

AN INQUIRY INTO THE DUTIES OF THE LANDHOLDERS OF SCOTLAND TO THE PEASANTRY, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THESE DUTIES HAVE BEEN PERFORMED.

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Were one required to name the leading characteristic of the present age, perhaps none would be found more distinctive than the exertions of the higher orders to elevate their inferiors. In the fine arts, modern works will not bear a comparison with those of the ancients. In the different departments of science, philosophers are only following out the tracks on which their predecessors had entered; and even in the application of scientific principles to the common arts of life, a parallel may be found in the inventions of remote ages. But in the conduct of the possessors of power and influence to those who are dependent upon them, this age is altogether without parallel.

Not to speak of the atrocities of barbarous nations, in polished Greece, we find the unoffending slaves slaughtered in thousands by the Spartan youth, under the direct sanction of the state. In Rome, the unfortunate slave was subject to the lash for every trivial delict—condemned to the cross for such offences as a tyrannical master, without either judge or jury, deemed worthy of death; and, to glut the blood-thirsty citizens with spectacles of wholesale butchery, we find 10,000 gladiators, chiefly slaves, sacrificed in a single triumph. In feudal times, a purer faith brought with it a more humane practice. Still, however, not only did slavery hold its place, but the superior exercised despotic authority over all below him, fixing the wages of labour, settling the civil differences betwixt himself and his vassals, and administering, in the most arbitrary manner, a criminal jurisdiction to the extent of capital punishment. If the practice of the feudal baron came afterwards to be in some degree mollified, the change may, in most instances, be ascribed rather to the increasing power of the lower orders than to a disposition on the part of their superiors to part with their prerogatives.

But now, acting in a spirit of benevolence truly Christian,

the higher ranks not only do their utmost to gratify the rising tastes of their inferiors, but to inspire them with still higher views. While one class of philanthropists are cultivating their physical powers, and making them acquainted with that species of knowledge which has somewhat too exclusively obtained the name of "useful," as if nothing else were of any value; another class are labouring to imbue them with that more exalted knowledge, through the influence of which the scourge has dropt from the hand of the tyrant, the slave has obtained freedom, and the sinner hopes for salvation. Nor is this confined to a particular nation or a particular sect. Throughout the whole civilized world, the same spirit is at work, among Catholics as well as Protestants, in the most despotic monarchy as well as in the freest republic. Never were the energies of the human race called into such general activity. The task of unveiling the hidden riches of nature is not now, as in former times, in the hands of a privileged few. In every rank of society, numbers are employed in the search; and many of those whose discoveries have been of the highest value to mankind have sprung from a station which, at an earlier period, would have doomed them and their inventions to equal oblivion. As a consequence of all this, every art which can contribute to the comfort of the human race is advancing with unexampled rapidity.

And the enjoyment of these comforts now suffers comparatively little interruption from the angry passions. As it is in a rude state of society that war is most prevalent; so, in more civilized times, it is from the misconduct of that portion of the community which still remains uncultivated that the peace of society is most frequently broken. How many Mercutios have fallen in broils originating with unmannerly servants! How many countries have been deluged with blood from causes equally trivial! But the improved tone of feeling which now pervades all ranks, has very much lessened the risk of such disagreements. Deliberate insult is a thing hardly to be contemplated. Family feuds are to be found only in the pages of romance. We have discovered that, as a nation, we have no natural enemies. Abroad we experience equal kindness from the inhabitants of every country; and

misunderstandings which, at one time, would have cost the lives of thousands, have of late been adjusted by peaceful negotiation, without the slightest compromise of honour upon either side.

Finally, in Britain, at least, we are in a great measure secured from those outbreaks of suppressed genius, which, failing to obtain a legitimate vent, bursts forth in revolutionary eruption. Where the sons of industry may, by the diligent pursuit of an honest calling, raise themselves to the highest stations, men can have little inducement to seek distinction in an improper way; and although discontented individuals will be found in every age, and a heedless multitude is at all times too ready to give ear to their councils; without real ground of complaint, and without efficient leaders, their attempts to disturb the established institutions of the country never can be formidable, supported as these are, not only by its wealth and property, but by a continuous supply of plebeian talent raised or rising under the patronage of the higher orders.

That this is a true picture of the present state of the civilized world in general, cannot be denied; but it has been declared by an enlightened author of our own country, that the higher orders of Scotland, if not now absolutely the oppressors of their inferiors as in darker ages, at least "do much less, —and what they do, less systematically, and therefore less effectually—for the relief of poverty, and of sufferings resulting from it, than those of any other country of Europe which is really well regulated."* This doctrine has been echoed from periodical to periodical throughout the whole of Scotland, accompanied by expressions of almost unmingled approbation of the system of poor laws lately introduced into England, and a desire that the same system should be extended to this country. As a preliminary to this, every effort has been made to obtain an official investigation of the subject by the same gentlemen who framed the English law.

To most Scottish landowners it has appeared, that individuals so perfectly unacquainted with the country are by no means well fitted for such a task, and that they are, besides, disqualified by an unalterable prejudice in favour of their own

* Dr Alison, Pref. p. 8.

plans. To these plans they have adhered in England without any essential change, notwithstanding of the strongest remonstrances. They have introduced the same system into Ireland in a still more stringent form, although the circumstances of the country are in all respects different. Scotland, then, could obviously expect nothing else at their hands. The Scottish landholders have opposed an inquiry conducted by such parties; and because they object to this particular form of investigation, they have been accused of resisting "every proposal for improvement." These censures have not been confined to the Scottish prints, the readers of which are in general sufficiently acquainted with the real state of matters to detect inaccuracy. They have extended also to the English periodicals, which are read by many but little conversant in Scotch affairs.

I am far from supposing that the benevolent originator of this controversy, or any of the gentlemen who have taken part in it, have the slightest desire to misrepresent. It is natural for persons who feel keenly to express themselves strongly, and it is not very easy for them to avoid mistakes. There is no cause to regret that these statements have been made. If they are correct, the conduct of the Scottish landowners cannot be too strongly stigmatized. If the accusations against them are unfounded, their real merits will only be made more apparent by the investigations to which such attacks must give rise. It is matter of great satisfaction that the question is in no degree mixed up with political differences; and it is farther gratifying to those connected with the landed interest to observe, that those classes whom they are alleged to have thus neglected have neither directly nor indirectly given countenance to what has been said. The question could not possibly be agitated under circumstances more favourable to a correct decision.

It is justly remarked by Mr Nicholls, in his Report on Ireland, that a "poor-law alone will not effect the necessary ameliorations, which can only be accomplished by a combination of efforts;"* and he says elsewhere, with equal justice, "it is from spontaneous or natural employment alone that the labourers of a community can look for permanent occupation,

* Report on Belgium, p. 169.

and the means of support." * So true is this that it is quite possible for proprietors to divide their all among the poor, without materially improving their condition ; and it is equally possible, by a judicious application of their means to objects which make a return for labour, to spread comfort and happiness throughout a whole community, not only without sacrifice, but with an absolute gain. The return made enables the capitalist to continue the employment ; and if the wages of the labourer are not squandered in selfish indulgence, and if he retains that regard for his kindred which has hitherto distinguished Scotchmen, even the disabled and improvident will not be neglected, although altogether left to the charitable feelings of their relations and neighbours. It is the duty of every man to provide for his own, and those of his own house, if that be in his power ; and at all times the best mode of supplying the wants of the indigent, is to put those on whom they place their natural dependence in a situation to fulfil this obligation. It is only on the failure of these resources that a pauper ought to fall upon the public.

It is impossible, from observation of one community, to lay down a rule for ascertaining the proportion of pauperism in another. No doubt, it is quite true that the poor we shall have always ; but the precise amount of pauperism can scarcely be the same in any two places. It must very much depend on the manner in which capital is employed. If its returns come only in fits and starts, as in the case of commercial speculation, without a degree of prudence and self-denial beyond what our manufacturing population have ever yet exhibited, this natural provision will plainly go but a short way in relieving distress. If again, as in agriculture, the employment is constant and the returns regular, the natural provision will, in a well regulated community, require comparatively little artificial assistance. The most important question then is, what have the Scottish landowners done towards providing the labourer with this " spontaneous or natural employment ?"

The first step to this is evidently to give him a comprehensive view of his own position, and thus enable each to select that course which is best suited to his character ; in other

* First Report, p. 54.

words, he must be educated. To some this will pave the way for situations far beyond the sphere of their birth, and to all it will give an energy of exertion, and a resource for relaxation, which is not to be attained by any other means. The education of the population is accordingly the great point to which every civilized state is now directing its attention. But long before any other country of Europe had turned their minds to the subject, and long before the Scottish legislature was united to that of England, a series of enactments had been passed in this country, establishing the system of parish schools, which exists to this day. It may not perhaps be perfect, but it is at least very superior to the educational provisions of our more wealthy neighbours. In England, indeed, the humblest literary attainments are so rare among the great body of the people, that under the old poor-law the annual distribution of many hundreds of pounds was frequently committed to overseers who could neither read nor write. The report of the committee of the House of Commons in 1838 states, that taking an average of a number of the principal towns of England, only "one in 12 receive some sort of daily instruction, but only one in 24 an education likely to be useful. In Leeds only one in 41, in Birmingham one in 38, in Manchester one in 35." Throughout all the cultivated parts of Scotland, again, not only has the benevolent wish of George III., that every man should be able to read his Bible, been long ago realized, but almost every labourer is enabled to write down his estimate of the expense of any work for which he wishes to contract, and to keep up a correspondence with the absent members of his family. The spirit of enterprise thus inspired is so general, that there are few who have not some connections in foreign countries; and many returning to their native soil are now enjoying the reward of their distant labours, and distributing among the tradesmen of their own country the wealth which they have so honourably amassed. Thus far, then, the Scottish aristocracy have certainly not neglected their duty.

The necessaries of life, lodging, clothing, and food, are provided to the labourer in part by the work of his own hands, and partly by means of the wages which he earns. A judi-

cious landlord may do him essential service by directing the labour which he performs on his own account, as well as by providing the work which is to yield his pecuniary revenue.

So far as regards lodging, unless in a very low state of society, a labourer must depend chiefly upon his landlord. Without convenient domestic accommodation, there can neither be comfort nor economy, and it must be confessed, that in this respect we are still very far behind; yet our backwardness must not be altogether charged against the Scottish landlords. It must be remembered that Scotland suffered under the pressure of the feudal system longer and more severely than any country of Europe. Every glen was from time to time laid waste by the feuds of rival chieftains; and not a century ago one-half of the nation was marshalled against the other, contending for a disputed crown. While all were ready to start up in arms at a moment's warning, it was impossible for any individual to throw aside his weapons; and it was not, accordingly, till after the complete abolition of military tenures, in the year 1747, that the country was in a situation to give itself to the arts of peace. None of the farm-houses, and few even of the mansion-houses of the proprietors, will be found to bear an earlier date. Much improvement has taken place in the habitations of the peasantry since that period; but these were necessarily the last objects of attention. Independent of the expense of such works, for which no adequate return could be expected, the habits induced by the former state of things opposed serious difficulties to the undertaking.

