

— The —
**COLLECTED
WRITINGS**

— of —

LORD

Selkirk

— 1799-1809 —

Volume I in the Writings and Papers of
Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk.



Edited and Introduced by
J. M. Bumsted

Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk (1771-1820), is known to most Canadians as a Scots laird who founded a colony at Red River in 1811. Selkirk's efforts at Red River were not merely an isolated episode in his life, however, but rather the culmination of it. He had been involved in North American colonization since the early years of the century, and had established settlements in both Prince Edward Island and Upper Canada before turning to the West. Moreover, Selkirk did not approach colonization merely as an individual who sought to populate a new country, but as an experimenter in social policy by which those considered redundant in their native lands could find a meaningful place for themselves in other climes. In the first years of the nineteenth century Selkirk published extensively, although unsystematically, on the subjects of political economy and reform. This volume, the first of two which will collect and reprint Selkirk's published writings, deals with the period before 1809. In a lengthy introduction, J. M. Bumsted places these early writings in the context both of Selkirk's life and of his times. The result is a different Selkirk from the one usually encountered in the textbooks. He emerges not merely as a man of action but also one of ideas.

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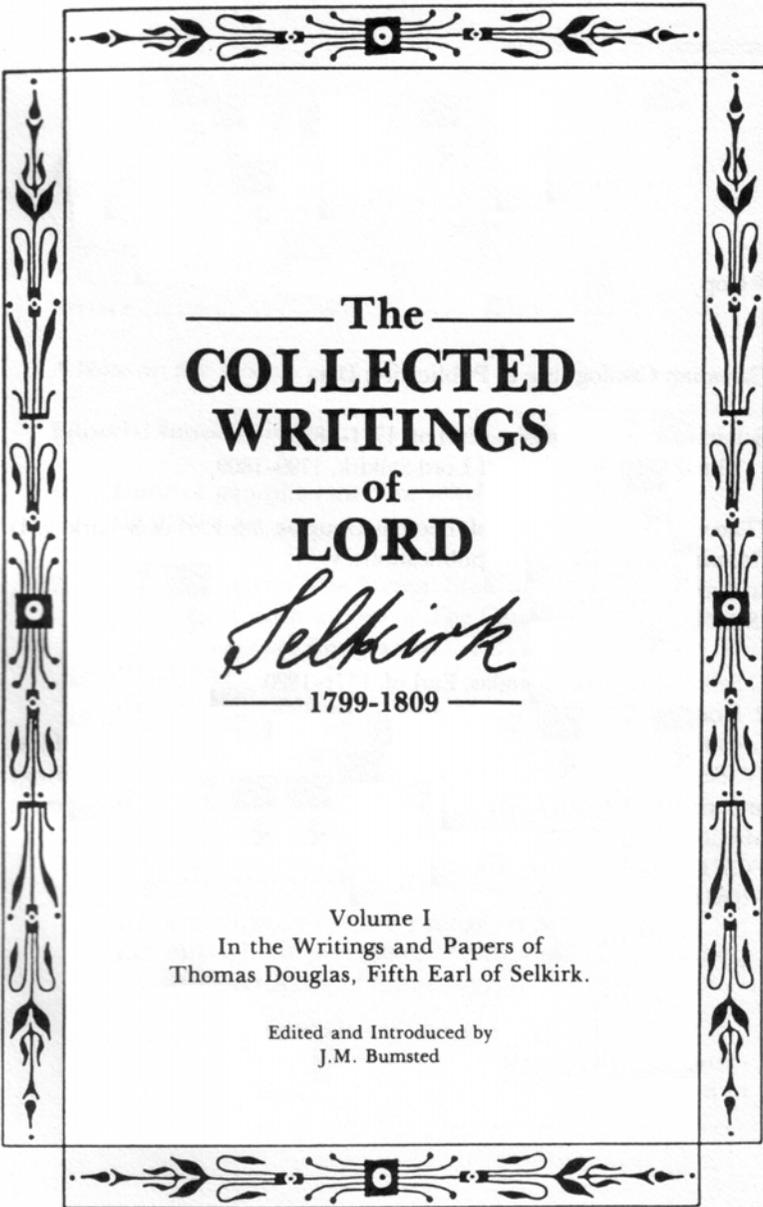
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Preface

This book represents the first volume of a projected eleven-volume edition of the Collected Writings and Papers of Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk. This project had its origins in 1979, when J.M. Bumsted and A.B. McKillop, then General Editor of the Manitoba Record Society, first proposed to the University of Manitoba that it sponsor such an edition as a contribution to scholarship and particularly the early history of the Canadian West. Professor Douglas Sprague agreed at that time to join the project as Associate Editor, and a team of specialists on early Canadian history was assembled.

Since 1979, the Selkirk Project has experienced considerable vicissitudes and permutations, but the initial ambition to publish in a scholarly edition the writings and private papers of Lord Selkirk has remained unaltered. As a team enterprise of considerable magnitude, the Project has incurred an enormous series of debts to its participating editors, other scholars, archives and libraries, a number of student assistants, various university administrators, (particularly at the University of Manitoba), and to those who have provided it with the funds to carry on.

The original participating editors in the Project were: P.A. Buckner (University of New Brunswick); Philip Wigley (University of Edinburgh and now deceased); Jennifer Brown (currently University of Winnipeg); J.E. Rea (University of Manitoba); Dale and Lee Gibson (University of Manitoba); Frits Pannekoek (Alberta Heritage); A.B. McKillop (University of Manitoba); Sylvia Van Kirk (University of Toronto); Douglas Sprague (University of Manitoba); and Herbert Mays (University of Winnipeg). In addition to Professor Sprague, Professors Rae, Brown, and Mays have actively assisted in the preparation of this first volume.

The original Editorial Committee of the Project included Dr. Frances Halpenny (University of Toronto); Dr. Serge Lusignan (University of Montreal); Mr. Derek Bedson (then president of the Manitoba Records Society); Dr. Cornelius Jaenen (University of Ottawa); Professor G.A. Shepperson (University of Edinburgh); Professor Glyn Williams (University of London); Dr. F.G. Stambrook (University of Manitoba); Dr. John Foster (University of Alberta); Dr. John Robson (University of Toronto); and Dr. David Chesnutt (University of South Carolina). We are indebted to all these individuals for their continued support and assistance.

We acknowledge with thanks as well the unfailing co-operation of the National Library of Scotland, the University of Edinburgh Library, the Scottish Catholic Archives, the Scottish Record Office, the Public Record Office in England, the British Library, the British Museum, the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island, the Public Archives of Canada, the Public Archives of Ontario, the Public Archives of Manitoba, the University of Manitoba Library, and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives. Shirlee Smith of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and Richard Bennett of the University of Manitoba Library have been particularly supportive over the years.

At the University of Manitoba, we give thanks to President Ralph Campbell and President Arnold Naimark, Vice-President (Academic) David Lawless, Dean of Arts Fred Stambrook, Provost Walter Bushuk, and the several chairmen of the History - Department - John Finlay, George Schultz, and John Kendle. A special word of gratitude needs to be added for Henry Jacobs, the University's research officer, who spent more hours than any of us care to remember dealing with the problems of organization and funding for the Project.

A number of student assistants have contributed to the preparation for this volume, including Wendy Owen, Gerhard Ens, Sharon Babaian, David Hall, and Gerry Berkowski. Joanne Drewniak deserves special mention, for she has been responsible for entering onto the computer most of the editorial annotations and the editorial introduction.

Funding for the Selkirk Project and for the preparation and publication of this volume has been provided by the Province of Manitoba, the University of Manitoba, and an anonymous donor.

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A Note on the Texts

The texts which follow are faithful transcriptions of the originals with the following exceptions: the indiscriminate use of single and double quotation marks by Selkirk and his printers has been regularized; the nineteenth century custom of using quotation marks around each line of quoted material has been altered to more familiar modern usage; Selkirk's original footnotes have been labelled as such and incorporated into the running annotation to the texts; Selkirk's original spellings and punctuations have been maintained, however idiosyncratic; words commonly spelled differently today have been noted with a [sic].

INTRODUCTION

The Early Years to 1799

The House of Douglas, headed by the Earls of Selkirk, held its ancestral estates in Galloway, which by the eighteenth century was comprised of the Shire of Wigton and the Stewardry of Kirkcudbright. Situated in Scotland's southwestern corner, not far from the Lake District of England with which it shares many geo-logical features, Galloway's past had been a turbulent rather than placid one. Behind its oft-indented coastline loomed a mountainous region of livestock and semi-itinerant pastoral folk, and the region was famous for its fierce fighting men, the latter in the seventeenth century mainly "Covenanters," who supported the Kirk and the Scottish Parliament. Galloway was a land where, by the time of the Union of England and Scotland in 1707, the old and new Scotlands lived in uneasy juxtaposition. Modernization, particularly in the form of agricultural reform or "improvement," met with great popular resistance.¹

For most of the second half of the eighteenth century, from 1744 to 1799, the House of Douglas was headed by Dunbar Hamilton Douglas, 4th Earl of Selkirk, whose very names commemorated the three families whose intermarriage had produced the lands to support a Scottish title not of ancient lineage, having been created only in 1646 by a beleaguered Charles I.² Dunbar was a man of curious accomplishments and fascinating contradictions. He had corrected an inadequate early education by learning Latin and Greek in his adolescence, in order to matriculate at the University of Glasgow in 1739; he was notorious among his classmates as a scholarly recluse.³ Besides a love for learning, Dunbar acquired at the University of Glasgow a political creed from that great teacher of "moral philosophy"

Francis Hutcheson, who stressed the need to promote the “common good of all” at the same time that he opposed arbitrary government and reserved the right to resist tyranny.⁴ One of the main figures in what one scholar has labelled the “Commonwealthman” or “True Whig” political tradition, Hutcheson had an enormous lifetime influence on Dunbar Douglas, although it would take many years for his political ideas to be put publicly into practice by the man who acceded to his granduncle’s title in 1744.⁵ But Dunbar left Glasgow a “true whig” and warm friend of civil and religious liberty, economic improvement, political reform, and the independence of the Scottish nobility from servility to English political masters.

Soon after his graduation, Dunbar had to face the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, and unlike his father - who had supported the Stuart cause in 1715 - firmly declared his allegiance to the Hanoverian monarchy and even helped raise volunteer soldiers, never armed, to fight the Pretender’s army if it should make its way out of the Highlands.⁶ After this brief flurry of public patriotism, Dunbar travelled for some years on the continent, ultimately returning to his estates to marry and raise a family in isolation from the public life for which he occasionally yearned and in which late in life he became involved. He married, on 6 December 1758 a distant cousin, Helen Hamilton, fifth daughter of the second son of the Earl of Haddington. Helen brought little property to the family, but her connections were extensive and her fecundity considerable.⁷

For over twenty years after his marriage, Dunbar Douglas led the life of a minor and obscure Scottish nobleman, putting all his energies into the modernization of his estates, especially a property at St. Mary’s Isle just outside the town of Kirkcudbright acquired by the family in 1725. A manor house was constructed - and extended - while lands were marled, trees planted, and livestock (especially sheep) bred to increasingly high standards.⁸ St. Mary’s Isle became the centre of a model farm, influential in bringing new techniques of agriculture to Galloway and demonstrating their efficacy.⁹ Dunbar’s own specialities were horticultural, his heated green-houses producing plants for ornamentation and experimentation. He planted trees everywhere - for timber, for decoration, and for profit. His extensive orchard of fruit trees was the basis of a scheme to establish an orchard by the house of every tenant.¹⁰ Although now largely forgotten, the 4th Earl of Selkirk was noted in his day as one of Scotland’s major agricultural improvers.¹¹

While Dunbar was active in his nursery, Helen was equally busy in hers. An heir, Sholto Basil, was born on 3 September 1759, less than ten months after the celebration of the nuptials. A sickly child, he died less than a year later; the Countess was already carrying Isabella Margaret, born 6 September 1760. Seventeen months later another daughter, Helen, arrived, and finally in March of 1763 came the long-awaited heir, Basil William, who as the family's eldest male held the courtesy title of Lord Daer. After Basil a succession of male children followed: John in 1765, Dunbar in 1766, Alexander in 1767, David in 1769 (he died in May 1770), and finally Thomas on 20 June 1771. The Countess had seemingly done her work well, and the family was well supplied with males to carry on the line. Who could suspect that the four eldest males would all die unmarried and childless, leaving only Thomas to survive his father and inherit the title? As if satisfied with her production of males, Helen shifted back to daughters, with Mary in 1773, Elizabeth in 1775, Catherine in 1778, and finally Anne (who lived but ten days) in 1782. In twenty-three years the Countess of Selkirk had produced thirteen children - seven males and six females - ten of whom, evenly divided between the sexes, survived infancy. The house at St. Mary's Isle would be full of children for many years.¹²

In the period of continual childbirth, Dunbar Douglas seemed content to improve his lands and enjoy his constantly expanding family. His only major involvement with the larger world was thrust upon him when because of his inheritances he became a chief litigant in the most notorious and complicated legal case in eighteenth-century Scotland, the so-called "Douglas Cause."¹³ This case concerned the disposition of the estate of Archibald, Duke of Douglas, who died without issue on 21 July 1761. A death-bed settlement had left the estate to the heirs of the Duke's father's body, making the heir apparent Archibald Steuart Douglas, the only surviving son of the Duke's only sibling, Lady Jane Douglas, who had died in 1753. Archibald had been born in Paris in 1748 in mysterious circumstances to a fifty-one year old Lady Jane, who two years earlier had married Colonel John Steuart, an aged scapegrace Jacobite adventurer. Few questioned that Lady Jane had given birth to twins in 1748, but there was reason to suspect, it transpired, that these children had died with one being replaced by Colonel John from the ranks of the Paris poor.¹⁴ As one of the closest kinsmen of the deceased Duke - apart from Archibald - Dunbar had claims based upon earlier family settlements and previous wills. The Court of Session at Edinburgh decided routinely late in 1762 against the Earl of Selkirk and the other claimant, the Duke of Hamilton, in favour of the designated heir.¹⁵

At this point the Douglas Case had not yet become the Douglas Cause. But the chief attorney for the Duke of Hamilton, Andrew Stuart, had become increasingly suspicious of the evidence surrounding young Archibald's birth, and research in France produced information which called into question whether he was truly the son of Lady Jane Douglas. That evidence was heard in 1766 and 1767, and in a dramatic occasion at Holyrood House, the fifteen judges decided by one vote to deny Archibald's maternity.¹⁶ Archibald, aided by a young James Boswell, appealed to the House of Lords, which voted in 1769 in his favour.¹⁷ The Earl of Selkirk had remained aloof from the attack on Archibald's parentage, but returned to press his own claims based on ancient documents after the Lords had decided the filiation issue. Selkirk lost his case in the Edinburgh Court of Sessions late in 1769, but decided to appeal to the House of Lords. A stubborn man, Dunbar began a series of actions based upon conviction, many of which went against the weight of contemporary public opinion. He soon became notorious in both Scottish and British public life as a quixotic figure, a fervent supporter of lost causes.

Estate improvement, a large family, and legal battles were expensive matters. Dunbar was prepared to sell his Baldoon lands, and lived for the next twenty years on credit backed by the potential value of his Wigtonshire property. In the midst of his legal maneuvering towards the House of Lords in the Douglas Case, Thomas was born. With four elder brothers ahead of him in the succession to the title, no one in the family could have anticipated that tiny Thomas was the prospective Fifth Earl of Selkirk. His birth was met with family rejoicing, but not on the basis of dynastic factors.

Even before the birth of Thomas, his father had added yet another windmill against which he could tilt, in this case the interference of the British government in the Scottish peerage elections. By the Act of Union of 1707, the Scots peers were allowed to elect sixteen of their number to represent them at Westminster, thus effectively reducing the status of the Scottish peerage below that of their English cousins, each of whom held a birthright seat in the House of Lords. By 1770 a series of unofficial procedures and rules had developed governing elections. Neither open campaigning nor political organization was formally allowed. Peers were permitted to draft circumspect letters to their fellows informing them of a willingness to "stand"

(not to “run”), and a few friends of the candidate might meet in an Edinburgh tavern or oyster house before the election to encourage him. Vote exchanging was permitted. Open voting by the peers took place at every general parliamentary election, although it was possible to ballot by proxy or to submit signed lists rather than appear in person at Edinburgh. The very diffidence of the peers to engage in politicking inevitably led to encroachments on the system by British governments in search of parliamentary support.¹⁸

Late in 1770 the death of the Duke of Argyle forced a peerage by-election, and the North ministry found an opposition developing to its attempts to influence the results. That opposition was led, particularly on that day in January of 1771 fixed for the election at Holyrood House, by the Earl of Selkirk, who declared to his fellow peers that “the ministers of state have, contrary to the rights of the constitution, used undue influence relative to the election,” especially by intimidating “all who have dependence on the favours of administration from giving their votes in that unbiassed manner which is essential to the existence of liberty and our free constitution.”¹⁹ This ringing declaration of “True Whig” sentiments was the first of many occasions when the Earl of Selkirk and his family would fight for the independence of the Scots peerage and the status of their order. The problem of the peerage was one inherited from Dunbar by his heir Thomas, and the latter would find it equally vexing. In 1774 Dunbar again battled unsuccessfully to halt government interference with Scottish peerage elections.

The 4th Earl of Selkirk publicly opposed the North ministry for political meddling, although he was also highly critical of the government’s policies, particularly toward the American colonies. As he would later write, “with regard to the King’s Ministers, I neither have nor can have any interest with them, as I have generally disapproved of most of their measures, and in particular of almost their whole conduct in the unhappy and illjudged American War.”²⁰ Not only had he no connection with the administration, he insisted, but “except having the disadvantage of a useless Scottish title, I am in all respects as much a Private Country Gentleman as any one can be, having a retired life in the country and engaging in no factions whatever.”²¹ Such protestations were quite accurate for Dunbar’s behaviour until the end of the American War, although the wider world occasionally intruded upon his privacy and that of his family, perhaps nowhere so distressingly as in April of 1778, when a party from the American vessel *Ranger*, under the command of John Paul Jones, raided St. Mary’s Isle.

John Paul (he added the Jones after leaving Scotland) was the son of a gardener from Arbigland, Kirkcudbright, who did not realize that the “great laird” of his childhood was not a figure of national prominence. His scheme to capture the Earl of Selkirk to publicize the war in Scotland was thwarted by Dunbar’s absence from the estate. But although based on an obviously erroneous assessment of Selkirk’s importance, it was otherwise not a bad plan. The fact that an American naval vessel could raid the Scottish coast at will and engage in political kidnapping would have had enormous propaganda value. Rumours then and since that Jones was an illegitimate member of the Earl’s family have met with no substantiation.²² In later years Thomas Douglas would credit his fervent anti-Americanism to the trauma of the Jones raid. As he wrote in 1813, “this was a momentous event in my life. I was terribly frightened . . . and when I was but a youth I developed an antipathy for the United States due almost solely to the buccaneering of John Paul.”²³ Other more important reasons can be advanced for the 5th Earl’s later American hostility, and too much ought not to be placed on the shoulders of John Paul Jones. Young Thommy Douglas did not actually witness the raid, although he undoubtedly heard much about it, and when he met the American sailor in 1791 he displayed no signs of dislike.²⁴ Moreover, the raid itself was merely a tempest in a teapot. Jones himself was not present, and his officers behaved civilly, settling for the family silver when it became clear they could not have a human prize. Jones himself would later return the booty?²⁵ News of the raid reached Dunbar on his way back to St. Mary’s Isle and he rushed home, meeting the Countess and the children at Annan, whereupon the family joined the Dumfries social circuit and became totally immersed in “dressing, assemblys, suppers and receiving visits.”²⁶ Not surprisingly, Dunbar became increasingly concerned with government plans for home defence, another obsession which carried over to his heir.

The John Paul Jones affair was probably the major external event in the life of the young Thomas Douglas until his departure for school in England in 1782. The matter of schooling must have been something of a problem for his parents. Although a bright lad, he was not physically strong and was far removed from the inheritance. The boy would have to fend for himself in life, and his parents sought to prepare him for a profession. At the same time, he was both retiring and unworldly. He required exposure to the world rather than the cosseted life of private tutoring, but was hardly ready for

the rough and tumble of Scotland's only possible school, the Edinburgh High School, widely known at the time for its harshness and vulgarity. "Among the boys," later observed Henry Cockburn, who had attend the school in the 1780s, "coarseness of language and manners was the only fashion. An English boy was so rare, that his accent was openly laughed at. No Lady would be seen within its walls. Nothing evidently civilized was safe. Two of the masters, in particular, were so savage, that any master doing now what they did every hour, would certainly be transported."²⁷ Such an environment would hardly suit a peer's son of delicate constitution. Fortunately, the English school which elder brother Basil had attended was still in operation, and so Thomas was taken there.

Palgrave - the school was named after the town in which it was situated - was on the border of Norfolk and Suffolk, about thirty miles northeast of Cambridge. It was one of the many dissenting academies opened in 18th-century England to train the sons of non-Anglican merchants and professionals, and occasionally the offspring of Scottish peers. Begun in 1774 and closed in 1785, its life was longer than most such institutions?⁸ Like most dissenting academies, it was concerned with the present. Its students were not to be men of leisure and were not likely to require the classical education required to attend Oxford and Cambridge, both closed to dissenters. Palgrave and its many competitors were the educational outlets for the two main currents of dissenting thought in the eighteenth century: evangelical pietism and experimental science.²⁹ Both currents were, at the time, breaks with the arid formalism of the past.

Ostensibly Palgrave was run by the Reverend Rochemont Barbauld, but contemporaries recognized its real force was Barbauld's wife, the former Anna Laetitia Aiken, whose family originated in Kirkcudbright. Mrs. Barbauld, as Anna Laetitia was always known, was a minor but well-known literary figure, accepted by Samuel Johnson as his most successful imitator. She was most celebrated for her "Hymns in Prose for Children," perhaps the first serious literary work written expressly for children at their own level.³⁰ The Barbaulds were evangelical Unitarians, hostile to predestination and crisis conversion experiences, but also to undue rationalism. They believed in experiential piety and a genteel Christian lifestyle, and were the precursors of what is today popularly regarded as "Victorian Morality." For young Thomas, Mrs. Barbauld was a critical influence, uniting the notions of moral and intellectual development in ways not really Enlightenment Rationalism but rather Enlightenment Moralism. She clearly contributed to making the young man more than a bit of a prig.

The Barbaulds encouraged leadership as well as scholarship, and their school's rules prefigured the major educational reforms of the English public school of the nineteenth century.³¹ Thomas fitted well into their programme, and at one point Mrs. Barbauld commented that he had "grown into a very fine youth & is in every sense one of the first if not the first among his fellow students. He has a well-directed ambition, a sprightly pleasing manner which if I am not mistaken will enable him to make a figure in future life." Revealingly, she added, "he is not one of those however who entertain us."³² Thomas Douglas had no sense of levity or playfulness. His approach to life was enthusiastic but totally serious.

While young Thom was in England rubbing the Scottish burrs off his accent and further developing the sense of moral responsibility inculcated by his parents, his father decided to enter Scottish politics in a committed way. In 1784 a new ministry, headed by William Pitt, came into power. Its Scottish lieutenants, especially members of the Dundas family who spoke for the gentry and professional classes, were once again arranging the election of Scottish peers.³³ A liberal Whig government which Dunbar could enthusiastically support, had been briefly in power to arrange the unpopular peace with America, but the Pitt ministry - whatever Pitt's personal appeal - was supported by elements which Dunbar found unsympathetic and unattractive. In 1782 he had joined the Society (or Constitutional Information, founded by Christopher Wyvill and John Cartwright, which was committed to parliamentary reform.³⁴ The Pitt ministry was hardly reformist. The Earl of Selkirk girded himself to resume battle against political interference from Whitehall in the peerage elections of Scotland. Over the next few years, while young Thomas Douglas grew to manhood, his family would become increasingly connected with opposition to the ruling elements in Scotland and Britain. Dunbar, in close collaboration with his eldest son and heir, Lord Daer, would fight fiercely for reform of the political privileges of the Scottish peerage, and eventually for more wide-reaching changes in the franchise and representation. In the process, the family would make itself politically and socially unacceptable to most of its contemporaries, a fact of enormous importance to the future career of its youngest son when he unexpectedly succeeded his father as 5th Earl of Selkirk.

The new-found militancy of Dunbar Douglas in 1784 was initially merely a logical extension of his earlier concerns for the independence of his order. During the 1770s he had opposed the political interference of the ministry in the Scottish peerage elections, but had neither attempted to lead those who shared his fears nor endeavoured to organize his colleagues. He now recognized that a purely personal opposition was insufficient to deal with concerted ministerial policy. He therefore “formed a Plan for a General Union of those who wished for freedom in the Peerage Election uncontrolled by Court Influence,” and to his surprise discovered it was not a “Wild Chimera.”³⁵ Others were prepared to rally to his standard. Like most “True Whigs” of his century, Dunbar associated the chief threat to freedom with the factionalization created by the government and stood only reluctantly for selection as a representative peer at the head of a faction of opposition. He was at first a reluctant politician, who had shown little previous interest in public life and would demonstrate little agility in the corridors of power. But, again typically, once involved he became totally committed. Once engaged, there could be no retreat. Each confrontation and each defeat merely strengthened his determination. Stubbornness was a family trait, which would serve both as advantage and disadvantage. Unsuccessful in his declared candidacy to the House of Lords in 1784, Dunbar protested his defeat to Lord Camden in London on the grounds of government interference which had reduced the Scottish peerage to “the most wretched dependence on Ministry.”³⁶

In his letter to Camden, Dunbar noted that he could, if he so desired, determine Commons elections in two counties. Instead, he proclaimed self-righteously, more than twenty years earlier, “rather than be dependent on Ministers, I gave up all connection with Politicks & retired indignantly into obscurity and insignificance; and threw away then as good an Interest as any Peer in Scotland had.”³⁷ Dispatching Lord Daer, just turned twenty-one, as his emissary, Dunbar frightened the government with the prospect of a formal protest to the House of Lords, and it offered him what seemed to be a promise to reform the peerage elections. Selkirk spent the next months preparing a petition for reform, but as the ministry well knew, he could not obtain sufficient support from his colleagues.-” This first involvement of the family with Scottish peerage reform was hardly the last. Lord Daer took up the issue in a different context, and twenty years later Thomas - as Fifth Earl - would again resume the struggle to convince his fellow peers to

alter inequitable procedures, with little more ultimate effect on the system.

As for young Thomas, he spent the summer of 1785 in the companionship of the son of a New York Loyalist taken under Dunbar's wing. The Earl described the young man, the son of former governor Cadwallader Colden, as exhibiting "too many of the prejudices of the American Loyalists," but some of these hostilities may well have rubbed off on his hosts³⁹ Certainly it was from the Coldens that the family acquired land in upper New York State which would help lead Thomas to his eventual career in North America.⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1785 Lady Selkirk took her three youngest children, including Thomas, to Edinburgh, where they were boarded at the house of a Miss Colburn. Thus was Thomas introduced to the city of Edinburgh, where he would enter the University and spend five happy years maturing.

The city in which Thomas was to spend his adolescence was then at the height of its renaissance, the centre of the Enlightenment in Scotland and already renowned throughout the world - both for its architectural splendours and its learned conversation - as the "Athens of the North." Architects like the Adam brothers were busy laying out squares of classical symmetry in the recently-developed New Town, and filling them with houses of equally classical proportions. Public buildings were also being constructed at a rapid rate.⁴¹ But classical Edinburgh was not built simply on bricks and mortar; its real asset was its people, especially those associated with the university. Most of the leading intellectual figures - doctors, lawyers, scholars, philosophers, poets - had little connection with the merchants and professionals of the New Town, but resided in the medieval closes of the Old Town atop the "Mound." Here was the university, albeit housed in new buildings, and here were the taverns, coffee-shops, and oyster bars which served as the meeting places for the hundreds of "clubs" for which Edinburgh was justly famed. There was a club for almost every taste, ranging from gambling to scientific discussion, and it was in these gatherings, perhaps more than in the lecture halls of the university or even the drawing rooms of the well-to-do, that one could find the giants of the Scottish Enlightenment: David Hume, philosopher and historian; Adam Smith, political economist; William Cullen, medical theorist and reformer; Dugald Stewart, philosopher and teacher; and the young men - like Robert Burns the poet or Thom Douglas the peer's son - who flocked around them.⁴²

While scholars have long debated the precise concatenation of causes for this outpouring of creative energy in a relatively poor, small, isolated, and exploited part of Europe, and have equally argued over its direction and ideology, what has been generally accepted is that the basis of the Scottish Enlightenment was a questioning skepticism toward traditional knowledge and a rethinking of old questions on the basis of new conceptualization and even experimentation.⁴³ Along with this open attitude toward knowledge went a firm conviction that any attempts to improve the lot of mankind through enlightened ideas was not merely beneficial but necessary, and such reformism was the highest form of moral behaviour possible for the sensitive and responsible individual. Whether such views were Moral Idealism or Moral Pragmatism is irrelevant to appreciating the thrust of the movement.⁴⁴

Into this electric atmosphere stepped Thomas Douglas - barely fifteen - who matriculated at the University of Edinburgh in December of 1785. His intention, or perhaps that of his father for him, was to prepare for a career in the law. His courses over the next few years would be standard fare at the time: classics, mathematics, logic, rhetoric, belles-lettres, natural philosophy, and ethics. There is little evidence he took many of them terribly seriously.⁴⁵ Attendance at the university was basically unorganized and decentralized. The student applied for tickets of leave to attend a course of lectures, remunerating the lecturer with a fee for the ticket, and went along to listen and take notes - or not - at his pleasure. No one took attendance, there was no student participation in classes, and there were no term essays or course examinations. Those upwardly mobile students attending with a view toward eventual certification in one of the professions such as law or medicine would ultimately face some sort of reckoning, and many ambitious students took detailed lecture and reading notes which still survive today.⁴⁶ For a young man like Thomas Douglas, however, whose family position assured some future and whose social status could be guaranteed to open doors, most of the learning process could be less formal. Unlike his elder brother Basil, who had an outward-going personality and mixed easily with all ranks of society - Robert Burns wrote a poem about their meeting - young Thomas was diffident and modest, traits which could be interpreted as an attitude of aloof superiority. For Thomas, making friends would always be difficult.

As Thomas returned to Edinburgh in 1786 for his first full year at the university, two events in his family occurred which would affect him considerably. One was symptomatic, the other sympathetic. His father

broke with his kinsman Lord Morton over peerage politics, the first of many such rifts with the Scottish aristocracy which would mark the growing gulf between the Selkirk clan and their order in Scotland.⁴⁷ On the brighter side, Tom's sister Helen became betrothed to James Hall of Dunglass, a well-known figure in Edinburgh scientific circles.⁴⁸ The wedding took place at St. Mary's Isle on 11 November 1786. The acquisition of Hall as a brother-in-law was of enormous importance to Thomas, for it provided him with an older man who could serve as mentor and exemplar, a role old Dunbar obviously could not fill. Like the 4th Earl, James Hall was particularly close to Lord Daer, but unlike Thomas' father, Hall could and did find time for Thomas, and the Hall house in Edinburgh provided a centre of activity in which Thomas could participate. If Hall provided guidance and example, so too did Professor Dugald Stewart, an old family friend and lecturer in moral philosophy at the university.⁴⁹ A leading exponent of the Scottish "Common Sense" school of philosophy, Stewart was a worthy successor to Francis Hutcheson. Less overtly political than Hutcheson, Stewart maintained that virtue and morality were epitomized by selfless dedication to the improvement of society.⁵⁰ In later years, "Thomas would as 5th Earl attempt to combine the scientific spirit of James Hall, with its emphasis on careful experimentation, with the philosophical spirit of Stewart, which stressed an altruistic dedication to others.

