wages enable him to pay a better rent for it.

Thus

Thus the increase of wages redounds ultimately to the advantage of the landlord, whether the labourer occupy land himself, or consume the produce of what is occupied by others.

This has been so clearly manifested in several districts of the Highlands, that some have thought it might prove a salutary measure to raise the price of labour, by political regulations. The wretched system of cottars and servitudes, is now generally abolished. Farm servants are generally unmarried men, who live in the house of their employer. Day labourers are becoming every day more and more frequent; and, even in the Western Isles, a good workman earns about 1 s. 6 d. *per* day.

A gradual rise on the rents of small holdings, tends also to stimulate the industry of the tenant; for, in proportion as a man becomes less dependent on the spontaneous produce of his lands, and the returns of his cattle, the more he exerts himself, to obtain, by vigorous cultivation, good management, and frugality, returns sufficient to cover his increased rent, and to provide the necessaries of life. The habits



bits of industry becoming regular and steady, he even goes beyond these his first objects, and acquires a surplus, which accumulates into wealth.

Accordingly, in the course of my acquaintance with the Highlands, I have always observed, that the small tenants, who had their land on the lowest terms, were generally slothful, and the worst payers; while those who held land at what might be deemed a fair rent, were always the most industrious, and the clearest of debt.

There is therefore not the smallest ground for the clamour that has been raised against the Highland proprietors, for driving away their people, by raising their rents, the effects of which his Lordship paints in such glowing colours. Wherever the raising of rents has been prudently conducted, it has produced effects directly the reverse of those ascribed to it, and has raised the tenants to comfort and independence.

4. His Lordship labours under a mistake, when, in *p.* 57, 58., he represents the tenants as almost entirely the only class disposed to emigrate, because they possess the means of defraying their passage,  
while

while the others go to the manufacturing towns.

In fact, it is the class denominated sub-tenants, who hold lands under the tacksmen, who first shewed a spirit of discontent, and a disposition to emigrate.

In the year 1802, a cargo of about two hundred and seventy emigrated from South Uist; and in 1803, nearly as many more with Lord Selkirk himself. Of these two cargoes, only twenty-six held land from the proprietor. The great body went from the tacksmen's lands. In 1801 and 1802, a considerable emigration took place, from Arisaig and Moidart. The number might be about three hundred, and of these seventeen only held lands direct from the proprietor.

It can be truly affirmed, that, in most parts of the North-west Highlands and Isles, the case was pretty similar to the examples quoted. His Lordship is therefore in an error, in stating that it is the tenants who emigrate; as it is generally those who hold lands at second hand.

Not one of the tenants who emigrated from Clanranald's property, and from many other estates in the Highlands, were  
turned

turned out of their lands, or entertained the slightest apprehension of being turned out, either by the engrossing of farms, or subjecting them to sheep, which his Lordship assigns, in Section III. of his work, as the principal causes of emigration. On the contrary, many of them held beneficial leases, of which, by selling the reversion, they acquired more than was sufficient to defray the expence of transporting themselves, and families, to America.

5. It is generally the idle and indolent class of tenants who seem most anxious to emigrate. The steady and industrious, rather show a disposition to remain at home. Notwithstanding all his Lordship has said, it is well known that few of them retain any capital after landing in America. So far is this from being the case, it appears, from his appendix E, that some of his own emigrants had not wherewithal to pay their freight, and that "a few were bound under indenture to a certain number of years' service."

The distinguished humanity and philanthropy of his Lordship, it is admitted, afford the most ample security against any oppressive use being made of such inden-

tures. But it is well known, that these indentures have already been abused, and may come to be abused, even in his Lordship's colony, into the most shocking cruelty and injustice. Such indented servants form the subject of what is called the *white slave trade*, which has long been practised, and is well understood, in the American States. Great numbers of those who had wherewith to pay their freight, and even a little *extra* capital, on their arrival in America, before they could get into a situation where they could provide for themselves, have been reduced by necessity to sell their services, or rather themselves, for a limited time, for bare subsistence. They are then bought and sold, and transferred, like cattle, from hand to hand. Their master always endeavours to get them into his debt before their contract expires, for the payment of which they are under the direful necessity of entering into a new indenture, and thus they seldom recover their personal liberty.

Their situation is still more deplorable, if they have contracted sickness or disease in an over-crowded ship; for in such a case they are wholly at the mercy of those  
who

who may afford them food and medicines, and who speculate on the recovery of their health, and a long indenture for their reimbursement. Here I may observe, that, contrary to what his Lordship states, *p.* 151. the Highlanders, who are not accustomed to regular changes of linen, and are surrounded by their own and their children's filth, require much more room, in proportion, to preserve health on board a ship than his Majesty's troops, who are kept perfectly clean. For a detail of the *white slave trade*, reference is made to Parkinson's Tour in America, where every step of it is explained.