Every one knows that the mere transference of an individual from a bad house to a good, will by no means insure to him permanent comfort. On the contrary, if he was a sloven before, he is apt to remain a sloven still; and in place of conforming to his new accommodation, the house is much more likely to be brought down to a level with the tenant. The indifference about mere matters of taste which prevailed among the peasantry during the unsettled feudal times, descended from generation to generation, and exists to no small degree at the present day. Till that indifference is overcome, no effort of proprietors can be of the least use. The Scottish landholders have, accordingly, for many years employed every

means to bring about among the peasantry this change of character. I might refer to the exertions of many private individuals, but I think it better to confine myself to the proceedings of the Highland and Agricultural Society, which may be regarded as representing the whole landed interest of Scotland. Upon this subject, as on every other, they have gladly availed themselves of any suggestion which seemed calculated to forward their object, however humble the quarter from which it might come; and after going through a great variety of forms, their premiums intended to promote cottage improvement are now regulated thus:—They are offered in the same parish for four successive years, and one half is paid by the Society, the other by the parish, so as to insure from the influential individuals of the district that personal interest which is essential to success. A specification of particulars is given, which are regarded as necessary to comfort, and the neglect of any of these excludes from competition. All these requisites having been complied with, the preference is regulated by the taste displayed in external ornament. This is regarded as the best security against dilapidation, as disrepair of every kind must be offensive to the eye long before it can have occasioned serious injury. It naturally leads also to economical arrangements in the interior, and prepares the inmates for better accommodation when circumstances may admit of its being afforded. Eight new parishes are assumed into the benefit of these premiums every year, and continuing, as has already been said, for four years, thirty-two parishes thus form the complement. Medals are also given to certain additional districts, in aid of such premiums as they may have offered at their own expense.

Last year was the fourth of the operation of this system of cottage premiums, and consequently the first in which it could comprehend the full number of districts. But the applications from all parts of Scotland far exceeded the limited number, and the medals also never were in such general demand. Zetland, Caithness, Inverness, Argyleshire, Mid-Lothian, Selkirkshire, Fife, Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbright, have all had trial of these premiums, and their effects cannot be better explained than in the words of the two noble lords who addressed

the last General Meeting of the Society upon this subject. The Earl of Roseberry "did not know that he was more sensibly struck by observing the immense improvement in the cleanness, neatness, and attention of those cottagers who were competitors for the premiums, than he was by seeing the effect which the competition created among others who were not competitors,—the spirit which was infused among them, and the order, decency, and cleanliness, which were established." He observed, "that even in those cottages where large families lived, and where they had only one apartment for their accommodation, efforts were frequently made to divide that apartment with an ingenuity which astonished those who were not in the habit of attending to these matters." His Lordship concluded by suggesting an alteration on the plans of the Society, in order to hasten the diffusion of these premiums over Scotland. The Duke of Buccleuch "expressed his satisfaction to hear the sentiments of the noble Earl," and said, "he was certain that the premiums had produced many good effects in different parts of the country, which he had seen of his own knowledge. He would also submit, that the matter ought to be taken up not by this Society alone, but by the members of the different District Societies, who might do much good by small premiums."*

* The opinions expressed by the conveners of the different Districts so perfectly agree with those of the two noble lords that it has not seemed necessary to refer to them in the text; but for the information of those who may wish to see them, I will here give an abstract from the reports of last year.

Mr Sim of Culter Mains, Convener of the parish of Culter, Lanarkshire, reports that the Judges expressed "their surprise at seeing the extraordinary cleanliness and neatness, and attention to comfort, in all of the cottages;" and on going into some "whose occupants were not on the list of competitors, they were exceedingly gratified to perceive the very same attention to order, taste, and economy, pervade them all."—"The Judges were so much pleased and gratified with what they had witnessed, and the great benefits resulting to the cottagers from the competition, that they expressed themselves most anxious to have the same encouragement extended to their own parishes." The reporters were also of opinion, "that the benefits of these premiums were not confined to this parish; but that, from the external appearance of the houses in the neighbouring parishes, the attention of the proprietors had been more turned towards increasing the comforts of the labouring classes, by building better houses and improving their present cottages."

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The sentiments of these noblemen obtained the entire assent of the most numerous and most influential meeting of

The Society's premiums have run their course in the parish of Culter, but similar premiums are to be continued in that parish by a society formed for the express purpose.

Mr Alston of Muirburn, Convener of the parish of Avandale, says, "It gives me much pleasure to be able to confirm the remarks which I made in my report of last year with respect to the greater attention now bestowed on the order, cleanliness, and comfortable appearance of most of the cottages, and on the pains taken in ornamenting them with honeysuckle, roses," &c.

Mr Lockhart of Milton Lockhart, M.P. for the country of Lanark, gives an equally satisfactory report of the parish of Carluke.

Mr Hamilton of Fairholm, Convener of the parish of Dalsersf, states his firm belief and conviction, "that much good has been done to this district by drawing the attention of the people to the comfort and advantages of having neat clean kept cottages," &c.; and that there, as in Culter, an association has been formed for continuing the system.

From Fife Mr Balfour of Balbirnie reports, "that the plan adopted by the Highland Society, and the encouragement given by awarding premiums, is attended in the parish of Markinch with the happiest results. The emulation for the different prizes is extending among the cottagers, and is calculated to perpetuate habits of industry and cleanliness." The Judges "found the cottages situated near large manufacturing works and densely populated districts very clean, and that remarkable and frequently very successful attempts had been made to ornament their dwellings without expense, and showing in many instances very great taste."

In Kennoway, Major Anderson reports "that the Society's premiums have produced a marked effect;" and in both of these parishes societies have been formed for promoting the improvement of cottage gardens.

From the county of Mid-Lothian, Mr Trotter of Mortonhall reports, that, in the parish of Liberton, there were sixteen competitors. "The examiners were much pleased by the inspection, and observed with pleasure a marked improvement in the appearance of the cottages this year, clearly demonstrating the good effects of the Highland Society's plan of continuing the premiums for four consecutive years." As in former years, Mr Trotter, with his usual liberality, doubled the premiums of the Society, and offered two in addition.

Mr Borthwick of Crookston, Convener of the parish of Stow, also in Mid-Lothian, reports, that, in the opinion of "the Judges, these premiums have been attended there with much benefit in improving the comforts of the cottages, and promoting the health of the cottagers and their families in this district, of the country." In that parish also it is understood that a society is on the eve of being established for continuing the system.

Messrs Geddes and Dodds, in absence of the Earl of Stair, Convener of the parish of Cranston, reported, that in visiting the cottages they were "pleased with their neatness, and the order in which they are kept."

Mr Stavert of Hoscoat, Convener of the parish of Robertson, in Selkirk-

the Society that ever assembled. The same desire pervades the whole landed interest of Scotland to rouse the peasantry

shire, reports, that Mr Lockhart Elliot and himself were "perfectly satisfied with the perfect and comfortable state in which the cottages in competition were kept."

Sir James Russell of Ashiestiel, Convener of the parish of Yarrow, also in the county of Selkirk, reports, that the cottage for which the first premium was awarded, "exhibited as great a degree of cleanliness and comfort as could be looked for or almost desired." That to which the second premium was assigned, he states, is also "very respectable, and deserves the encouragement held out by the Society."

From Zetland the reporters for the parish of Bressay "remark generally that the state of all the cottages in competition is such as to afford a pledge of increasing improvement. The dunghills have been removed from the fronts and gables of the several cottages, and every thing done that the nature of the buildings can admit of to meet the requirements of the Society. On the whole, they feel bound to state their conviction that the awarding of premiums in that district is calculated to produce most beneficial results."

The report from the parish of North Maving, also in Zetland, makes mention of some competitors who were excluded as not having complied with the requisites of the Society; but the cottage to which the premium was awarded is highly commended, and will no doubt be imitated. "The furniture was good, the floors perfectly clean; even the kitchen was whitewashed, a very uncommon thing in this part of the country."

The report from the parish of Thurso, in the county of Caithness, states, that "a great improvement has taken place in this district during the last twenty years in the cottages of the lower orders, and cleanliness and comfort are much more attended to than formerly, and the encouragement given by the Highland and Agricultural Society, by the distribution of premiums, has no doubt tended to stir up a spirit of emulation, which has been attended with the most beneficial effects."

Mr Hope Johnstone of Annandale, M.P. for the county of Dumfries, reports, that, in the parish of Johnstone, in that county, where these premiums have only been in operation for one year, the Judges, "struck with the great advantage to this parish which has arisen from the competition, cannot refrain from expressing their earnest wish that such competitions should be extensively practised in the country."

In the parish of Kirkbean, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, cottage premiums have been given for a number of years by a benevolent lady residing in the neighbourhood. Last year that parish had the premiums of the Highland Society also, and Mr Stewart of Southwick, the Convener, reports that "the cottages in Kirkbean village are kept in the very best order."

Mr Malcolm of Pottaloch, reports, that, in Kilmartin, Argyleshire, "the measure has already been attended with the happiest effects, and a marked improvement is already apparent in the houses of many of the peasantry;" no less than forty-five competitors entered their names in this parish.

from a torpid contentment with the hovels of their fathers, though in doing so they are obviously paving the way for new demands upon themselves. If a labourer shall declare his inability to compete for these premiums in consequence of the state of his windows, roof, or any other part of the building, the landlord who urges him to come forward can scarcely refuse his assistance to remedy the defect; or if additional accommodation should be required, he must go to an expense which would not have been thought of but for the new ideas to which he has himself been instrumental in giving birth.

With the view of guiding proprietors in the construction of new cottages, the Highland Society, some years ago, offered a premium for a collection of plans and specifications adapted to different situations. An extensive impression of those preferred was thrown off; and it may be mentioned, as another instance of the interest which the landed proprietors take in this subject, that the whole of this impression was almost immediately sold off. Still farther to facilitate works of this kind, the Society have, by means of another premium, brought before the public a cottage window which is free from the defects in ventilation, &c. attaching to those in common use. If it shall be generally adopted, glass of the requisite size will be kept every where, and the labourer will be enabled to repair his own windows without the aid of a tradesman. Another premium is on their list for the best means of economising fuel. Medals also are offered to proprietors for the best cottages erected in particular districts. Besides all this, in con-

In Loch Gilphead, also, in Argyleshire, Mr Campbell of Auchindarroch, says, "It is most satisfactory to see the exertions already made," although the notice to the competitors had been short, and the situation of their houses was not favourable to external decoration.