Dunbar was finally elected as a representative peer at a by-election early in 1787, and while he spent increasing amounts of time in London, even acquiring a residence there, Thomas began to make some friends among his fellow students. In the summer of 1787, Thomas made a number of expeditions on horseback by himself and with his brothers, practising sketching and studying geology with James Hall. He spent considerable time on the Dumfries social circuit, where - as he wrote undergraduate friend William Clerk of Pennicuik - "every body has been dancing like the devil."⁵¹ While Dunbar and Daer engaged in various projects of estate improvement, "Thomas built and planted on a smaller scale. He constructed a cottage, and planned a tree "plantation" seventy feet long by thirty feet broad. Still apprenticing, Thomas was clearly attempting to follow in the footsteps of his elders.

Although a fifth son still unrecognized by the outside world, Thomas gradually expanded his horizons. By the autumn of 1788 he had begun attending law lectures, coming into contact with many more of his ambitious

contemporaries. Chief among his new friends, perhaps met through William Clerk, was a young man almost exactly his age slightly lamed by a childhood bout with polio. Walter Scott had completed his preparation at Edinburgh High School and had moved on to the law school at the university.⁵² A small circle of about a dozen young students which included Scott, William Clerk, Adam Ferguson, George Abercromby, and Thomas Douglas, formed an informal organization in imitation of their elders known as “The Club,” which met Friday evenings in a room in Carrubber’s Close for discussion and debate. The participants then adjourned to a nearby oyster tavern to - in Scott’s words - “doff the world aside and bid it pass.”⁵³ The Club’s members remained close friends. Throughout their later careers, mainly in law, they dined twice a year at the close of the winter and summer sessions of the law courts, and marked personal triumphs by allowing the celebrant to host a special dinner for his old associates. Only Walter Scott and Thomas Douglas made their marks outside the Scottish legal community, and while their respective careers as British literary figure and North American colonizer made it difficult for them to remain close friends in later years, there was always a bond of mutual respect and admiration between the two men.⁵⁴

On 22 December 1789, the Honourable Thomas Douglas petitioned for membership in the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, thus attempting to join brothers Basil, Dunbar, and John within the ranks of the most prestigious undergraduate organization at the university. Its origins dated to 1764, and membership was limited to twenty-five. The society had its own room originally built at society expense in 1769 and expanded in 1775 adjacent to the college, as well as its own library. At each meeting one member was to “deliver a Discourse on any Subject” of his choice, and every other member in attendance could comment once on the presentation. Afterwards a debate was held from a previously prepared list of questions, the topic again opened by a member. The subjects of discussion were contentious current issues, often political in nature, and as with most student organizations, the fortunes of the Society depended upon the enthusiasm and commitment of its members. During the 1780s the Society had flourished. Again in common with most such student organizations, the Speculative Society’s politics were radical and critical of the Establishment, and its fortunes would decline as the events of the French Revolution and the activities of its British supporters (including Thomas’s family) brought suspicion on all those who questioned the existing order.⁵⁵

While Thomas sought peer group acceptance among Edinburgh's student body, his elder brother Daer opened the first round in a series of open challenges to the established order of Scotland. On 6 and 13 October 1789, Daer had attempted to enroll as a freeholder in Wigton and Kirkcudbright, being refused on the grounds that he was the eldest son of a Scottish peer and hence ineligible to exercise the freeholder's privilege of voting for and sitting in the House of Commons.⁵⁶ The Act of Union of 1707 stated that none were eligible to sit in the British Parliament who had been ineligible for the Scottish one before 1707, and the last eldest son had sat in Scotland's Assembly in 1558. After the Union eldest sons were routinely disqualified by the Commons, although Alexander Saltoun pointed out in 1788 that these decisions meant that the eldest sons of Scottish peers were "marked out as a distinct and separate body of subjects, to whom *alone* the rights and privileges of Britons are refused."⁵⁷ The anomaly was a double liability for an able young man like Daer, for succession to the title would merely allow him to enter the lottery for an elected seat in the Lords, while family influence in Galloway could virtually assure him a secure place in the Commons. Daer appealed the local rejection, with his father's full support.

Thomas was easily admitted to the Speculative Society, and he had his first opportunity to speak publicly there on 2 March 1790, when the question of the evening was "Has the late Revolution in France been equally glorious and will it be attended with consequence equally beneficial to that Country that the Revolution in 1688 has to this?" Where Thomas stood on this question is not clear from the records, but he spoke with animation and served as teller for the victorious ayes on 13 April, when the question was a more pointed "Will the late Revolution in France have a beneficial effect upon the interests of Great Britain?" On 27 April, Thomas read his first essay to the Society. The subject was "The Territorial Tax." Owing to the paper's great length and to questions put to its presenter, the discussion topic had to be postponed.¹⁸ His arguments have not survived, but characteristically, they were obviously dealt with exhaustively. Equally characteristically, Thomas had chosen a topic which fell within the realm of political economy, the subject which was always closest to his heart.

In the parliamentary elections of 1790, both Dunbar and Daer challenged the system without success. Putting himself at the head of the "associated Independent Peers," the Earl of Selkirk stood for re-election to the House of Lords, but was defeated by a government list and the manipulation of proxy

votes.⁵⁹ He appealed his defeat to the House of Lords, which spent three years on the case before finally overturning the official results and seating him. As for Daer, he attempted to stand for the Commons, but was defeated in an election for a seat representing one of the fourteen Scottish royal boroughs.⁶⁰ He did not even get to test the Commons as his father did the Lords. The events of the French Revolution and the arguments of Edmond Burke's *Reflection on the Revolution in France* led both government and the landed aristocracy to oppose political reform, with which Dunbar's family was becoming increasingly associated.

Over the winter of 1790-91 Thomas was back in Edinburgh. He opened debate on the first question discussed by the Speculative Society - "Have the National Assembly of France acted wisely in abolishing hereditary jurisdiction?" - and was a chief supporter of the petition for membership of Mr. Walter Scott. He served on the committee to select new questions for debate and listened to an essay by James Gordon on colonization, perhaps his first introduction to the issue which would become his life's chief passion. He spoke, undoubtedly in the negative, on the question "Ought any permanent support to be permitted for the poor?" and was teller for the nays on the question "Ought the Duration of Parliament to be shortened?"⁶¹ This latter involvement, on 30 March 1791, was Thomas's last active one with the Society, for in early April he left the city for revolutionary Paris with his brother-in-law Sir James Hall, and he never returned to student life at the university. Enlightenment Edinburgh had given him its basic sensibilities, and now it was off to revolutionary Europe to observe ideas in action.

Sir James Hall had travelled extensively in Europe in the 1770s, establishing contact with a number of leading intellectuals and scientists, especially in France, where he formed a particular friendship with the French chemist Antoine Lavoisier.⁶² The tour of 1791 was intended to renew these contacts, as well as to get some first-hand sense for the family of political developments in a highly volatile European situation. Moreover, Hall obviously intended to provide some direction and tutelage for his brother-in-law. A tour of Europe was an essential component of the education of any eighteenth-century British gentleman. Thomas Douglas had never been any further from St. Mary's Isle than Palgrave, and to send him overseas by himself was not advisable. Thomas and his brothers obviously looked up to and admired Hall, and so the elder man made an ideal supervisor.

Hall and Thomas Douglas left Dunglass, the site of the Hall country residence on the east coast of Scotland, on 3 April 1791.

The coach journey through England was swift, averaging eleven miles per hour on some days, and the pair were in London within four days, greeted at the Selkirk London house in Upper Brook St. by the “whole family.” After a brief visit, an expanded party of Hall, Lord Daer, John Douglas, and Thomas left on 15 April for France in their own coach. Once in France, the party stopped by roadside on the way to Paris to talk to peasants about agriculture. At St. Omens they saw a new design of plough and Hall tried it out, to the peasant’s astonishment. “Daer said that in our country every body held the plough & that we were not aristocrats” like the hated French nobility, noted Hall. By 19 April the group were in Paris, where Hall re-established contact with his friends Lavoisier and LaRocheffoucauld. On 21 April the party had been invited to a soiree attended by Dupont de Nemours, Condorcet, and LaRocheffoucauld. Daer left his brothers at this point to take lodgings in the Grand Hotel du Vendome. Hall, John, and Thomas eventually ended up in the Grand Hotel de Vauben, Rue de Richelieu.⁶³

Hall’s diary of the visit is full of daily doings, mainly with “T.” They dined regularly with Lavoisier, heard about the revolution from Condorcet, listened to Robespierre and other debaters at the National Assembly, and attended plays and operas. On 13 May John returned to England, leaving Hall and Thomas together, although they were frequently joined by Daer. On 7 May John Paul Jones called on the visitors at their hotel, having met Daer the night before at a soiree, but refused to be drawn on the Selkirk raid. That same evening Hall and Thomas dined “at home” with Abbe Sieyes, Condorcet, and Lavoisier. The last took off his coat after dinner to help the young Scot with a chemical experiment of some sort. A few days later, Thomas entered a discussion with a dinner guest on Locke’s insistence on the relationship of government to the protection of private property. Hall had initiated the subject by remarking that the estate of a man without children should be distributed among the poor, and recorded in his diary, “T.D. supported me in this by saying that to employ a man’s estate on his death for the public service was making a present to those who otherwise must have paid for that service, to those who paid the taxes, that is, as we all agreed to the landed proprietors - to the rich and not the poor.”⁶⁴ The pair subsequently adjourned to dinner with a number of prominent republican leaders, including Brissot de Warville and du Chastellet.

The summer months of June and July 1791 passed quickly. The times were exciting, and the little party of Scots enjoyed a constant round of social engagements, as well as visits to the countryside to study agricultural practice and survey the state of the people in a period of revolutionary change. Lord Selkirk himself joined them in late June, at the same time that Louis XVI was carried by the “mob” to Paris. There were regular visits to the National Assembly to listen to the debates, mainly over the future of the monarchy and France’s overseas colonies, and on one occasion Thomas observed that “the republican spirit of the country” seemed greater than was to be found in Paris itself.⁶⁵ On 3 July, on the eve of the anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, the party dined at home with Thomas Paine as principal guest. Paine was full of stories and anecdotes, and admitted his understanding of French was quite imperfect. A few days later the Scots “supt” at Condorcet’s rooms with du Chastellet and Paine, talking of the “fable about maintaining bees, emigrants, education.” On 7 July Hall recorded, “Abbe Sieyes has written a monarchial letter in the *Moniteur* & Payne who goes to England tomorrow with Daer means to have an answer to it.”⁶⁶ The next day Daer set out for England with Thomas Paine and *The Rights of Man* accompanying him.

After Daer’s departure, Hall and Thomas were thrown even more closely together. By this time events in Paris were moving at a breakneck pace, and the two men spent much time crowding into public gatherings to observe and listen. They still managed to find time for regular dinner parties with the leading intellectual figures of Paris, usually discussing some aspect of political economy. Although they occasionally visited with members of the British community, including British Ambassador Lord Gower, they found “Lady Sutherland ... remarkably cool,” undoubtedly because the Selkirk group had become notorious as “violent friends of liberty.”⁶⁷ A Paris newspaper reported that Robespierre was plotting with two Englishmen whose names - M. D’Ark and M. le Chev’r d’Ark - obviously conflated Daer, Hall, and Selkirk. Such public-ity probably hastened the departure of the little party from France and they were back in London by 27 July. A few days later Hall and Thom called on Sir Joseph Banks and Josiah Wedgewood, subsequently meeting Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld at dinner, where they “disputed much about French politics.”⁶⁸

No written record by Thomas Douglas survives of his reaction to this French visit of 1791, but it must have had a considerable impact upon him, as it certainly did upon a far more urbane and experienced Sir James Hall. For the

younger man, it had been largely an opportunity to observe and listen, but one given to few of his generation. In a short space of time, he had been exposed to the leading *philosophes* of revolutionary France, and had at least listened to them discuss politics and economics in an informal setting. He had witnessed the turmoil of the French Revolution at first hand, and had if nothing else been made to appreciate that intellectuals could also be men of action, that ideas were not necessarily mere academic exercises. Throughout his later career, Thomas would insist on the need to translate ideas into action, on the need to test social theories experimentally. Paris in 1791 was not the only influence upon him in this regard, but it was undoubtedly a critical one, for the city was far more alive with a spirit of adventure and social experimentation than was the staid little Edinburgh which had been his previous uxor.

If the Paris visit of 1791 was influential for “Thomas, it also had an enormous effect upon others of his family, particularly Lard Daer, whose activities became increasingly radicalized after his return from France with Thomas Paine. In October of 1791 Daer finally managed to become enrolled as a Kirkcudbright freeholder, and this action was immediately challenged in the courts.⁶⁹ Daer had not only to battle for the rights of the eldest sons of Scottish peers, but he and his father had to struggle against an increasingly hostile opinion of their politics among the Scottish aristocracy. Lord Selkirk found himself “deserted and avoided by most of his former acquaintances and friends,” few of whom would have regarded Daer as did Sir Ralph Abercromby.⁷⁰ That worthy commented of Daer that “unless the opinions of a young man of twenty had a tinge of republicanism, he would be sure to be a corrupt man at forty.”⁷¹ Nevertheless, Selkirk radicalism was more than most members of the Scottish aristocracy could manage, especially after it became associated with popular electoral reform and not merely with changes in peerage politics.⁷²

Late in April of 1792, a well-attended general meeting in Kirkcudbright met to consider major electoral reform, including the reduction of property qualifications and the sending of delegates to a convention in Edinburgh in July. Lord Daer had written to the gathering supporting reform and requesting “their vote for him as a delegate.”⁷³ He was duly chosen, but the County did not commit itself either to support the delegates or the measures of the convention. Even this cautious action was more than many could tolerate, one critic of the proceedings observing that the logical extension of

such “levelling principles” was the question of “why one man should be allowed to be so rich, while another was so poor,” adding the inevitable comment that the present state of Europe rendered “all attempts at Innovation more improper now than at any other period.”⁷⁴

While his eldest brother was busy “politicking,” Thomas Douglas continued his education. He planned a tour of the Highlands of Scotland, his first visit to the region that would become the Scottish centre of his life’s work. Why he chose to visit the region is not clear, although he had relations who had married into the Highland clan leadership. In any event, accompanied by a “Mr. Gilmour,” he set out in the spring of 1792. The only surviving report of the journey comes in the form of a letter to his father, dated from Perth on 2 May 1792. At Dundee, Thomas reported, “I had the honour of seeing Mr. Dundas carried in procession & to be burnt in effigy immediately for opposing the reform of the boroughs. The people seemed to have a dash of the French *qui vive*.”⁷⁵ Obviously the young man was sympathetic to the radical ardour of his family. We do not know much about Thomas’s Highland visit in 1792, although he would later refer to it frequently in general terms. He was by his own account present in Ross and Cromarty in August of 1792 when the population rose in arms against the introduction of new sheep-walks in the area. It apparently induced him to learn to speak some Gaelic and remained in the back of his mind for years, until he had the opportunity to do something about the state of the region.

The meeting of the county delegates for electoral reform met in July and adjourned until December of 1792. It was a distinguished gathering, including Henry Erskine, the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, and Lord Daer, among others.⁷⁷ Given the attendance by the supporters of the government, the outcome was not very extreme. It was agreed to reduce property qualifications from 400 £. to 100 £. Scots, and submit such an alteration to the counties. Daer fought against such minor palliatives, but the meeting eventually “unanimously came to resolutions expressive of their attachment to the constitution of this country, and their abhorrence of levelling principles.”⁷⁸ By this time Daer had joined the London Corresponding Society for Constitutional Information, an organization of craftsmen and artisans devoted to political reform, and the more extreme London Friends of the People. He was also active in the first meeting of the Friends of the People in Scotland meeting in Edinburgh shortly after the electoral reform convention in December of 1792. This gathering

of “Friends of the People” was regarded by the government as far more dangerous than the convention, for it was composed of many men who were disenfranchised artisans and who advocated the “levelling principles” the convention had abhorred.⁷⁹ Government spies and informers began to infiltrate such organizations, and Daer himself was under surveillance, eventually being advised to leave Scotland.

On 17 January 1793 Daer had written to Charles Grey (later Earl Grey of the Reform Bill) that “Scotland has long groaned under the chains of England,” and analyzing the English constitution “as we Scotsmen see it.”⁸⁰ For Daer Scotland had been “a conquered province” from the Union of the Crowns. Union had done little “except removing a part of the obstacles which your greater power had posterior to the first Union (1603) thrown around us.” Scotland was governed not by Parliament, declared Daer, but by its law courts in audacious and arbitrary fashion. Because “We have been the worse of every connection hitherto with you, the Friends of Liberty in Scotland have almost universally been enemies to the Union with England.”⁸¹ This nationalistic declaration was, of course, highly subversive. Not surprisingly, Robert Burns composed “Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled,” often regarded as Scotland’s major nationalist anthem, on his way home from an evening at St. Mary’s Isle in July 1793.⁸²

Thomas Douglas was not a witness to the events in Britain with which Daer was so intimately involved. By late 1792 he was again back in France, reporting to old mentor Dugald Stewart that the people anxiously awaited the re-establishment of order, and observing that another insurrection might make the establishment of armed force necessary.⁸³ Thomas was in close contact with Condorcet and Roederer, the former the leader of the constitutional committee of the French convention, the latter the editor of the *Journal de Paris*. He appears to have left France before the brutal repression of these moderate elements. From Paris Thomas moved on to Naples, where he visited a kinsman, Sir William Hamilton, perhaps best known as the husband of Lady Emma Hamilton, whose torrid love affair with Admiral Nelson became legendary. Thomas may well have been present when the two lovers first met, although they would hardly have noticed him, for by his own admission his “timidity” put him “in company without making me one of the company.”⁸⁴ His father encouraged him to acquire more worldly experience, writing “I have known many lads of sixteen, who, as the vulgar saying is, could have bought and sold you in a market.”⁸⁵ From Naples Thomas moved on to Switzerland,

apparently contemplating a military career in Poland.

Drifting through Europe seeking experience and searching for a career was brought up short in 1794 by news of the death of brother Sandy in Guadeloupe and the serious illness of Lord Daer, who died in Devonshire in November of that year. The death of Daer was taken extremely badly by his father, who had made Daer his constant companion, associate, and confidante. A father's entire hopes for the future of the family, as well as for the fulfillment of ambitions he himself had never attained, had been bound up in Daer, and the loss was a crippling blow both to Dunbar and to his surviving sons, who recognized full well that they were not regarded in quite the same light. John became Lord Daer, but there was constant friction between the new heir and his father, caused in part by the inability of Dunbar to adjust to the new situation. As for Thomas, he was now no longer a distant fifth son, but was now third in line to the title; John himself was unwell, suffering from the same consumptive malady which had struck down his elder brother. Thomas apparently managed to remain abroad until 1796, when news of the death from yellow fever of brother Dunbar at St. Kitt's and of John's continued ill health brought him home to Scotland. He still had military aspirations, attempting in 1797 to raise a corps of Scottish volunteers. His father opposed the venture. By this time it was clear that Thomas was the family's only hope, and his father's "distress of mind" at the prospect of military involvement held Thomas back.⁸⁶ In 1797 John also died, and Thomas was now officially Lord Daer, heir to the title.

As Lord Daer, Thomas spent much of his time managing the family estate, acting essentially as "man of business" for his father, who was by this time quite infirm. He engaged in complex negotiations, for example, with the Town Council of Kirkcudbright, to tidy up boundary lines on Selkirk lands which adjoined those of the town. At issue particularly were some pieces of property held by the town completely surrounded by Selkirk holdings, which the Earl was willing to exchange for lands on the borders of his estate and more accessible to the town.⁸⁷ Thomas bargained hard, regarding the demands of the town as "extravagant and out of all proportion to the value of the lands respectively."⁸⁸ He also attempted to add to the estate's salmon fishing rights on the River Dee, by renting the town's rights and taking over management of the fishery. This subject was a touchy one since the town's poor relied on the fishery both for food and income.⁸⁹ But Thomas had enormous energy, and it could not be satisfied with estate management.

Apart from his family responsibilities, he became involved in two projects, one related to his interest in political economy, the other to his interest in public service.

The political economy project was undertaken for the Board of Agriculture, organized in 1793 by Sir John Sinclair, that industrious compiler of social statistics and research information. The Board was a quasi-public agency funded by Parliament but organized as a voluntary society with the noted agriculturalist Arthur Young as secretary. It never really had a satisfactory function, but its most successful activities were connected with county-by-county agricultural surveys and reports, many of which were published. The report for Galloway was to be the responsibility of Thomas, Lord Daer, and he went about the task of gathering information on agricultural practices with his usual enthusiasm, concentrating particularly on sheep husbandry.⁹⁰ By early 1798 the report was in rough form, ready to be perused by Sinclair but “not yet in a state for the public.”⁹¹ By this time, however, “The Board of Agriculture really ceased to be a government office, if it ever had been one, and became a comfortable club.”⁹² The impetus for investigation was lost and Thomas’s volume was never completed, although the rough notes for it remain in the Selkirk Papers.

Although Thomas probably entered into each as a separate activity, there was considerable connection between relieving the Galloway poor and agricultural investigations. The late 1790s were a period of agricultural distress, caused by poor harvests and war-time inflation. Food was in short supply and expensive, and as Dunbar’s old friend Charles James Fox once trenchantly put it, “the great majority of the people. . ., an enormous and dreadful majority are no longer in a situation where they can boast that they live by the produce of their labour.”⁹³ Contemporaries saw few solutions. One was enclosure to increase production, especially of wheat. Another was the notorious Speenhamland System, by which in England especially low wages were supplemented by poor relief. Minimum wage laws would infringe the sacred right of property - including the right of an individual to sell his labour at the market rate - and many connected with the Board of Agriculture attempted to convince the poor to consume alternative and less costly foodstuffs.⁹⁴

Thomas undoubtedly became involved in the problem of the relief of Galloway’s poor as a major laird, although the problem fascinated him as a political economist and as a reformer. His activities resulted in his first

publication, an anonymous untitled pamphlet describing the 1799 relief system obviously implemented at his instigation.⁹⁵ The specifics of the Galloway scheme outlined in the pamphlet are less important for our purposes than the general philosophy enunciated by its author. Here three points stand out. In the first place, Thomas characteristically approached the problem as one of political economy, attempting to use the occasion to seek “experimental proof” of the efficacy of particular methods.⁹⁶ To the modern reader, the dispassionate and coldly analytical tone of the pamphlet may strike a discordant note. But it must be remembered that Thomas Douglas thought of himself as both a social scientist - although he would not have used such a term - and a philanthropist. At the same time, the second point which emerges from the pamphlet is its author’s clear sense of the social responsibility of the upper classes. He had no interest in altering the structure of society, but a definite desire to prevent social discontent by drawing “closer those bonds of union between the different classes of society, on which the stability of social order so essentially depends.”⁹⁷ Finally, the pamphlet advocated voluntarism and opposed the importation of a Speenhamland-type system of poor relief to the city of Edinburgh. Taxation for relief of the poor was opposed on the grounds that the poor will not feel gratitude if “the only aid they receive is extorted from the rich without their consent.”⁹⁸ Moreover, such relief would lead the poor “to believe that the assistance given them is their right” and any hardships suffered would be “considered as an injustice.”⁹⁹ Poor rates “will spread a profligate dependence on it among the poorer classes; the money that would otherwise be laid up for the support of age and infirmity, will go to the whisky shop; poverty and misery continually increasing, will continually add to the demands upon public charity.”¹⁰⁰ Such a policy not only undermined the spirit of industry, it perpetuated the cycle of poverty it was intended to relieve.

At this point, Thomas had not moved much beyond the point of objecting to poor rates as destructive of the morals of the poor, and recognizing an obligation - which should be voluntarily organized - to assist them. His critique of poor relief has a distinctly modern ring, even though his solution does not. In later years Thomas would find an alternative way to aid the poor which pre-served the principle of self-help in the concept of emigration to North America. Such schemes were beyond the capacity of a male heir, but the means for larger endeavours would soon come to hand. In May of 1799 old Dunbar died, and Thomas Douglas became the Fifth Earl of Selkirk. The old man’s financial affairs

were quite tangled. As the male heir, Thomas inherited the Galloway property and honoured statements in his last days by Dunbar of bequests to his four daughters, although they were not legally binding.¹⁰¹ The major problem with the inheritance was the estate at Baldoon, which had been sold in 1793 to Lord Galloway for 155,000 £. At the time, Dunbar had intended to use the proceeds to pay off the family's debts and provide an inheritance for his younger children. Galloway's offer paid off the debt but provided no surplus. Basil, then Lord Daer, succeeded in persuading his father to write into the agreement of sale the condition that the property would be leased to Daer for ten years, at the end of which time arbiters would decide on the value of the improvements made and Galloway would make an additional payment of this amount.¹⁰²

The improvements made were not as great as Basil had hoped, for he had been ill, and after his death the supervision of the estate passed from brother to brother in rapid succession in the 1790s. Nevertheless, the amount of money involved was considerable, and at Dunbar's death the arbitration had not yet occurred. There was considerable family controversy over the added value to Baldoon. Thomas insisted, based on his own knowledge and the opinions of the family steward William Mure, that 60,000 £. was all the improvements would bring. Sir James Hall questioned this assessment, and there were accusations that Mure was not acting entirely in the family's interests - he and Sir James had never gotten on - but Thomas stubbornly insisted that he would take 20,000 £. and settle 10,000 £. on each of his sisters. The business would drag on for years.

A valuation roll for purposes of the land tax was coincidentally made up for Kirkcudbright immediately after Dunbar's death, and indicated that the main estate was valued for tax purposes at nearly 9000 £., a figure based on the annual rental value of the lands.¹⁰³ In addition, Thomas inherited land in New York State (which was registered formally in his name in 1800) and scattered property elsewhere in the south of Scotland. He had a gross income of perhaps 10,000 £. per year, certainly a substantial sum but not one sufficient to permit the sort of adventurous colonization activity in which he would subsequently engage without considerable strain on the estate. In any event, although he had some years to prepare for the previously unexpected eventuality, Thomas Douglas was now

twenty-eight years old and the Fifth Earl of Selkirk. He had inherited a significant estate, and had to decide what he was to do with his life. Managing the Kirkcudbright lands, negotiating minor business with local politicians, organizing poor relief for Galloway, were obviously not sufficient outlets for his energies and aspirations.

In December of 1799 Selkirk turned to other matters beyond his estate. He attempted unsuccessfully to gain approval from his fellow magistrates in Kirkcudbright for a new scheme of poor relief, probably an institutionalization of the one discussed in his printed pamphlet, which he may in part have had published to argue his case before a larger audience.¹⁰⁴ The reluctance of his colleagues to join him in plans for local reform was joined that month by the refusal of the town of Kirkcudbright to accept what Thomas regarded as legitimate and rational arrangements to resolve the ongoing boundary disputes between the town and the estate. The Town Council on 28 December 1799 rejected all his proposals as injurious to the town, and added insult to injury by declaring that in some matters his Lordship was “misinformed as to the nature & extent of their Mutual Rights.”¹⁰⁵ Thomas undoubtedly found such attitudes irritating, and they contributed to other factors which led him to look beyond his immediate environs for his consuming interests. His eldest brother had become a legend in the Galloway region, a mythic figure whose reputation was only enhanced by his premature death. Thomas needed to be his own man, not to follow in his brother’s footsteps. Finding wider horizons would require some time, however. A political career was severely limited by the nature of the Scottish peerage system, and by the fact that his family’s radical reputation was quite out of step both with Scottish peerage opinion and British political realities. Both the peerage and the government in London were Tory, and appeared likely to remain so. Thomas was relatively young and virtually unknown, and he needed to bring himself to the attention of his contemporaries were he to be successful in peerage politics.

North America, 1800-1805

While surviving evidence does not allow us to identify the exact origins in Selkirk’s mind of his interest in emigration and North American colonization, it is clear that the schemes he ultimately implemented did not come to him as a fully-developed vision, but were instead worked out over a fairly protracted period on the basis of reaction and readjustment to circumstances.

Selkirk wanted to do something significant, and that something eventually involved America. Even these vague ambitious conclusions were probably arrived at very gradually, as he settled into the life of a Scottish peer.

Little is known of Selkirk's movements between late 1799 and 1801. There is a tantalizing reference in Dugald Stewart's diary for 1801 which reads simply "St Mary's Isle - North of Scotland".¹⁰⁶ The two men undoubtedly discussed subjects of mutual interest - moral philosophy, philanthropy, and political economy - in the context of Selkirk's pamphlet on poor relief, a copy of which had been sent to Stewart. It is tempting to speculate that Thomas, in company with his former mentor, again toured the Highlands, great schemes bubbling in his head. If so, it seems likely that Stewart, as his later correspondence indicated, attempted to restrain the young man's enthusiasm. More concretely, Sir James Hall's diary for October 1801 describes a brief tour in company with fellow geologist John Playfair and Lord S.¹⁰⁷ The party started at Dungallass and spent four or five days in Edinburgh before travelling via the Dumfries roads to the Isle of Annan. There they revisited "the junction of Granite and Schistus formerly discovered and traced by Ld Selkirk (then T.D.) & myself in 1788." From the Isle the trio travelled through Ayrshire, where they found some strata which could not be reconciled with other observations. Hall noted, "Ld S. thinks that much may be ascribed to back draughts taking effect after the first violent action had ceased."¹⁰⁸ Although very much a dilettante geologist, Selkirk's opinions were obviously taken seriously by men who were regarded as experts in their time. His interest in geology would persist throughout his life, finding expression in his journal of his tour through North America in 1803-1804 and later in his collection of geological specimens in Western Canada. Hall's record gives no indication of any great projects being formulated by his brother-in-law, however, although Selkirk apparently spent some time in Ireland in 1801 on a fact-finding expedition.

The first evidence of Selkirk's planning comes in a letter dated 20 November 1801 from Highland Roman Catholic Bishop John Chisholm to his superiors in Edinburgh. The letter was sent by express, wrote Chisholm, "on account of a letter I received from Lord Selkirk whom I never saw and with whom I never corresponded."¹⁰⁹ Chisholm continued:

His Lordship's letter was too long in the way and I was determined to lose no time in answering it. It is the result

of views that his Lordship did not communicate to me. But he affirms that they are of importance and concern my flock. He proposes my going to Edin'r immediately to have a personal interview which is impossible just now as I have been very ill But I promised his Lordship to be ready for Edin'r on the next intimation from him if I continue to mend as I do ... In the meantime you'll examine into this affair as soon as you can and find out if possible the meaning of it, without laying yourself open to any for I suppose as his Lordship has not been explicit with me he wants to keep his view secret.

The Roman Catholic church in Scotland was officially proscribed but informally accepted by the government, which appreciated "the Loyalty & Constitutional principles of the Roman Catholic Clergy of Scotland."¹¹⁰ It was, nevertheless, accustomed to secrecy and clandestine operations, and Bishop Chisholm was only cautious and prudent, not hostile, to Selkirk's overtures.