It is to be hoped, that every proposition originally laid down, has been completely established ; and that it must appear to every unprejudiced person, the Highlanders may find ample and profitable employment in their own country, in the improvement of waste lands, in fisheries, and probably, at no distant period, in manufactures, if they are disposed to be industrious : That, so far from being a burden on their landlords, as repeatedly asserted by his Lordship, or its being either the policy or interest of the landlords to get rid of them,

it

it is both the policy and interest of landlords, through a very extensive range of the Highlands and Isles, to retain them ; That, even where the interest of the landlord requires to enlarge an arable farm, in order to introduce a more skilful cultivation, or to lay an extensive range of mountains under sheep, his interest also requires him to provide for the tenants who may have been dispossessed, by the crofting system ; for which there are extensive and commodious tracts, on almost every estate : That, in such a case, the tenant, having his labour confined to a clear and precise object, is in a much more comfortable situation than when he loitered and slept among the mountains, and had no definite object of pursuit : That, in all cases, a man who is disposed to be industrious, may turn his labour to much better account in the Highlands than he can in the colonies, especially if he labour in agriculture or fishing ; and, with respect to those who are averse to labour, that they must be in a much worse situation in the colonies, where they must labour or starve, than in their own country, where they can support existence with hardly any labour.

It

It may be farther remarked, that the sums necessary to convey a man and his family to America, and to maintain them there until produce can be raised, would be amply sufficient to stock a farm, or to establish a lucrative fishery in the Highlands ; where, with all the disadvantage of paying rent, the labour of the tenant will prove more beneficial to himself, than in America. This remark is offered to the serious consideration of such tenants, as may have been deluded into a favourable opinion of emigration.

The Author of these Strictures can truly aver, that he is actuated by no mean motive : he has no interest to serve ; no resentment to gratify. Conscious of his inferiority of talent, he would not have obtruded himself on the public, but from a sense of duty ; an earnest desire to remove prejudice, and to vindicate the cause of truth and humanity.

*EDINBURGH, February 1806.*





# APPENDIX.

## STATE OF EMIGRATIONS, 1801, 1802, AND 1803, *referred to, p. 7.*

Years.	No. of Ships.	No. of Souls.	Port whence.	Country whither.	Contractors.	Countries whence.
1801.	3	799	F. William and Isle Martin.	Pictou.	Geo. Dunoon.	Aird, Strathglass, Urquhart, Glen-gary, Knoidart, Arisaig, Moidart, Lochaber; a few from Ross-shire, Rannach of Perth-shire, Appin, and Glencoe of Ar-gyleshire.
1802.	1	70	Isle Martin.	Pictou.		Sutherland.
	3	473	F. William.	Up. Canada.	A. M'Millan.	{ Same countries as in 1801.
	1	128	Ditto.	Pictou.	S. Fraser.	
	1	550	Knoidart.	Canada.	M'Donald and Elder.	{ North Morven, Knoidart, Glen-elg, Strathglass, Kintail, Lochalsh.
	1	600	Braccadale.	Wilmington. N. Carolina.	Ditto.	{ Lord M'Donald and M'Leod's e-states.
	1	340	Moidart.	Sydney. Spanish-town. Cape Breton.	And. M'Donald.	{ 300 from Arisaig and Moidart; 40 from Egg, Rum, &c.
	2	900	Uist and Barra.	Pictou.	J. Ure.	{ Clanranald, Boys-dale, and Barra.
	1	250	Greenock.	Canada.	Niell.	
	14	4110				

STATE OF EMIGRATIONS, *continued.*

Yar.	No. of Ships.	Freighters.	From whence.	Whither.	No. of Passengers.
1803.	1	In the Moray Frith, engaged by D. Forbes, burden 120 tons,	Strathglass.	Pictou.	120
	1	By Mr Clark,	Ditto.	Pictou.	120
	1	Ditto.	Ditto.	Pictou.	120
	1	By a Club of Strathglass people,	Ditto.	Pictou.	120
	2	Vessels of Major Melville's at Ullapool, by D. Roy from America,	Sutherlandshire.	Pictou.	200
	2	Vessels of R. Maciver from Stornaway,	Lewis.	Pictou.	600
	1	Vessel of J. MacKenzie, Lochend,	Ditto.	Pictou.	
	2	Major Symon Fraser Fort William, who has made a trade of the business since 1780.	From different quarters in the Highlands.	Pictou.	
	11				

FINIS.

*Abernethy & Walker, Printers,  
Old Bank Close.*