Captain Ramsay reports, that, in Banchory Ternan, in Kincardineshire, the Judges found the cottages and gardens, entered for competition, "in a most satisfactory state, and worthy of imitation." He farther states, that there are many other cottages in the parish "not inferior to those of the competitors named, and that they have brought their houses and gardens into their present excellent state solely by their own exertions."

From the parish of Inverness, also, there is a most satisfactory report by Mr Fraser of Culduthcl. He says both the cottages for which premiums were awarded, "were admirable as to order, cleanliness, and suitableness in point of taste and ornamental decoration."

sequence of numerous applications from the most influential quarters, a committee was appointed to consider what more could be done towards forwarding an object which all have so much at heart. The report of the committee has been laid before the public with the other Transactions of the Society, and to that report reference may be made for a full explanation of their views.*

Although, from the circumstances which I have mentioned, the landowners of Scotland were not till lately in a situation to pay much attention to the domestic comforts of the labouring classes, I am not aware that the object has been prosecuted with greater zeal in any country of Europe than it has of late been by them. To all appearance the present efforts promise to be ultimately successful; and I am very sure that no communication would be more gratefully received by them than any suggestions which may hasten a consummation so devoutly desired. All the premiums of the Highland Society are to the full as much calculated to benefit the labourer as the proprietor; and of the eighty pages to which the list extends, eight are devoted exclusively to premiums, the sole object of which is to improve the condition of the humbler classes.

In the article of clothing, the peasantry of Scotland are quite on a par with those of England, but their food is very generally thought to be inferior. On this subject we must beware of prejudice. The human constitution easily adapts itself to food of very different kinds, but cannot with impunity be subjected to any very rapid change; and we are apt to condemn, as unsuited for any one, whatever differs materially from the diet to which we have been ourselves accustomed.

One would naturally enough imagine that diet to be the most wholesome which contains the largest proportion of nutritive matter; but it must be remembered, that besides supplying those vessels which convey nourishment into the system, it is necessary also to supply those larger canals which carry off impurities. The same rule which holds with regard to the air which we breathe, seems also to apply to the food which

* No. LII. p. 534.

we eat. As an atmosphere composed exclusively of that species of gas which is absorbed by the lungs would soon occasion death, so if nothing were to enter the stomach but what is taken into the system, the consequences would be equally fatal. A mixture of heterogeneous matter is necessary to a wholesome diet as well as to a wholesome atmosphere. What diet is really best, is not then to be determined, *a priori*, by analysis; the most experienced physicians, however able to prescribe for sickness, have acknowledged themselves incapable of solving this question. The most expert chemist has not even been able to detect a difference between the chyle produced from animal matter, and that which is produced from vegetable. The question can be determined in no other way but by experiment; and although scarcely any point can be more important, strange to say, it is only now beginning to attract attention. The proper food of cattle has been examined with the most scrupulous care, but I have heard of only one published experiment for discovering the best diet for the human race. It was performed a short time ago in Glasgow Bridewell, and an account of it is given in Mr Hill's Fifth Report on Scottish Prisons. "Eight different forms of diet were prepared, and a class of prisoners was placed on each diet, and confined to it for one month. Before commencing, each prisoner was examined as to the state of his health, and weighed, and the same was done at the end of the experiment." The diet which was, on the whole, preferred by the prisoners, consisted of 96 oz. of potatoes per day, divided into 3 meals, costing in all 1½d. "A class of ten young men and boys was put on this diet. All had been in confinement for short periods only, and all were employed at light work, teasing hair. At the beginning of the experiment, eight were in good health, and two in indifferent health; at the end, the eight continued in good health, and the two who had been in indifferent health had improved. There was, on an average, a gain of nearly 3½ lb. per prisoner, the greatest gain being 8½ lb. by a young man whose health had been indifferent at the beginning of the experiment. Only two prisoners lost at all in weight, and the quantity in each case was trifling. The prisoners all expressed themselves *quite satisfied with this diet, and regretted the change back again to the ordinary diet.*" The ordinary diet of the prison consisted of 13 oz. of oat meal, 4 oz. of barley, 1 oz. of bone, and 8 oz. of bread, in all 26 oz. of solid food, exclu-

sive of vegetables, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ pint butter-milk. The expense was $3\frac{1}{4}$ d., and this also was divided into 3 meals. Five young men, and five young women on this diet, lost each nearly half a pound. Another class with the same quantity of meal and milk as in the last case, were allowed at dinner half a pound of meat, and a pound of potatoes, in all 37 oz. of solid food. There was neither loss nor gain in point of weight at the end of the experiment; but although the most expensive of all the diets, two-thirds of those put upon it preferred the ordinary diet of the prison.

Thus it appears that the first of these diets, though decidedly the cheapest, was, on the whole, the most satisfactory. I do not pretend to say that this experiment is sufficient to determine the best diet for a labouring man. In many respects, the report is incomplete. The ages of the prisoners are not given, and no inference can obviously be drawn from the increased weight of such as had not arrived at their full size. Neither is the season of the year mentioned, or the temperature of the atmosphere at the time, though that would unquestionably affect the result. We know that the inhabitant of a tropical climate eats little but vegetables, while in the polar regions, no kind of animal food is too gross for digestion; and in this country also, food which is relished in cold weather is not acceptable in warm. But we may surely draw this conclusion from the Glasgow experiment, that, if the potato alone, after a trial of a whole month, was still preferred to diets containing a considerable amount of animal food, it cannot be denounced as unwholesome. And if it was capable of sustaining the constitution with the imperfect ventilation of a prison, and under the gloomy reflections with which its inmates are oppressed, it can hardly be insufficient food for a man breathing the pure air of the country, and enjoying the society of his family and his friends. In farther confirmation of this, we find that in the House of Industry of Dublin, bread is "given as being less acceptable to applicants, and as a kind of test of actual want, the potato being generally preferred by the people;*" and when English and Irish are employed together on public

* Nicholls' Second Report, p. 78.

works, each of course living in the way in which he has been brought up, I have never heard that the higher fed Englishman is able to do more work than the Irishman whose diet consists of little else than potatoes.

In Scotland the potato, with the addition of milk, has become the principal nourishment of the lowest grade of the population, and if sufficient in quantity, we can scarcely, in the face of the above experiment, find ourselves entitled to pronounce it defective in quality. At all events, it will be granted that vegetable diet is by far the most important to the labouring classes, for though we hear much of the pressure of the high price of corn, no complaint is ever made of the rise of the price of animal food. What measures, then, could the land-holders of Scotland adopt, to secure a sufficient supply of this most important article ?

By limiting their own consumption, and assessing themselves in a poor's rate, they might equalize a deficiency, but the amount of want must remain the same. Again, before we had manufactures to export, it would have been vain for us to invite corn from abroad, for we had nothing to give in return. If, on the other hand, our manufacturers are now to take their food from foreign countries, the employment of the home-agriculturist must cease. A large portion of those of mature years who cannot accommodate themselves to a change of life must absolutely starve, and the younger portion would find the unsteady work of a mill but a bad substitute for the regular routine of the field. The village tradesmen and shopkeepers must, of course, suffer along with the agricultural classes on whom they depend, nor would even the greater commercial interests escape. The universal diffusion of knowledge must ultimately introduce machinery wherever there is no physical obstruction. It is by no means certain that foreigners would long take our manufactures in return for their corn, and it is quite certain that the demand from the home agriculturist would be irrecoverably lost, and that the wages of the manufacturer, besides being reduced from this cause, would sustain a still farther reduction from the competition of the country population, who are compelled to resort to the towns, by the failure of their present work.

There was but one way of benefiting every interest, viz. by an improved application of labour—by giving a new impulse to that spontaneous or natural employment “to which alone Mr Nicholls so justly says “a community can look for permanent occupation.” If the soil could be rendered more productive, the farmer would be enabled to pay better wages to the labourer, and to sell his produce at a lower price. The agriculturist would be better enabled to purchase the manufactures of the town, and in both town and country, every table would be spread with abundance.

To this object, accordingly, the land-owners of Scotland bent their minds with a degree of energy and perseverance which was never before bestowed upon the subject. In this they were powerfully aided by an yeomanry and tenantry prepared by the educational institutions of the country, to estimate the value of every scheme for improvement, prepared by their previous course of life to struggle with difficulties and ready to marshal themselves under leaders for whom they entertained a hereditary respect. Through their joint exertions the clumsy implements of former times have been superseded by the best implements in the world. Through them also the labourer has been perfected in the use of these implements. The management of manures, the mixture of soils, the different modes of drainage, the rotation of cropping, have been investigated by careful experiment, and practice has been regulated by the result. The exertions of individuals, however active and however intelligent, could do little in the work of thus reforming a whole country. Combined efforts were necessary to the accomplishment of so great an enterprize; and from one end of Scotland to the other, local associations were formed for that purpose, each headed by the leading men of its own district. Above all, this has from the first been the grand object of the Highland Society, which, although in its earlier stages confined to a particular district, has long extended its operations over the whole kingdom, and been the alma mater of every improvement. The whole country bears witness to their exertions. We now see luxuriant crops covering fields which our fathers regarded as doomed to irretrievable sterility. Not only are the houses everywhere new

from the hands of the tradesman. The fences also are equally recent, and in many districts so also are the trees. In these works, we behold an imperishable record of the "spontaneous or natural employment" procured for the peasantry mainly by the Scottish land-owners—of the immense sums distributed among the industrious labourers through their instrumentality—of the comfort and happiness which they have diffused throughout the land.

But to see the full value of their services, we must look back to the state of the country at a remoter age. In 1698, Fletcher of Saltoun writes as follows: "There have always been in Scotland such numbers of poor, as by no regulations could ever be orderly provided for, and this country has always swarmed with such numbers of idle vagabonds as no laws could ever restrain." Out of the population at that time, which did not much exceed a million, he says, "There are at this day in Scotland, besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church-boxes, with others who, by living upon bad food, fall into various diseases, 200,000 people begging from door to door. These are not only no way advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double of what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about 100,000 of those vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection, either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature. Fathers incestuously accompanying with their own daughters, the son with the mother, and the brother with the sister. No magistrate could ever discover or be informed which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptized. Many murders have been discovered among them. And they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants, who if they give not bread or some kind of provision to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them; but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together."*

Another author gives the following account from the First Statistical Reports. "Scotland has at all times been subject to years of scarcity, and occasionally even to dreadful famines. The years 1635, 1680, and 1688, the concluding years of the sixteenth (seventeenth?) century, the years 1740, 1756, 1766, 1778, 1782, and 1783, are all mentioned in

* Fletcher, p. 100—101.

different places as years of great suffering from want. In the year 1680, so many families perished from this cause, that for six miles in a well inhabited extent, there was not a smoke remaining. The seven years at the close of the sixteenth (seventeenth?) century, were called the ill years. The writer of the account of the parish of Montquhitter, says, that of sixteen families on a farm in that neighbourhood, thirteen were extinguished; and on another, out of 169 individuals, only three families (the proprietors included) survived. Extensive farms now containing a hundred souls, being entirely desolated, were converted into a sheep-walk. The inhabitants of the parish in general, were diminished by death to one-half, or, as some affirm, to one-fourth of the preceding number. Until 1709, many farms were waste. In 1740, another season of scarcity occurred, and the utmost misery was felt by the poor, though it fell short of death. Many offered in vain to serve for their bread. Stout men accepted thankfully twopence a-day in full for their work. Great distress was also suffered in 1782 and 1783, but none died.*

I do not ask whether, in the memory of the present generation, Scotland has ever exhibited scenes like these; but I would beg to call attention to a circumstance which must be in the recollection of many.