In January 1802 Bishop Chisholm reported, "I continue to correspond with Selkirk. I cannot as yet give you any proper account of the business and it is not quite clear to me yet."¹¹¹ At this point, the record becomes exasperatingly silent, probably reflecting the fact that Chisholm managed to meet with Selkirk and discuss the "business" with him personally, then reporting orally to the leaders of the Church. In view of Selkirk's activities over the next few months, there can be no doubt that he was searching for some sort of collaboration from the Catholic clergy in the Highlands to recruit potential settlers for a colonization venture in North America. The "mania for emigration" from the Highlands, particularly the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, was in full swing by late 1801, and much publicized in the press.¹¹² Selkirk knew not only of the emigration, but of the disproportionate numbers of Catholics who were involved. It seems likely that he received little encouragement from Bishop Chisholm at this point, but the overtures indicate that even before Selkirk had emerged publicly with a colonization proposal, he had the Highlands in mind as a source for the settlers. In any event, in February of 1802 Selkirk prepared a draft of a memorial to the British government proposing that the Earl lead a colony of Irish Catholics to Louisiana. Since a copy of the document was sent to Dugald Stewart, it is probable that the subject had been discussed in 1801 with the older man, and undoubtedly with others. In this first concrete evidence of Selkirk's American projects we can see in embryo the main outlines of his later actions and arguments regarding emigration and colonization, as well as the coming

together of earlier influences and activities. Selkirk advocated a colony in North America specifically for Irish Catholics, which would suit their "Religious & National Prejudices" and drain Ireland of "the most dangerous subjects" most likely to lead future disturbances. He was prepared to recruit and lead the emigrants if the government would pay their passage. Because the site of the colony should possess a "favorable Climate, soil, & navigation" and since the remaining unsettled territories of British North America were "very unfavourably situated in point of climate," Louisiana was an obvious choice, although the Earl recognized it did not formally belong to Great Britain."¹¹³ While Selkirk may have considered such alternatives as the Canadian West, he had obviously rejected them.

Although there was no particular reason for the government to treat this proposal - which came from the blue from an individual who had no obvious vested interest in Irish affairs - Selkirk had a long meeting with the secretary of state for Ireland Lord Pelham early in April of 1802. That worthy offered a number of reasons why the proposal was unacceptable in its present form, but he did suggest that a scheme involving Scots might be received with more favour.¹¹⁴ A day later Selkirk submitted a supplementary document which addressed the problem of the location of the proposed settlement but not its source of settlers. He argued that unoccupied lands could not be found on the eastern seacoast of North America, and in order to find "a sufficient extent of good soil in a temperate climate one must go far inland." He now proposed a settlement in the territory where the waters which fell into Lake Winnipeg unite with the rivers draining into Hudson Bay, emphasizing that Indian traders spoke highly of the region, which was much like some of the Russian provinces in climate and soil. Since trade and transportation would be difficult, the settlers would have to produce goods valuable in proportion to weight, and in this respect hemp would be ideal. The Hudson's Bay Company could be indemnified by license fees on those trading with the Indians, an ample compensation since the Company did not have an "absolute monopoly" with the Canadians fast penetrating the territory via an inland route. The license fees would also pay for the civil and military establishment of the colony, and the scheme would pacify the Indians, who could be controlled by shutting off supplies of European commodities.¹¹⁵ While Selkirk's interest in the Red

River territory probably originated with the publication of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's book, *Voyages Through The Continent of North America*, with his usual thoroughness the Earl had gone to experts. A former North West Company partner had been approached for advice on the formation of an inland colony, but the Nor'westers found the scheme "too absurd almost to be mention'd." Joseph Colen, the recently retired chief of the Hudson's Bay Company's York Factory, found the idea far more promising, however, and much of Selkirk's information undoubtedly came from him."¹¹⁶

While he was prepared to alter the location of his settlement, Selkirk was less willing to change the place of recruitment of his settlers. On 4 April he wrote again to Lord Pelham answering the argument that the Irish could not be induced to emigrate by a private individual, insisting that his studies in Ireland indicated that many could be induced to emigrate for advantageous wages for a term of years, and while such people could return home at the expiry of their contract, "after having tasted the sweets of property in Land, there is no probability of their making that choice."¹¹⁷ The Earl maintained his opinion was an informed one, based upon "the attention I have paid to Agriculture for a considerable number of years, & the particular opportunities I have had of studying it as practised with singular success on a scale of uncommon extent." Lord Pelham finally got rid of Selkirk by transferring the whole matter over to Lord Hobart at the Colonial Office, and the Earl tenaciously started all over again. In the meantime, Selkirk sold some of his lands in Kirkcudbright to Adam Maitland of Dundrennan, probably intending to use the 7000 £. purchase price to help finance his colonization schemes.¹¹⁸ By June of 1802 the Earl had an agent - William Burn - in Ireland recruiting labourers. He sought 100 hands in total, mainly from the Catholic counties, who would be engaged for as long as possible, preferably 5-10 years, each man to have 10-20 Irish acres or a passage home at the conclusion of his service.¹¹⁹ He attempted to use the tact that he was in the process of actually hiring people to force Lord Hobart to take some action.

A conversation with Hobart on 11 June was inconclusive, but on 6 July Selkirk tried again, this time in a letter from Kirkcudbright. If the Earl's initial proposal was unacceptable, could he obtain from His Majesty a tract of land "in Upper Canada adjoining the Falls of St. Mary between Lake Superior & Lake Huron, & also of the mines & minerals I may discover along the

north coasts of these two lakes?”¹²⁰ Observing that Hobart had mentioned the possibility of Prince Edward Island, Selkirk also applied for land there. Hobart could not be seen encouraging emigration, the opposition to which was growing throughout Great Britain.¹²¹ He replied he could find no reason to deviate from policy and make a special land grant, but he was prepared to write to the Governor of Upper Canada to “afford the most favourable con-sideration which his General Instructions will admit to Your Lordships application.”¹²² At the same time, Hobart emphasized the government of Upper Canada would probably object to the arrival of large numbers of Irish, and suggested Selkirk look to “Scotch & German families” at the beginning. His time consumed by his North American project, Selkirk refused to attend the 1802 Scottish peerage election, writing one candidate “I conceive my attendance can be of no use & do not think of taking any part in the Election.”¹²³

On 21 August he informed Hobart’s secretary that he was sending a New York acquaintance, Richard Savage, to the falls of St. Mary’s to examine the situation first hand, and requested official letters of recommendation to the British commanding officers of the western posts in the region.¹²⁴ That same day Selkirk wrote a lengthy letter to Lord Hobart, arguing for special consideration in the land grants to be made him, particularly regarding mineral rights. His principal argument was the “peculiar importance to the internal commerce of Canada” of the Falls of St. Mary, through which most of the fur trade passed. Because of its distance from settled regions, prospective settlers required “extraordinary encouragements” and anyone organizing such a colony compensation “beyond the usual range.” Significantly, the Earl agreed he should begin with settlers “more tractable than the Irish,” and while he was investigating the possibility of Germans, “Of Scotch I have no doubt of procuring a sufficiency, as great numbers are at this moment about to emigrate from the Highlands.” Referring to a “recent visit to that quarter,” perhaps to consult with Bishop Chisholm, Selkirk noted the resumption of American emigration by the Highlanders, and added, “I shall offer them such superior terms as I think can scarcely fail to retain these valuable people in his Majesty’s Dominions.”¹²⁵ Thus had Selkirk been manoeuvred by the British government into the midst of the Highland Emigration Crisis, which was quickly becoming a major public issue in Scotland. That government pressure rather than Selkirk initiative had produced the final emphasis on Highlanders was ignored by the Earl in his book on the Highlands,

published in 1805.¹²⁶ Both Selkirk and the colonial secretary were well aware that the Scots were again on the move across the Atlantic in great numbers, responding to bad harvests and economic uncertainty. Many Highland tenants lived a precarious existence based on good harvests and cash remissions sent home by those in the family employed elsewhere, particularly in military service and Lowland labour. In the brief period of peace which began in 1801, unemployment and bad crops heightened the temptations to emigrate to America, especially when they were combined with rumours of rent increases, new sets of estates, and even clearance for sheep. The Highlands were changing, and the people were sore afraid. So were their landlords, increasingly fearful that their estates would become depopulated by this clearance from below.¹²⁷

Selkirk characteristically plunged into the middle of this Scottish “emigration mania” with little acknowledgment of the implications of his plans. Dugald Stewart attempted to warn him that the shift of emigrants from Irish to Scottish was fraught with danger, that he would be seen as promoting emigration and associated with an unsavoury group of recruiting agents, against whom the Highland Society of Edinburgh had undertaken a campaign which would culminate in public regulation of the traffic in emigrants in 1803. The Earl’s proceedings, Stewart maintained, “will at once render you obnoxious to Government & odious to the Gentlemen connected with that part of the Island,” particularly since Selkirk would be unable to claim direct government sponsorship. Recalling the earlier persecutions of the family, the Edinburgh professor recommended that the Earl do his good at home, and concluded with a warning which Selkirk might well have remembered at the end of his life but patently ignored here:

The objects you aim at are distant, & of more than doubtful attainment; and should your schemes miscarry, either thro’ your premature death, or any of the other number-less accidents by which your benevolent wishes are liable to be frustrated, you would entail on your memory (together with the ridicule which always attends unsuccessful Projectors) the reproach of being the Author of all the disappointments & miseries which might await the companions of your Adventure.¹²⁸

Selkirk paid the older man no heed, and pressed on.

Planning took not only the form of the recruitment of settlers, but of the buildup of a substantial breeding herd of sheep for the new colony. After much difficulty, Selkirk managed to send William Burn,

who had long been associated with the family estate, to America to supervise the preparations. Burn was intended to pick up Irish labourers and breeding stock in the Highlands on his way to the New World, but eventually he took ship directly from Liverpool to New York, where he would rendezvous with Richard Savage, who was charged with buying 1000 ewes and wintering them in upstate New York. Burn was accompanied by Alexander (Sandy) Brown, an experienced shepherd, whom Selkirk thought would “answer better with a numerous flock than any American.”¹²⁹ The Earl provided detailed breeding instructions for Burn and Brown, and advertised in the Scottish Lowlands for “A few young Men who will go to America to cultivate an Estate in Upper Canada, the property of a Scots nobleman and a gentleman of the greatest respectability.”¹³⁰ Selkirk obviously did not intend merely a settlement, but a personal holding as well.

Sometime in the late summer or early autumn of 1802 Selkirk called upon Father Alexander Macdonell, a Scottish Catholic priest who was in London attempting to find government support for the emigration of the Glengarry Fencible Regiment of which he had been chaplain, offering the priest the position as agent for his proposed colony at “those regions between Lakes Huron and Superior ... where the climate was nearly similar to that of the north of Scotland, and the soil of a superior quality.” Macdonell refused, asking the Earl “what could induce a man of his high rank and great fortune, possessing the esteem and confidence of His Majesty’s Government, and of every public man in Britain, to embark on an enterprise so romantic as that he had just explained?” Selkirk was taken aback by the question. He could hardly respond that he did not have quite the esteem and confidence the priest intimated, and he answered that given the situation of Britain and Europe, “a man would like to have a more solid footing to stand on, than anything that Europe could offer.”¹³¹ Such a statement was hardly incorrect, although it was incomplete. Selkirk was a very private man, and he was scarcely likely to discuss his motivations with Macdonell. But his statement was hardly a defensive one. The young laird would have seen no inconsistency between his ambition to do something of humanitarian import for prospective emigrants and his own personal advancement, especially when both could be accomplished within the context of working out principles of political economy. Nor was personal advancement necessarily solely from the perspective of Great Britain. Closed off as he was from British politics, the

thought of forging a new career in the New World was most tempting, free as it was from the encumbrances of the family traditions and past. Selkirk in many ways pursued the same dreams as the settlers he hoped to recruit: a chance to start afresh.

As might have been expected, Selkirk found his major recruiting ground in the Hebrides, particularly on the Macdonald and Clanranald estates of Skye, Mull, and Uist. These islands had experienced a substantial growth of population as a result of a wartime boom in the manufacture of kelp, conducted as a cottage industry by tenants on extremely small land allotments.¹³² The profits to the landlords of kelping were extremely high with little capital investment.¹³³ Tenants were unhappy with their payment for producing the kelp, and the pressure for land was fierce, while the lairds understandably opposed any reduction of population which might lead to higher wages through reduced competition for land.¹³⁴ The proprietors had already mounted a campaign against the emigration agents active in selling passages to North America, arguing that conditions aboard the emigrant vessels were little better than on slaving ships.¹³⁵ During the autumn of 1802 the most active emigrant agents in the Hebrides were those employed by the Earl of Selkirk. The "Big Major," Alexander Macdonald, formerly of the Glengarry Fencibles - who had himself been "deprived of his Farm ... for a shooting quarter" - was particularly successful among tenants from his former regiment. Dr. Angus MacAulay, previously a Macdonald factor who was both preacher and physician, was also prominent in the campaign for emigrants; he had long been involved in regimental recruiting for his laird.¹³⁶ In November Selkirk himself took a hand in recruiting, and he made an impressive figure. Tall - he stood well over six feet - and slender, with carrotty red hair, he looked every inch a laird, and astounded the local people by conversing with them in serviceable Gaelic. According to one hostile contemporary, "His Lordship was most accessible, and affable, and even familiar; and promised every thing; offering to gratify any demand or wish they could frame." His proposals were admittedly "tempting, in the present State of this Country and Temper of the People."¹³⁷ Anxious to get his project under way, the Earl did indeed agree to whatever terms were asked of him, thus increasing the suspicion of both the landlords and the prospective emigrants. Despite his visit to the islands, Selkirk did most of his work in Glasgow, where one of his critics observed him holding "his Levee at the Bucks Head Inn."¹³⁸

According to the final written agreement, backed by a 1000 £. fulfilment bond by Selkirk, he offered inexpensive transportation to his settlement in Upper Canada, full provision while in transit, and promised either to sell land at 50 cents an acre or to lease 100 acres perpetually in return for a rent of twenty-four bushels of wheat annually. For prospective tenants (who could not afford to pay for passage or land) he reduced transportation drastically, agreed to provision them at cost (without cartage fees) for two years or until they could harvest first crops, and threw in a cow per family. How he could have delivered on these promises at isolated St Mary's hundreds of miles from any transportation but the canoe brigades is not clear, but fortunately he was not required to do so. Finally, there was a money-back guarantee (including payment for all improvements and transportation home) if not completely satisfied.¹³⁹

Considerable sales resistance developed to these proposals among shrewd Highlanders. Despite all the inducements, or perhaps because of them, Selkirk was forced to ask Dr. William Porter of the British Fisheries to endorse his scheme.¹⁴⁰ By the end of November 1802 however, Selkirk was able to report to Hobart that he had signed up one hundred families on condition he accompany them "to see that their stipulations are fulfilled." Most of these families were self-financing, members of the prosperous possessor class in the Highlands whose movement characterized emigration in this period.¹⁴¹ Despite the quality of his people, Selkirk was understandably having second thoughts about the costs of his project, and informed the colonial secretary that the expense of the commitment was well beyond his personal fortune; he was therefore pausing until the government informed him what it would do to alleviate his burden or what indemnification he could expect if he undertook it himself.¹⁴²

The pause was reinforced by family matters. Early in December Selkirk received word in Edinburgh of the death of his mother in Bath, and he rushed off for that city to join his sisters, who had accompanied Lady Selkirk there.¹⁴³ There is no evidence that the Earl was particularly close to his mother, and no comments survive as to his reaction to her death. If he mourned her passing, it also ended one more responsibility tying him to the family estate in Kirkcudbright and to Great Britain. In the inevitable family gathering surrounding the death of Lady Helen, the question of the Baldoon estate again arose. The arbitration for the value of the improvements was still not settled. According to Selkirk's sister, "Lord Galloway & the Law

people employed by him (some of them of no very creditable characters) were so difficult to deal with, & did so harass my brother, that he became quite disgusted with the whole matter.”¹⁴⁴ The whole family realized that the Earl’s “mind was wholly engrossed with his project concerning Highland emigration.” They feared that he would accept any offer of payment made to him. Sir James Hall continued to insist that the improvements were worth 100,000 £. rather than the 60,000 £. Selkirk calculated, and wanted his brother-in-law to pursue the matter vigorously. The Earl at first responded “jestingly,” suggesting that Hall “take it, & make a Kirk & a Mill of it,” but later seriously offered to allow Sir James the management of the business while he was away in America. Hall eventually agreed, providing he was given sufficient authority to act independently.¹⁴⁵ The written agreement specified that Selkirk would receive 20,000 £. of the proceeds, and the remainder would be equally divided amongst his sisters.¹⁴⁶ It was formally registered on 1 February 1803.¹⁴⁷

At the end of 1802 the gathering storm in Scotland over emigration broke forth in its full fury. The publication in September of 1802 of Alexander Irvine’s *An Enquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration from the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland, with Observations on the Means to be Employed for Preventing It* was symptomatic. Irvine’s work contained some very perceptive comments on the causes and remedies for emigration, and he was highly critical of the landed interests. But what contemporaries took from the book was that the people were being deluded into foolish actions by unscrupulous promoters of North American lands who made them outrageous promises, and that new employment opportunities were essential to prevent the “mania” from continuing.¹⁴⁸ Although Lord Selkirk was never mentioned by name, all Scotland seems to have been aware that he was the biggest promoter of all, using - as Edward Fraser of Reelig angrily complained - money from the sale of “good Scots soil” (Baldoon, no doubt) to finance his activities.¹⁴⁹ As was so often the case with rumours about Selkirk’s activities, the Earl’s situation was greatly misrepresented. It was true that Selkirk had hoped to use the Baldoon money for his American ventures, but he had not yet received any payment on the improvements, and would not realize the entire 60,000 £. windfall which appears to have been common knowledge among his contemporaries. In short, Selkirk was not so well financed as his opponents believed. Whatever the truth of the matter, the force of public opinion (within the ranks of the “public” which mattered in Britain at the

time, those represented in Parliament) made it impossible for Lord Hobart to continue even quiet support for Selkirk, and the Colonial Secretary withdrew even the offer of lands in Upper Canada.¹⁵⁰ Criticism of Selkirk's operations continued for years, especially when he allowed himself to become associated with emigration recruiting among extremist Protestant sectarians in Stratherrick.¹⁵¹

If the Earl had intended to induce the government to acquiesce in his excessive promises in the Hebrides, he was sadly mistaken. Instead, he was left with an agreement with emigrants and no lands upon which to fulfill it. He wrote to Prime Minister Addington and managed an interview with that worthy at which he was told that his "Interference in the Emigration has given umbrage." To avoid the difficulties, he again offered to return to the Red River region, and to convert his Highlanders into a regiment for military service there, a scheme that would resurface more seriously during the War of 1812.¹⁵² While Selkirk was always prepared to be flexible in his proposals, he often would drop an idea and return to it later, particularly if it were one about which he felt strongly. Western settlement and a military role were two of those recurring fixations in his life. At this point, however, Selkirk concentrated on his immediate problem, and furious activity led Lord Hobart early in 1803 to allow that the government might ultimately look favourably on a settlement on Prince Edward Island, where lands could be obtained cheaply from private proprietors without involving the ministry in an unpopular project.¹⁵³ The Earl was soon buying vast tracts of land in Prince Edward Island, at least partly from the Ellice interest who later opposed him in Red River. Most of Selkirk's information about the Island and its potential came from receiver of quitrents John Stewart, the Scots-born son of the former chief justice.¹⁵⁴ Stewart was in London attempting to settle the complex business of quitrent arrearages and inactive absentee proprietors, and was well pleased to assist the Earl with his acquisitions. Although in 1806 Selkirk's sister married the other major Scots proprietor on the Island, Sir James Montgomery of Stanhope, there is no evidence that Selkirk and Montgomery were acquainted in 1803; they apparently met first in 1805, after the Earl's return from North America.

From the British government's perspective, deflecting Selkirk's enthusiasm to Prince Edward Island was a positive boon. The Island had not flourished under the proprietors who had been granted land there in 1767, and an infusion of new blood was obviously desirable. Public support for

Selkirk's Island activities could be defended as part of a necessary rescue operation. Prince Edward Island had long been a favourite destination of emigrating Highlanders. Major parties had been sent by Lord Advocate James Montgomery and John Macdonald of Glenaladale before the American Rebellion, and at least two shiploads from the Hebrides had arrived on the island in 1790.¹⁵⁵ Over the years, others had reached the Island singly or in smaller parties. Thirty years of Highlander experience with the Island was a mixed blessing, however. On the one hand it meant that many of Selkirk's people had relations or friends already in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but on the other hand, the Island had a bit of an unsavoury reputation. Macdonald's settlers from Uist were still in 1803 without proper leases, and at the beginning of that year the lairds in the Hebrides were industriously circulating a letter from Charlottetown which began, "This is to let you know that I am sorry for coming here and I don't like it at all and I wish you would do for me to get home again because I won't stay here." The writer, one Donald Steel, complained of the unsettled climate and the lack of employment and requested his former laird to write his brother "to tell my friends at Uist that they won't do as I did if they can."¹⁵⁶ The publicity given this letter was part of a general campaign to discourage North American emigration, but it had a particular relevance at the moment Selkirk was acquiring land there.

From the Earl's perspective, the critical problem was to persuade those he had already signed up for Upper Canada to shift with him to Prince Edward Island under different terms, and to recruit additional new emigrants to fill the three ships he had chartered. Given the reputation of the Island, these objectives would not be easy to meet. The Upper Canadian party was not at all enthusiastic about a new agreement, and some of those involved took Selkirk to court for breach of contract.¹⁵⁷ The alteration of conditions was a longstanding grievance even among those who eventually sailed with Selkirk to the Island. But at this point Parliament saved the Earl by the hasty passage of the Passenger Vessel Act of 1803.

By early 1803 it was common knowledge in Scotland that the British government was preparing to undertake a massive scheme of internal improvements in the Highlands, which were to end emigration by providing immediate employment for redundant Highlanders and create the basis of a new Highland prosperity.¹⁵⁸ It would take some little time to implement the scheme of public works, however, and the government needed a short-term

brake on emigration. This it found in the expressed concern for the health and welfare of the poor emigrants, crammed into ships chartered by unscrupulous promoters like so many slaves.¹⁵⁹ The result was the passage in 1803 of legislation regulating the emigrant trade, so often seen as the beginning of a new ruling class attitude toward the welfare of the poor.¹⁶⁰ The act, ostensibly a piece of humane legislation designed to protect emigrants from exploitation, had strange inconsistencies, as Selkirk later noted.¹⁶¹ But the important point here was that it was scheduled to take effect on 1 July 1803, and was universally recognized in Scotland as the anti-emigration measure it really was.

The parliamentary legislation was a godsend in disguise for Selkirk. Many in the Hebrides had already failed to renew their tenancies or even sold their property in anticipation of emigration in 1803. Those who had previously signed with Selkirk had expected to make alternative arrangements if he could not satisfy them. Suddenly Selkirk was left as the only promoter whose project seemed likely to survive the stringencies of the act, and both old recruits and new ones flocked to him.¹⁶² The Earl carefully met all the conditions of the legislation, convinced that it was directed against him personally, and he attacked it bitterly in later writings. But without the act, he would not have succeeded in obtaining anywhere near the number of promising recruits he transported in 1803. Moreover the government did in the end manage to assist him in a positive way, by cutting red tape and making it possible for him to sail in advance of harassment under the act and the burgeoning military recruitment in the Highlands connected with the resumption of war with Napoleon.¹⁶³

In a larger sense, the shift to Prince Edward Island forced upon Selkirk also worked in his best interests. The Prince Edward Island project was the only one of Selkirk's North American schemes which ever came close to success. It is true that Selkirk's presence at the beginning, personally resolving many problems which his agents in other efforts could not do, was important. But the Earl spent very little of his visit in America on the Island, and other factors were far more critical in the success. The duration of time at sea was reduced to a few weeks, and the emigrants had no overland journey but could literally see their lands from shipboard. Despite his medical officers, Selkirk's ships experienced a typhus outbreak, and while shipboard medical care probably had little effect on its incidence, the shortness of passage did. The passengers managed to get out of crowded conditions before the

disease reached epidemic proportions; the Kildonan settlers later would not be so fortunate. The new settlers found many relations and friends already on the Island to help them feel at home. Provisions could be obtained in the Maritimes with little difficulty, and, despite the trees, the soil was fertile and easy to work, ideally suited to the potato cultivation familiar to Highlanders. Finally, Selkirk's settlement on the Island was not complicated by the considerations of larger imperial and commercial strategy which so confused his later operations. This case was one of agrarian resettlement, due to circumstances beyond the Earl's control - for he kept trying to achieve something major - uncontaminated by larger objectives and issues.

Selkirk spent only a little over a month on Prince Edward Island organizing his settlement, and then, in company with his manservant Jilks, he headed south to Halifax, whence he sailed for Boston. His intention was to rendezvous with William Burn in upstate New York, and to search for suitable land in Upper Canada for the sheep. Along the way, his journal indicates that he took copious notes (and probably made numerous sketches, which have not survived) of political and agricultural practices in the territories through which he passed. The Earl enjoyed Boston, but he appreciated Albany, the capital city of New York, even more. His first evening in Albany he "fell in at the Hotel with a party of wild young aristocrats worthy of London or Edr - a merry evening however made us very thick - & this proved an introduction to the Aristts of Albany to whom these were related." The New York aristocracy proved particularly congenial to the Scots nobleman, and he was most impressed with Alexander Hamilton, in whose company he spent much time. He had never met a man, wrote Selkirk in his journal, "of whom I formed a higher opinion - the clearness of his ideas, & the readiness with which he brings forward a solid reason for every opinion he advances combine with his very extensive information in giving an uncommon zest to the conversation - and to this he joins a degree of candour in discussion very rarely to be met with." Hamilton was, of course, the high priest of Federalism in the United States. Intensely pro-British and aristocratic in bearing and attitude, he spent a considerable period with Selkirk, and his visitor acquired many of his attitudes about the United States from their conversations. Hamilton confirmed Selkirk's growing distaste for democracy, examples of which the Scot saw daily in his travels. He also confirmed the Earl's fears that the United States would not prove suitable for his schemes because of a "general party prejudice against any large proprietor," which meant that

“no rich man would think here of vesting money in the purchase of Land as in Europe to produce an annual revenue.”¹⁶⁴ Travels through western New York, where Selkirk held considerable lands, did not alter this perception.¹⁶⁵

By mid November Selkirk had crossed the Niagara River and entered Upper Canada. He visited Niagara Falls, recording “the great fall goes indeed beyond imagination, & exceeded every idea I had formed of its grandeur,” but moved on quickly to Queenstown, where he learned that his sheep were in Canada and doing as well as could be expected.¹⁶⁶ He was unfortunately unable to make direct contact with William Burn immediately, sailing for York (later Toronto) on the last vessel on 20 November.¹⁶⁷ Selkirk was not impressed with York - “the whole appears very ragged from the Stumps” - nor with Upper Canada’s officials.¹⁶⁸ But in York he met Sheriff Alexander Macdonell, who would become his Upper Canadian advisor and agent, beginning a protracted and unsatisfactory relationship with the Macdonell family in North America. He investigated land granting procedures with particular care and attention, soon perceiving that the system had many difficulties and was open to much abuse.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, he felt that he had established a good relationship with Lieutenant-governor Peter Hunter, and was sufficiently confident to write in late December to an American acquaintance about his plans of bringing a “settlement of Highlanders to a Township near Lake Erie” and his desire for a “few of their countrymen who have long been in America” to “instruct the newcomers in the methods of the country.”¹⁷⁰ By this time the Earl had more or less decided on the Chenail Ecarte on the north shore of Lake St. Clair, nor far from Detroit, as the site of his settlement. The land there was marshy, and would not require much clearing to be suitable for sheep. After drafting detailed instructions for William Burn, Selkirk set off for Montreal, travel-ling by horse along the north shore of Lake Ontario.¹⁷¹

As he journeyed to Montreal, Selkirk continued to make detailed observations of the settlements and the people, being particularly impressed by the occasional pockets of ethnic communities he found along the way. He spent some time in the Highland settlement of Glengarry, in southeastern Upper Canada, visiting beforehand at the Osnabrook farm of Captain Miles Macdonell, Sheriff Alexander’s brother-in-law. The Earl approved of what he saw and heard regarding Miles, who was “much of a gentleman in manners & sentiments” and was “so popular that he could get work done when nobody

else could.”¹⁷² These qualifications Selkirk regarded as important, and he filed Miles away for future reference. In Glengarry Selkirk found a thriving community, with houses which while poor by American or English standards were “a wonderful advance from the Hovels of Glengarry,” and equal to those of “farmers of 100 or 150 £. a year in Galloway.”¹⁷³ The Highlanders of Caengarry had adjusted well to American conditions, while maintaining their own traditions.

Selkirk liked French Canada, especially “the appearance of old settlement & thick population” which was quite European. In Montreal he was royally entertained by the “grandees, nabobs of the N.W.Co. etc” and learned a good deal about the economics and politics of the fur trade, which he recorded at length in his journal.¹⁷⁴ The Nor’westers would later accuse him of imposing on their hospitality by accepting their confidences without indicating his direct interest in their affairs. The charges were half-true. Selkirk undoubtedly did not broadcast the information that he had already attempted to interest the British government in settlements in Red River or the Falls of St. Mary, but at the same time, the careful observations which he made in Montreal were no different than those he made elsewhere in North America. Interested in everything he saw and was told, Selkirk was quite prepared to accept information from any source, and most people in North America rather enjoyed the opportunity to impress a British Lord.

In Quebec City for the opening of the legislature, Selkirk’s Scottish sympathies enabled him to grasp the problems of French Canada quite easily:

The English at Quebec & Montreal cry out in the true John Bull style against their obstinate aversion to institutions which they have never taken any pains to make them understand - & are surprised at the natural & universally experienced dislike of a conquered people to their con-querors & to every thing which puts them in mind of their subjection.¹⁷⁵

The Earl was struck by the English absence of “system in dealing with Canada,” observing:

... the only chance of reconciling the people would have been either to use every effort to change them entirely in language & Institutions & make them forget that they were not English - or keeping them as French to give a Government adapted to them as such, & keep every thing English out of sight - neither of these plans has been

followed, & the policy of Govt. has been a kind of vibration between them.¹⁷⁶

The result, thought Selkirk, was confusion and contradiction. Fluent in a French polished during years in the drawing rooms of Paris, the Earl observed that “even in private society ... the English & Canadians draw asunder.”¹⁷⁷ He clearly did not approve.