Prior to the resumption of cash payments by the Bank of England in 1819, when the price of every article had been enormously raised by the profuse issue of paper, the universal cry was for the prices of 1790 and 1791. Could these only be restored, it was thought that the distresses of the labouring man would be at an end. No official record is kept of the price of potatoes, but the *fiar* prices of oat-meal are struck annually, and although not now so exclusively, the food of the population, as it was in former times, it is still a very fair measure of the supply of food of every kind, as it must rise or fall in proportion to the rise and fall of the price of potatoes and other articles. Now, the price of oatmeal, according to the Edinburgh *fiars* in the year 1791, was 16s. 6d., per boll, and taking an average of seven years from 1790 to 1797, it was just 16s. 7½d. Taking another average of seven years backwards from 1838, the price of oatmeal, according to the same *fiars*, was 16s. 8¼d. Thus the wish so often expressed five-and-twenty years ago has been completely realized. But while the price of food remains the same now as it was in 1791, the wages of labour of all kinds have risen from 50 to 100 per cent., and the annual

* Malthus, vol. i. p. 465.

income of the labourer has been increased in a much greater degree from the comparative constancy of his employment. Indeed, in well-cultivated districts, a steady labourer is hardly ever without work; and although he had to purchase food at the price paid for prisoners, he would be in a much better condition now than his predecessors fifty years ago.

But the greater part of the Scottish agricultural labourers do not thus live from hand to mouth. They obtain their staple article of diet on much cheaper terms. By the manure produced on their own premises, or gathered on the road, they are enabled to raise a crop of potatoes sufficient to maintain their families for the whole year. All the necessary horse-labour is performed by the tenants on whose land the manure is laid, and nothing is required of themselves but the work of a few days in planting and taking up. Thus they are provided with a store which would maintain their families for months, although no work of any kind should offer itself.

Besides all this, the labourer has a still farther resource in the produce of the garden with which almost every cottage is supplied. Premiums have for a number of years been given by the Highland Society and Local Associations, with the view of improving the management of these small plots, and, in many instances, with excellent effect.

The English poor law commissioners on entering on their inquiry, with great judgment, laid down as a rule, "that those modes of administering relief which have been tried wholly or partially, and have produced beneficial effects in some districts, be introduced with modifications, according to local circumstances, and carried into complete execution in all."* This is precisely what has been done by the landholders of Scotland. Whenever a new implement, a new mode of cultivation, or any other improvement, was ascertained to have increased the produce, and benefited the population, of a particular district, it has been immediately made known to the country at large through the medium of its societies; and the consequence has been, that instead of now being laid waste by constantly recurring famines, the whole country, notwithstanding of its stubborn soil and unfavourable climate, has, for

* Report for 1834, p. 261.

half a century, been blessed with comparative plenty, which has extended even to the helpless. In various districts where artificial wants have made considerable progress, the artificial aid of a Poor Law has been called in for the relief of the indigent; but even where no legal provision has been established, and where the sole dependence of the destitute is on voluntary charity, privations, like those of former times, are no longer heard of among the rural population of any of the improved districts of Scotland. Did the Scottish landholders require more to confirm their confidence in the system, they have it in the circumstance, that, originating with them, it has been adopted in England, has been adopted in Ireland, and has found its way into several of the continental states.

Continuing, then, to act upon the principle which the English Poor Law Commissioners adopted as their guide, the Scottish landholders are surely justified in placing their chief reliance on a system which has conferred such signal benefits upon the country; and having so far succeeded in supplying the wants even of the disabled and indigent by providing the industrious labourer with "spontaneous or natural employment," they ought to look with confidence to the same means for still farther increasing the comforts of all classes, more especially in those districts where modern improvements have as yet made little progress.

Unhappily considerable portions of the country still remain in this situation, and, from that cause, have been occasionally involved in very severe distress. The charity of the whole kingdom has been exercised in their behalf with a liberality experienced by no other part of the agricultural population; but the "spontaneous or natural employment" of the population of these districts having been neglected, they still continue exposed to a return of the same calamities. Their condition shews, in a striking light, how little the most munificent pauper provision can avail for permanently ameliorating the circumstances of its objects, when compared with a stimulus applied to the individual himself which keeps him buoyant by the exercise of his own native energies.

The district to which I chiefly refer is the Western Isles. There, as elsewhere, the effect of the ancient military tenure

was to crowd the land under culture with a large population possessing either in common or in very small allotments. This minute division was afterwards kept up for the supply of the fencible regiments, an officer receiving rank in proportion to the number of his recruits. After that came the kelp-trade. No doubt, this manufacture had commenced at a period much more remote, but it was not, till 1807, carried on to any considerable extent. For the three following years it afforded very large returns, and, up to 1817, was still a profitable source of revenue. That branch of trade was, however, completely annihilated by the repeal of the salt-duties* which then took place, and the small tenantry were thus deprived of the means from which, exclusively, their rents had been latterly paid.

A branch of manufacture, at all times so precarious, and continuing for so short a period, can hardly be supposed to have added materially to the population. But the sudden loss of a trade which had afforded such general occupation throughout the district was very severely felt. Great exertions have been made by the proprietors for the relief of the sufferers. By some the kelp-trade has been continued at an absolute loss. Instances have occurred of its being sold at 40s. per ton, when the expense of manufacturing the article and conveying it to market amounted to L.3 per ton,† a specimen of forced and unprofitable labour scarcely surpassed in the English work-houses. Large abatements of rent were made. The Duke of Argyle, besides granting a reduction of L.500 from the rental of Tiree, amounting in all to L.3000, discharged arrears to the extent of L.1500. But these sacrifices on the part of the landlords brought no permanent relief of the distress, and in 1836 and 1837, in addition to all that had been done, it became necessary to appeal to government and to the country at large. A farther sum of L.70,000 thus raised, was distributed,‡ but still without removing the prospect of a return of the evil.

* Evidence before Emigration Committee, No. 2042, *et sequen.*

† Evidence before Committee on Emigration, p. 155.

‡ Report of Committee of House of Commons.

In these circumstances it has been the object of the proprietors to diminish a population, which, although now become cumbersome, had in former times been the foundation of their own rank and consequence. In some instances whole districts have been cleared at once, and turned into sheep-walks, without any provision whatever being made for the previous occupants. But the great body of the proprietors are now desirous to follow the more humane plan of removing to her Majesty's colonies, what they consider a surplus population, before they enter on a new system of management. After repeated applications for aid to this work out of the public funds, a committee of the House of Commons was last year appointed to investigate the subject. Their reports, which have for some time been before the public, are favourable to the grant; but although these reports will meet with the respect which is justly due to all the proceedings of that enlightened body, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the committee were not unanimous, and that the views of a large and most influential minority are supported by very high authority.

Mr Nicholls says, that "*any attempt at a rapid consolidation of these small holdings would inevitably produce misery and suffering for which no adequate remedy has ever yet been devised. Extensive changes of this nature cannot be successfully undertaken without special reference to the moral and social condition of the people; and the obstructions which arise from fixed habits and old social arrangements generally render great organic changes impossible, excepting in the lapse of years.*"* The measure proposed, according to the lowest estimate, involves the removal of no less than 45,000 of the inhabitants, and some of the gentlemen examined are of opinion that it ought to extend to nearly double that number. Such a change as this could not be effected, even by private individuals at their own expense, without attracting attention, but when a demand is made on the national resources for carrying it into effect, the public is called upon to examine whether its "reference to the moral and social condition of the people" be such as to afford a security from that misery and suffering which have hitherto attended every measure of the kind. Rather than run the slightest risk of renewing these calamities by a pre-

* Report on Belgium, p. 168.

cipitate decision on a matter of such transcendent importance, a generous nation, who purchased with their millions the liberty of the West India slaves, will again freely open their treasures for the sons of men who have bled for their country, should the severity of the seasons call for such assistance before it can be determined with due deliberation.

It is most gratifying to observe, that the subject is not brought before the public, at the instance of the proprietors, for their own individual benefit. It is called for from all quarters mainly on behalf of the population at large. Mr A. K. M'Kinnon says, it would be of no "great advantage to the landlords, except in as far as they are interested in relieving the people themselves,"* and many of the other witnesses speak nearly to the same effect.

It is farther satisfactory to observe, that in ordinary years the produce of the land is quite sufficient for the support of the population. They are a remarkably healthy people, and the births bear a very high proportion to the deaths.†

The wishes of the proprietors must thus command the hearty concurrence of the public; and as an immediate decision is not required by the pressing wants of the district, there is not even an apology for inconsiderate haste.

Is the proposed measure, then, adapted to "the moral and social condition"—prejudices, if you will, of those for whose benefit it has been brought forward? How stand they affected to this change of country? If they are themselves desirous for it, to gratify their wishes, it would be a work of kindness; but if it is against their inclinations, we cannot forget that, next to death itself, expatriation for life is in this country the highest penalty inflicted for the most atrocious crime.

Whatever may now be the feelings of the Highlanders upon this subject, up to a very late date, they were more intensely attached to their native land than any other portion of Her Majesty's subjects, and no convict ever felt the doom of separation more acutely. The scenes which were exhibited on the Sutherland estate about the beginning of this century, are not yet altogether forgotten. I find the following account of

* Evidence before Committee, No. 1968. . . . † Ibid, No. 1714.

a group of these unfortunate outcasts in an Agricultural Treatise by Mr Aiton of Strathaven, which obtained the patronage of the Highland Society. In August 1805, while surveying the country with a view to his work, he had occasion to pass Aviemore in Badenoch. He happened to arrive immediately after a fair at Ruthven, and, in consequence of the crowded state of the inn, he says—"I was obliged to sleep in a room over a hall where common travellers are entertained, but before I got asleep, I heard the noise of a large company in the hall under my room, who I conjectured were people returning from the fair; they made so much noise as kept me from sleep, and I could discover that some of them were in tears. Hearing a servant in the next room, I inquired who they were that occupied the hall, and what was the cause of their lamentations, when she told me they were a colony of Highlanders who had come from beyond Inverness, and were on their way to America, and that their tears had not dried up since they had begun their journey. This information removed all fears for my own safety, but my sympathy for these poor people was so much raised that I did not sleep one moment during that night, though I had travelled on foot from Blair Drummond to Aviemore on the three preceding days, nearly fifty miles each day. Every groan from below reached my heart. As a shilling was demanded for each bed, none of them could afford to pay that price, and they all remained in the hall. *They had worship performed with great solemnity and apparent devotion.* I never saw so many people together so much dejected; *though the whole had been under sentence of death they could not have been more cast down;* their sighs and tears made an impression on my mind which will continue while I live."* Mr Knox, chamberlain of Lewis, says, "There was an emigration from Lewis in 1838 to the amount of about fifteen families, seventy individuals.† *They did not wish to go, but the farms were cleared for the purpose of being made sheep-walks.*"‡ To this day, Mr Knox says, the country people in Lewis are unwilling to have their children taught English, because "they think if they were taught to read the English language, they would leave the island."§ In 1839 the Earl of Dunmore was obliged to call in a military force to remove a portion of the crofters of Harris; they had actually consented to go to America, but when the day fixed for their departure arrived they could not make up their minds to leave the country. They were permitted by his lordship to

* Treatise on Moss by Mr Aiton (Wilson, and Paul. Ayr, 1811), p. 351.

† Evidence before Emigration Committee. No. 2176.

‡ Ibid. No. 2177. § Ibid, No. 2321.

retain their possessions till Whitsunday 1840, and although he offered to defray the whole expense of their voyage, not one of them could even then be prevailed upon to quit the island, all of them preferring such accommodation as could be got in the crowded hovels of their friends, to the fair promises of distant lands. A short time before this something of the same kind occurred in Skye.* Dr Norman M'Leod says, "The late Duke of Argyle has to my knowledge shed tears over the distress of the island of Tiree; his answer was, 'These people wish to remain, they are devotedly attached to that island, and I cannot think of removing them; they were my fencible men, and I love them;' and in many districts throughout the country, proprietors sacrifice their incomes to feelings of humanity, in consequence of the reluctance of the people to emigrate. The sailing of an emigrant ship, which I have seen frequently, was the most painful thing I ever witnessed."†

Nor has the disinclination which the Highlanders have manifested to emigration been altogether without reason. Mr M'Leod of Morven, says, "that occasionally they have met with many disappointments, and that they have consequently great distrust in private agents and speculators."‡ But almost every witness examined concurs in stating that this reluctance has now been completely overcome. Dr M'Leod even says, that "in the harbour of Tobormory, where the most heart-breaking scenes occurred at the sailing of emigrant vessels in former times, when the last ship sailed there was a general dancing and rejoicing"§; that "they are very much disposed now to view Canada and Nova Scotia as their own country, from the numbers who have gone out."||

If this alteration of sentiment has taken place without the interference or advice of other parties, there can be no possible objection to indulge their new-born wish. That, however, is by no means the case. The change of opinion is attributed by all the witnesses solely to the eloquent addresses of Dr M'Leod, contained in a gaelic periodical which has of late been most industriously circulated among them.

That Dr M'Leod most conscientiously believes the scheme which he has advocated with so much zeal and success to be in all respects calculated to promote their best interests, no

* Evidence before Emigration Committee. No. 2647.

† Ibid. No. 829. ‡ Ibid. 1139. § Ibid. No. 920. || Ibid. No. 921.

one can for a moment entertain a doubt. But on this subject he must be viewed as a projector, and he is consequently liable to be deceived by his theory like others acting under a similar influence. He has besides been describing scenes which he knows only by report, and may have been misled by those on whose accounts he has relied. The expectations raised by him must have been of no ordinary character, when the heart-breaking scenes which formerly occurred on the departure of emigrants have given place to demonstrations of such extravagant joy; and as the schemes of former speculators, many of them at first no doubt equally sanguine, have unfortunately occasioned so much disappointment, there is much reason to fear that the high hopes inspired by this new project are destined to suffer a similar reverse.

Canada and Nova Scotia, it seems, are the places to which the inhabitants of these districts have been taught to look. There was no evidence before the committee on the condition of the latter of these provinces, but several witnesses spoke to that of the former.

From the evidence of Mr Rolph, it appears that the difficulties of the emigrant to Canada have hitherto begun immediately upon his landing. "Last year (1840) there were very many complaints as to the detention of emigrants between the two provinces, the length of time that elapsed after their arrival from Upper to Lower Canada." This inconvenience would appear, however, to have been in some degree removed.* When the emigrant has arrived in Upper Canada, it is the opinion of the Honourable Mr Hangerman, a judge of that province, that "Any man with a capital of less than L.100 or L.150 would act most wisely in engaging as a labourer for the first year or two, husbanding his means to purchase and stock his little farm when he became a purchaser."† Mr Hangerman also thinks, "that in the first instance it would be better to scatter the labouring Highland emigrants, destitute of means, among the resident agriculturists generally; when they had possessed themselves of means to settle on their own lands they would probably prefer establishing themselves near to each other, but *before doing so they should acquire a knowledge of clearing and cultivating land*, by living for a year or two with those well acquainted with the process."‡

* Evidence before Emigration Committee. No. 1494.

† Ibid. No. 2014.

‡ Ibid. No. 2035.

But one of the principal obstacles to the settlement of the Highlander among the lowland population of Scotland is his ignorance of the English language. How, then, is he to amalgamate with the English population of Canada, or what are to be his feelings when he is told on his arrival that he is at once to be separated from those friends whose society was his chief inducement for leaving his native country. Suppose, however, that he has made up his mind to all this, a month may elapse before employment is found for him. The precise time must depend upon the government agents and private companies who are charged with his duty. It must depend, too, in part on the number of emigrants from Ireland and other quarters, and there is a perfect possibility that, in consequence of the market being overstocked, his period of idleness may be very much prolonged. For his maintenance during this time, no provision is made by the Highland proprietors, by the British Government, or the Canadian Government; and how he is to exist is as yet a mystery.

It is expected by Mr Hangerman that certain works will be undertaken by Government, and on them it may be supposed that a regular system will be introduced. But for the present there seems no employment, except that afforded by private individuals; and here again we encounter another difficulty. No doubt an able-bodied labourer will find accommodation in the house of his master;* but the leading feature of the new system is, that the able-bodied are to carry along with them all the aged and infirm relatives who were dependent on them in this country, and it is only to men with families that allotments of land are to be given.† Now, although persons of this description are most desirable settlers, it is by no means clear that they would be preferred as servants. Those who are unable to work must by strangers be regarded as an incumbrance, and if deprived by death of the hand which supported them, their situation, at all times uncomfortable, must be to the last degree distressing.

If, again, emigrants shall wish to establish themselves at once on land of their own, the Colonial Government requires

* Evidence before Emigration Committee, No. 1997. † Ibid. 1575.

“ a positive assurance that they shall be enabled to maintain themselves till a crop shall be raised.”* That may be for a period of from three to nine months.† A sum of L.15 would be required to support a man and his wife and three children even for the shorter period ;‡ but for this also no provision had been made when Dr M'Leod issued his addresses.

Then it is a mere accident if they are within reach of medical advice.§ No doubt it may be said that in this respect their condition cannot be worse in Canada than it is at home. In Canada, however, they must necessarily be subject to complaints arising from the change of climate to which they are now strangers. Among these are fever and ague. “ That,” says one of the witnesses, “ is one of the difficulties that emigrants to Canada have to encounter. It takes them years before they are seasoned to it.”||

In short, so numerous are the contingencies to which emigrants to Canada are exposed, that, in the opinion of Mr Hangerman, they ought to have “ some one person of *superior intelligence, prudence, and benevolence* among them, who, being possessed of their confidence and respect, they can look up to as their adviser and friend, and who, by his counsel and example, will encourage them to persevere in overcoming difficulties, *which, without such advice and encouragement, they might regard as insurmountable.*” Mr Hangerman says farther, that a clergyman “ is evidently the person most likely to answer these purposes.”¶

If this be necessary in the ordinary case of emigrants, it is still more urgently demanded in the case of Highlanders. Although they bear up at home under many privations, Mr Baird says, that, as compared with the Irish, “ the change of scene—the change of climate—the change of country and temperature, every thing seems to affect them more.”** If moved even to Glasgow, they frequently “ sink into a kind of hopeless

* Evidence before Emigration Committee, No. 1544.

† Ibid. No. 1546, 1547, 1605. ‡ Ibid. No. 3344, 3345, and 3346.

§ Ibid. No. 1591. || Ibid. No. 3109. ¶ Ibid. No. 2036.

** Ibid. No. 684.

state.”* Every witness bears testimony to their high moral character, and we have seen in the case of the Sutherland emigrants, how naturally, in the midst of calamity, they look to the consolations of religion. What influence, then, might not a judicious clergyman have on such a community? But neither was any provision of this kind made when the islanders anticipated with such ecstasy the luxuries of their new settlement. Nothing had apparently been thought of but the means of removing them from this country, and conveying them to the other; when there, they were to be left at once to their own resources. Although but indifferent workers at home, totally ignorant of the occupations on which they were to enter, not even sure of obtaining employment of any kind, and with no means to support them in idleness, these people, habitually despondent in every reverse of fortune, and resting upon their superiors, were to be sent to a foreign country where difficulties meet them at every turn, without one man of intelligence on whom they could lean for advice.

Such was the prospect of emigrants to Canada at the time when the publication of Dr M'Leod effected such a change of sentiment. Some of the obstacles which they had to encounter may possibly be removed by better arrangement; but surely, as the plan stood when it came out of the hands of the Highland proprietors, no one will pronounce it an adequate remedy “for the misery and suffering” produced by the rapid consolidation of small holdings. No one can look with the slightest confidence to the fulfilment of the sanguine expectations of its projectors, or anticipate that its popularity among the Highland population is to last.

But if there is not actually a strong desire for emigration among the Highlanders, conceived after a comprehensive examination of all its advantages and disadvantages, surely, with a view to improving their circumstances, before inquiring where they ought to be sent, and how they are to be transported, we ought to satisfy ourselves that the country which they now inhabit does not admit of a profitable application of

* Evidence before the Emigration Committee, No. 686.

their labour. Is it already completely opened up by roads? Are there no wastes which may be reclaimed? Is the land now in cultivation under the best possible management? It was by inducing the inhabitants of the rest of Scotland to throw off their slovenly habits, and apply themselves to works of this kind, that they have been raised from the state of barbarism and misery described by Fletcher to the comfort which they now enjoy; and there is at least a possibility that districts so remote as those under consideration may in these respects be behind the rest of the country.