From Montreal Selkirk travelled through Vermont back to New York State, visiting in New York City and again at Albany, where he had further extensive conversations with Alexander Hamilton, only a few weeks away from his fatal duel with Aaron Burr.¹⁷⁸ In May of 1804 he returned to Upper Canada and in company with a Dr. Shaw made his way by boat and horse to the site of his settlement on the Chenail Ecarte, arriving there on 8 June. He intended to supervise personally the establishment of his estate at Baldoon. Selkirk had great plans for Baldoon, as naming it after the family estate sold in Scotland suggested. Unlike Prince Edward Island, with which he had become involved largely as a means of fulfilling his commitments, Baldoon represented both a public and a personal vision for Selkirk, and he spent much time writing careful and detailed instructions for its management.¹⁷⁹ On the public side, Baldoon was intended both to demonstrate the efficacy of planned resettlement of Highlanders and to serve as an illustration of Selkirk’s growing dream of “National Settlements” of people non-English in culture and language who would help preserve the heartland of British North America from the pernicious influence of American culture. On the private side, Selkirk intended to carve out a major North American estate for himself and his heirs, based upon scientific techniques of agriculture not common in the New World and particularly upon the development of the finest possible sheep on the continent. Sheep - and he had several thousand ready for Baldoon in the summer of 1804 - and the marshlands of the Chenail Ecarte were admirably suited to one another, especially when the lands had been properly drained and dyked. Unfortunately, until fully drained the site was quite unhealthy to human inhabitants, breeding malarial mosquitoes. Selkirk left Baldoon in late July, before the arrival of 102 passengers aboard the *Oughton*, who had been temporarily accommodated in Kirkcudbright, arrived. His departure also preceded the beginnings of an epidemic outbreak of malaria among his advance party and subsequently among the new arrivals. But as years of expenditure and correspondence with his estate managers would demonstrate, Baldoon was always a problem.¹⁸⁰

Selkirk returned in 1804 to Prince Edward Island via York and Montreal, arriving on the Island on 2 October. In a whirlwind of activity he attempted to resolve problems which had emerged in his absence, particularly a conflict between two of his agents there, Dr. Angus MacAulay and James Williams, which would continue to simmer for many years. He also consulted with a number of individuals on the Island and in Nova Scotia regarding future emigration to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. On November 20 he was back in New York, waiting for passage to England. The last North American entry in his journal was a highly favourable character reference for Miles Macdonell, and the only entry after his return to Britain a sketch of brother Daer's shrine at Exeter Cathedral.¹⁸¹ The visit to Daer's final resting place was probably something of an exercise in exorcism. Daer and his memory had hovered over Selkirk for many years, but Thomas was finally free. He had now established his own career, quite apart from the family tradition. North America had temporarily liberated him. Unfortunately, he was never quite able to free himself of the past, and the next few years would see him increasingly drawn back into the longstanding concerns of his family.

Success But No Satisfaction, 1805-1809

Soon after his return to Britain Selkirk began serious work on the manuscript of his book *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands*, spending most of his time in the first part of 1805 on his first major publication. Composition took place against the back-drop of rapidly shifting developments in British politics and correspondence from his agents in Prince Edward Island and Upper Canada. On the public front the news was encouraging. The Tory administration which so disliked his family was in serious difficulty, and Henry Dundas, the government's Scottish political manager, was under particularly heavy attack.¹⁸² Since he was a major opponent both of Selkirk's family and an independent Scottish peerage, the fall from political grace of Dundas spurred Selkirk's pen. A possible political career as a representative peer was the prize, if the Earl could bring his name to public attention without an excess of hostility. On the private side Selkirk's information was less favourable. He learned early in January from Alexander Macdonell of the problems of Baldoon, which would

become worse in each successive letter.¹⁸³ Indirect word from James Williams on Prince Edward Island was more favourable, but there were hints all was not well on the Gulf of St. Lawrence either. Were Selkirk to be able to boast of any success in his colonization ventures, it needed to be done quickly. Thus spurred on, he wrote quickly and incessantly a work less of reflection than of large-scale pamphleteering.

Despite the haste of its preparation, *Observations* was a major contribution to the debate over emigration, the first serious attempt in many years to defend and justify the exodus of Highlanders to North America. Its author had undoubtedly spent a good deal of time on horseback and shipboard collecting his thoughts and elaborating his theories. To his credit, the author attempted to write in the broader context of political economy and faced the larger issues of his subject squarely. From the outset of his book, Selkirk concentrated his attention on the inconsistency of the opponents of emigration, who simultaneously acted to improve the Highlands in ways “most conducive to the pecuniary interests of its individual proprietors” while offering no real solution to the problems inherent on the dispossession of the ancient inhabitants. It was clear, he maintained, that the process of change had already gone too far to be reversed, and with improvement “in no part will cultivation require all the people whom the produce of the land can support.” Proprietors could not be expected to concede to a population possessing land at a rent much below its potential value, and therefore most of the Highlanders would need a new means of livelihood. Clearances for sheep were only the most spectacular dispossessions, and were not the root cause of the difficulties in the Highland region. But since dispossession was inevitable, what options did the Highlander have? He could join the labouring force in the manufacturing towns, largely outside the region, or he could continue his traditional pastoral ways by emigrating to America. Emigration, Selkirk insisted, was “most likely to suit the inclination and habits of the Highlanders,” since it promised land and outdoor labour. Sedentary labour under firm discipline in a factory would not suit the Highlander, and he had few skills to bring to the labour market.¹⁸⁴

Selkirk then turned to deal with the various objections which had been raised against emigration. Highland development was not a legitimate argument against the removal of population to America, for it would less alter “the essential circumstances of the country” than provide temporary employment for those near the various construction sites. The loss of the

supply of soldiers was a real danger to the nation, admitted Selkirk, but he went on to insist that compulsory measures against emigration would not “add a single recruit to the army.” He maintained that the real threat to the nursery of soldiers, to the continued recruitment of hardy peasants loyal to their clan leaders and well-behaved because among friends and neighbours, was change occurring in the Highlands independent of emigration. With change the Highlands would become like everywhere else in Britain, and regiments composed of the region’s manhood would be “no longer composed of the flower of the peasantry, collected under their natural superiors.” As to the argument that emigration carried off labour required for agriculture and manufacture, the Earl asserted that, paradoxically enough, production had been increased by the exodus of people from the region. In the north of Scotland, the traditional Highlanders existed as “intrepid but indolent military retainers,” good only for drudge labour so long as they remained landless and degraded. While the state was entitled to regulate the loss of skilled labour, he observed, “there is perhaps no precedent of regulations for obviating a deficiency of porters and barrowmen and ditchers.” The merchants and manufacturers of Paisley and Glasgow moreover had not been responsible for the emigration restrictions, which even if successful would not prevent the depopulation of the Highlands. Manufacturing in the Highlands could never succeed, proclaimed Selkirk, because excess population and low wages were the only advantages the region could offer a manufacturer, and none would attempt an enterprise under such circumstances.

A point which Selkirk hit hard was that the same interests which had been responsible for the regulatory legislation of 1803 were producing the changes underlying emigration, and it was quite unfair to deny the same rights to their tenantry that they themselves were demanding. If public welfare were the issue, why not a restriction on the proprietors as to the disposal of their lands, instead of a brake on the population as to the disposal of their bodies? Selkirk allowed that the exodus could be avoided by returning to the old ways, but if the old ways were not acceptable, then the consequences must be followed to their logical conclusion. Attempting to be sympathetic to the lairds - after all, he had to live with them - Selkirk speculated that the landlord’s aversion to emigration sprang partly from the unjust criticism levelled against him for improvement. Instead of defending their just actions, the proprietors had turned instead to lash out against their people and those who had

allegedly deluded them. The Earl then examined the activities of the Royal Highland Society and Parliament regarding emigration regulation, and was extremely skeptical and critical of the published reports of both groups. But Selkirk reserved the full force of his full fury for the legislation itself, the inconsistencies of which he well and truly exposed.

Selkirk had read the minutes of the Highland Society, and in *Observations* pointed out that the basis of the legislation - the abuse of the emigrant - was not well documented by either the Society or the Select Committee of Parliament which had recommended the emigration act. He maintained that the food allowance bore absolutely no relationship to the normal living standards of the Highlander at home. Moreover Selkirk implicitly questioned one basic assumption of those who hoped through legislation to price the passage out of the reach of the average Highlander: that he was extremely poor. The Earl argued that the increased cost of passage resulting from the Act would in most cases be met by emigrants out of the cash reserve which they needed to settle in their destination, adding:

What is to be thought, however, of the superabundant humanity of the Highland Society, of which this is all the result - which to save the emigrants from the miserable consequences of being as much crowded on ship-board as the King's troops themselves, and of living there on the same fare as at home, reduces them to land in the colonies in the state of beggars, instead of having a comfortable provision beforehand?¹⁸⁵

The Society, the Earl maintained, represented "one class of men, for whom they appear as advocates at the bar of the public."¹⁸⁶ Such a comment, while accurate, was not designed to increase Selkirk's popularity among the Highland lairds.

When Selkirk eventually finished his analysis of the Scottish situation and moved to that in North America, he offered two related propositions regarding Highland emigration: that the presence of Highlanders would help prevent British North America from falling to the Americans; and that to take full advantage of what Highlanders offered, the newcomers (like other ethnic groups) should be concentrated in what the Earl labelled "national Settlements" in order to preserve their language, culture, and manners. In his various colonization activities, Selkirk was always concerned to maintain the old culture, but he did not here elaborate the concept of national settlement, moving quickly on to describe his efforts on Prince Edward Island as an

illustration of how Highland settlers could best be assisted so as to increase their chances of success in a strange environment.

Selkirk's book was greeted most enthusiastically by the reviewers, who unanimously recognized the force of his arguments. *The Critical Review* commented: "We think that he has combated the prejudice and censured the weakness of some leading movers of the late transactions of the Highland Society with considerable success; and that his publication will have a powerful effect in removing such embarrassing and untoward obstacles to the adoption of a just system Of policy."¹⁸⁷ *The Scots Magazine*, traditionally hostile to Highland emigration, acknowledged that Selkirk "certainly appears to us to be guided by such sound and enlarged views of policy, and has explained these in a manner so clear and forcible, as to leave hardly any room for contesting the important conclusions which it is his object to draw." Moreover, added the reviewer, "of all the persons affected by the present state of things, the Highland proprietors are certainly the last that have any title to complain, since it is their own work."¹⁸⁸ Hearty applause came from the *Edinburgh Review*, which thought the question so well handled that the work merely needed to be summarized. The anonymous reviewer (Francis Horner) concluded that political economy must not mistake "as symptoms of decay and devastation, the movements actually occasioned by the growth of wealth, enterprize, and industry," adding that Selkirk had

contributed a new article, very nearly finished in its form, to the general elements of political administration, and ... cast light on one of the most intricate parts of the science of oeconomy, that in which the theory of wealth and the theory of population are examined in connexion.

In private correspondence, Horner added that the book was "a valuable piece of descriptive history, as well as political economy," noting that the critics experienced a "concurrence of opinion" on its importance."¹⁸⁹ The *Farmer's Magazine* opined: "We hope that every Highland proprietor will peruse this work; not that we wish it to have the effect of inducing them to drive their tenantry from their estates, but of persuading them to adopt prudent measures in the management of their properties, that the people may have time to prepare, and may leave them without shewing any discontent."¹⁹⁰

Despite the obvious attention and approval excited by the appearance of *Observations* at the time of its publication, posterity has not followed the lead of some of the contemporary reviewers in regarding Selkirk's book

as an important piece of the canon of political economy. There are a number of reasons for the failure of the book to survive. In the first place, the immediate issues addressed by Selkirk rapidly shifted, altered to some extent by the force of his own arguments. The book came to be seen as a tract for the times rather than as a general statement of theoretical principles, an assessment encouraged by the nature of the subsequent attacks upon it by spokesmen for the Highland lairds but more importantly, perhaps, by its author's failure to pursue his ideas further in print, at least in ways which gave his thinking any coherence. Selkirk's publications were occasional and issue-oriented, thus helping to disguise his own emphasis upon the need for system. Perhaps the critical factor in Selkirk's failure to achieve prominence as a political economist, however, was inherent in the principles he was attempting to combine and reconcile. At first glance Selkirk appeared to be expounding the standard liberal notions of the Scottish Enlightenment, arguing for freedom from restraint and the encouragement of natural and inevitable processes of change and modernization. But Selkirk was not simply another *laissez-faire* liberal, for he was committed not only to positive intervention in the emigration process by private and public interests, but to intervention to preserve what were to him important human values. Unlike most of the political economists of his time, Selkirk recognized that human nature had to be taken into account in the process of change, and moreover, that human nature was simply not as adaptable as was the marketplace or the economy.

Undoubtedly the most interesting feature of Selkirk's book on emigration was his insistence that traditional Highland culture and personal psychology were inimicable to modernization, and that the Highlander had a legitimate right to evade progress. For Selkirk, the traditional ways of life could be in large measure preserved by emigration to land-rich British North America, and he even offered a series of arguments which found strategic advantage for the colonies in the perpetuation of cultures such as that of the Highlanders. The Earl was hardly the only contemporary who concerned himself with the human cost of progress, but he was one of the few who simultaneously accepted the inevitability and even desirability of change at the same time that he sought practical alternatives for the victims. His recognition of the essential conservatism of Scots assisted Selkirk in his realization that the vaunted schemes of Highland development would not work, or at best would not work in the ways that their proponents advanced. It

would appear that few readers of *Observations* either at the time of its publication or in later years recognized Selkirk's ingenious reconciliation of progress and tradition.

With the text of his book at the printer, Selkirk turned more seriously to his North American interests. Correspondence from Sheriff Macdonell made clear not only the health problems at Baldoon but the difficulties in obtaining land concessions from the government in Upper Canada, and in personal interviews and writ-ten representations with Prime Minister William Pitt the Earl attempted to gain government support for his settlement ventures in that province. The result was a lengthy document entitled "Outlines of a Plan for the Settlement & Security of Canada," which reflected Selkirk's American thinking as of the summer of 1805. He submitted his ideas on the basis of "an attentive & pretty laborious investigation of the local circumstances" of Upper and Lower Canada, he wrote to Pitt. The chief problem of the Canadas, Selkirk insisted, was the constant influx of American settlers into the colonies, which would ultimately endanger British interests. The Americans were encouraged by easy land granting procedures and low prices, and the entire land system of the Canadas needed serious overhauling. While Americans should be discouraged, encouragement should be given to the settlement of Highlanders, Dutch, Germans, and Welsh, "in short any who speak a different language from the English." The Earl maintained that if the Canadian provinces were divided into four or five districts, "each inhabited by Colonists of a different nation, keeping up their original peculiarities and all differing in language from their neighbours in the United States, the authority of Government would be placed on the most secure foundation." He suggested some guidelines for national settlements. The Dutch could be placed in townships below Kingston in Upper Canada. The Highlanders could go to those parts of Upper Canada west of Niagara in sufficient numbers "to preserve themselves from the contagion of American manners," and Highlanders should be attracted from the United States to the region. Americans around Lake Ontario should be moved further north.

Selkirk recommended entails on larger grants to assure a landed aristocracy so much needed, particularly in Upper Canada, and in general a land policy less favourable to common settlers. Clergymen from the national groups should be encouraged regardless of denomination, and of course, the regulations of the Passenger Vessel Act of 1805 should be reconsidered since

“Gov’t appears to have been taken by surprize when they consented to the measure.”¹⁹¹ The British government did not take seriously Selkirk’s proposals, which were entirely too far-reaching to be implemented, and the scheme remains important only as evidence of the further elaboration of the Earl’s thinking on the subject of national settlement. In future negotiations with the government Selkirk would drop his focus on non-English-speaking settlers and would concentrate on land granting practices.

By late 1805 rumours of the downfall of the Tory government of William Pitt, who was very ill, were endemic in Britain, and Selkirk obviously felt sufficiently established to consider standing for a Scottish seat in the House of Lords. He began writing the obligatory letters requesting support in October, long before elections had formally been called, the 9th Earl of Keltie commenting to a correspondent, “Your Lordship will have had a circular from Lord Selkirk, who, has a mind to be in time!”¹⁹² In the meantime, the news from his American agents continued to be unfavourable. Alexander Macdonell reported another outbreak of malaria at Baldoon, and commented, “when well, the settlers are discontented, violent & rapacious - now they are unfit for any exertion.”¹⁹³ A few days later, a desperate Macdonell penned:

For Heavens sake, my Lord, lose no time in instructing me how I am to proceed. You will find that your views will be frustrated, & that you cannot effect a permanent settlement at Baldoon ... eventually our Lordship will be under the necessity of giving up the idea.¹⁹⁴

Macdonell pressed for a removal of the settlement to lands elsewhere in the province. Selkirk replied by observing that Macdonell’s letters had given him a “distress of mind” which was “more than I can express,” but insisted that removal had been delayed by the failure of the Upper Canadian government to co-operate with him in additional land grants. “I trust you will take good care that the public throughout Canada shall understand how the case stood,” he wrote, “& that it was my anxious desire & positive instruction to remove the people from Baldoon before the unhealthy season.” The responsibility for “the calamities which have befallen the settlers” were on the shoulders of General Peter Hunter, he insisted.¹⁹⁵ As for Prince Edward Island, Selkirk attempted desperately through intermediaries to gain some information on his settlement, because he had not heard from James Williams since his departure from the Island in October 1804.¹⁹⁶

The American situation was obviously deteriorating rapidly for Selkirk. Alexander Macdonell's letters made plain that the man had lost his nerve, and as for James Williams, he was simply lost. Selkirk could do little more than answer Macdonell in firm tones; there seemed little point in writing Williams at all.¹⁹⁷ Beyond the problems with his agents lurked some larger issues, however; Selkirk was convinced that the Upper Canadian government was unsympathetic to his projects, and on Prince Edward Island, the House of Assembly, in a "Jacobinical temper," was arguing for public seizure lands where the quitrents authorized in 1767 were not paid. Selkirk recognized that the original conditions of settlement on Prince Edward Island, which had never been observed, were "devised by some theorist, devoid of experience in Colonization." But he blamed the demand for forfeiture of the lands on the fact, "that a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of the Island are natives of the older Settlements in America & inherit the levelling spirit of the New Englanders," an assessment which fit with his general attitude toward the American population but was simply not accurate.¹⁹⁸ Whatever the reasons, however, it was clear that the American projects were not going well, and that Selkirk's presence was desperately needed, both to provide leadership for the settlers and to cut through the resistance of governments to new initiatives.

The opening months of 1806 also saw three full-scale critiques of Selkirk and *Observations* appear in print, one by Clanranald factor Robert Brown and two by anonymous writers.¹⁹⁹ All three responses were characterized by *ad hominem* arguments and a reiteration of the optimistic sentiments, combined with hostility to the overseas empire, always characteristic of the opponents of emigration. Selkirk was accused of romanticizing the culture of indolent Highlanders, of the outsider's ignorance of "true conditions" in the Highlands, and of pecuniary self-interest. All three authors insisted that there was room for even more people in the Highlands, by opening waste land for cultivation and shifting much of the population to crofting. Maintaining that America was not really a land of opportunity, they advanced the arguments that Highlanders were required at home as soldiers and as labourers in the south. The reviewers were relatively unimpressed with these responses?°° If a cast were to be made against the Earl's conclusions, these authors did not succeed in making it. Ominously, however, events in Upper Canada and Prince Edward Island might well undermine the Earl's arguments, which relied not only on an analysis of affairs in the Highlands but also heavily on the presumption that life was better in the New World.

If developments both in Scotland and in British North America caused Selkirk some distress in the winter of 1805-06, there seemed some hope for improvement. In January of 1806 William Pitt died, and his ministry was replaced by one headed by Lord Grenville and Charles James Fox, the latter having particular concern for foreign affairs. Fox and Selkirk's father had been good friends, sharing in the Whig battles against the ministry associated with the French Revolution in the 1790s. By March 1806 it was widely rumoured that Selkirk would replace Anthony Merry as British minister to the United States, and the American government was so informed?²⁰¹ Superficially, the appointment appeared to make a good deal of sense, for Selkirk had recently travelled widely in the United States and obviously had a lively interest in American affairs. On the other hand, his American acquaintances were largely among the Federalist forces out of power in Washington, and his opinions about the United States were hardly designed to win favour with the Jefferson administration. Although the appointment appears to have been offered and accepted, it was never implemented and Selkirk waited for months to learn of his fate, writing an old university friend that he had been "put off in a teasing manner" and found the suspense disagreeable?²⁰² Whether Washington had objected to the appointment or whether the rapid deterioration of the health of Charles James Fox played a part in the delay is not clear. Probably Fox's illness did matter, and events moved beyond his control, for Fox died in September and Parliament was dissolved soon after. It is also possible that Selkirk's continued barrage of position papers to the ministry on American affairs while his appointment hung fire either annoyed those in power or provided evidence that he was not the man wanted for the job, which involved coming to terms with the Americans on a variety of vexing issues. As Selkirk made plain, he did not regard friendship with the United States as the only aim of British policy in the New World.

In one position paper, Selkirk threw his support behind a comprehensive effort to liberate the Spanish colonies of Latin America, partly to restore British honour and partly to prevent them from falling into the hands of the French. Moreover, such an enterprise would be the basis of "lasting friendship" with the United States by allowing the Americans Florida, which they coveted. "Some secret stipulation in this subject would effectually secure them to our interests and render them more pliant upon all the other subjects we have to discuss with them." True to his Scottish heritage, Selkirk argued "*The Isthmus of Darien [Panama] is the Key to the whole trade*

of South America, “and control of this region should be Britain’s only territorial concern?”²⁰³ In a subsequent paper Selkirk again counselled against the acquisition of Latin American territory, insisting:

where the people have not the tie of a common origin and language with us, where their religion and their laws are so different, as those of these Colonists are from ours, it is almost unavoidable, that in time jealousies must arise, that the affections of the people will be alienated, that they will feel the control of a distant foreign country to be irksome, and that sooner or later we must resolve, to abandon the dominion, or to maintain it by a Severe and ruinous Struggle.²⁰⁴

Although an expansionist, the Earl was no indiscriminate imperialist.

If Selkirk bombarded the ministry with support for activity in South America, he also continued to be concerned about British policy within the North American colonies. His major statement of early 1806 was entitled “Granting Lands in North America,” sent both to the Colonial Secretary and the Board of Trade. Land policy must be adapted to local circumstances, Selkirk insisted, with the main point to give each family a farm to cultivate by distributing land among actual settlers. At the same time, the Earl defended extensive grants to great proprietors, for land was useless unless improved. In an interesting line of argument he maintained:

From the principles so clearly laid down by Mr. Malthus, it will be easily understood that in a Colony where an original nucleus of population has been planted, that population increasing at a certain rate, will be capable of carrying forward the improvement of the country with a proportional degree of rapidity - a rapidity increasing like the population in a geometrical proportion.

From this extension of Malthusianism, Selkirk concluded large grants did not hinder development if an original population was in place, and major proprietors could afford to improve their lands. Turning to proprietors in a new colony, the Earl insisted they must either bring people or want for them, “in one case the expence must be very great; in the other the return is vey distant.” The lack of success in Nova Scotia and P.E.I. of large proprietors should not prejudice against extensive grants, Selkirk wrote, and he opposed giving land away, a policy which attracted only American squatters, “a set of lawless vagabonds,

straggling upon the frontiers of our provinces.” It was far better to give the land to the leading people among the emigrants. Free lands diffused and perpetuated a “level-ling spirit among the people,” and a system of agrarian equality ran counter to British principles and “experience of ages” that a “respectable landed Aristocracy” was the basis of stability. Selkirk laid down as a *dictum*, “where land is of no value no Aristocracy can be found,” and added that the absence of a distribution of ranks was “the greatest defect in the political system of our Colonies, as well as of the United States.”²⁰⁵

What the British government made of these submissions is quite unclear. They certainly gave evidence that Selkirk was interested in American affairs, had much first-hand information at his disposal, and was constantly thinking about New World problems. They also indicated that he was critical of if not hostile to the United States, and more than hinted at a patronizing condescension which many Americans would have found offensive. At the same time, his policy papers of early 1806 also demonstrated that Selkirk’s theories were hardening, particularly in response to his American experience. His views on the importance of a landed aristocracy in the preservation of stability had been first expressed in his pamphlet on poor relief, but he was coming increasingly to focus upon these principles and even to seek their extension into North America. Whig aristocrats in Britain had always maintained an uneasy tension between their commitment to equality and the preservation of their own order, but for Selkirk the scales were being tipped in favour of the latter concern. The break with family political tradition which soon would take place was an almost inevitable product of these personal developments.

The spring of 1806 saw Selkirk actively involved in political machinations, in one direction openly breaking with family tradition and in another extending it. The forthcoming parliamentary election would be a hard-fought battle, and unlike his father, Thomas was prepared to use his local power on behalf of Whig candidates. Moreover, he was willing to take steps which his father had always opposed and criticized, by creating artificial voters through transfers of property within the constituency. The practice was a common one throughout Scotland, and he defended his activities on the simple grounds that his opponents were already engaged in it?²⁰⁶

If old Dunbar would not have approved the creation of fictional superiorities by his son, he would at the same time have applauded Selkirk’s concerns for the position of the Scottish peerage. The occasion arose

because of the uncertainties surrounding the elevation of the Earl of Eglintoun to the British peerage, thus giving him an hereditary seat in the House of Lords. Eglintoun had been elected a representative peer of Scotland, and many, including no doubt the Earl of Selkirk, assumed that this personal change of status created a vacancy. The government failed to act on this assumption, however, and a petition to the House of Lords was drafted and circulated among the Scottish peers, winning some approval.²⁰⁷ Selkirk himself met with “a noble Lord, very high in administration” (Lord Grenville himself), who was rumoured to be opposed to reopening the question of the privileges of the Scottish peerage. As in 1784, an irate Earl of Selkirk was deflected from protesting on the grounds that government did not oppose reform of the system “if the Peers of Scotland should unite” in seeking it. Selkirk was encouraged to take the lead in organizing his colleagues, and he would do so later in 1806 and 1807.²⁰⁸

In addition to consulting with members of the ministry on a variety of topics - both orally and in writing, and usually at his initiative - and engaging in political activity in Scotland, Selkirk also saw a second edition of *Observations on the State of the Highlands* through the press. The new edition was rather more of the nature of a reprinting than a substantial revision of the book. Type was reset, providing a number of minor differences of capitalization, punctuation, and page numberings with the first edition.²⁰⁹ The only major additions were in the footnotes and appendices, particularly an updating of the progress of the Prince Edward Island settlement (based on second-hand information since the Earl still had not heard officially from his Island agent James Williams) and a new Appendix V dealing with population data and changes in the Highlands.²¹⁰ If more details on Prince Edward Island had been available, they might have induced the author to make more substantial changes, particularly to his chapter on the Island. But the absence of information, combined with the failure of the critics of the book to force Selkirk to reconsider seriously any of his arguments, led him to reissue it virtually unaltered.

By the beginning of July 1806 Selkirk had learned that he had no chance for returning to North America in any official capacity, and he undertook alternate strategies. For Prince Edward Island, he wrote to an old acquaintance in Halifax asking him to investigate the situation. He was particularly concerned with news of the people, noting:

I don't know if you have seen any of the replies that have come out to my book, but they all attempt in a very malignant manner to insinuate doubts on the veracity of the relation I have given to their progress, & pretend that no account from the Colonies is to be trusted - I would wish to be able to refute this vile aspersion in a manner that could admit no reply.²¹¹

As for James Williams, the Earl admitted he could not be certain that the agent had turned "rogue", but thought there was sufficient evidence to fit with other examples of the "malignant effect of the American Climate on the honesty."²¹² More publicly, Selkirk assumed the leadership of the proprietors of Prince Edward Island, pressing upon the ministry a bill (for passage by the Island Assembly) adjusting the lines and boundaries of the lands there. This bill had apparently been drafted by John Stewart, whose book on the Island appeared about this time with many kind words for Selkirk, and would involve the Earl in Island politics and personal conflicts in an unfortunate way.²¹³ He also transmitted to the government with his approbation a proposal from Miles Macdonell for the creation of a Highland Fencible Corps in Upper Canada, a scheme which influenced his own proposals of 1813. As for his own affairs in Upper Canada, he continued to press for alternative land grants to make it possible to provide other lands for the Baldoon settlers.²¹⁴

Autumn of 1806 saw Selkirk in the midst of political preparations for the forthcoming parliamentary election. He was active in support of Whig candidates for the House of Commons, using his influence in Galloway to considerable effect. Anxiety about a seat for Henry Erskine, Lord Advocate for Scotland in the Whig government, led Selkirk to work behind the scenes to obtain the nomination of the Dumfries Burghs for Erskine.²¹⁵ Selkirk was equally active on behalf of his own order, serving as one of the leaders of an effort to gather the peers of Scotland and their heirs apparent to consider "what steps it may be advisable to take with a view of obtaining for our Order certain advantages granted by the Union of Ireland to the peerage of that Kingdom."²¹⁶

At the same time that he was pressing for Scottish peerage reform, Selkirk was also concerned that he would be elected a representative peer himself. Another round of letters came in late October to the select electorate, announcing his candidacy and hoping for support, which if received he would "ever esteem it the most distinguished obligation. "1217 On 27 October Lord

Grenville sent to the Scottish peers a list of the names “of those Peers whom I understand the friends of Government are likely to support.”²¹ Thomas’s name was among them. His father would have been horrified yet again at the thought of his son’s name appearing on one of those hated attempts by the ministry in London to influence the vote, but Thomas might have answered his father that he was attempting to implement a reform of the Scottish peerage system which would permit those not elected to the Lords to serve in the Commons, as was the case in Ireland, and in the meantime a serious political career was possible only by playing according to the existing rules.

Whether or not immediate political concerns were foremost in Selkirk’s mind when he prepared yet another position paper on America in early October, the exercise, which involved personal discussions with Lord Grenville and George Canning, undoubtedly helped keep his name and expertise to the forefront. The main thrust of the submission was to reiterate his earlier arguments on the need for British involvement in the inevitable attempts of Spanish colonies in Latin America to liberate themselves. His advocacy of an active British military role to prevent these territories from falling into French hands was an argument of the moment, but it was on this occasion cast in terms of British policy toward the United States. Selkirk pointed out that Alexander Hamilton had earlier advocated an “Anglo-American partition of the Spanish American Colonies in the western hemisphere” and although Hamilton was dead, in an irony which the Earl did not mention, his killer Aaron Burr was adventuring in the Spanish territories. Selkirk argued that Thomas Jefferson could probably be won over to the scheme, noting that under Jefferson the United States was “an ambitious young nation with great potentialities.”²¹⁹ Canning’s response was non-committal, but Grenville observed that it would be difficult “to ally the United States of America with us in the liberation of the Spanish territories in the Americas” given Jefferson’s lack of friendliness to Britain and the present difficulty of Anglo-American relations in general.²²⁰ The Prime Minister was also dubious about Aaron Burr and his schemes. Once again Selkirk had demonstrated his vision and his intimate knowledge of American affairs, but combined these positive attributes with hare-brained ideas (such as employing Burr for British purposes) which cast doubt on his judgment. The ministry undoubtedly found in this exchange further substantiation for the wisdom of not appointing Selkirk to the American post.

While Selkirk continued to be without news of his Prince Edward Island settlement, correspondence from Alexander Macdonell sounded more promising. The people at Baldoon, despite sickness, had decided to remain, and the shepherds were extremely enthusiastic about the quality of the grass there.²²¹ Although Macdonell continued to have trouble with the Upper Canadian government, noting with his enclosures “Your Lordship will perceive how little disposed this Government is to accomodate [sic].” Selkirk was more sanguine, advising his agent,

The change of administration, alters very materially my prospects & views in tl.C. as I can now depend on every reasonable accommodation & a fair interpretation of my original grant, & moreover the Gentlemen who in Council have shewn so *fair* a regard for the spirit of their Sovereigns orders, may expect a haul over the coals for their pains.