It is much to be regretted that the committee of the House of Commons did not feel themselves called upon to enter upon this part of the subject. To a motion by Mr Cumming Bruce, "That this committee do proceed to take the evidence of some of the landed proprietors in the distressed districts, and of further witnesses connected with Canada," an amendment was moved by Mr Edward Ellice, "That in the opinion of this committee it is expedient to take further evidence," on the following, among other points, viz. 1. "To ascertain what attempts, if any, have been made by the local proprietors to improve the condition of the people by affording them employment, encouraging their industry, or promoting education." 2. "How far the system of creating large farms, and dispossessing the small tenants of their holdings, has acted prejudicially upon the state of the population." 3. "As to the resources offered by agricultural improvements for supporting a large part of what is now termed the redundant population of the Highlands."

This amendment was supported by Mr Ellice, Mr Protheroe, Mr Robert Stewart, Mr Tuffnell, and Mr Smith O'Brien; but was opposed by Mr Forbes M'Kenzie, Mr Thomas M'Kenzie, Mr Pigot, Mr Dunbar, and Mr Cumming Bruce, and was negatived by the casting vote of Mr Henry Baillie, the chairman. Two other amendments, somewhat to the same effect, shared a similar fate. Mr Robert Stewart then moved as an amendment, "That, as it appears to be the determination of the committee to confine their examination to evidence of an entirely ex-parte character, the chairman do now leave the chair." This amendment also was lost, being supported only by Mr Stewart and Mr Ellice. The only landed proprietors called in terms of the resolution of the committee, were the Duke of Argyll, and Mr M'Kenzie of Dundonnell, both de-

aided favourers of the plan of emigration. On the adoption of the report being moved, Mr Ellice proposed as an amendment, "That inasmuch as the committee, by their decision of the 3d instant, declined to examine witnesses on the main point referred to them, the condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and confined their examinations to the restricted inquiry, How far a remedy might be found for the excess of population, by means of emigration? it is expedient to report to the House only the examinations of the witnesses and the proceedings of the committee, there being neither sufficient grounds nor evidence before the committee with respect to the origin and causes of the distress now prevailing in the Highlands, to enable the committee to recommend to the House an adequate or efficient system of remedial measures for the destitution, the want of education, or for the improvement of the moral and physical condition of the most helpless class of the suffering population of Scotland." This amendment obtained the support of Mr Protheroe and Mr Ellice, but was opposed by Mr Cumming Bruce, Mr Dunbar, Mr Thomas M'Kenzie, and Mr Forbes M'Kenzie. It was consequently lost.

So far, then, as regards the capabilities of the country to support its population, the evidence before the committee is confined to the opinions casually dropt by witnesses who have all along been active promoters of emigration, and are either so little acquainted with agricultural subjects as not to be competent judges in any matter of the kind, or have not had opportunities of obtaining the information necessary to a correct judgment. Mr Bowie, who speaks to the state of the whole of the Long Island, is a most intelligent Writer to the Signet, but certainly has not had much experience in farming. Mr Shaw, now factor in North Uist and Harris, and formerly also factor on South Uist, distinguished himself so highly as a lawyer, that he at one time held the office of Sheriff-Substitute; and although now, to a certain extent, an agriculturist, he cannot be supposed to be deeply skilled in a science which had so little of his early attention. Mr Knox, chamberlain of Lewis, is much in the same situation. Dr M'Leod is well known as an able divine and an accomplished orator; but his literary pursuits have been quite foreign to inquiries like the present. The object of Mr Graham's mission was not to examine the state of husbandry, but to ascertain what aid was required by the population to remove present distress; and nearly the whole of

the influential classes of the districts which he visited having conceived the idea that nothing but emigration could afford relief, little else could come under his notice but the evidence on that side. Few of the other witnesses, if any, have had better opportunities of acquainting themselves with the subject.

All of these gentlemen seem to concur in opinion that the whole district ought to be converted into sheep-walks. This would no doubt greatly facilitate the collection of rent, and it is very possible that the land may really be better adapted for grazing than cropping, but it does not follow that the most profitable management would be at once to throw it into pasturage without any previous preparation ; and, if manual labour of any kind is required, surely the hands by which the work is to be executed should at least be retained till it is completed.

I do not pretend to have any personal knowledge of the subject ; but viewing the matter merely as a question of evidence, I must say that the authorities adduced to the committee appear to me to be very much outweighed by those of an opposite tendency, which were excluded from their consideration.

From Islay the emigrationists would remove 3000, being rather more than a fifth of the population ; but Mr Campbell, the proprietor, it is understood, does not wish to lose a man of them.

From Barra they would send 1000, being almost a half of the population, and from South Uist they would send more than a half ; but Colonel Gordon, now the proprietor of these islands, wishes to keep them all ; and the account given in the Statistical Reports would lead one to think, that in so doing he acts most judiciously for his own interest, as well as most humanely with a view to the real interests of the people.

The report of Barra, which was written since the sale, does not contain a word in favour of emigration. On the contrary, it states that " the face of the country has undergone a material change for the better since the former Statistical Account was written ;"* and were certain improvements which are suggested attended to, " and due encouragement given to

* Inverness, p. 216.

prosecute the fisheries, there is hardly a doubt that this small portion of the Western Islands might rival in wealth and happiness any country of the same extent in the Highlands of Scotland.”*

The account of South Uist, again, was written before Colonel Gordon’s purchase, and no doubt the opinions of the writer were in some degree influenced by the prevailing sentiments of the time. He is, accordingly, a strenuous advocate for emigration; yet the whole of his statements appear to favour a directly contrary doctrine. All the west side of the island, he says, “is low, flat, and sandy, and the east side mountainous, hilly, and mossy.”† “The sand, which consists of three parts of lime and one silex, is found to answer well as manure, when laid on moss, by which crops of bear and oats are produced; so that, if good roads were made through the different farms from the shore to the moss, extending at an average for three or four miles, large tracts of moorland, with the aid of sea-ware and sand, might be brought into cultivation.”‡

How easily the people might be induced to engage in these improvements, is manifest from what they have already done. Till 1818, “the tenantry had their tillage and grass in common,” and the land was of course very unproductive. “The consequence was, that the proprietors had to supply them with meal every year. The average meal imported from 1812 to 1818 for the use of Clanranald’s tenants, is 1500 bolls. Since then, none was imported till last year (1836). This change was effected by the stimulus which the cropping system had given to the industry of the tenantry, by their crop being better preserved from cattle, and by some improvements in their mode of agriculture. The work formerly done by five men and five horses at the plough, is now performed by one man and two horses.”§ Turnips, it is said, have been tried by two or three farmers, and are found to “answer uncommonly well.”|| “Forty years ago the rental of the parish was L.2200; it is now L.5600. The produce has been more than tripled since 1796.”¶

The plan of immediate emigration was certainly quite inconsistent with the other plan of employing the population in opening up the country by roads. Both are, however, recommended by the writer of this report. Colonel Gordon has adopted the latter, with the view, it is understood, of settling in the interior the redundant population of the coast; and the

* Inverness, p. 217.

† Ibid. p. 182.

‡ Ibid. p. 193.

§ Ibid. p. 190.

|| Ibid. p. 193.

¶ Ibid. p. 197.

prodigious improvement already effected in this parish, under the most unfavourable circumstances, affords a powerful guarantee for the full accomplishment of his most sanguine hopes.

According to the plans of the emigrationists, from North Uist, out of a population of 4603, no less than 2500 must be removed; and again they have the countenance of the statistical reporter; but here, once more, the admitted facts militate against his conclusions. "With the exception of a few bold rocky headlands, the west coast (of North Uist) is all along bounded with light white sands, chiefly formed of shells crumbled and pounded by the irresistible force of the Atlantic waves." "The sand, or rather shells, thus literally ground to beautiful fineness, is, when dry, wafted by the winds into the interior of the country to a very considerable distance; and possessing the qualities of lime, it adds much to the productive qualities and the beauty of the belt over which it extends."* "The process nature thus pointed out was remarked by some individuals of sagacity and observation, who persuaded a few to follow this guide. In consequence, along some of the shores where the moss was washed by the sea, a certain quantity of sand was led to the moss in the immediate neighbourhood, which produced crops in most instances sufficient to remunerate the trouble and expense, and which renders what was before of small value of permanent benefit as pasture ground. *This improvement, by due encouragement, might be carried on to an immense extent by what we call draining and sanding moss.*"† The reporter also says, recovering lands from the sea and draining lakes might "be carried on extensively and advantageously in many parts of this parish."‡

Mr Shaw, who is no way disposed to overrate the capabilities of these islands for improvement, says, that, in this respect, the condition of North and South Uist is "much about the same;"§ but how the moss is to be drained and sanded, or any of the other improvements executed, without the aid of a large population, is certainly not very apparent. The inhabitants may not be so industrious as lowlanders, but it has been seen that where they have a personal interest in the fruits of their labours, they are perfectly capable of exertion. Here also, as in South Uist, the small tenants formerly "occupied their farms conjunctly, the arable land possessed in runrig, or subject to annual division among themselves." In the year 1814 a system was introduced similar to that which was

* Inverness, p. 160.

† Ibid. p. 175.

‡ Ibid.

§ Evidence before Committee, p. 2766.

adopted in South Uist four years later, each small tenant being put in possession of a croft of his own, and the effect in giving an impetus to industry was precisely the same.*

Harris is said by the reporter to be chiefly adapted to pasture, and "some of the most fertile farms possessed by small tenants have been depopulated, and converted into extensive sheep-walks."† Yet the annual produce of the land under culture amounts to L.5900, while the sheep and cattle only yield L.4300. On the coast of Harris, also, Mr Shaw says, "there is a good deal of shell-sand,"‡ which might be employed, as in North and South Uist, to the improvement of the soil. But notwithstanding of this, and notwithstanding of the clearance already made from Harris, it is proposed to remove 2500 more, being upwards of two-thirds of the remaining population.

Mr Knox says, that, so far as he knows, the resources of Lewis are "thoroughly well employed,"§ and that "the island produces as much as, under favourable circumstances, it could produce."|| In most years, he says, it grows more corn than is required by the population.¶ Of its 14,541 inhabitants, however, the advocates of emigration would remove 6000. Mr Knox says, "Though it might be advantageous for 6000 or 7000 individuals to emigrate from Lewis, a great deal might be done in shifting them from one part of the island to another."**

Now, the account of Lewis given in the last statistical reports is, that it "was not inappropriately compared to a gold-laced hat in the former Statistical Account; for the cultivated parts of the coast bear the same proportion, as yet, to the bleak moss in the interior, as the gold lace on the rim of the hat to the whole superficies of the chapeau."†† All the clergymen state, that it is susceptible of great improvement. As in other parts of these islands, shell-sand is found on the coast;‡‡ and no doubt the measures which have been adopted with such success in North and South Uist, might be equally applicable here.