The Earl had “full confidence in the fairness & liberality of the present government,” and was prepared once again to become active in Upper Canada?²²² A few weeks later Selkirk was memorializing the government, arguing that the Irish would soon join the Scots Highlanders in a major flow of emigration to North America, pushed out by overpopulation and agricultural improvement. These Irish, especially the Roman Catholics among them, needed to be redirected to British colonies. Selkirk recommended amalgamating the Irish and Highlanders, insisting:

A national settlement, speaking their original & favourite dialect will be equally attractive to the Irish as to the Highlanders; & it will be of use to preserve among the Settlers, those national customs & peculiarities, which are associated in their minds, with the traditions of the ancient greatness of their race.²²³

Naturally he recommended Upper Canada as the ultimate destination. The notion of combining Irish and Highlanders would eventually be attempted by Selkirk in Red River, with less than success.

Peerage politics heated up in the autumn of 1806, as the election called for 4 December at Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh came closer. There were problems with the government list, and Selkirk worked actively behind the scenes to assure his own support. When the day arrived a much larger assembly than usual appeared in person, and all but nine absent peers had submitted proxies. Selkirk was sufficiently concerned about his own prospects to vote for himself, but he was easily elected.²²⁴ A day later he was in the chair at a meeting of the Peers of Scotland held at Fortune’s

Tavern in Edinburgh, called to consider peerage reform. The gathering was an informal rump of those earlier attending at Holyroodhouse, but it included more than twenty peers and heirs apparent. Not all present were enthusiastic about change; a motion for adjournment by Lord Napier and Earl Morton was defeated only by 14 to 11. Those assembled then debated another proposition, probably drafted by Selkirk:

Would it, or would it not, be advantageous to the Peerage of Scotland, that their Representatives should be chosen for life, provided the Peers not elected should have the same privileges of eligibility to the House of Commons as enjoyed by the Peerage of Ireland?

It was decided that Selkirk as chairman should send the proposition to every peer and heir apparent, requesting an answer by 1 December 1807, following which another meeting should be called as quickly as possible.²²⁵ Such a conclusion was undoubtedly as much as Selkirk had expected. As he departed Edinburgh for London, where he would take the oaths associated with his entrance into the House of Lords, he could feel relatively pleased with the course of events. He had entered politics, he was moving his fellows in the direction of reform, he was achieving some measure of success.

Although Selkirk did not immediately throw himself into the middle of proceedings in the House of Lords, he attended assiduously and made his maiden speech in the midst of a high-spirited debate on the second reading of the bill to abolish the slave trade. The Earl of Westmoreland had argued that if Britain abandoned the slave trade, others less humane might take it up, adding that the trade was a valuable one and abolition would endanger the rights of property.²²⁶ Selkirk rose to answer his colleague, insisting that moral offence took precedence over property. He then launched into a lecture on the demography of the West Indies which concluded that abolition of the trade would improve planter treatment of their negroes and hence would increase the population.²²⁷ William Wilberforce, listening intently to the debate on his precious reform bill, thought Selkirk's remarks "sensible and well-principled," but added to a correspondent that the Earl spoke "with so low a voice that he could scarce be heard."²²⁸ No one expected a first effort to be outstanding, but Selkirk had demonstrated two principal failings which would hold him back as a political figure in an era where the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate was still where an aspiring young man made his mark. In the first place, he was an unprepossessing public speaker, lacking volume, animation,

and sense of humour. Fellow-Scot Archibald Constable reported a few weeks later, after attendance at the House of Lords, that “whatever may be his merit as a writer,” Selkirk was a “most wretched speaker, and I think will never be a good one.”²²⁹ Perhaps even more critically, he had a tendency to lecture rather than to debate, droning on endlessly with carefully prepared arguments full of good points lost upon his audience.

If Selkirk began inauspiciously in the public glare of the House of Lords, he was still working hard behind the scenes. The ministry, already in its dying days, received several new submissions from Selkirk early in 1807. One was directly concerned with his own affairs, in which he observed that since 1802 he had expended more than 30,000£. (35,000 £. with interest) upon North American colonization and had in the process acquired property which could not be sold for more than 10,000 £. While he recognized that he had no absolute right to compensation, his losses plus the suffering of his “patrimonial affairs” at home deserved indemnification, since he had performed a public service. The Earl suggested he would be prepared to accept a large grant of waste lands in Upper Canada for his efforts.²³⁰ Another document returned again to the Passenger Vessel Act of 1803, with Selkirk suggesting revisions to parts “particularly objectionable.” He argued here that two passengers for every three tons was more reasonable than the present regulation, and suggested changes in the amount and kind of provisioning required more in keeping “with the actual habits of the peasantry of Scotland.”²³¹ Nothing came of either of these initiatives, the government falling soon afterwards.

Perhaps the most interesting of the position papers Selkirk prepared for the perusal of government in early 1807 was one entitled “Bounds of Louisiana.” Noting that the British government was negotiating with the Americans over unresolved boundaries, Selkirk called attention to the question of Louisiana, an enormous territory possessing many advantages of soil and climate which should not be given away gratuitously to the Americans. Arguing that rights rested on treaties, and where these were silent on occupancy, the Earl pointed out that the 1783 treaty with the United States did not refer to territory west of the Mississippi and that the Americans had only acquired Spanish rights through purchase. The northern boundary of Louisiana had not been fixed, and the British had a strong claim to the territory through its

conquest of French Canada and through occupancy. While Selkirk was prepared to allow the Americans the upper Mississippi region, he maintained that the British could claim territory above the 47th latitude through the British traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, which France certainly could not have ceded away to anyone.²³² He would return indirectly to these considerations in 1811 when negotiating his vast grant of territory from the Hudson's Bay Company, a grant which studiously ignored the 49th parallel as demarcating a boundary between British and American territory.

The early months of 1807 also saw Selkirk hard at work in his study, drafting his arguments for reform of the Scottish peerage. The resultant pamphlet was completed on 19 February with the Ministry of the Talents still in control of Parliament, but by the time it was printed a month later, political circumstances had altered dramatically, a point alluded to by the author in a brief Preface. Following the meeting of the peers in Edinburgh which Selkirk had chaired in December of 1806, he had circularized an account of the proceedings. Replies he had received indicated that reform would not be easy to achieve. The Earl of Morton described the proposal that Scots peers not elected for life to the Lords be eligible for the Commons as "degrading, and consequently disadvantageous beyond all possibility of compensation to our order," while Lord Torphichen produced a more lengthy and rea-soned response.²³³ Those peers not elected for life would be reduced, argued, Torphichen, to "absolute Insignificance, almost Non-Existence." The elections would not necessarily produce a representative group, he insisted, and those eligible for the Commons who had once sat in the Lords would feel reduced in status. Perhaps more critically, Torphichen pointed out the importance of money for Commons electioneering, observing "That Ingredient, Some of us *have*, but most, certainly many, *have not*." The plan was dangerous, both because it was unconstitutional and because it set a dangerous precedent for altering the terms of the Union of Scotland and England. Behind all his arguments lurked Torphichen's concern, undoubtedly shared by many others, that the scheme was "calculated only to distinguish a few of our Order" to the "absolute Humiliation" of the remainder²³⁴ Selkirk was conscious of the strength of the opposition as he penned his reasoned statement in favour of the proposal.

Thomas Douglas was an intensely private man, and he did not often expose his thinking on personal matters to public scrutiny. Nevertheless, one gets a clear feeling from *A Letter to the Peers of Scotland* of a man

writing from personal experience, extrapolating from his own situation to that of his order in general. As such, the pamphlet offers an unusual opportunity to see how Selkirk assessed his own political future at the start of his public career. His major concern in *A Letter* was to demonstrate the disadvantageous public position of the Scottish peerage, an analysis in which his family's experiences merged with his own calculations. The present system, Selkirk insisted, excluded many capable men from public life and the pursuit of "honourable ambition." Probably thinking of his father, Selkirk pointed out that party voting had excluded men of talent in favour of lesser figures, who were supported by the prevailing party. "From such exclusion, my Lords," he warned, "none of us, in the present state of our elections, can flatter himself with being exempt: to-day the vindictive *ostracism* may fall on the head of our adversaries; to-morrow it may light on our own."²³⁵ Men defeated by party machinations in the Commons could find another seat, but Scottish peers had no alternative, being the only individuals who "in spite of the most distinguished and acknowledged merit, may be sunk in oblivion and condemned to obscurity."²³⁶ Moreover, he noted that some might find the Commons a preferable theatre for the display of their talents. As for the arguments of degradation, surely each peer could judge the question for himself. Selkirk insisted that only by enlarging on political opportunity could the Scottish peerage be true to its traditions:

It is no longer the ferocious valour of the feudal chieftain that leads to the highest honours of the state, but the talents of the statesman and the orator. The senate, in short, is now the *arena*, in which individuals have to struggle for personal consequence and distinction.²³⁷

Having chosen himself to contend in that arena, Selkirk must have often been conscious during the next few months of the force of his own analysis.

As Selkirk's involvement in British affairs grew, the level of his interest and concern in his North American settlements declined. His recent successes put any notion of starting afresh in America well into the background. The fact that neither of his settlements did particularly well meant that while they had been expensive enterprises, they did not tempt him to consider further their personal supervision. Although the Earl still had not heard from agent James Williams on Prince Edward Island, a Pictou attorney sent to the Island on Selkirk's behalf had reported that the settlement appeared to be flourishing. James Williams was still in charge,

appearing to be, the first reports indicated, “very attentive to your interest but ... rather *hard* in his Dealings.”²³⁸ Baldoon seemed to have reached some stability, and there was no news of fresh disasters from that quarter. Alexander Macdonell was able to fill his letters with gossip, both about Upper Canadian politics and from the settlement itself.²³⁹ Selkirk continued to complain to Macdonell about the expenses of Baldoon, which were “frightfully great,” and pressed for continued work on drainage of the marshland.²⁴⁰

The fall of the Ministry of the Talents and its replacement with a more purely Tory government, which called another parliamentary election, faced Selkirk with exactly the dilemma he had attempted to address in his pamphlet on peerage reform. Like all members of the House of Commons, Selkirk would have to stand for re-election, and his chances did not at first glance appear very promising. Associated as he had been with the reform Whigs, he would have to overcome ministerial support for other candidates and the natural predilection of the Scottish peerage to vote for known Tories. Having tasted the excitement of the public arena, however briefly, the Earl understandably did not look forward to losing his seat in the House of Lords, especially given the absence of options for re-entry into political life inherent in his Scottish title. Some room for maneuvering was held out when the Duke of Buccleuch, who was managing the government interest in the forthcoming peerage contest, approached Selkirk with the suggestion that the ministry might well be able to include the Earl in its list. What prompted Selkirk to accept this offer is not at all clear. His critics would label his decision sheer opportunism, although it must be noted that in many respects, particularly socially and in terms of social attitudes, Selkirk had always been more comfortable with Tories than with reformers. In any event, he insisted to both Buccleuch and to his fellow peers that he was staunchly independent, admitting to the Duke his awareness that many would find his scruples “over-refined.” But, he insisted, “it is a matter of feeling.”²⁴¹

Selkirk did indeed appear on the subsequent government list, and despite his declaration that his own votes would be given in accordance with his conscience, Buccleuch was certain he would “vote with fewer exceptions to our list than I expected.”²⁴² There was some resistance from the older peers to Selkirk partly because of his peerage reform proposals, and a good deal of discussion of his inclusion in the government list. Lord Napier commented, “I hope he will not be a wandering planet, though I doubt much that he will ever become a fixed Star.”²⁴³ Lord Haddington

called Selkirk “cousin *whistle about*,” adding, “Why they took him up I know not, except that all Ministers in one only instance follow the scriptures, ‘that there is more joy in Heaven for one sinner who repents than in 20 just men.’ Which in plain English is, that they always court their enemies, & neglect their friends.”²⁴⁴ At the election at Holyroodhouse on 9 June 1807, Selkirk received 43 of 62 votes, and was re-elected a representative peer. As Buccleuch had anticipated, most of his own votes were cast for government candidates.²⁴⁵ The Earl’s actions in this business were a calculated gamble. While it was true that he might well lose credibility by his political shift, the alternative was to return to the political wilderness, a situation for which his American projects could not at the time compensate. Whether the risk would be justified by success was a question only the future could answer.

Selkirk’s agreement with the Duke of Buccleuch had one other major consequence besides its assurance that he would be able to remain within the House of Lords. In March of 1807 the Earl was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Kirkcudbright, a traditionally ceremonial military position which during the years of the Napoleonic Wars actually brought with it responsibilities and authority. The Lords Lieutenant were civilians of county importance who were charged with home defence for their counties. They supervised not only the militia within their jurisdiction but also the various volunteer companies organized through local initiative and accepted by the War Office?⁴⁶ Since the French had more than once seriously threatened an invasion of Britain, the organization of home defence was an important matter for any coastal county. Kirkcudbright, located as it was on the west coast of Scotland, was not a particularly likely target for French invasion, but it was to some extent prepared. Home defence, and particularly the use of local militia, had been a constant concern of Selkirk’s father, particularly after the *Ranger* raid of 1777. Whether Selkirk’s appointment was a result of an interest he had expressed in such matters or simply a mark of approbation by the government is not clear. Certainly he had always maintained a desire for military involvement, and would more than once include military command in subsequent American settlement schemes. In any event, Selkirk threw himself into his new role with characteristic energy. Equally characteristically, his first instinct was to produce some general principles and system for home defence.

The occasion for Selkirk’s public statement of the result of his research and ruminations was debate in the House of Lords

on the government's militia transfer bill, which proposed to raise 44,000 militia men across Britain by use of a ballot. On 10 August 1807 he rose in the House to deliver a long and carefully argued speech on home defence, the text of which was subsequently published as *Substance of the Speech of the Earl of Selkirk, in the House of Lords, Monday, August 10, 1807, on the Defence of the Country*. In this speech Selkirk protested that the proposed bill was insufficient, for French invasion was a possibility and preparedness the only deterrent. "It is not to the Channel that we must look for security," Selkirk proclaimed, "but to the hands of Englishmen fighting for their liberties, for the glory and independence of their country." If there were to be an adequate defensive force, it required a "permanent system." Selkirk called for the creation of a well-trained reserve army, led by "the principal landed proprietors of the county," insisting that "in process of time the whole people will have gone through a course of discipline; we shall become, like our enemies, a nation of soldiers; and then England will assuredly be invincible."²⁴⁷ Particular criticisms of the existing arrangements were accompanied by references to "the valuable speculations of Mr. Malthus", as Selkirk used demography to argue his case for the creation of a general citizen army.²⁴⁸

Involvement with his political career and his militia proposals contributed to an increasing lack of interest on Selkirk's part with his American settlements. For a change, his agents were the ones complaining of a lack of communication.²⁴⁹ But Selkirk's time was also increasingly taken up with personal matters. He was by now a thirty-six year old bachelor, the last of his family. The time had come to marry and settle into domesticity. In the course of his attendance at the London social soirees of 1807, Selkirk had met a vivacious and eligible potential partner in the person of Miss Jean Wedderburn. The two were instantly attracted to one another. Miss Wedderburn was twenty-one years old, the daughter of a distinguished Scottish lawyer. One of her elder brothers (Alexander) was a rising London merchant, another (James) was married to the daughter of Whig potentate Lord Auckland. Through brother James, Jean had become not only the sister-in-law but the close friend of Lady Mary Louisa Auckland, and it was at the Auckland home in London that Selkirk and Jean had first met. We know virtually nothing about their courtship. The only contemporary surviving evidence is a letter from Lord Auckland to Lord Grenville in November of 1807, commenting that "Lord Selkirk

is not much to be admired either for his political conduct or for his eloquence, but he is amiable and good in private life, and therefore I am glad that he is to marry Miss Wedderburn.”²⁵⁰ Auckland added, “Lady Auckland has the great responsibility of buying the wedding clothes and laces.” The wedding took place at Inveresk, the bride’s home, on 24 November. It was a quiet and private affair, laconically announced in the press.²⁵¹ The new Lady Selkirk brought Selkirk domestic happiness and a number of relations who would become his friends and allies throughout his future American activities.

The beginning of the year 1808 found Selkirk more settled and contented than he had, perhaps, ever been in his life. The news from America was satisfactory. The Earl’s young nephew Basil Hall (subsequently renowned as a writer of travel literature) had visited Prince Edward Island, and had both sent back a personal report of progress and induced James Williams to provide reports and accounts. The accounts made clear that Selkirk’s lands were being successfully settled and generating a revenue, although it was not yet reaching Scotland.²⁵² Williams’ letters offered some explanation for the lack of communication, and a fairly detailed justification for the absence of cash remittances.²⁵³ Were Selkirk in a suspicious mood, or were he still contemplating an American career, he might have found the responses of Williams quite unsatisfactory. But Prince Edward Island had served its purpose, and so long as it did not continue to be a drain upon his income he was content. As with Baldoon, Selkirk’s chief concern was to minimize further outlays of funds rather than to expand his commitment, although he was happy to receive other land grants to compensate him for his efforts.²⁵⁴ In other areas of past activity he was equally sanguine, prepared to accept that the peerage proposal “is now completely asleep - there is no probability that the Dundas’s will ever countenance it or the present ministry suffer it to pass.” Although he was prepared to fight if any possibility of success existed, it seemed pointless to carry on further.²⁵⁵

While his marriage and new-found domesticity undoubtedly contributed to his relative lack of concern for matters which had once seemed important, so too did his current interest in military reform. January of 1808, he reported to one correspondent, found him “in the midst of what one of my literary friends calls ‘the agonies of the Press.’”²⁵⁶ Such work was, he confessed, “a species of torture which makes me forget every thing external.” The

publication upon which Selkirk was engaged was a revised and expanded version of his speech on home defence, which appeared under the title *On the Necessity of a More Effectual System of National Defence, and the Means of Establishing the Permanent Security of the Kingdom*. It was published in London by J. Hatchard and in Edinburgh by Constable and Company. In it the author attempted to enlarge upon his earlier proposals for a Local Militia, “rather for the purpose of illustrating the general principle, and of showing its practicability, than with any idea of exhibiting a perfect system.”²⁵⁷ Once again he demonstrated his preoccupation with demography in calculating the number of young men who would be affected by his scheme of required national military training.²⁵⁸ Once again he wrote favourably of the “internal energy, resulting from that happy connection which subsists between the different orders of society.”²⁵⁹ Selkirk went even further here, however, insisting that what needed to be imparted to his citizen soldiery was less experience in the use of arms than “habits of strict obedience.”²⁶⁰ He justified his proposal in a variety of ways, including the argument that such military service would “operate in an indirect manner in favour of the whole body of manufacturing labourers, by withdrawing the competition of a large portion of the younger workmen, and throwing the employment that remains into the hands of those who are more advanced in life, and more generally burdened with families.”²⁶¹ He suggested a separate system for Ireland and explained it carefully.

In his conclusions, Selkirk emphasized the importance of the principle of universality. Although he was no democrat, insisting as he did on the replication of the natural order of society in the command structure of his citizen army, he also recognized that his plan would be totally subverted by “any exemption in favour of the higher ranks of society, or any which can be purchased by pecuniary sacrifices.” Going further, he wrote, “To lay the burden of compulsory service upon the poor, and not upon the rich, would be contrary to the spirit of that constitution which it is our ambition to preserve.”²⁶² In the last analysis, what Selkirk had again demonstrated was that curious combination of vision and impracticality which characterized so many of his proposals. In the matter of universal military training, as in so many others, Selkirk was, as has often been observed, “ahead of his time.” But as was also typical, he had expressed his vision less in general terms than in terms of a concrete proposal of policy. Had he written a book on the general theory of universal military service instead of one detailing a specific programme, his ideas might have received more notice, at least from posterity, than they have enjoyed.

In the spring of 1808 Selkirk continued his communications with his American agents, showing slightly more positive interest than he had displayed for several years past.²⁶³ Nevertheless, neither his American letters nor any other surviving evidence offer any indication that his energies were seriously engaged on American projects, or that he contemplated some new initiative. Thus it is difficult to explain Selkirk's association over the summer of 1808 with Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the noted fur trader and explorer, in buying shares of stock in the Hudson's Bay Company. Not only are explanations of motivation difficult, but the entire "partnership" is clouded in uncertainty. Mackenzie apparently sought to use Selkirk as a front man in his negotiations with stockholders, but we do not know whether the Earl had accepted this role.²⁶⁴ The Hudson's Bay Company stock was selling fairly inexpensively in 1808, the company having suffered greatly over the years from a rivalry with Canadian-based organizations (especially the North West Company), and after 1807 its major market for furs in the Baltic area was closed by Napoleon.²⁶⁵ Selkirk had, of course, long shown an interest in the fur trade territory as a site of settlement, but his papers do not suggest in any way that this interest had been rekindled. The venture with Mackenzie was probably merely an incidental speculation made possible by Selkirk's knowledge of the fur trading operations, rather than - at least at this early stage - some deliberate policy of re-entrance into North American investment.

More significant than his dalliance with Sir Alexander Mackenzie and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1808 was Selkirk's continued active involvement in the House of Lords, and the execution of his duties as Lord Lieutenant of Kirkcudbright. On 1 July Selkirk was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, a recognition by his contemporaries of his commitment to scientific investigation; the honour no doubt pleased him enormously.²⁶⁶ Selkirk did find it necessary in the summer of 1808 to turn his attention at least briefly to Canadian affairs, answering an 1807 report by the Upper Canadian authorities which had been less than enthusiastic about the Earl's settlement ventures and his requests for future land grants. Selkirk defended himself against the charge that he was asking for more land than he deserved, and as evidence of his sincere desire for equity, offered to relinquish to the Crown 25,000 acres of land in Prince Edward Island, which was not waste land, in return for land in Upper Canada which, until improved by someone like himself, was useless.²⁶⁷ But Selkirk's response, while defending his position, was not that of an active colonizer. The basis of his rising reputation was in Britain, not in America.

A letter from Alexander Murray to Archibald Constable (the publisher) dated 3 August 1808, gives us a very favourable picture of Selkirk. Murray

described at length St. Mary's Isle, the surrounding territory, and Selkirk's place in his community, writing:

A more beautiful spot than he inhabits I think you have never seen. His house and policy (you know all Scottish peers have some, but he would rather have his in his *head* than about his house) are upon a peninsula, once the seat of a Priory, but just as profitable when occupied by a young man and woman of great merit.²⁶⁸

Discussing the town of Kirkcudbright, Murray noted,

This town is also the grand arena of county politics: The Earl of Selkirk is now at the head of one party, the Earl of Galloway directs the other. I am inclined to think that the Earl of Selkirk, if he choose, may at last preponderate. But this will not arise so much from his own merit, which is very great, as from his skill in buying and selling, this being a grazing county. You must feed your *beasts* well, and then you may lead them to the slaughter.²⁶⁹

Murray reserved his highest paeans for Selkirk's library, which he wrote, consists of a capital collection of well-chosen useful books. It is particularly rich in what are called books in Political Economy. It contains an excellent set of the higher Classics; not so many Greek, however, as Latin; nor is it deficient in books in Antiquities; but these have not been a primary object. In short, it is a statesman's library, but that statesman seems to be a philosopher.²⁷⁰

Selkirk's public image had never stood higher.

Throughout the fall and early spring of 1809 Mackenzie and Selkirk continued to acquire small amounts of Hudson's Bay Company stock, although the Earl does not appear to have engaged in any enquiries about affairs in the Canadian West nor to have committed any of his thoughts on the matter to paper. Since both of these lines of action usually accompanied any major shift in his interests, it seems likely that the stockdealing continued to be a relatively incidental business, albeit a curious one. In the spring of 1809 Selkirk did draft a lengthy statement of Upper Canadian affairs in the form of a letter to Lieutenant-governor Francis Gore.²⁷¹ The letter continued the defence of his actions criticized

by the Upper Canadian committee of council in 1807, arguing that his requests for land grants were justified and legitimate, given his colonization efforts in the province. That he had no major American initiatives in his mind was perhaps indicated by his search in this period for a new and larger London house, commensurate with his present domestic situation.²⁷²

Early in 1809 Major John Cartwright, the doughty reformer who had in 1780 founded the Society for Constitutional Information, which included as members Selkirk's father Dunbar and eldest brother Daer, laboured to obtain a number of respectable backers for a dinner in London in support of parliamentary reform. Naturally Selkirk was invited, but he chose to respond - with Cartwright's permission - with a pamphlet disassociating himself from the public object of the occasion.²⁷³ *A Letter Addressed to John Cartwright, Esq. Chairman of the Committee at the Crown and Anchor; on the Subject of Parliamentary Reform*, marks Selkirk's formal break with the political tradition of his family. In the pamphlet the author admitted that in his early years he had supported reform to correct the obvious abuses of the system and to remove the influence of corruption. While he still abhorred corruption and venality, his experience in the United States, which had a system of representation approximating that sought by the reformers, had turned him against major reform. Despite popular representation and a general diffusion of property in the United States, the Americans still exhibited much public misconduct and had not elevated the management of public affairs. Indeed, the American abuses were often more "infamous and bare-faced" than those in England. Referring to the events of the French Revolution, Selkirk noted that reformers had always sought to go further, displaying an "improvidence, which led them to despise every reform, short of complete regeneration," pursuing "a phantom of ideal perfection" which threw away "the substantial good which was in their hands."²⁷⁴ Reform might threaten the good, while not necessarily introducing "an additional portion of virtuous principle."²⁷⁵ Selkirk's particular concern was with the rise of demagogues in a popular democracy, and he referred approvingly to the comments of Peter Porcupine (William Cobbett) on American politics. Finally, Selkirk argued that constitutional reform would deflect the public's attention from other more important matters.

Selkirk's pamphlet, which sold well enough to be reprinted in a second edition, unleashed a considerable public controversy. Cartwright himself responded to the Earl in the *Sunday Review*,

and J. C. Worthington wrote an answer, but the major attack came in a brief pamphlet from Cartwright's close associate John Pearson.²⁷⁶ In his reply, Pearson chided Selkirk for betraying "a tone of superiority beyond what the writer of it is perhaps war-ranted in assuming," but he was particularly incensed at the use of the American example, insisting that conclusions could not be transferred from one country to another, for "the political constitution the best adapted to one of them, might be pernicious, in an extreme, to the other." Selkirk's disappointment with the United States was a result of his "having too lofty expectations of man-kind," and was essentially irrelevant to the British argument over political reform.²⁷⁷ None of his critics challenged Selkirk's sincerity, and indeed his disassociation from political reform was a position toward which he had been slowly but inexorably moving for a number of years, as the careful reader of the writings in this volume will undoubtedly discern.

With the controversy over his publication of the letter to Cartwright, Selkirk brought to a close the first phase of his public career. He had sought to make his own reputation and his own career, and by 1809 he had succeeded. The task had not been an easy one, for Thomas Douglas had to work out his own relationship with the family heritage as well as its public reputation. He had gradually moved politically from the Whigs to the Tories, a shift which suited his own developing inclinations. Along the way he had continued some of his father's preoccupations - particularly with regard to reform of the Scottish peerage and military reform - but had moved beyond them. An initial enthusiasm for making a new career in North America had been tempered by his experiences in both the United States and Canada. Happily married, holding a relatively secure seat in the House of Lords, active in the civil and military affairs of his home county as well as of the nation, possessor of an increasing reputation as a political economist, Selkirk in 1809 was a success. But his restless search for new challenges was only temporarily in abeyance. The seemingly incidental involvement with the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company would gradually but inexorably after 1809 lead him in the direction of his greatest project, the establishment of a new North American colony on the northern prairies at Red River. This venture would become his major claim to posterity's attention, as well as his own personal albatross.

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¹²³ Selkirk to Lord Napier, 12 July 1802, EUL Laing Mss, ii, 416.

¹²⁴ Selkirk to Adam Gordon, 21 August 1802, PRO CO 42/330/183-4.

¹²⁵ Selkirk to Lord Hobart, 21 August 1802, PRO GO 42/330/185-6.

¹²⁶ *Infra*, p.

¹²⁷ *The People's Clearance*, 83-128.

¹²⁸ Dugald Stewart to Selkirk, 1802, SPPAC, 13903-13906.

¹²⁹ Burns Itinerary and Expenses, SPPAC, 14308-14323; Selkirk's Instructions « > Burn, SPPAC, 14266-14268; Selkirk to Burn 25 September 1802, SPPAC, 19265.

¹³⁰ Advertising poster dated 22 October 1802, SRO GD 112% 61/1.

¹³¹ Alexander Macdonell, "A Page from the History of the Glengarry Highlanders," Macdonell Papers, Ontario Archives (OA).

¹³² Malcolm Gray, "The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands," *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., IV (1951), 197-209; *The People's Clearance*, 84-88.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *The People's Clearance*, pp. 86ff

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 94ff.

¹³⁶ [Edward S. Fraser], "On Emigration from the Scottish Highlands and Isles," unpublished manuscript in NLS; Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Macdonalds and Lords of the Isle* (Inverness, 1881); Malcolm Macqueen, *Skye Pioneers and 'the Island'* (n.p., n.d.), 65-69.

¹³⁷ [Fraser], "On Emigration," p. 37.

¹³⁸ Colonel A. Macdonald of Boisdale to Robert Brown, 1 December 1802, SRO L.ennoxlove Muniments, Robert Brown Papers, Bundle 15.

¹³⁹ [Fraser]. "On Emigration," 38-40.

¹⁴⁰ William Porter to John Mackenzie, 27 December 1802, SRO GD 9/166/23.

¹⁴¹ Selkirk to Hoban, 30 November 1802, SPPAC, 13895-6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Sir James Hall to Lord Seaforth, 4 December 1802, SRO GD 46/17/10.

¹⁴⁴ Helen Hall Memorandum, SRO GD 206/4/62.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ SRO RD 3/338/170-180.

¹⁴⁸ *The People's Clearance*, 119-123.

¹⁴⁹ Edward Fraser to Lord Seaforth, 30 December 1802, SRO GD 46/17/21.

¹⁵⁰ Selkirk to James Stewart, 16 January 1803, RDO GD 128/36/4; *The People's Clearance*, 165-166.

¹⁵¹ Selkirk to James Stewart. 16 January 1803. RDO GD 128/36/4; *The People's Clearance*, 165-166.

¹⁵² Selkirk to Rt. Hon. Henry Addington, 1 February 1803, SPPAC 13853-13855; Selkirk to Hobart, 9 February 1803, SPPAC, 13856-7; Selkirk to Addington, 10 February 1803, SPPAG, 13858.

¹⁵³ “Proposition [about P.E.I.], 26 February 1803, SPPAC, 13861-13862.

¹⁵⁴ For Stewart, See F.L. Pigot, *John Stewart of Mount Stewart* (Summerside, P.E.I., 1973).

¹⁵⁵ *The People's Clearance*, 55-82.

¹⁵⁶ Donald Steel to Ranald Macdonald, 16 September 1802, SRO GD 298/659.

¹⁵⁷ Edward S. Fraser to Lord Seaforth, 30 April 1803, SRO CD 46/17/23.

¹⁵⁸ *The People's Clearance*, 129-154.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 140-145.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ See *Present State of the Highlands*, *infra*.

¹⁶² Selkirk even acquired fifty impoverished families from Uist at the last minute. Patrick C.T. White, ed., *Lord Selkirk's Diary 1803-1804: A Journal of his Travels to British North America and the Northeastern United States* (Toronto, 1958), p. 37.