* Inverness, p. 174.

† Evidence before Committee, 2756.

|| Ibid. 2206.

** Ibid. 2346.

† Ibid. p. 157.

§ Ibid. 2185.

¶ Ibid. 2214.

‡‡ Ibid. p. 117.

†† Inverness, p. 120.

Lewis, Harris, North and South Uist, and Barra, constitute the whole of the Long Island. Mr Graham's investigation led him to the conclusion that emigration was more required from that than from any other part of the Hebrides; but if he had seen the above reports, it is more than probable that emigration would not have been the remedy which he would have prescribed.

Much of the surface of Skye is mountainous; yet even there extensive districts occur in which there is a wide field for improvement. The poverty of the population of Kilmuir has been heard of throughout the whole of Scotland; but perhaps it is not so well known, that "immense tracts of waste ground are found in the place, which might be brought into cultivation by a proper system of management, *at comparatively small expense*. By means of trenching, and the application of lime, the agricultural value of the parish might be greatly enhanced." * In that island lime is to be found in great abundance. The valleys of Strath are composed of it. "A bed of marl of the finest quality extends across that parish, from the farm of Torran, on Loch Slappen, to Skiniden on the Sound of Scalpay;" † thus running completely through the isthmus. In Duirinish there are two beds of limestone. "1st, At Waterstein, or Vaterstein, in a very remarkable situation, the immensely high cliffs overhanging the sea; the 2d, more extensively at Loch Bay, in the district of Vaternish." ‡ In that parish "there are 1900 acres now in cultivation, and upwards of 3000 which were once cultivated, but are now in pasture. There are about 40,000 acres which have always remained waste. There are 12,000 acres of these that might be brought into tillage, 4000 of which would probably yield a good return." § In Bracadale there are 4878 acres of arable land; but only a small portion is in cultivation, from "the system of farming which has for some time been adopted, viz., throwing a number of farms into one large tack for sheep-grazing, and dispossessing and setting adrift the small tenants." || This the writer designates a "decided disadvantage to its general population." ¶

It would be out of place to attempt here a complete survey

* Inverness, p. 276.

† Ibid. p. 302.

‡ Ibid. p. 327.

§ Ibid. p. 349.

|| Ibid. p. 296.

¶ Ibid. p. 209.

of so extensive a district, had I even ability to execute such a work, which I am sensible I have not ; and, on this view of the subject, I will only add, that most of the statistical reports to which I have referred, besides having their accuracy guaranteed by the names of their respectable authors, who, of course, collected their information from the best sources, appear from the evidence to have been in the hands of Mr Bowie and Dr M'Leod in proof-sheets at the time of their examination, and must consequently have had the benefit of their corrections.

But, independent altogether of the reclaiming of wastes, and without exposing proprietors to the serious expense attending such works, infinite good might be done by introducing among the small tenants a better system of cultivation. Not one of the crofters is possessed of a lease. They can hardly even be called tenants at will. They are not occupying their allotments with the persuasion, that, so long as they conduct themselves properly, they will not be disturbed. On the contrary, they see whole districts converted into sheep-walks, which were lately held by individuals in no degree more obnoxious than themselves. More than half of the inhabitants of South Uist were doomed to exile, although their exertions have trebled the produce of the parish, and more than doubled the rental. The fortunate occurrence of being now under a landlord whose views are different, has saved them from that calamity. But no such accident has befallen the inhabitants of North Uist ; and if the advocates for emigration shall prevail, 2500 of its 4603 inhabitants will presently be in Canada. No doubt all this is intended for their advantage ; but after what we have seen, it is certainly not impossible that the scheme may fail ; and it is absolutely certain that the doom hanging over them must paralyse every attempt to improve their own allotments. No one can wonder that tenants in these circumstances do not practise " the rotation system ;"—that " the only change is from oats to potatoes, and from potatoes to oats ;"—that " they do not always give such advantage to the soil as is implied even in this limited range ;"—that " it is by no means uncommon to sow oats for three or four years running in the same spot, and that without giving it any manure ;"—that black oats are still

cultivated, and their potatoes are of a very indifferent quality.* Neither can it be matter of surprise, that, under such management, seasons of scarcity should occasionally occur. The wonder is, that the land should in any year support its population. It is impossible to answer the crofter's objection, Why should he bestow his "labour in improving land which may become another's before the end of the year!"† The best farm in Roxburghshire or East Lothian would soon become a desert, if held by so precarious a tenure. But give the Highlander a permanent interest in his allotment, and he will presently lay aside his antiquated customs, and adopt the improved systems now universally established on the large farms in every part of these islands. This we are entitled to anticipate with confidence, from the effect produced in North and South Uist by the mere division of common.

It would not, however, be prudent at once to fix, for a period of years, every small tenant who may now have a holding upon an estate, without regard to his character. Their natural indolence cannot fail to have been increased by the circumstances in which they have been placed; and there are, no doubt, many who would hardly lay it aside, however much it might be for their benefit. There is plainly a necessity for using discrimination. And here I must refer to two classes of premiums offered by the Highland Society, with an express view to the districts under consideration. Conceiving that much of the misery of these districts is to be traced to the same causes which operated throughout the whole of Scotland at an earlier period, viz., the sloth and bad management of the inhabitants, the Society has instituted the premiums to which I refer, in order to cure these defects. If they shall in any degree attain that object, they will afford to proprietors a certain test to guide their selection of permanent tenants.

The first of these classes of premiums are intended to promote dexterity in the use of the spade, the implement by which small possessions must in general be cultivated. They are decided in the same way as the premiums in a ploughing match, and are continued for four years in the same parish,

* Inverness, p. 351.

† Ibid. p. 353.

like the cottage premiums. Like them, also, one-half of the expense is borne by the parish. Although the Highlander is averse to employments which must be long continued, with plodding perseverance, to meet with their reward, he is quite ready to enter on a struggle, however violent, in which he may soon obtain distinction. It was, accordingly, thought, that, if his ambition could be roused by engaging him in these competitions, the work upon his allotment would acquire a new interest as a preparation for his public exhibition. The plan was tried in Islay, in three parishes, in the year 1840, with the most perfect success. Owing to some oversights in the regulations, the exertion went even farther than could have been desired ; some of the men being actually carried off the field fainting from excessive fatigue. Last year, in consequence of Mr Campbell's absence, the competitions were not carried through within the time limited by the Society ; but he regards them as so important, that he expressed his intention of repeating them at his own expense. These premiums have also been offered in the parishes of Strath and Sleat, in the Isle of Skye. Last year they produced no competition ; but this year, in absence of Lord MacDonald, the convener Mr Shaw, his lordship's factor, reports that satisfactory competitions took place in both parishes ; and " now that the ice has once been broken, there is every reason to think that if premiums of the same kind are again offered, there will be a much larger number of competitors in each of these parishes ; and *there can be no doubt that their eyes have been opened to the efficiency of spade husbandry*, which is of great importance in a country where the awkward crooked spade is now in such general use." It may surely be assumed that a large proportion of the men who engage in these competitions will become active farmers, and may safely be intrusted with permanent leases.

The other class of premiums is for green crop on possessions not exceeding 30 acres, and forming part of a four-shift rotation. Without something like a prospect of continued possession, no competitors can be expected for these premiums ; but if a promise of leases were held forth to the winners, it would prove a powerful incentive to exertion ; and those who

might obtain such preference are not likely to prove undeserving of their landlord's confidence.

In these two ways any landlord might, in the course of a very few years, select from among the present population a class of small tenants who might with perfect safety be intrusted with leases, and that selection once made, the train of amelioration, which has been so well described by Mr Nicholls in his report on Ireland, would go on without interruption. "Improved management in the small farms would bring increase of capital, and improved habits among the cottier tenants; with the increase of capital, will come the desire to extend their holdings, and thus will arise a tendency to consolidate occupancies for the employment of increased capital, which the vast extent of now waste but reclaimable land in Ireland will greatly facilitate. An increase of agricultural capital will speedily act upon all the other sources of industry."*

Those who may not be fit to enter on an improved system of tillage, would sink into the rank of labourers under their more energetic and intelligent neighbours, or find employment in other parts of the country. To such emigrations the Highlanders have no objection. Indeed, till the extremely low price of travelling by steam brought the Irish into the market, numbers emigrated to the main land every year for harvest work from all parts of these islands, returning again before winter with their earnings. It has been found that, when settled in towns, the Highlanders are prone to vice, and subject to disease;† and if education has been the means of exposing their children to these hazards, there is no great wonder that the elder people should regard it as an evil. But were education only to convey them from one district of their own country to another district of their own country, safe from the unknown dangers of distant lands, and safe from the known dangers of a town life, the Highlander would be too happy to have his son supplied with the means of at once earning a comfortable subsistence, and of keeping up by correspondence his connection with his family. Thus, without the least violence to their feelings, the crowded population of the Western Isles would be conveyed to districts where their labour would be useful, and would command an ample price.

* Reports on Ireland, p. 168.

† Evidence before Emigration Committee, No. 535, 537, 1141.

In the course of the Parliamentary inquiry many of the witnesses are asked if a poor law, on the principle of that of England, would not be of service in the Highlands, but the question is almost uniformly answered in the negative. In ordinary years we have seen that the produce of the soil is sufficient to support the population; and so liberal are its possessors, that Mr Scott, now factor on a Highland estate, considers the poor of the Highlands "just as well off as where he lived in Roxburghshire where there was an assessment."* In the event of a deficient crop, again, the want extends to the whole community, nor are there means for distinguishing those who have peculiar claims to relief. The workhouse system assumes that, in general, the employment of the district is sufficient for its population; but in the Western Isles there is little capital, and hardly at any time is work to be found except on the crofter's own possession. If, then, the workhouse is to be used as a test of destitution, the whole community must be sent to it, and while engaged in this forced labour, at an enormous expense, they must neglect the cultivation of their own ground, on which their future subsistence must depend. The system is obviously quite inapplicable to such a case.

But there is another view of the matter which demands consideration. I have taken it for granted, that, when the advocates for emigration represent its main object to be the relief of the indigent Highlander, their meaning is, that it would secure to him comforts beyond those which he can obtain on his present allotment. But I fear their words will admit of being differently understood; and when we see how far "clearing farms" for sheep-walks has been carried, there is too much reason to think that it is only to the people thus dispossessed that emigration is regarded as a benefit—that no more is, in fact, meant but that the Highland landlord, in exercising his *summum jus*, by turning the able-bodied paupers out of their holdings, is so far actuated by benevolent motives, that he would make some contribution towards conveying them beyond seas, rather than throw them upon the world altogether destitute. That the law admits of his doing this, I believe to be but too true; and if its exercise could be justified by precedent, there

* Evidence before Committee, 1788.

are unhappily too many. But surely such a law has little harmony with the feelings of the present age. Mr Revans says, the outrages occasioned in England by the rapid consolidation of holdings, "seem to have been, in fact, the immediate occasion of the enactment of the English Poor Laws."* In this country, and at this time, the tears of the sufferers ought surely to plead as powerfully for them as any arguments addressed to our fears; and although a compulsory provision for the able-bodied may not be required in other parts of the country, nor even in these islands, when the inhabitants are allowed to retain their allotments; the Legislature is impudently called upon to secure some provision for those who are thus turned adrift to make way for a more profitable stock. I will not attempt to enter on the details of such a measure, which may possibly be complicated. The justice of the principle, I think, no one will venture to question; and I feel assured, that, if national aid even should be necessary for such a work, it will be given with a liberality becoming the British character.

With this exception, I cannot help thinking, that each district might, with perfect safety, be left to use their own discretion, in adopting or rejecting the English system, according to their views of their own situation; and I can have as little doubt that, in many districts, some modification of it would be of the greatest use. On that subject I will, however, say little here, having gone into it at considerable length in a former paper in this Journal.†

There is, however, one point which I cannot pass without some farther observation; I allude to the principle of making the workhouse the sole test of destitution.

Nominally it offers relief to every pauper; and impressing the belief that all kinds of mendicity are pure imposition, it steels the heart against every private claim. Yet so far has the workhouse fallen short of its promise, that the reports of the Registrar-General actually shew 63 deaths from *starvation* in the latter half of the year 1837, 167 from the same cause in the year 1838, and 130 in 1839. Nor were these

* Evils of the State of Ireland, p. 108.

† Tenth Report of *Glenkens Society*, No. LII.

deaths confined altogether to towns. Out of a million of a town's population, the annual deaths from this cause in the years 1838 and 1839 amounted to fourteen. Out of a million of a country population the annual deaths from this cause were exactly half that number.

In Scotland we have not the same facility of discovering such events by a coroner's inquest; but whatever may be said of the towns, they could scarcely escape the notice of ministers and elders in the country parishes. Had any thing of the kind happened, some instances must have been brought to light by the queries issued by the Society which was formed to follow out Dr Alison's views, and no doubt they would have been communicated to the public. But even in the Western Isles, in the year 1837, when there was an absolute famine, nothing of the kind occurred. The question, "Did any actually die from want?" is again and again put by the Committee of the House of Commons, but it is uniformly answered in the negative. For this, no doubt, that district was as much indebted to the generosity of England as to that of their own countrymen; but how, then, does it happen, that in rich and generous England, herself with so many appliances and means to keep want at a distance, hundreds every year perish from sheer starvation?

It is too plain that the gates of the workhouse are obstructed by moral obstacles, which to a person of principle are as impassible as bars of iron. Misconduct is the great cause of pauperism, and it too frequently happens that the inmates of a workhouse are such as to exclude all who have the slightest regard for character. In the appendix to the Report for 1839, there is a complaint from St George's in the East, setting forth the mischief occasioned by the dissolute females in that workhouse. "They not only by their conduct occasion disorder in the house, but they ruin the morals of the younger girls." "All the means which the guardians possess for their correction have been exercised in vain."* From the Bourn Union also, an application was made to the Commissioners, "that the able-bodied married women and widows be removed into the aged women's ward, to *avoid the contamination and*

* Appendix to Report, p.

degradation of associating with women having bastard children, and other lewd and disorderly characters.”* In this instance the attention of the guardians seems to have been confined to the married women and widows, leaving the morals of the younger girls without protection. Dr Kay, in reporting the former of these cases to the commissioners, says, “ This class of women is universally found to be a source of demoralization and disorder, not merely in the workhouses of the metropolitan district, but in all workhouses not comprising a population solely rural.”†

To a certain extent the evil may be removed by classification, but that cannot always be accomplished ; and it never can be possible to separate vice in its less revolting and most dangerous forms, or to prevent intimacies from being contracted which must bring certain ruin upon the most deserving. Nor is the danger confined to females. All are familiar with the mischief arising from the miscellaneous mixture in city lodging-houses ; and in the workhouse, as a condition of receiving relief from bodily wants, the unfortunate pauper is exposed to an ordeal quite as dangerous to his virtue, without the means of escape. To both sexes the workhouse cannot fail to be a source of demoralization, against which it is impossible to provide any effectual protection. Can we then be surprised, that persons to whom this is known should expose themselves and their families to the worst privations—even to death itself, rather than accept of relief upon such terms ? To the question, “ Do not the poor from some cause or other reduce themselves to a state bordering on starvation rather than enter the workhouse ? ” Mr Bulbeck answers, “ Yes, they do.”‡ Harry Sopp, a labouring man, was examined before the same committee, and asked, “ Would you sooner look for work out of your parish than go into the workhouse ? ” His answer was, “ I would sooner go to any part of the United Kingdom than go to the workhouse, or his Majesty’s dominions abroad.” The Rev. Mr Brock, after mentioning that in his parish “ several people had received orders to go into the poor-house in consequence of want of employment,” was asked by the commit-

* Appendix to Report, p. 298.

† Ibid. p. 287.

‡ Report of Committee, 1837, No. 9697.

tee, whether they had "gone into the poor-house?" He replied, "No, they have not; I believe they would rather starve than go in." Other witnesses spoke to the same effect.* A melancholy instance of actual death under these circumstances occurred at Berwick, so late as December 1840. The sufferer had applied several times for out-door relief, but his applications had been refused or neglected by the guardians. The jury returned a verdict, "That disease and death from want of food had been brought on." It was proved that for some days before his death this poor man had subsisted on fish garbage, which had been laid on the fields for manure.†

I believe no Scotsman, not even the warmest advocates for a Government inquiry, would wish to see a system like this introduced into his own country. And yet, it is quite certain, that, if we are to be guided altogether by the opinions of the English Poor Law Commissioners, this is the system which we must adopt.

By all means, let us have work-houses for the relief of paupers of bad character. They ought not to be allowed to starve, but as little ought the innocent victims of misfortune to be exposed to the contamination of their society. How easy would it be to give to females work to be executed in their own houses, which would test their destitution as thoroughly as any kind of work-house labour that can be devised; and what possible objection can there be to Sheriff Alison's plan of having some public work always in progress, which, without interfering with ordinary labour, might be a resource for men who happen to be out of employment. There would then be no separation of families, no exposure to dangerous intimacies. The father would return to his children when his day's work was finished; and if he were allowed no more for his work than is required for their support, he would cease to be a burden upon the public, whenever he could command more profitable employment.

By such means, it seems perfectly possible to provide for indigence in every form, as effectually as by any system of workhouses. It is chiefly for the town's population that such

* Report, 1837, No. 8663, 8676.

† Berwick Warder, 9th December 1840; 22d January 1841.

provision is required, and there, also, it can be afforded with the greatest facility.

But let it not be supposed that by any possible contrivance the connection between vice and misery can be dissolved, or the dissolute inhabitants of the wynds of Glasgow put in possession of the comforts of a virtuous life. The man who spends his wages in the ale-house on the night on which they are paid, can benefit little from the charity of his countrymen, however exercised. Of course, he will not go to the workhouse when he can obtain good wages elsewhere, and it is only on an entire failure of other employment that it can afford him relief. In the ordinary case, it is of no use to him; and the condition of such characters in London, under the immediate eye of the Commissioners, is not materially different from their condition here. The following description is extracted by Messrs Chambers from the *Journal of Civilization*:—“It is a fact that, in St Giles’s, in the back streets of Drury Lane, around Westminster Abbey, in the parishes of Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, &c., nearly all along the Surrey shores of the river, and in the similar neighbourhoods of great towns, a state of social civilization exists as low in degree as it is found in the far off regions of Africa. We visited last week Charles, King, and Parker Streets, Drury Lane; many of the houses are without fore-doors; some of the rooms are in the last stage of dilapidation, and exhibit fewer conveniences than the basket-work cane of Bechuana, or the wigwam of a red Indian. The stairs are in a few cases broken away; the out-offices, where there are any, are rendered useless from accumulated filth, and the sewerage is frequently stopped. The accumulation of dirt, refuse, &c., exhales effluvia, scarcely tolerable on entering the passages; it is quite unendurable to a visitor, especially after a shower of rain, and can only be borne by the inhabitants from long custom.”*

These discomforts are the never-failing attendants on the habits of such a population; and while Glasgow shall continue to consume annually, as stated by Mr Alison, L.1,200,000 in the single article of whisky, and while its wynds exhibit their present array of thriving spirit-shops, let the provision for the poor be as munificent as the most ardent philanthropist could desire, it would do little towards protecting the inhabitants from those miseries which are inseparable from their course of life.

But the consideration of the state of the town’s population

does not come within the scope of this paper, its main object being to ascertain whether the landowners of Scotland, as a body, have deserved the censures which have been vented upon them. Those who may take the trouble of dispassionately weighing what is stated in these pages, will, I think, scarcely answer this question in the affirmative. It is true that they have placed their chief reliance on those means by which the productive powers of the country are increased, and the industrious labourer is enabled to maintain those who have a natural claim on him for support. But the artificial provision for the wants of the indigent has also had a large share of their attention; and, as in their efforts to promote other improvements throughout the country, they have ransacked the whole world for information, so in studying the difficult subject of pauper management, they will gladly avail themselves of every assistance within their reach. The opinions of such men as the Poor Law Commissioners of England, they must hold in the greatest respect. But still it must be remembered, that the commissioners are strangers to Scotland, and that they are devoted to their own theory; and, although many portions of their plans may merit our adoption, the Scottish proprietors must stand excused for retaining to themselves the power of making their own selection.

AGRICULTURIST'S NOTE-BOOK.—NO. XVII.

Securing a Crop of Carrots. By Mr JAMES BROWN.—*Daucus Carrota* (Lin.) belongs to the class and order *Pentandria Digynia*, and natural order *Umbellifera*,—is a native of Britain, and found in light sandy pastures and in waste dry places in almost every part of the kingdom. The effects of cultivation have entirely altered the appearance of its root, which is the part used. In its natural state, the carrot is small, hard, and dry, of a white colour and strong flavour. In its cultivated state, the root becomes large, succulent, and of a red or yellowish colour.

We have no certain information respecting the precise time when carrots were first cultivated in this country; but Hume the historian says, that, in the time of Henry the Eighth,