¹⁶³ Customs Board to Tobermory Collectors, 14 June 1803, SRO CE 74/2/77.

¹⁶⁴ *Selkirk's Diary*, especially 91-2, 122-130.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 132-134.

¹⁶⁶ *Selkirk's Diary*, 135-6.

¹⁶⁷ Selkirk to William Burn, 19 November 1803, SPPAC, 14291.

¹⁶⁸ *Selkirk's Diary*, pp. 143ff.

¹⁶⁹ *Selkirk's Diary*, 145-154.

¹⁷⁰ Selkirk to George Chisholm, 22 December 1803, SPPAC, ser 7, MG 19, E1, vol. 54.

¹⁷¹ Instructions to William Burn, December 1803, SPPAC, 14278.

¹⁷² *Selkirk's Diary*, p. 193.

¹⁷³ *Selkirk's Diary*, p. 199.

¹⁷⁴ *Selkirk's Diary*, p. 201, 204-215.

¹⁷⁵ *Selkirk's Diary*, p. 217.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Diary*, p.220.

¹⁷⁸ *Selkirk's Diary*, 238-241.

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, the detailed plans for the home farm at Baldoon in SPPAC, 14628-14652.

¹⁸⁰ A.E.D. MacKenzie, *Baldoon: Lord Selkirk's Settlement in Upper Canada* (London, Ont., 1978).

¹⁸¹ *Selkirk's Diary*, p. 354.

¹⁸² Holden Furber, *Henry Dundas: First Viscount Melville 1712-1811: Political Manager of Scotland, Statesman, Administrator of British India* (Oxford, 1931), p. 149ff.

¹⁸³ A. MacDonell to Selkirk, 8 November 1804 (received 19 January 1805), PAC MacDonell Papers, vol. 9,6-7.

¹⁸⁴ *Infra.*

¹⁸⁵ *Infra.*

¹⁸⁶ *Infra.*

¹⁸⁷ *Critical Review*, 3rd Set., V (1805), 366-378.

¹⁸⁸ *Scots Magazine*, LXVII (1805), 609-616.

¹⁸⁹ *Edinburgh Review*, VII (1805),186-202; Francis Horner to Sir James Mackintosh, 25 September 1805, in Leonard Horner, ed., *Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P., I* (London. 1843),312-313.

¹⁹⁰ *Farmer's Magazine*, V (1805), 483-490.

¹⁹¹ Selkirk to William Pitt, 29 July 1805, SPPAC, 13926; "Outlines of a Plan for the Settlement & Security of Canada 1805," SPPAC, 13919-13926.

¹⁹² Earl of Keltie to Baron Napier, 20 October 1805, SRO GD 129/15/1707.

¹⁹³ A. MacDonell to Selkirk, 28 July 1805 (received 18 October 1805), MacDonell Papers, PAC/9/29-31.

¹⁹⁴ A. MacDonell to Selkirk, 3 August 1805 (received 19 October 1805), MacDonell Papers. PAC/9/31-6.

¹⁹⁵ Selkirk to A. MacDonell, 2 November 1805, SPPAC, 14546-14555.

¹⁹⁶ Alexander Mundell to Selkirk, 30 November 1805, SPPAC, 14901.

¹⁹⁷ James Williams to General Fanning, 4 August 1805 (received early December 1805), SPPAC, 14898-14900.

¹⁹⁸ “Prince Edward Island Statement, 1806,” SPPAC 13966-13972.

¹⁹⁹ Robert Brown, *Strictures and Remarks on the Earl of Selkirk’s Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1806); *Eight Letters on the Subject of the Earl of Selkirk’s Pamphlet on Highland Emigration, As They Lately Appeared under the Signature of AMICUS in One of the Edinburgh Newspapers* (Edinburgh, 180fi); *Remarks on the Earl of Selkirk’s Observations on the Present State of the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1806).

²⁰⁰ Monthly Review, V (1806), 411-419; Critical Review, 3rd set., VIII (1806), 374-378; Farmer’s Magazine, VI (1806), 241-248.

²⁰¹ Lady Bessborough to Lord Granville, 15 March 1806, in Catania Countess Granville, ed., *Lord Granville Leveson Gower (First Earl Granville Private Correspondence 1781 to 1821)* (London, 1916), II, p. 184. Charles James Fox to Anthony Merry, 7 March 1806, PRO FO 115/13; Beckles Willson, *Friendly Relations* (Boston, 1934), p. 53.

²⁰² Selkirk to William Clerk, 30 April 1806, SRO GD 18/3297.

²⁰³ Selkirk to Sir John Stippisley, 22 March 1806, British Museum (BM) Add. Mss. 37849, ff. 290-293.

²⁰⁴ Selkirk to William Windham [June 1806], BM Add. Mss. 37884, ff. 11-24.

²⁰⁵ Copy Letter to Lord Auckland per Board of Trade, 12 April [1806], Granting Lands in North America, SPPAC, 13937, 13949.

²⁰⁶ Selkirk to William Clerk, 30 April 1804, SRO GD 18.3297.

²⁰⁷ See *A Letter to the Peers of Scotland*, *infra*.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ See footnotes to the text *infra* for alterations.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Selkirk to James Stewart, 3 July 1806, SPPAC, 14908-14913.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Selkirk to Lord Auckland, 4 July 1806, CO 226/21/174-5; John Stewart, *An Account of Prince Edward Island* (London, 1806), vi-vii. and *passim*.

²¹⁴ Selkirk to Castlereagh, 30 August 1806, CO 42/342/187.

²¹⁵ Selkirk to Henry Erskine, 12 September 1806, cited in Fergusson, Henry Erskine, p. 457n.

- ²¹⁶ Lord Kinnaird to Lord Napier, 7 October 1806, EUL: Laing Mss, ii, 461.
- ²¹⁷ See, for example, Selkirk to Lord Napier, 25 October 1806, EUL: Laing Mss, ii, 461.
- ²¹⁸ Grenville to Earl of Iven and Melville, 27 October 1806, SRO GD 26/13/198/4/1.
- ²¹⁹ Selkirk, Observations on S. America [1806] delivered to Windham & to Lord Grenville, SPPAC, 13950-13965, reprinted with introduction and notes by John Perry Pritchett in *Canadian Historical Review*, 381-396.
- ²²⁰ Grenville to Selkirk, 15 November 1806, *Ibid.*, p. 396.
- ²²¹ Alexander MacDonell to Selkirk, 13 April, 30 May 1806, PAC MG 2418, vol. 9, 56-64.
- ²²² Selkirk to MacDonell, 30 October 1806, SPPAC, 14564-14566.
- ²²³ Selkirk, Memorial on Irish Emigration transmitted to Lord Sidmouth, 19 November 1806, SPPAC, 13875-92.
- ²²⁴ *Caledonian Mercury*, 6 December 1806.
- ²²⁵ Minutes of Meeting of the Peers of Scotland, 5 December 1806, SRO CD 150/2382.
- ²²⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5 February 18(17, 666-667.
- ²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 667-8.
- ²²⁸ William Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster, 11 February 1807, quoted in Robert and Samuel Wilberforce, eds., *The Life of Wilberforce* (London, 1838), III, p. 294.
- ²²⁹ Archibald Constable diary, entry of 16 March 1807, quoted in Thomas Constable, ed., *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents* (Edinburgh, 1873), I, 108-109.
- ²³⁰ Selkirk, Memorial to Lord Grenville, 1807, SPPAC, 14149-14153.
- ²³¹ Selkirk, Observations on Emigrant Regulation Act, 22 February 1807, sent to Lord Sidmouth, SPPAC, 13973-13976.
- ²³² Selkirk to Lord Holland, 13 March 1807, SPPAC, 13977-13982.
- ²³³ Earl of Morton to Selkirk, 26 December 1806, SRO CD 150.2382; Lord Torphichen to Selkirk, 14 January 1806, EUL: Laing Mss, ii, 461.
- ²³⁴ Torphichen to Selkirk, 14 January 1807.
- ²³⁵ *Infra.*
- ²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ John Fraser to James Stewart, 8 November 1806, SPPAC, 14918-14920.

²³⁹ A. MacDonell to Selkirk, 17 December 1806, PAC MG 24 18, vol. 9, 72-78.

²⁴⁰ Selkirk to Alexander MacDonell, 8 April 1807, SPPAC, 14567.

²⁴¹ Selkirk to Duke of Buccleuch, 30 April 1807, SRO GD 224/579; Selkirk to Earl of Morton, 29 April 1807, SRO GD 150/2382.

²⁴² Duke of Buccleuch to Lord Melville, 8 May 1807, EUL: Laing Mss, ii, 461.

²⁴³ Lord Napier to Duke of Buccleuch, 10 May 1807, SRO GD 229/579.

²⁴⁴ Lord Haddington to Earl of Morton. 19 May 1807, SRO GD 150/2382.

²⁴⁵ General Election, 9 June 1807, Et?L: Laing Mss., ii, 461.

²⁴⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1807. 77, part I, p. 575. For the Lords Lieutenant, see Sir John Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies and the Army 1803-1814* (London, 1906).

²⁴⁷ *Infra.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ Alexander MacDonell to Selkirk, 30 June 1807, PAC MG 24 18, vol. IU, 8-10.

²⁵⁰ Lord Auckland to Lord Grenville, 14 November 1807, *Dropmore Mss.*, IX, p. 149.

²⁵¹ See for example *Edinburgh Advertiser*, 28 November 1807; *Gentleman's Magazine* 1807, 77, part 11, p. 1171.

²⁵² James Stewart to Selkirk, 13 June 1807, SPPAC, 14925; James Williams to Stewart, 29 May 1807, SPPAC, 14926-14928; State of the Sale of Lands upon the Earl of Selkirk's Estate Prince Edward Island North America Nov'r 1807, SPPAC. 14862-14869.

²⁵³ James Williams to Selkirk, 16 November 1807, SPPAC, 14932-14943; Williams to Selkirk, 1 December 1807, SPPAC. 14945-14952.

²⁵⁴ A grant of 30,800 acres on the Grand River was recorded to Selkirk on 17 November 1807, Ontario Archives RG 1, G-III-7, vol. 6.

²⁵⁵ Selkirk to Lord Leven, 8 January (1808), SRO GD 26/13/197.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Infra.*

²⁵⁸ *Infra*.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*.

²⁶² *Ibid*.

²⁶³ Selkirk to James Williams, 15 April 1808, SPPAC, 14953; Selkirk to Williams, 2 May 1808, SPPAC, 15103-15105.

²⁶⁴ Alexander Mackenzie to Selkirk, 27 June 1808, SPP.4C, I-3.

²⁶⁵ Glyndwr Williams, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Fur Trade: 1670-1870," *The Beaver* (autumn, 1983), 93-44.

²⁶⁶ Irving, *Book of Scotsmen*, p. 466.

²⁶⁷ Observations by Lord S., July 1808, SPPAC. 14161-14168.

²⁶⁸ Alexander Murray to Mr. Constable, 3 August 1808, in T. Constable, ed., *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*, I, 273-275.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁷¹ Selkirk to Francis Gore, 31 March 1809, PRO CO 42'349'64-66.

²⁷² Selkirk to A. Mundell, 11 March 1809, McGill University Library.

²⁷³ For Cartwright, see F. D. Cattwrixt, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright*, (London, 182G), especially I, 392-'3.

²⁷⁴ *Infra*.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*.

²⁷⁶ *Review of Lord Selkirk's Objections to a Reform in the Representation of the People: In a Letter to John Cartwright, Esq. from John Pearson, Esq.* (London, 1809).

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1, p.6, p.10.

THE recommendation which has been lately given from the highest authority to all classes of society, to use the utmost economy in the consumption of every species of provisions, is so evidently laudable, that there cannot be two opinions as to its propriety. It is possible, however, that doubts may be entertained how far this recommendation can be so generally enforced as

A

to

The following pamphlet is the first known publication of Lord Selkirk. The only known copy, without a title page, is in The Dugald Stewart Collection in the University of Edinburgh Library. The authorship is attributed, in Stewart's hand, to Selkirk. It is not clear whether the work was printed before or after his accession to the title in 1799, although from the contents it is obvious that the pamphlet is a product of Selkirk's activities in local poor relief in the late 1790s. A number of his later writings were printed for Selkirk for private distribution. In the absence of a title page or other information it is impossible to tell whether this pamphlet was meant for private or public distribution.

Untitled Pamphlet on Poor Relief in Scotland

The recommendation which has been lately given from the highest authority to all classes of society, to use the utmost economy in the consumption of every species of provisions, is so evidently laudable, that there cannot be two opinions as to its propriety. It is possible, however, that doubts may be entertained how far this recommendation can be so generally enforced as to become of much consequence in diminishing the consumption of the kingdom; and it may be thought that the object is too extensive to be attained by the unconnected exertions of a few individuals. If this idea should become prevalent, it is probable that many persons, who are fully convinced of the importance of the object, may be less active in promoting it than they would be if they were sensible how much it is in their power to effect. In this view it may not be uninteresting, not without use, to lay before the public a detail of the means adopted in some parishes of the

stewartry of Kirkcudbright, for the relief of the cottagers and labouring poor, during the distress of last season's scarcity.¹

These measures were concerted and executed upon those very views of the necessity of general economy which have now been so strongly recommended to the nation at large, and their success has clearly demonstrated the practicability of combining this object with the individual relief of the poor, and of attaining a degree of economy in the consumption fully adequate to remedy the deficiency of this year's crop, since we can substantiate the fact, that under the operation of the measures alluded to, the consumption of grain has been reduced at least one fourth; and that, without any extraordinary innovation on the established practices of this part of the kingdom; a reduction which is certainly very remarkable, when it is considered how much superior the domestic economy of the common people of Scotland is to that of the southern inhabitants of the island.

In the year 1795 measures had been very generally adopted in Galloway for the relief of the poorer class, under the pressure of the dearth² The measures then taken were very various, and the experience of the inconveniency that had then resulted in particular cases, was of great use in pointing out the dangers to be avoided.

At that time, the object principally in view, was to ensure a supply to the inhabitants.

The high prices given at Liverpool and other great ports had tempted a number of farmers to part with their whole crop. When grain was offered in the markets of the country at similar prices, the people, unaccustomed to such prices, treated the sellers with insult as extortioners. It was not to be wondered at that, under such circumstances, the Liverpool dealers easily found a preference: the country markets were deserted, and the people were filled with apprehensions of their being totally deprived of a supply. Under these circumstances, some measures were thought necessary for calming their minds. Subscriptions were very generally entered into for laying up, in each parish, a quantity of grain sufficient for its own supply, and frequently for selling it out at reduced prices. In most cases the people were desired to give a statement of the meal requisite for the supply of their families; and, upon the information thus collected, it was calculated how much was to be purchased or reserved for the use of the inhabitants. The stores thus laid up, in some few instances, succeeded well, where very particular attention was bestowed; but, in general, a loss was sustained far beyond what had been expected; and, in almost every case, the stores laid up had excited considerable jealousy among the most ignorant of the people.

The low price at which the meal was sold had also tempted many to state the quantity requisite for their subsistence, much too high; and much greater quantities had thus been kept from the market than there had been any necessity for. If this was an evil in 1795, it was evident in 1799, that if the same error were given into, the pernicious consequences must be much greater: the obvious and immense deficiency of the crop loudly called for economy, on the general view of national precaution. The crops too, which in 1795 had not been very deficient in Galloway, were very greatly so in 1799; and the farmers, in many cases, had not actually a sufficiency to contribute in the extravagant manner that had been done in many places in 1795. When, therefore, in the end of 1799 it was in agitation to take measures for relieving the distresses of the season, it appeared to be of the utmost consequence, as well from local circumstances as from general principles, that the quantity reserved in the country should be limited to the smallest, which, with the utmost economy, could possibly suffice for the consumption of the inhabitants.

The prices, however, were such, that the ordinary wages of country labour seemed inadequate to pay them, and it was generally resolved to sell meal to the labouring poor at reduced prices. This would have tended, by its natural consequences, to counteract the principle of reserving no more grain than was absolutely necessary, since a reduced price necessarily must render people less attentive to economy. But to avoid this evil, two circumstances were particularly attended to. 1st. The reduction of price was limited, and to no one was meal given so cheap as the market price of ordinary years, but always at such a rate, as would, in any other circumstances, have been considered as high. 2dly, Each family for whom provision was made, was limited to a precise quantity; and all were solemnly assured, that if they exceeded this allowance, no further assistance would be given; and that they must then take their chance of the markets. The quantity allowed to each was calculated according to the numbers of their respective families, not at their ordinary rate of consumption, but at the lowest to which it was supposed they could by the strictest economy reduce it. To ascertain this, was in many instances very difficult, but as it was of so great importance, that it might truly be considered as the key-stone of all our measures, it was thought deserving of all the pains that could be bestowed, to come at the truth; and the judgement and accuracy with which this point was examined into, certainly constitutes the greatest merit of the proceedings I am detailing.

In this examination, the first step was to hear the account of each head of a family as to the quantity of his ordinary consumption. This was not

always to be trusted to: the idea of being limited in quantity, (however clearly its necessity was demonstrated), could not be other-wise than disagreeable to those who were to be the objects of the restriction; and many strove to avoid it, by stating their consumption as higher than it really was. These misstatements, however, were easily detected, both by a comparison with the numbers of the family, and by the testimony of those from whom each person was in the habit of purchasing his provisions.

Having attained a pretty accurate statement of the ordinary consumption of the parish, it came next to be examined what retrenchments could be made. The diet of the labouring class, in this part of the country, consists principally of oatmeal, potatoes, and milk, together with a small quantity of butcher-meat, and of pot barley, which are made into broth. Of the oatmeal, about one half, or perhaps more, is baked into cakes, and the rest is made into *porridge*. By the observations of persons the best acquainted with the domestic economy of the country people, it was ascertained, that meal, when used as *porridge*, produced a much greater quantity of nourishment, than the same quantity when made into cakes. These were therefore considered as a wasteful luxury, the use of which it was our business to discourage, and to supply its place by some addition upon those articles of ordinary consumpt in the country which appeared to be the most economical. - Potatoes would perhaps have served this purpose, but that unfortunately the potato crop had been still more deficient than that of grain, and that it was difficult, or rather impossible to procure the people even their ordinary supply of potatoes. If they could have been induced to use all their meal in making porridge, and to substitute that species of food in every case where they were in the habit of using cakes, it would have had a great effect; but upon an attentive consideration of the minutiae of their management, it occur-red, that the same purpose would be still more effectually attained by an addition to their usual supply of pot barley. The usual routine diet in this country is, for breakfast, porridge, with which milk is used in summer, but small beer in winter, or when the supply of milk fails. After finishing the pot of porridge, some cakes are eat to complete the meal: - The dinner is broth, made of a small quantity of meat, with vegetables and barley; with the broth, cakes are eat as bread; and it is in this way that they are chiefly consumed. The supper is usually potatoes mashed with milk or butter. Last year, however, porridge was very frequently used at supper, from the deficiency of potatoes.

In considering how the use of cakes might be avoided, there appeared no great difficulty as to those used at breakfast - a small addition to the quantity of porridge answered the purpose - but at dinner, the broth, without any thing to accompany it, did not appear to be a substantial enough meal. It occurred, however, that if the broth

could be rendered more thick and substantial in itself, a smaller quantity of cakes would be needed to eat along with it.

This object was attained without much change on the ordinary cookery, by adding a greater quantity of barley than usual to the other ingredients of the 'broth'³ and it appeared, that the economy arising from this practice, was of more effect than would have been produced by substituting porridge in place of the ordinary dinner, both in reducing the quantity of grain used, and in saving expence to the labourer. Upon these views, the measures to be taken were arranged, and at the same time, that the quantity of oatmeal to be furnished to each family was restricted to a much smaller quantity than they had ever before been in the habit of using, they were supplied with an unusually large allowance of pot barley. The free use of this valuable substitute was still farther encouraged by reducing its price considerably more in proportion than that of oatmeal, so as to bring it very nearly to that of ordinary years.

From a comparison of various instances, in which the consumpt of particular families had been accurately ascertained, it appeared that in ordinary years the consumption of cottagers and their families, taken at an average of all ages, amounted daily to something more than 8 oz. of oatmeal, with nearly one oz. of pot barley, and from 1 1/2 to 2 lib. [sic.] of potatoes. It was calculated that with the help of a small addition to the barley, the meal might be reduced to 6 oz. notwithstanding the deficiency of the potatoe [sic.] crop. Experience has proved the truth of these ideas; for tho' the additional quantity of barley has in no case amounted to an average of 1/2 oz. per day, the consumption of meal has not exceeded 6 oz. It will no doubt be understood, that this can only be true on a general average, and that as the consumption of individuals of different ages and descriptions must differ widely, this average could not in the detail of the measures be uniformly adhered to - that in some instances more might be required, and in other less could suffice.

When the quantity of meal to be allowed to each family, had been ascertained on these principles, and it was known how much it was necessary to reserve for the use of all those in each parish, who had not grain of their own, the quantity to be reserved was apportioned among the different farmers, as nearly as possible, according to the produce of their respective farms, and each of them entered into an agreement to keep the quantity that fell to his share, and to deliver it at a price agreed upon, which

was fully equal to the market price, at the time these measures were concerted. And in order to be able to furnish it to the labourers, at a price proportioned to their earnings, a subscription was entered into among all the proprietors and farmers of each parish, from the amount of which it appeared what deduction could be given. The price was not in any instance brought so low, as the price of abundant years; even had the subscriptions been ever so great, this would not have been adviseable, as it would have encouraged the very pernicious idea, that people have a right to be furnished with provisions at a particular price. Neither was the price made uniform to all: to those whose wages were great, and whose families were not numerous, there was no call for giving the same relief, as to those who had a number of children to support out of smaller earnings. The oatmeal which used in ordinary seasons to be sold about two shillings per stone, was in some particular instances allowed at two shillings and sixpence; but in no case except to absolute paupers, any lower; in ordinary cases there were means of allowing it at three shillings or three shillings and sixpence. To some who were in prosperous circumstances it was not thought requisite to give any deduction at all; and all the benefit they derived from the measures we adopted, was the certainty of a supply, and the being relieved from all anxiety about the markets.

Some arrangements were to be made respecting the distribution of the supply thus secured, and in this it was found necessary, to make variations according to local circumstances.

Where the population was much scattered the meal was never collected into a general store. The quantity agreed to be reserved by each farmer, was compared with the quantities to be allowed to the cottagers in his neighbourhood, and a certain number of families were allotted to be supplied by him. The money raised by the subscription was then divided, and the whole amount of the deduction granted on the meal, to be furnished to each family, was at once paid into the hands of the farmer from whom they were to receive it, and the farmer became bound to furnish it to them, at the reduced price fixed upon. The money never passed through the hands of the people, for whose relief it was contributed; but each family received a ticket expressing the quantity of meal they were entitled to apply for, the price at which it was to be furnished, and the farmer who was to furnish it. It was made an absolute condition that it was always to be paid for with ready money; but the farmers agreed, that if this was complied with, they would give it in as small quantities at a time as the people wished: the quantity which each individual farmer had to supply, was not so

great as to make this any hardship; the meal kept for the neighbouring cottagers, he could easily keep along with that of his own family, and the people he had to retail it to were, in no case, very numerous. Where local circumstances allowed this arrangement to be made, it appeared to be by far the most convenient and adviseable mode. But in some cases the population being collected in villages, lay at a distance from the farmers who were to supply the meal. In this case it seemed unavoidably necessary to lay up a general store from which the distribution was to be made; but even in this case it was found practicable to avoid laying up any great quantity at one time. The weekly supply necessary was ascertained, and the different farmers took it in turns to send their respective proportions to the store, in such quantities as always to meet the demand.

Where this arrangement took place, a person was appointed to attend the store, and to retail out meal to the people who came for it; a committee of a few leading people examined his proceedings from time to time, settled with him for the money he received for the meal when retailed, and with it, and with the subscription money which they had in their possession, paid the farmers for the meal they sent to the store. In this way the arrangement was made easy to the poor who were supplied; but it was not so convenient in other respects, as it required a continual superintendance and management to the very end of the season. In those instances where no store was laid up, and the cottagers were apportioned among the different farmers, the business when once arranged went on of itself, and no further management or superintendance was necessary.

To the detail that has been given, the completest commentary that can be added is, that the measures adopted had a success almost beyond our most sanguine expectations: - the relief given proved to be of the most essential service to those who received it; and the economy with which it was accompanied, was such, that if a proportional retrenchment had taken place in every other part of the kingdom, the present scarcity would have been almost entirely prevented. In one parish, the saving in the space of the seven months preceding the late harvest, amounted to nearly 600 stone of meal, upon the consumption of 94 'families'⁴ who were supplied with 1600 stone of oatmeal, tho' it was ascertained upon good data, that they consume nearly 2200 stone in the same space of time in ordinary years. The addition made to their usual supply of barley was not above 50 or 60 stone. It must no doubt be allowed, that the people began to make use of their potatoes much earlier in the season than usual, but this circumstance could not at the utmost do more, and it was perhaps not even sufficient to

counterbalance the deficiency in the quantity of potatoes of the last years crop.⁵ We are therefore fully intitled to say that the parish was maintained with less than three-fourths of the grain it consumes in ordinary years.

After the most candid examination of the measures adopted in various other parts of the kingdom, for alleviating the distress of the season, it does not appear that any are better adapted to to our peculiar situation than those we have already adopted.

The district in which they have been tried is agricultural, it always produces more grain than its own consumpt, and in ordinary years exports considerably; the towns in it are few, and the measures adopted in them were totally unconnected with those which have been described, and differed widely from them. How far therefore the principles on which we proceeded may be applicable to large towns, or populous manufacturing countries, we have no title to assert from experience; but if the principles are essentially just, there is certainly a probability that by judicious variations, in the mode of their application, they may be of use in other situations. To those districts which usually produce more grain than is necessary for their own consumption, the plan that has been described may be safely recommended as peculiarly adapted to their situation. For it was one most important consequence of our measures, that by removing the anxiety of the people as to their own supply, they obviated that clamour against the transport of the superabundant produce, which is a continual check to the free circulation of grain, and often a material hindrance, notwithstanding all the exertions that can be made for protecting the freedom of the corn trade. The essential necessity of that free circulation, for remedying the calamity of a deficient crop, has been so fully demonstrated, that any thing which can tend to promote it, must be of great national utility.

For ourselves, the most important lesson we have learned, lies in the experimental proof we have acquired of the degree to which the consumpt may be reduced. In this respect, the people have also acquired a lesson, and have found, that they can struggle through a severe season with a smaller supply of meal, than they had been accustomed to consider as absolutely necessary; and there is no doubt, that from the experience they have gained, they will now be able to maintain themselves much easier with the same supply of meal, than they could last year. This season, there will also be other circumstances in their favour, which will contribute to make the scanty supply of meal less severe upon them.

1st. The summer has been singularly favourable to the making of peats: hence, they will not only be able to keep their houses more comfortable, but they can afford more fuel to keep the pot boiling a long time, and to derive the full benefit from the barley they use in thickening their broth.

2d. The potatoe crop, though deficient, is not so deficient as last year: there will not only be greater abundance for the purposes they are commonly used for, but some may be afforded to add to the broth, and still farther contribute to render it substantial and nutritious enough to afford a good meal without the assistance of bread or oat cakes. This application of potatoes may be recommended as a most important addition to the domestic economy of the lower class in Scotland; and it requires so small an innovation on their present habits, that there can be little difficulty in bringing it into practice. Where the quantity of potatoes, which the poor have the means of procuring, is not considerable, this is perhaps the mode in which they ought to be employed, in preference to any other. After many trials as to the mode of applying them, none has been found so good as that described by Count Rumford.⁶

By the means which have been detailed, the scarcity, though still felt, and severely felt, was yet alleviated in a very great degree, and at an expence comparably less than has been incurred in many other districts where the object in view has not been so far attained.

And though the labouring poor have been saved from the greatest pressure of the dearth, it has been done without in the least degree encouraging waste. The general economy that has resulted where these measures were strictly followed out, has probably not been less than could have resulted from the fullest effect and natural operation of the high prices. Indeed, in some degree, these may be said still to have had their full effect; as the portion allowed to each family, was in most instances, very closely calculated; in some so closely, that with all the saving they could exert, it did not completely suffice; and some were, at the end of the season, under the necessity of purchasing a little at the highest prices - a circumstance by no means to be regretted; for the quantity which any person had thus to purchase, was not considerable enough to bring on any serious distress; and yet, it was sufficient to show him, how great was the pressure from which he had been relieved. - It must be acknowledged however, that without the assistance of any such adventitious circumstance, there was no reason to complain of want of gratitude in the people for the exertions made in their behalf; and that the thankfulness they showed, was such as cannot fail to be a most encouraging stimulus to those who may here-after engage in similar exertions.

That the gratitude of the poor, for the relief afforded them, was highly pleasing to the donors, no one will doubt; but, perhaps, it is not too much to say, it was also beneficial to those who received the relief, and that a mind disposed to contentment is the first requisite for enabling a poor man to bear up against such difficulties as in the present circumstances he must have to struggle with. Though their fare should be equally scanty, there is still a great difference between the situation of those whose feelings are of this cast, and that of men whose minds are soured, and who receive every assistance with grumbling discontent, as if it were a debt which is insufficiently paid up.

The difference of the system of England from that of the northern part of the island, naturally must produce this difference.' In all the proceedings that have been mentioned, the funds were every where provided by voluntary donations. The poor were sensible they received their aid from the good-will of their superiors, and the relief was administered by those who contributed it. The whole formed a chain of good offices, calculated to conciliate the affections of the lower orders; to draw closer those bonds of union between the different classes of society, on which the stability of social order so essentially depends. If the funds had been raised by any species of assessment, this happy effect could never have been expected. Where a tax is imposed for the relief of the poor, where the only aid they receive is extorted from the rich without their consent, how is it possible for them to feel gratitude for that which is given without charity, or to consider it in the same light as that which is given from a generous motive? They are taught, they are forced to believe that the assistance given them is their right. When this idea is once impressed on their minds, the hardships they are relieved from excite no gratitude, and the least hardship they remain subject to, is considered as an injustice. Discontent is the unavoidable consequence. Independent, therefore, of all the collateral evils of the poor rates, there is intrinsically a material difference between the effects of a voluntary contribution for the poor, and those that must be expected from any assessment, how-ever wisely regulated, however ably and honourably administered. But when, in addition to this, we consider all the endless mischief which in England have followed as natural consequences of the system of poor rates, it is truly surprising that the city of Edinburgh should have rushed so thoughtlessly into that system, of the pernicious effects of which, they have before their eyes so melancholy an example. What can have been the motives of their application to Parliament for an assessment for the relief of their poor, it is not easy to guess: if no better exist than those assigned in the preamble of their bill, they are

most unsatisfactory .⁸ All that can thence be collected is, that some avaricious individuals have not contributed in their due proportion to others. Surely it would have been better, before resorting to so fatal a remedy, to have tried how far such men might not have been driven, by shame, to do what charity could not induce them to do; and, if not, let their sordidness be held up to public contempt; but surely the small deficiency which might arise from that circumstance is no justification of a measure that strikes at the root of an establishment, proved by the experience of a century, to be incomparably superior to the system for which it is now to be exchanged. It is a measure which nothing but absolute necessity could justify; but, of that necessity, there is not even a pretence.

It may safely be asserted, from the experience not only of Scotland alone, but of all Britain, that when the managers of a public charity are zealous, and possess the confidence of the public, there is no sum that can be really needed for charitable purposes but may be raised by voluntary contribution. Let the necessity of raising it be clearly demonstrated, let the public be thoroughly convinced, that what they give will be well applied, let some activity be used in collecting subscriptions, and the sum required, be it ever so great, will be found. Of this no one will doubt, who considers a moment the immense sums every year contributed for charitable purposes through the kingdom, and the great establishments which in almost every large town are supported entirely on this principle. If, in any place, it is really found impossible to raise a sufficient voluntary contribution to supply a reasonable and proper assistance to the poor, it is a severe satire on those who have the management of their funds. But, this is an imputation which no one can throw on those at Edinburgh. No where has there been a fuller experimental proof of the efficacy and productiveness of voluntary contributions; and, it would be a strange assertion indeed, that when 9700 £. has been last year voluntarily subscribed, there can be any necessity this year for an act of Parliament to raise 10,000 £. This, the inhabitants may flatter themselves, will be only a temporary measure; but the precedent is established; those who may have the management of the poor will find themselves saved from the trouble of soliciting collections; let their portion of the natural indolence of mankind be ever so small, this relief will be too agreeable not to lead to a repetition of the same proposal; the funds at their disposal being no longer limited within such narrow bounds, applications from the poor can more easily be complied with; and parochial aid, more readily granted, will be more frequently applied for. The facility of obtaining relief will spread a profligate dependence on it among the poorer classes;

the money that would otherwise be laid up for the support of age and infirmity, will go to the whisky shop; poverty and misery continually increasing, will continually add to the demands upon public charity. When there is no longer a necessity for the same rigid economy in the disposal of the poor's funds, the management of it will no longer be a laborious task; an office which none will under-take but from motives of charity and public spirit: the respectable characters who have hitherto undertaken the toilsome office, will no longer be pressed to continue in it; others will easily be found to supply their place; perhaps the office may, ere long, be one which may require much interest to procure. Careless management, and a continual increase of applications from the poor, will soon lead the managers of the fund to discover that the assessment is too low; one increase will follow another; and the thoughtless inhabitants will find, when it is too late, that they have saddled themselves with burdens to an extent they had no suspicion of; with a tax of which they nor their children may never see the end.

So far as this measure concerns merely the city of Edinburgh, the inhabitants must be allowed to judge for themselves; but, if it be considered as a precedent which may open the door to similar proposals elsewhere, and may lead, by insensible degrees, to a general establishment of poor's rates in Scotland, it is a measure of general concern, and all classes of men, even in places the most unconnected with Edinburgh, are called upon to consider how they may be affected by it. Surely neither the landed nor commercial interest can consider them-selves as unconcerned, when a tax so pernicious is brought to their door; a tax, whose necessary consequence is, by undermining the spirit of industry, to lay the foundation of that poverty it professes to relieve, and thus continually to add to its own weight. The clergy, and all those who feel an interest in the preservation of that moral character for which the commonalty of Scotland are now distinguished, can never give their sanction to a system which has tended, beyond all other causes, to pervert the morals of the lower classes in the sister kingdom. To allow it even the sanction of their silence would be a failure to their duty. The occasion is such as calls for the universal reprobation of the country against measures of so fatal a tendency. If that reprobation be speedily and generally pronounced - be pronounced as strongly as the occasion deserves, the inhabitants of Edinburgh may yet perhaps awaken from their slumbers, and exert themselves to prevent any repetition of the same measures - any further steps towards the same disgraceful system. At least, we may hope that the good sense of the country will never allow it to be extended beyond the limits of that deluded city.

References

¹ Bad harvests were a constant feature of Scottish life in the last quarter of the 18th century. Responsibility for the poor was in the hands of the heritors and the kirk sessions in every parish. There was no general public system of poor relief in Scotland. See A.A.Cormack, *Poor Relief in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1923); Charles Stewart Loch, "Poor relief in Scotland: its statistics and development, 1791-1891," *Journal Royal Statistical Society*, 61 (1898), 271-370.

² Similar informal arrangements had been made at various time all over Scotland. See Jean Lindsay, *The Scottish Poor Law: Its Operation in the North-East from 1745 to 1845* (Ilfracombe, 137-44.)

³ Selkirk's footnote reads: "It appears from Count Rumford's invaluable observations on food [Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, "An Essay on Food, and particularly on feeding the poor, exhibiting the science of nutrition and the art of providing wholesome and palatable food at a small expense," *Essay III of his Essays, political, economical, and philosophical*, I (London, 1796)], that this might have been obtained without almost any addition to the ingredients commonly used, merely by a greater length of time being allowed for the process of cooking. A change, however, on the established practice of cooking, cannot become general in any country, except in along interval of time; and even if the people had been ever so much convinced of the advantage of keeping their broth longer on the fire, it would have been almost impossible for them to have put this into practice last winter; as the unfavourable summer had rendered useless the greatest parts of the peats which are almost the only fuel they use: and the scarcity of firing was, perhaps, as severe upon them, as the dearth of provisions."

⁴ 'The University of Edinburgh copy has the following addition in Selkirk's hand: "of 329 individuals."

⁵ Selkirk's footnote reads: "With respect to the supply and consumpt of potatoes, it is not possible for us to attain the same precise information we have concerning the meal; as the cottagers almost universally plant them for themselves, on small spots of ground which they have means of procuring."

⁶ Selkirk's original footnote reads: "viz. To boil them separately till fit to be eaten, then to mash or bruise them down, and to add them in this state to the broth after it has been several hours on the fire, and to continue the boiling an hour or two longer, stirring the pot frequently. For Rumford, see fn. 3.

⁷ Poor relief in England was compulsory and rate-financed. Moreover, after 1795, when the Berkshire magistrates meeting at Speenhamland made their notorious decision, it was common practice to pay subsidies to those whose earnings were inadequate to buy food. See Geoffrey W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834* (Newton Abbot, 1974); J. R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief. 1795-1834* (London, 1969).

⁸ There is no evidence that the Edinburgh application was successful. In his hostility to compulsory poor rates, Selkirk merely echoed the sentiments of most Scots of his day.

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE
OF THE
HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND,
WITH A VIEW OF THE
CAUSES AND PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
OF
EMIGRATION.

BY THE EARL OF SELKIRK.

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by J. Ballantyne & Co.

FOR A. CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH; AND LONG-
MAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, LONDON.

1806.

The following book was Selkirk's first major publication. Apparently written after his return from North America late in 1809, it was published in London in late spring of 1805 to substantial critical acclaim. A second edition was published in 1806 in Edinburgh. Both editions bore the names of the London publishing firm of Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme and the Scottish publishers A. Constable and Co. We have chosen to reprint the second edition, which was revised and expanded by the author. All alterations from the first edition have been noted in the footnotes to the text.

Observations

Introduction

When, on a question that has undergone much investigation and excited general attention, an individual comes forward to controvert received opinions, and to offer views which have previously passed unnoticed, every one is disposed to ask, what have been the peculiar opportunities of information upon which he presumes to contradict those who have gone before him. I trust, therefore, it will not be deemed an unbecoming egotism, that some particulars relating to myself form the subject of these preliminary pages.

Without any immediate or local connexion with the Highlands, I was led, very early in life, to take a warm interest in the fate of my

countrymen in that part of the kingdom. During the course of my academical studies, my curiosity was strongly excited by the representations I had heard of the antient state of society, and the striking peculiarity of manners still remaining among them; and, in the year 1792, I was prompted to take an extensive tour through their wild region, and to explore many of its remotest and most secluded valleys. In the course of this I ascertained several of the leading facts, on which the arguments of the following pages are grounded; in particular, that Emigration was an unavoidable result of the general state of the country, arising from causes above all control, and in itself of essential consequence to the tranquillity and permanent welfare of the kingdom.

The particular destination of the emigrants is not likely to excite much interest in those who believe that emigration may be obviated altogether. Being persuaded that no such expectation could be reasonably entertained, I bestowed some attention on details, which to other observers may have appeared nugatory. I learned, that the Highlanders were dispersing to a variety of situations, in a foreign land, where they were lost not only to their native country, but to themselves as a separate people. Admiring many generous and manly features in their character, I could not observe without regret the rapid decline of their genuine manners, to which the circumstances of the country seemed inevitably to lead. I thought, however, that a portion of the ancient spirit might be preserved among the Highlanders of the New World - that the emigrants might be brought together in some part of their own colonies, where they would be of national utility, and where no motives of general policy would militate (as they certainly may at home) against the preservation of all those peculiarities of customs and language, which they are themselves so reluctant to give up, and which are perhaps intimately connected with many of their most striking and characteristic virtues.

It was on the eve of the late war that these views occurred to me, and any active prosecution of them was precluded by the eventful period which followed; but the object was deeply impressed on my mind, and has never been lost sight of. Far from being effaced by the lapse of time, or the occupations of maturer years, my ideas of its practicability and its importance have been confirmed by every succeeding reflection.

The emigrations from the Highlands, which had been of little amount during the continuance of hostilities, recommenced upon the return of peace, with a spirit more determined and more widely diffused than on any former occasion. All those views which I had hitherto entertained, then recurred as

requiring immediate attention; and the strong impressions I had on the subject induced me to state, to some persons then in Administration, the necessity of active interference, for attracting the emigrants to our own colonies. These representations were treated with polite attention, but did not excite an interest corresponding to my own ideas of the importance of the object. Inasmuch, however, as it could be promoted by the disposal of waste lands of the Crown, I was informed that every reasonable encouragement might be expected. Seeing no probability of my views being effectually adopted by Government, and reluctant to abandon the object altogether, I was led to consider how far, under the encouragement held out, I could, as an individual, follow it up on a more limited scale, to the effect at least of establishing the practicability of my suggestion. Having, therefore, received the assurance of a grant of land on such terms, as promised an adequate return for the unavoidable expences of the undertaking, I resolved to try the experiment, and, at my own risk, to engage some of the emigrants, who were preparing to go to the United States, to change their destination, and embark for our own colonies.

It is unnecessary to detail the transactions to which this led, and the various obstructions I met with in the Highlands, from persons whose jealousy had been roused by my attempt. When the preparations for my expedition were pretty far advanced, I learned that in consequence of some calumnious reports, Government were disposed to look less favourably than at first on my undertaking. To remove the grounds of these misapprehensions, in February 1803, I stated to the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, (in the concise form to which the bounds of a Letter restricted me,) the principal outlines of the following arguments; and I had the satisfaction to learn that this representation had removed the doubts of the Noble Lord to whom it was addressed.¹

I was given to understand, however, that it would be more satisfactory to Government, if the people I had engaged were settled in a maritime situation, instead of that I had at first in contemplation.² For reasons, which I may perhaps have occasion hereafter to lay before the public, I was by no means satisfied that this suggestion was founded in just views of national policy.³ Nevertheless, I thought it my duty, under all the circumstances of the case, to acquiesce, and determined on making my settlement in the Island of St John (now called Prince Edward's) in the Gulph of St Lawrence.

From various considerations I found, that, to give the experiment a fair prospect of success, my own presence with the colonists was

indispensable. It was indeed with some reluctance that I ultimately yielded to this; for, before I sailed, the unexpected renewal of hostilities had taken place.⁴ The business was then too far advanced to admit of any change of plan; and it was with the most anxious feelings that I found myself under the necessity of quitting the kingdom at so critical a moment. In other respects I have had no reason to regret my absence, as it has not only led me to sources of information, to which few have access; but I trust that my occupation in the mean time has not been wholly useless to my country.⁵

I find, that my own views in this undertaking have been as much misrepresented, as the subject in general has been misunderstood. But I enter with confidence on the task of correcting the mistakes that have been disseminated; trusting that a simple statement of facts will be not less convincing to the public at large, than it has already been to an official character.

My first intention was to have given to the world the very letter, I have above alluded to, with a few additional illustrations; but I could not avoid expanding my observations more than was consistent with such a plan, in order to render them intelligible to those who are not well acquainted with the local circumstances of Scotland. I have therefore cast the whole anew into its present form; and, notwithstanding the bulk to which it has grown, I cannot flatter myself that the subject is exhausted. If time had permitted, some valuable additional documents might have been collected. Anxious, however, that the misrepresentations, which have been circulated under the sanction of respectable names, should no longer remain uncontradicted, I venture to submit these remarks, in their present imperfect state, to the judgment of the public, and solicit that indulgence, to which, perhaps, I have some claim from the importance of the subject, and the unavoidable haste of this publication.

*London, June, 1805.*⁶

I. Independance [sic.] of the Highland Chieftains in Former Times / Internal State of the Country Resulting from that Circumstance

The state of commercial refinement and regular government, to which we are accustomed in England, has been so long established, that it requires some effort of imagination, to form a distinct idea of the situation of things under the feudal system. We must look back to a distant period of time, the manners and customs of which have gradually disappeared, with the causes which gave rise to them, and have left few traces of their existence. This has also been the case, to a great degree, in the Low Country of Scotland; but the progress of society in the Highlands has been very different. It must not be forgotten, that little more than half a century has passed, since that part of the kingdom was in a state similar to that of England before the Norman conquest. When we look back to the condition of the Highlands before the year 1745, the differences which still exist between that and the other parts of the kingdom are easily accounted for.⁷ There is much more reason to be surprised at the progress that has been made by the inhabitants in these sixty years, than that they should not have accomplished to its full extent the change, which in other parts has been the work of many centuries.⁸ The feudal system has been abolished; but the customs that arose out of it are not forgotten. An act of parliament, supported by a military force, could destroy the one; time only can eradicate the other: and in every peculiarity of the Highlanders, we may trace the remnants of this former state of the country, or the effects of its violent and rapid change.

Though the conquests of Cromwell, and the issue of the rebellion in 1715, gave a check to the independence of the Highland chieftains, yet it is well known that, till after the year 1745, it was never completely overthrown. Before that period, the authority of law was too feeble to afford protection. The obstructions to the execution of any legal warrant were such, that it was only for objects of great public concern that an extraordinary effort was sometimes made to overcome them. In any ordinary case of private injury, an individual could have little expectation of redress, unless he could avenge his own cause; and the only hope of safety from any attack was in meeting force by force.

In this state of things, every person above the common rank depended for his safety and his consequence on the number and attachment of his servants and dependants: without people ready to defend him, he could not expect to sleep in safety, to preserve his house from pillage, or his family from murder; he must

have submitted to the insolence of every neighbouring robber, unless he had maintained a numerous train of followers to go with him into the field, and to fight his battles. To this essential object, every inferior consideration was sacrificed; and the principal advantage of landed property consisted in the means it afforded to the proprietor of multiplying his dependants. By allowing his tenants to possess their farms at low rents, he secured their services whenever required, and, by the power of removing any one who was refractory, maintained over them the authority of a monarch. The sacrifice of pecuniary interest was of very inferior importance, and was not a matter of choice; for any proprietor, who should have acted on contrary principles, losing the attachment of his people, would have been left a prey to the violence of his neighbours.

The Highland gentlemen appear to have been so anxious on this subject, that they never ventured to raise their rents, however much the circumstances of any cases might make it reasonable: the tenant, in fact, paid his rent not so much in money as in military services; and this explains the extraordinary difference between the apparent value of land in the Highlands, in former times, and at present. The small rentals of the estates forfeited by the rebels of 1745 have been often remarked with surprise, and contrasted with the great value of the same lands at present; but were the rent of these lands at their utmost actual value to be all laid out in employing labourers, at the rates now current in the north of Scotland, the number of men to whom they would furnish wages and maintenance would not be very different from that of the clans who formerly came out in arms from the same tracts of country.⁹

The value of landed property was, in these times, to be reckoned, not by the rent it produced, but by the men whom it could send into the field. It is mentioned, indeed, of one of the chieftains, that being questioned by a stranger as to the rent of his estate, he answered, that it could raise 500 men.

Under these circumstances, it was natural that every proprietor should wish to reduce his farms into as small portions as possible: and this inclination was fully seconded by the disposition of the people. The state of the country left a father no other means of providing for a numerous family, than by dividing his farm among them; and where two families could be placed on the land that was previously occupied by one, the proprietor acquired a new tenant, and a new soldier. From the

operation of these principles, the land seems, in a great majority of cases, to have been divided into possessions barely sufficient for a scanty subsistence to the occupiers.

It was indeed usual for the head of a clan, possessing extensive territories, occasionally to grant more considerable farms to the younger branches of his family; but this circumstance had little effect on the general mode of agricultural management. The tacksmen (as the holders of such large farms were termed) were considered nearly in the same light as proprietors, and acted on the same principles. They were the officers who, under the chief, commanded in the military expeditions of the clan. This was their employment; and neither their own dispositions, nor the situation of the country, inclined them to engage in the drudgery of agriculture, any further than to supply the necessaries of life for their own families. A part of their land was usually sufficient for this purpose; and the remainder was let off, in small portions, to cotters, who differed but little from the small occupiers who held their lands immediately from the chief, excepting that, in lieu of rent, they were bound to a certain amount of labour for the advantage of their immediate superior. By collecting a number of these people around his own habitation, a gentleman not only procured the means of carrying on the work of his farm with ease, but also promoted the personal security of his family. Besides this, the tacksmen, holding their lands from the chief at a mere quit-rent, were naturally solicitous to merit his favour, by the number of their immediate dependants whom they could bring to join his standard; and they had in fact no other means of employing to advantage the superfluity of their land, than by joining in the general system of the country, and multiplying the ultimate occupiers of the land.

These circumstances produced a state of manners, from which it is easy still to trace the most striking peculiarities of the Highlanders.¹⁰ The greatest part of the country was fit only for pasturage, and the small portions of arable land which fell to the share of any family, could occupy but little of their time. On two or three occasions in the course of the year, the labours of the field required a momentary exertion, to prepare the soil, or to secure the crop: but no regular and continued industry was requisite for providing the simple necessaries of life, to which their forefathers had been accustomed, and beyond which their desires did not extend. The periods of labour were short; and they could devote the intermediate time to indolence, or to amusement, unless when they were called upon by the chief to unite for the common defence, or for an attack on some hostile clan. The merit of every individual was estimated by his prowess on these occasions; warlike achievements [sic.]¹¹ were ever the favourite theme among them; and the

amusements of their leisure hours generally consisted of active exercises, or displays of strength and agility, calculated to enhance their character as warriors.

This style of life, favourable as it was to those qualities of mind and body which are requisite to form a good soldier, was no less adverse to habits of industry. If, indeed, the natural disposition of the Highlanders to industry had been ever so great, their situation would have allowed it but little scope. Their lands afforded few objects of commerce: the only article of which they ever had any considerable superfluity was cattle; and, from the turbulent state of the country, these could not be brought to market without the utmost difficulty. The desire of accumulating was checked by the insecurity of property: those, indeed, who derive their acquisitions from the sword, are seldom in the habit of hoarding them with care; what may next day be replaced by the plunder of an enemy, they are disposed to lavish with careless profusion. Thus, among the antient Highlanders, the same men, who made a glory of pillage and rapine, carried the sentiments of hospitality and generosity to a romantic excess.

The meanest of the Highlanders was impressed with these sentiments; but, while he reckoned it disgraceful to shut his door against the stranger, or to withhold from him any thing which his house contained, he considered it as equally unpardonable, if a friend refused him any thing of which he was in want. From the chieftains, in particular, the most unbounded generosity was expected; and the necessity, which they were under, of conciliating the attachment of their people, led them to follow the same conduct, whatever might be their natural disposition.

The authority of the chief, however great, was not of that absolute kind which has sometimes been imagined, and could not be maintained without an unremitting attention to all the arts of popularity. Condescending manners were necessary in every individual, of what-ever rank; the meanest expected to be treated as a gentleman, and almost as an equal. The intimate connexion of the chief with his people, their daily intercourse, the daily dependance they had on each other for immediate safety, the dangers which they shared, were all calculated to produce a great degree of mutual sympathy and affection; and if there were any of the higher ranks who did not really feel such sentiments, prudence prevented them from allowing this to appear.

On the other hand, the devoted attachment of the common people to their chiefs, though described in terms of astonishment by contemporary writers, was an effect easily deducible from the general principles of human nature.

Among the poor in civilized countries, there is, perhaps, no circumstance more severely felt, than the neglect they meet with from persons of superior condition, and which appears to stigmatise them, as of an inferior species: and if in the hour of distress they meet with an unexpected degree of sympathy, the attention bestowed on their situation is often more soothing than direct benefits, conferred without any appearance of sensibility or concern. When a person of rank treats his inferiors with cordiality, and shows an interest in their welfare, it is seldom that, in any country, this behaviour is not repaid by gratitude and affection. This was particularly to be expected among the Highlanders, a people naturally of acute feelings, habituated to sentiments of a romantic and poetical cast: in them the condescending manners and kindness of their chiefs excited an attachment bordering on enthusiasm.¹²

II. Change in the Policy of the Highland Proprietors Subsequent to the Rebellion in 1745

The change which this state of society underwent after the rebellion in 1745, was great and sudden. The final issue of that contest annihilated the independence of the chieftains; and the vigorous measures, by which the victory of Culloden was followed, gave to regular government an authority which it had never before possessed in that part of the kingdom. The country was disarmed, and a sufficient force stationed in it to prevent any great and daring violation of the law.

The chiefs now ceased to be petty monarchs. The services of their followers were no longer requisite for defence, and could no longer be made use of for the plunder of a defenceless neighbour. They were reduced to the situation of any other proprietors: but they were not long in discovering, that to subsist a numerous train of dependants was not the only way in which their estates could be rendered of value; that the rents they received were far below those given for lands of equal quality in other parts of the kingdom.

For a few years after the power of the chieftains was broken, the influence of old habits seems to have prevailed, and it was some time before any great change took place; but, by degrees, the proprietors began to exact a rise of rent. Though the first demands of this kind

were extremely moderate, the rents being still far below the real value of the lands, yet the circumstance was so unprecedented, that great dissatisfaction ensued; and the removal of some of the tenants, who refused to comply, excited still more indignation. Accustomed to transmit their possessions from father to son, as if they had been their property, the people seem to have thought, that as long as they paid the old and accustomed rent, and performed the usual services, their possessions were their own by legal right.

The discontents which arose from these causes, were for a time but partial; for the progress of raising rents was slow. The gentlemen, who had been educated amidst the habits of the feudal times, could not at once relinquish all the sentiments of their youth. The attachment of their people was of so flattering a nature, that it was often preferred to pecuniary advantages; and little alteration seems to have been made, till the generation of old proprietors was extinct. Gradually, however, men educated under different circumstances came forward, and feeling more remotely the influence of antient connexions with their dependants, were not inclined to sacrifice for a shadow the substantial advantage of a productive property. The more necessitous, or the less generous, set the example; and one has followed another, till at length all scruple seems to be removed, and the proprietors in the Highlands have no more hesitation than in any other part of the kingdom, in turning their estates to the best advantage.¹³

There are still, indeed, a few chieftains who retain so much of the antient feudal notions, as to be unwilling to dispossess the old adherents of their families; and, from a tenderness towards them, submit to considerable loss.¹⁴ There are many others who, from vanity, are desirous of counting a numerous tenantry, and would willingly preserve the population of their estates, if it could be reconciled to their pecuniary interest. These motives, though now wearing fast away, have however had great effect till of late; so that, notwithstanding the length of time that has elapsed since the year 1745, a very considerable proportion of the Highlands remains under circumstances directly arising out of the feudal state, or is at this moment in the crisis of change. But the causes which have hitherto retarded the change are so much enfeebled, that they cannot long continue to have a perceptible effect; and, as an unavoidable consequence, the Highlands in general must soon fall into that state of occupancy and cultivation which is most conducive to the pecuniary interest of its individual proprietors.

III. Consequences of This Change on Population / Through the Prevalence of Pasturage / Sheep-farming / and Engrossing of Farms

In one very important circumstance, the antient state of the Highlands differed remarkably from the rest of the kingdom; - every spot was occupied by nearly as many families as the produce of the land could subsist.

In other parts, and indeed in every civilized country where landed estates are on a large scale, we find no more people upon a farm than are reckoned necessary for carrying on the work that must be done upon it. This is the natural result of the operation of private interest. The proprietor lets his land to the tenant who will give him the highest rent for it; and the tenant manages it in the manner that he expects will produce him the most profit. For this purpose, he must raise as much produce, but with as little expense, as possible: to avoid expense, he must employ no unnecessary hands; must feed no superfluous mouths. The less of the produce is consumed upon the farm, the more he can carry to market.

From these causes, the population in all those parts of the kingdom which are merely agricultural, is reduced much below the proportion of people which the country could feed; while particular spots that are favourable for manufacturers have accumulated a population greatly exceeding what the produce of the immediate vicinity could maintain. There the superabundant produce of the agricultural districts finds a market; there any superabundant population may expect to find employment.

Where there is no employment but what arises directly from the cultivation of the land, the country is more or less peopled according to the mode of cultivation. A highly refined agriculture, that approaches to gardening, will employ a considerable population, though not equal to that of a manufacturing district. In the ordinary style of agricultural management, less labour being bestowed on the land, fewer people will be required, and fewer will find a maintenance. This will be still more the case where a great proportion of the land is in grass; and even in countries entirely devoted to pasture, a difference will be observed; as a dairy farm will require more hands than the same land employed for mere grazing.

When we inquire, therefore, what population may be maintained in any district, we have not merely to ask what the country could produce, or how many inhabitants that produce could maintain; the essential point is, to know what employment it can afford, and under what mode of management the land will be most

profitable to the occupier. To examine the Highlands of Scotland by this test, let us consider what are the other parts of the kingdom to which it bears most resemblance. If in any of the mountainous districts of England, we find a considerable population collected in one spot, it is where a number of hands are required for working mines, or where the abundance of coal has led to the establishment of manufactures. In the Highlands there are few mines, and these of little consequence: the country is entirely destitute of coals; and though the inhabitants have an opportunity of supplying themselves with peat or turf from the mosses, yet this is by a process so expensive and precarious in a rainy climate, that this fuel is by no means a complete substitute for coals, and is of very inferior value. The Highlands are therefore on a par with the mountains of the South of Scotland, and those on the borders of the two kingdoms, with a great part of Cumberland and Westmoreland, of North Wales, and some other mountainous districts in England: - in all of these, the soil and climate forbid the extension of tillage, while the scarcity of fuel has discouraged manufacturing industry.

In such mountainous regions, the most profitable employment of land is universally found to be in rearing young cattle and sheep, which, at a proper age, are bought and fattened by farmers in more fertile countries. Few of these mountains are entirely destitute of spots in which cultivation might be practicable; but it is found more advantageous to keep them in grass, as the numerous flocks which a range of mountains can feed in summer, require some better pasture in sheltered situations for a retreat in winter. For these reasons, judicious farmers attempt little cultivation, except in so far as it can be rendered subservient to the accommodation of their flocks; and those who have tried more have been obliged to acknowledge, that the expense of labour, combined with the loss of their winter pastures, has overbalanced any profit arising from their crops.

These reasons have still more force in the Highlands, where the climate is more adverse to the production of grain, and renders a reserve of winter pastures still more indispensable.¹⁵ From the prevalence therefore of the same circumstances, it must be expected that the lands will fall into the same general style of management; and that in the Highlands, as in the Cheviots or in Tweeddale, a few

shepherds, with their dogs, will be found sufficient for all the profitable work of many an extensive range of land.

Ever since sheep-farming gained a footing in the Highlands, the ancient possessors of the lands have had a very unequal struggle to maintain. It would be difficult, perhaps, to quote an instance where they have been able to offer a rent fully equal to that which the graziers would have given; and the competition against them has been continually increasing.¹⁶

On the first introduction of sheep-farming, it was confined to a few adventurous individuals, who, being accustomed to it in the south of Scotland, had penetration to observe the vast field which was open to them, and firmness to persevere, notwithstanding the multiplied obstacles which opposed them. Having a great extent of country in their choice, they selected only such farms as were peculiarly adapted to their purpose, and such as they could obtain on very advantageous terms. This monopoly, however, has gradually disappeared.

The first sheep-farmers, like all who introduce new and successful modes of agriculture, reaped great profits, extended their capital, and have naturally been induced to employ it all in the same manner. Their success has also attracted others from the South of Scotland. The more sagacious of the inhabitants of the country itself saw the benefits they might derive from a similar mode of management. The small proprietors of land were among the first to imitate it; and some of them have taken the whole, or the greater part of their estates into their own possession. Many of the tacksmen have also discarded their superfluous cotters and subtenants, and imitate the active industry of the strangers. In this manner the graziers have now become so numerous as to enter into competition with one another, and to offer rents as fully proportionate to the value of the land as in other parts of the kingdom.¹⁷

During the earlier periods of this progress, the competition against the old tenantry was partial and comparatively feeble; while, on the other hand, the feudal prepossessions of the landlords in their favour still retained great force. Hence they often received a preference at rents much inferior to those which might have been procured for their farms; and though, in many instances, the utmost was exacted, that under their mode of management appeared to be possible, they have, in general,

found their situation more advantageous than they had just reason to expect. From the great and continual rise in the value of grazing cattle, many who, in taking their leases, could only calculate on a bare subsistence for themselves, have been enabled to pay their rent with tolerable ease, and even to accumulate some savings.

The profits of the sheep-farmers during the same period, have, however, been incomparably greater. The same rise in the value of produce, has operated in their favour also, and has encouraged them to extend their offers of rent to the utmost which the improved modes of management enable them to afford. The invariable success that has hitherto attended the new system of grazing, has, at the same time, drawn into this business almost every person in the Highlands who can command any considerable capital; so that there are now numerous competitors for every farm that is adapted to this purpose. - Such a competition, the old tenantry cannot possibly resist; and the consequence is inevitable, that, as fast as the current leases expire, the whole, or nearly the whole, of this body of men will be dispossessed.

The cotters are scarcely more likely to hold their place; because, though a few may be requisite, yet the number usually employed on any farm under the old system, was incomparably greater than a grazier has occasion for. The rents that are now to be paid, will not allow the occupier to submit to any unnecessary expense: the families to be maintained on the ground must, for his own interest, be reduced to the small number who are sufficient for the tending of his flocks.¹⁸

The tract of country known by the general name of Highlands, is not everywhere mountainous; and there are situations where, in all probability, sheep-farming will not prevail.¹⁹ In some parts the country consists of low hills, more adapted for pasturing black cattle than sheep; in others, there is a great proportion of arable land; but the climate is generally a discouragement to tillage, even where the soil and situation oppose no obstacles. - The Western Coast and Isles are subject to such excessive rains, that a crop of grain can scarcely be secured without damage, or at least not without great expense, difficulty, and uncertainty. Under these circumstances, the farmer will certainly find it for his advantage to keep the greatest part of his arable land in pasture: and, though the tending of cattle may require rather more labour than that of sheep, yet grazing of any kind, when managed with economy, can afford employment to very few people in comparison with the numbers hitherto maintained under the old system of the Highlands.

The same general principle is applicable even to the districts where agriculture can be carried on to advantage: in no part will cultivation

require all the people whom the produce of the land can support. Where farms are very small, the proprietors will, in every situation, find it for their interest to throw several into the hands of one man. The occupier of a minute portion of land, who, without any other source of profit, can raise little more produce than enough for his own consumption, has no means of paying an adequate rent. One man, constantly employed, might accomplish all the work of cultivating several of these small possessions. When they are thrown together, the farmer is enabled, merely by diminishing the number of superfluous mouths, to send a part of the produce to market; and from the same land, without any addition to its fertility, to afford a better rent to the landlord.²⁰ This the Highland proprietors have already begun to experience; and a tendency to the engrossing of farms, is very observable in the agricultural districts, as well as in those employed in pasturage.

From these reasons, it is an unavoidable consequence that a great proportion of the small occupiers of land must be dispossessed.²¹ Of the people, whose services were necessary in the feudal times, a small part only can be useful as agricultural labourers. The superfluous numbers have been hitherto enabled to live by possessing land at a rent below its value: directly, or indirectly, they are a burthen on the proprietors; and unless some new and profitable employment can be devised for them, they must continue to be a burthen as long as they remain in the country.²² To this the proprietors certainly will not long submit; and, therefore, a great part of the present inhabitants of the Highlands must, in one way or another, seek for means of livelihood totally different from those on which they have hitherto depended.

Though there has been a continual progress towards this state of things, it has never till now taken place to its full extent. Those parts of the Highlands, where the new modes of management are generally established, form, as yet, but the smaller proportion. From other districts, where they have been more recently introduced, emigrations have taken place on former occasions, but not to such an extent, as to produce a sensible diminution of the inhabitants. Thus the change of system has yet to produce its entire and unimpaired effect in a country still teeming with the superabundant population accumulated by the genius of the feudal times.

IV. Situation and Circumstances of the Old Tenantry / Choice of Resources When Dispossessed of Their Farms / Emigration Preferred / For What Reasons / Limited in Extent

This great change in the system of management throughout the Highlands branches into various and complicated effects. In order to give a clear view of its unavoidable consequences, it will be proper, first, to enter into some details as to the situation and mode of life of the people, such as we actually find them, where the old system of occupancy still remains. From this it will be easy to deduce the immediate effects which the change must produce on their circumstances; and it will thus appear that emigration is the line of conduct which the occasion leads them most naturally to pursue. After considering this consequence as it affects the interest of the public the same details will enable us to appreciate how far it may be obviated or modified by legislative wisdom; and this will lead to a discussion of all the resources which have been proposed as remedies for preventing emigration.

In consequence of the extensive distribution of landed possessions arising from the feudal manners, combined with the small progress that has been made in the arts of life and division of labour, the people of the Highlands are not separated into distinct classes of farmers, labourers, and mechanics: they are all more or less engaged in agriculture. There are no markets where provisions can be purchased so that every man must be a farmer, at least so far as to raise provisions for his own family. Whatever additional employment a man may follow, he must occupy a small spot of land; and any one who cannot procure such a possession, cannot live in the country.

The farms occupied by the common tenantry, are hamlets or petty townships,²³ held by six or eight partners, sometimes by many more. The shares appear to have been originally equal; but, by the subdivision of some, and the accumulation, in other cases, of several in the same hand, it is now frequently found that one man has a third or a fourth part of a farm, while his neighbour has but a fifteenth or a twentieth part.²⁴

These farms consist, in general, of a portion of a valley, to which is annexed a tract of mountain pasture, often stretching to the distance of many miles. The habitations are collected in a little village, upon the best of the arable lands, which are used as crofts in constant tillage.

The less fertile of the arable lands on the outskirts, termed *outfield*, are only occasionally cultivated, and every part of them is in its turn allowed to rest in grass. The lands in tillage are sometimes cultivated in common, but are more usually distributed among the tenants in proportion to their shares; seldom, however, in a permanent manner, but from year to year. The produce of the land in tillage is rarely more than sufficient to maintain the tenants and their families. Their riches consist of cattle, chiefly breeding cows, and the young stock produced from them, which are maintained on the farm till of a proper age for the market; and by the sale of these the tenants are enabled to pay their rent.²⁵ The number which each farm or *toun* is capable of maintaining, is ascertained by antient usage, and may be, in general, from thirty to eighty cows, besides other cattle. Of these, each tenant is allowed to keep a fixed proportion, according to his share of the farm.

The joint occupiers of such farms are termed *small tenants*, to distinguish them from the *tacksman*, who hold entire farms, and who are in general of the rank of gentry, each of them tracing himself to some antient proprietor of the estate, who has allotted the farm as a provision for a cadet of his family.

Upon the farms of the tacksman, are a number of subtenants or *cotters*, under which general term may be included various local denominations of *crofters*, *mailers*, &c. &c.²⁶ These people hold their possessions under various conditions: sometimes they differ from the tenants in little else than the diminutive scale of their possessions; but in general they have a greater or less amount of labour to perform as a part of their rent. Frequently they are absolute servants to their immediate superior, having the command only of a small share of their own time to cultivate the land allowed them for maintaining their families. Sometimes the tacksman allows a portion of his own tillage-field for his cotter; sometimes a small separate croft is laid off for him; and he is likewise allowed, in general, to pasture a cow, or perhaps two, along with the cattle of the farm.²⁷

Cotters are not confined to the farms of the tacksman - they are also intermixed with the small tenants. Two or three are generally employed on every farm, as servants of the whole partnership, for herding their cattle, or preventing the trespasses of others. There are also a few people who exercise the trades of blacksmiths, weavers, taylors, shoemakers, &c. and who bargain with one or other of the tenants for a portion of his land. Sometimes persons who have been dispossessed of their own farms, and are unable to procure a share of one elsewhere, will secure a temporary residence in the country by taking *subsets* of this kind: sometimes individuals, connected by relationship with the tenants of a farm,

and who have no other resource, are permitted, from mere charity, to occupy some corner of waste land, where, by raising crops of potatoes they contrive to procure a miserable subsistence.

It may be easily conceived, that the line between these two classes, the small tenants and the cotters, is not always very accurately defined; some of the more opulent of the cotters being as well provided as the lowest of the tenants. Upon the whole, however, there is a great difference in the amount of their property, and in the views they may entertain, when, by the progress of sheep-farming, they are dispossessed of their tenements. Among the more opulent, it is not uncommon for one man to have twelve, fifteen, or even twenty cows; but, in general, the small tenant, according to his share of the farm, may have from three or four, to six or eight cows, and always with a proportionate number of young cattle. He has also horses, a few small sheep, implements of agriculture, and various household articles to dispose of; and, from the sale of all these he is enabled to embark in undertakings which cannot be thought of by the cotter, and which are not within the reach of the peasantry even in the more improved and richer parts of the kingdom.

There the labouring poor, though earning very considerable wages, are seldom possessed of much permanent property. Their daily or weekly wages are expended in the market as fast as they arise, for the immediate supply of their families. In the Highlands, there are few of the lower class who have the means of living nearly so well as an English labourer, but many who have property of much greater value. In the Agricultural Survey of the Northern Counties, details are given of the economy of a farmer of about 30 acres of arable land, whose diet and habitation appear to be of the lowest kind, the total value of his buildings not exceeding 10 £., and the annual consumption of provisions for his own family and three *servants* amounting to about 15 £.: yet his capital is estimated at 116 £.; and from the advance in the price of cattle since the date of that publication, his stock must now be of considerably greater value.²⁸

Of this description of people it has often happened that 30 or 40 families have been dispossessed all at once, to make way for a great sheep-farm: - and those who have attended to the preceding details will easily understand the dilemma to which every one of these people must be reduced. The country affords no means of living without a possession of land, and how is that to be procured? The farms, that are not already in the hands of the graziers, are all full of inhabitants, themselves perhaps in dread of the same fate, and at any rate too crowded to make room for him.

Should he, in spite of every difficulty, resolve to earn his bread as a labourer, he can expect no employment in a neighbourhood, where every spot is occupied by many more people than are necessary for its own work; and if any casual opportunity of employment occur, it is too uncertain to be depended upon. Let his industrious dispositions be every so great, he must, in the total want of manufacturing employment in his own neighbourhood, quit his native spot; and, if he do not leave the kingdom altogether, must resort to some of those situations where the increasing demand for labour affords a prospect of employment.²⁹

When a great number are dispossessed at once, and the land is to be applied to purposes that afford little or no employment, as in a sheep-walk, the conclusion is so evident as to require no illustration: but the case is not essentially altered when these people are dismissed in a gradual and continued progress one after another. In this way, indeed, the circumstance does not excite so much public attention; but the effects on the state of the country are the same: and to the individual who is dispossessed, it makes no other difference than that he has fewer companions to share his misfortune. It is equally impossible for him to find resources in his native spot, and he is equally under the necessity of removing to a different situation.

Sheep-farming, though it is the most prominent occasion, is not the radical cause of the difficulties to which the peasantry of the Highlands are reduced: the disposition to extend farms by throwing several possessions into one, must produce the same effect, in what-ever mode the land is afterwards to be managed.³⁰

To the dispossessed tenantry, as well as to the cotters, who by the same progress of things are deprived of their situation and livelihood, two different resources present themselves. They know that in the Low Country of Scotland, and particularly in the manufacturing towns, labour will procure them good wages: they know likewise that in America the wages of labour are still higher, and that, from the moderate price of land, they may expect to obtain there not only the possession of a farm, but an absolute property.

Of these alternatives, every one who is acquainted with the country must admit that Emigration is by far the most likely to suit the inclination and habits of the Highlanders. It requires a great momentary effort; but holds out a speedy prospect of a situation and mode of life similar to that in which they have been educated. Accustomed to possess land, to derive from it all the comforts they enjoy, they naturally consider it as indispensable, and can form no idea of happiness without such a possession. No prospect of an accommodation of this kind can enter

into the views of any one who seeks for employment as a day-labourer, still less of those who resort to a manufacturing town.³¹

The manners of a town, the practice of sedentary labour under the roof of a manufactory, present to the Highlander a most irksome contrast to his former life. Among his native mountains he is accustomed to a freedom from constraint which approaches to the independence of the savage. His activity is occasionally called forth to the utmost stretch, in conducting his boat through boisterous waves, or in traversing the wildest mountains amidst the storms of winter: but these efforts are succeeded by intervals of indolence equally extreme. He is accustomed to occasional exertions of agricultural labour, but without any habits of regular and steady industry; and he has not the least experience of sedentary employments, for which, most frequently, the prejudices of his infancy have taught him to entertain a contempt.³²

To a person of such habits, a manufactory can have no attraction except in a case of necessity; it can never be his choice, when any resource can be found more congenial to his native disposition. The occupations of an agricultural labourer, though very different, would not be so great a contrast to his former life; but the demand for labour, in this line, is too limited to afford him any great encouragement. In this, as well as in manufacturing establishments, every desirable situation is pre-occupied by men of much greater skill than the untutored Highlander. He has therefore little chance of finding employment but in works of the lowest drudgery.

To this it is to be added, that the situation of a mere day-labourer, is one which must appear degrading to a person, who has been the possessor of a portion of land however small, and has been accustomed to consider himself as in the rank of a farmer. In America, on the contrary, he has a prospect of superior rank; of holding land by a permanent tenure, instead of a temporary, precarious, and dependant possession. It is not to be forgotten that every motive of this nature has a peculiar degree of force on the minds of the Highland peasantry. The pride, which formerly pervaded even the lowest classes, has always been a prominent feature of their national character: and this feeling is deeply wounded by the distant behaviour they now experience from their chieftains - a mortifying contrast to the cordiality that subsisted in the feudal times.

It has sometimes been alleged, that these motives of preference derive their principal strength from the ignorance of the people, and their expectation of procuring in America lands like those of Britain,

fit for immediate cultivation.³³ That such ideas may have been entertained, and even that individuals who knew better may have been unprincipled enough to circulate such falsehoods, is not impossible: but certainly there is no need of recurring to delusions of this kind, for an explanation of the universal preference of the Highlanders for America. I know, indeed, from personal communication with them, that they are aware of the laborious process that is necessary for bringing the forest lands into a productive state. But this is not sufficient to deter men of vigorous minds, when they are incited by such powerful motives to encounter the difficulty.

It is indeed very probable, that the fashion, being once set, may influence some who are under no absolute necessity of emigrating. That this cause, however, has any very extensive operation, I can see no ground for believing. Those who represent the emigrations as arising from capricious and inadequate motives, argue from the circumstance of tenants having occasionally relinquished advantageous leases several year before their expiration, in order to go to America.³⁴ This, I believe to be a fact, though a very rare occurrence; but were it ever so common, it would afford no proof in favour of the argument which it is brought to support.

Do the gentlemen who urge this argument, suppose the tenantry so blind as to perceive no danger till they are overwhelmed? The fate of their friends and neighbours is a sufficient warning of that which they must sooner or later expect. It is surely with good reason they are convinced that they cannot long continue to retain the possessions they now hold; and, under this conviction, the simplest dictates of prudence would lead them to anticipate the evil day, if they meet any uncommonly favourable opportunity for executing the plans to which, sooner or later, they must have recourse.

The price of cattle has of late years been so fluctuating, and at some periods so extremely high, that opportunities have occurred for tenants to sell off their stock at two or three times their usual and average value. Those who availed themselves of this advantage have acquired so great an increase of capital, that a few remaining years of an expiring lease could be no object when put in comparison.³⁵ Such instances, so far from implying capricious levity in the people, are rather a proof of the deep impression which the circumstances of the country have made on their minds, and of the deliberate foresight with which their determinations are formed.

If there were no other proof that emigration arises from radical and peculiar causes in the circumstances of the country, it might be strongly presumed from the fact, that while this spirit is so prevalent in the

Highlands, it has made no impression, or a very inconsiderable and transient impression, in the adjoining Lowlands. The labourer in the South may occasionally feel the stimulus of ambition; but this affects comparatively few: the great mass of people go on in the track to which they have been accustomed; none but those of peculiarly ardent minds can bring themselves, for the sake of a distant object, to make the exertion which emigration requires.³⁶

The Highlander, who is dispossessed of his land, is forced to this species of exertion: it is utterly impossible for him to go on in the path he has been accustomed to tread. Whether he emigrate to America, or remove to the Low Country of Scotland, the scene is equally new to him; his habits are broken through: he must in either case form himself to an entirely new mode of life. Forced to a change, it is comparatively of little consequence whether he undertake an exertion of greater or less amount.³⁷ To move his family from the Highlands to Glasgow or Paisley, is not to be done without an effort, and, to a poor man, a very considerable effort: and if the result is, that, after all, he must enter upon a mode of life to which all his habits render him averse, which all his prejudices teach him to consider as degrading, it is surely to be expected that he will be ready to carry his effort something further, in order to attain a more desirable situation.³⁸

Though the Highlanders are certainly very inferior to their Southern neighbours in habits of regular and steady industry, yet, for a temporary effort, there are few people equal to them; none who will submit to greater hardships and privations, where there is a great object to be accomplished. Any one who resolves on braving the difficulties of an American settlement, may soon look forward to a situation so much superior to that of a day-labourer, and, particularly, so much more consonant to his former mode of life, that no tenant, who loses his farm in the Highlands, can hesitate between these resources, unless his preference is over-ruled by circumstances of inevitable necessity.

Accordingly, with a very few exceptions, we find the choice of the Highlanders has been entirely regulated by their ability or inability to afford the expenses of their passage to America; and among those whose poverty has forced them to go into the manufacturing towns, some of the most remarkable exertions of industry have been prompted only by the desire of accumulating as much money, as might enable them to join their friends beyond the Atlantic.

From the peculiar circumstances of the Highlands, the proportion of the peasantry, whose property is sufficient to carry them to America, is much greater than in other parts of the kingdom.

The excessive division of land arising from the feudal manners, has confounded and intermixed the characters of *farmer and labourer*; and, while it has reduced to a very low standard the rank of the individual farmer, has diffused the agricultural capital of the country among a great number of hands. The small tenants form a very considerable proportion of the population of the Highlands. Few, even of the lowest of this class, are, in ordinary times, unable to pay for their passage to America: in most instances they have carried with them some money to begin with in their new situation.³⁹

The cotters, on the contrary, have not, in general, had property adequate to the expense of the passage, and few of them have ever been able to emigrate. There have been instances of young unmarried men binding themselves by indenture to a number of years service in return for their passage; but this has been very rare. From Ireland, there has been a greater proportion of these *redemptioners* (as they are called): they are generally, however, young men who go to seek their fortunes; careless, perhaps, whether they ever again meet their relations.⁴⁰ The more social and systematic plan which the Highlanders have always followed in going to America, is inconsistent with the obligations of a redemptioner; and to men with families, this resource is wholly inapplicable.⁴¹ The emigrants have, therefore, been almost entirely of the class of tenants; while the cotters, whom the same change of agricultural system has deprived of their means of livelihood, have in general removed into the manufacturing districts of the South of Scotland.

Some expectations have been entertained, that the great public works which have lately been set on foot in the North of Scotland, the Caledonian canal, and the improvement of the roads, may prevent emigration by the employment they will afford.⁴² But this is more than problematical. Their great and permanent national utility is a sufficient ground of praise for these noble undertakings, without ascribing to them effects to which they are altogether inadequate.

These works may give a temporary relief to some of the peasantry, but will not essentially alter the circumstances of the country. They bring employment a little nearer to the people, but few can derive any advantage from this without a change of residence. Those who have to remove their families, cannot forget that the employment will only be temporary, and this reflection will strongly counteract the preference which the situation would otherwise command.⁴³ No one will be disposed to form permanent arrangements on such a foundation.

Except in point of situation, the employment afforded by these public works has no advantage over that which the Highlanders have long been

in the habit of seeking in the Low Country of Scotland. The small tenant, who is deprived of his land, has still the same question to ask himself as formerly, - whether he will remove into a different part of the country to earn his subsistence as a labourer, or go to America to obtain land: - and the motives which have hitherto determined his preference for emigration will in no respect be altered.

V. Political Effects of the Emigrations / the Highlands Hitherto a Nursery of Soldiers / Circumstances on Which This Depended / No Longer Exist / the Loss of This National Advantage Does Not Arise From Emigration

Among the effects of emigration, there is none that has been more universally lamented than the loss of that valuable supply of soldiers, which the public service has hitherto derived from the Highlands.⁴⁴ At such a moment as this, it is impossible not to feel deep regret at every circumstance which may tend to impair the military resources of the nation; and if any satisfactory means could be devised for obviating, or even for suspending, an evil of this nature, it must be considered as of the greatest importance. But how this is to be accomplished, is not to be rashly decided. This is not the only question of political economy where an apparently direct remedy, occurring on a superficial view of the subject, may prove to be calculated in no degree to prevent, per-haps to aggravate, the evil we wish to avoid.

From the details that have been given as to the state of the Highlands previous to the year 1745, it will be observed, that all the power of the chieftains over their followers, was ultimately derived from the low rent of their lands. This was the essential circumstance on the greater or less continuance of which the subsequent state of the country has chiefly depended. Those proprietors who continued to exact rents very inadequate to the real value of their land, maintained all their former authority over the tenantry, perhaps even a still greater; for, during the feudal times, this authority was tempered by the dependence of the gentry on the affection of their followers for personal safety. After the year 1745, the tenantry had no such return to make for the means of subsistence they derived from the indulgence of their landlord. They felt, at the same time,

that he must be under frequent temptations to discontinue that indulgence, and, therefore, were still more anxious than formerly to merit his favour.

The only opportunity they had of rendering him any important obligation, was when he undertook to raise men for the army. The zeal with which the followers of any chieftain then came forward to enlist, was prompted not only by affection and the enthusiasm of clan-ship, but likewise by obvious views of private interest. The tenant who, on such an occasion, should have refused to comply with the wishes of his landlord, was sensible that he could expect no further favour, and would be turned out of his farm. The more considerable the possession he held, the more was it his interest, as well as his duty to exert himself. The most respectable of the tenantry would, therefore, be among the first to bring forward their sons; and the landlord might, with an authority almost despotic, select from among the youth upon his estate, all who appeared most suitable for recruits. The gentry of the Highlands were, in general, too good politicians to make a wanton display of this power; and well enough acquainted with the temper of their people to know that they would come forward with more alacrity, if allowed to indulge the flattering idea that their exertions were the spontaneous effect of attachment to the chief; yet, perhaps, no man of penetration in the country ever doubted the real cause of the facility, with which the Highland landlords could raise such numbers of men with such magical rapidity.⁴⁵

It is easy to see how superior a body of men, thus composed, must be to a regiment recruited in the ordinary manner in other parts of the kingdom. As long as the old system remained in its purity, as long as the rents in the Highlands continued nearly at their old standard, the Highland regiments maintained a very superior character. Instead of the refuse of a manufacturing town, these regiments were composed of hardy mountaineers, whose ordinary mode of life was a perfect school for the habits of a soldier. They were composed of the most respectable of the peasantry; men, for whose fidelity and good conduct there was a solid pledge, in the families they left at home, and in the motives that induced them to enter into the service; men, who had much stronger motives of obedience to their officers than the lash can enforce; who were previously accustomed, from their infancy, to respect and obey the same superiors who led them into the field; who looked on them as their protectors no less than their commanders; men, in whose minds the attachment of clanship still retained a large portion of its antient enthusiasm.⁴⁶

Besides this, each corps being collected from the same neighbourhood, the men were connected by the ties of friendship and of blood; and every one saw in his companions those with whom he had to pass the rest of his life, whether in a military capacity or not. Every one was therefore more solicitous to maintain an unblemished character, than he would have been among a medley of strangers, from whom he might soon be parted, to meet no more. The same circumstance tended to give the soldiery a peculiar degree of that *esprit de corps*, which is so powerful an engine in the hands of a judicious commander. The attachment of the Highland soldier to his regiment was not of a casual or transitory nature, - it was not a matter of indifference to him, or the result of accident, whether he belonged to one regiment or another, - his regiment was derived from his clan, and inseparably connected with it: in the honour of his regiment he saw that of his name; and to it he transferred all those sentiments of glory, which early education had connected with the achievements of his ancestors.⁴⁷

The well-known military character of the Highlanders may thus be naturally accounted for: but the peculiarities that have been described may all be traced to the recent feudal state of the country; and in proportion as this has been supplanted by the progress of a commercial system, the Highland regiments have approached to a similarity with the other regiments in the service. The low rent of land was the foundation of the whole difference; and, that existing no longer, there is no possibility that its consequences can long continue. When the Highland chieftain exacts the full value for his land, his people, even if he could accommodate them all, will no longer be dependants; the relation between them must be the same as between a landlord and his tenants in any other part of the kingdom.

It is not usual in any district for a considerable proprietor to exact for his land the utmost shilling which it can possibly afford. The tenant has almost always some advantage in his bargain; and, in proportion to this advantage, he will be disposed to pay a certain deference to his landlord. In many parts of England, where the farmers are tenants at will, the rents are certainly lower, in proportion to the real value of the lands, than in Scotland, where leases for a term of years are generally prevalent. It is probable, therefore, that the tenantry of the Highlands, under the new system, will be even more independent than those of England; and certainly in a very different situation from that, in which they felt a necessity of quitting their families and their homes, whenever they were called upon by their landlord.

A Yorkshire farmer may give his vote at an election for the candidate whom his landlord recommends, but would be rather surprised at an order to enlist, - not less, perhaps, than he would be at a summons to attend his lord to the attack of a neighbouring castle. Such a summons, however, to his ancestors, would once have been as irresistible a command, as recently it was to the Highlander. The same change in the circumstances of the country, must produce the same consequences in the Highlands as in England. It would be as absurd now to expect every Highlander to follow his chief into the field, as to suppose that any English nobleman could, in these days, march against London with an army of his dependants, because that was done by Warwick the *King-maker*.

Independently, therefore, of depopulation, that nursery of soldiers which has hitherto been found in the Highlands cannot continue.

If there is a possibility of retaining the present population under the change of the agricultural system, it is clear that this must be done by introducing among the inhabitants new branches of industry, by which those who are deprived of their lands may obtain a subsistence. If manufactories could be established, so extensively as to employ all the present inhabitants, they must, of course, acquire the habits of other manufacturing districts. Like them, indeed, they would furnish a proportion of recruits; but these would be of a very different description from the recruits that have hitherto been sent from the Highlands.⁴⁸

Will it be argued, that there is something in the blood of the Highlanders that will render them soldiers under every circumstance of habit or education? If that be the case, they will form as good a nursery of soldiers at Glasgow or Paisley, as in their native valleys. Or does their military character arise from the local and physical circumstances of their country; and is the manufacturer of a mountainous district different from the manufacturer of a plain? Be it so - still a Highland regiment, recruited among manufacturing villages, must be extremely different from the Highland regiments we have hitherto seen; - we can no longer expect to see the flower of the peasantry, collected in the ranks, under their natural superiors.

Where men are occupied with industrious pursuits, those of steady habits will be successful in their business, and become attached to it; none will be easily tempted to quit their home, but those who from idleness and dissipation have not succeeded in their ordinary occupations. Men of this description, inlisting singly and unconnected, in any regiment they may happen to meet, under officers who are unknown to them, can be

depended on no further than their obedience is enforced by the rigour of military discipline. A regiment thus com-posed, whether from the Highlands or any other part of the kingdom, will be in no respect different from the ordinary regiments in the service.⁴⁹

This change in the composition and character of the Highland regiments, is not a mere speculative probability, but has been actually going on in a progressive manner, ever since the advance of rents began to be considerable. We must go back to the Seven-Years War to find these regiments in their original purity, formed entirely on the feudal principle, and raised in the manner that has been described. Even as early as the American war, some tendency towards a different system was to be observed;⁵⁰ and during the late war, it went so far, that many regiments were Highland scarcely more than in name. Some corps were indeed composed nearly in the antient manner; but there were others in which few of the men had any connexion whatever with the estates of their officers, being recruited, in the ordinary manner, in Glasgow and other manufacturing places, and consisting of any description of people, Lowlanders and Irish, as well as Highlanders.⁵¹

Those gentlemen, whose estates had long been occupied in large grazings, could not, in fact, raise men in any other manner. The influence of a popular character in his immediate neighbourhood, will every where have some little effect in bringing forward recruits; and the care with which the commissions in some regiments were distributed among gentlemen resident in the same district, gave these corps a certain degree of local connexion, which is not found in the service in general. Still, however, there was a great difference between these, and the regiments which were raised in the remoter parts of the Highlands, where the change in the state of the country was only partially accomplished, and where recruiting proceeded on the old system.

It is to be observed, that the great demand for men during the late war, and the uncommon advantages that accrued to those gentlemen, who had still the means of influencing their tenantry, suspended for a time the extension of sheep-farming, and the progress of the advance of rents. Many estates which were ripe for the changes that have since been made, and which, if peace had not been interrupted, would have been let to graziers seven or eight years earlier, remained, for a time, in the hands of the small tenants, who were not dismissed till the conclusion of the war rendered their personal services of little further use. This circumstance goes a great way in accounting, both for the suspension of emigration during the late war, and for that sudden burst, which appeared immediately after peace was concluded.

The same may again take place in a certain degree, but cannot again have much effect. The tract in which the old system remains, is reduced within narrow limits; and even there, the tenantry will not be so easily influenced as formerly. They have learnt, by the experience of their neighbours, that a compliance with the desire of their land-lords may protract the period of their dismissal, but cannot procure them that permanent possession they formerly expected to preserve.⁵² A few years more must, in all probability, complete the change in the agricultural system of the Highlands, and bury in oblivion every circumstance that distinguishes the Highlands, as a nursery of soldiers, from the rest of the kingdom.

The change in the composition of the Highland regiments, what-ever may be its consequences hereafter, has not yet entirely altered their peculiar spirit and character. Military men well know the effect which the established character of any regiment has in moulding the mind of the recruit; and how long a peculiarity may thereby be pre-served, though perhaps originating from mere accident. The reputation acquired by the old Highland regiments, has probably had no small effect on their successors, and perhaps also on the opinion of the public.

In a period of great and imminent national danger,⁵³ the reflection may naturally occur, as it has, in fact, occurred to men whose opinions deserve the highest respect, that an exclusive attention to commercial improvement may lead to very pernicious consequences, and that the feudal system, with all its unavoidable evils, had effects on the national character, the loss of which may be justly regretted. Whether it be within the reach of political wisdom to reconcile these opposite systems, or by any means to retain the appropriate advantages of each, is a most interesting question, but not connected with the immediate subject of these discussions; since every argument which, in this view, can be applied to the Highlands, must be equally applicable to the rest of the kingdom. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if the circumstances we actually observe, are distinctly traced to their real causes; and if it be made apparent, that the decay of a military spirit in the Highlands necessarily follows from the abolition of feudal anarchy; from that system of policy which was adopted in the year 1746, and which has from that time been the theme of unqualified approbation. If the military character of the Highlanders is to be preserved, it must be founded on principles different from those that have hitherto operated; and while the change in the state of the country goes on without interruption, no remedy can be expected from compulsory measures against emigration.

If we are to look no farther than to the mere number of recruits of the ordinary description to be procured from the Highlands,⁵⁴ it must be apparent to every one who is acquainted with the circumstances of the emigrants in general, that these are not the men who can be expected to enlist. Men with money in their pockets, and with families to take care of, are not those whom a recruiting serjeant would assail. From their personal and domestic situation, they must entertain objections against a military life, which cannot be overcome by any motive less powerful, than those which influenced the feudal tenantry. There is no reason therefore to expect that any direct obstruction to emigration, however severe, can add a single recruit to the army.

VI. The Emigrations of the Highlanders Intimately Connected With the Progress of National Prosperity / Not Detrimental to Manufactures or Agriculture

Emigration has also been thought prejudicial to the public interest, as depriving the country of the hands requisite for carrying on its agriculture and manufactures. How far this idea might be just, if the people who went away were industrious workmen, is not the question; but in the case of the Highlanders, the effect of emigration is absolutely beneficial to the commercial prosperity of the kingdom.

To give a just view of this subject, the great and important change that has been described in the general management of the Highlands, must be considered as one connected event. Emigration is a part of the general change: it is one result, and cannot in fair reasoning be abstracted from the other concomitant effects. If the national wealth be essentially promoted by the causes from which emigration necessarily ensues, this their effect cannot be reprobated as detrimental.

The same change in the state of the country, which we now see going on in the Highlands, took place in England under the Tudors. In the reign of Henry VII. the authority of the crown was firmly established; the power of the great barons was broken; their retainers, being found to be useless, were dismissed. In the same progressive manner the rents were then

raised, by turning the lands into more profitable modes of management, and letting them in larger farms; the same odium was excited by dispossessing the small occupiers, and by the prevalence of pasturage; the very same complaints were made of the sheep having driven out the men.⁵⁵ No one, however, now entertains a doubt, that from the aera of this change the prosperity of England, as a commercial country, is to be dated: and can it be supposed that an arrangement, of which the beneficial consequences in England have been so remarkable, will have an opposite effect when extended to the Highlands of Scotland?

After all the declamation that has been excited by the depopulation of the Highlands, the fact in reality amounts to this; that the produce of the country, instead of being consumed by a set of intrepid but indolent military retainers, is applied to the support of peaceable and industrious manufacturers. Notwithstanding the marks of desolation which occasionally meet the eye of the traveller, impressing him with melancholy reflections on the change which is going on, it cannot be doubted, that the result is ultimately favourable to population, when we take into account that of the whole kingdom, balancing the diminution in one district by the increase in another.

In former times, when a great population was maintained in the midst of these mountains, their produce was almost entirely consumed on the spot. All the cattle that at any time found their way to a distant market were of inconsiderable value, in comparison with the produce sent away under the new system of grazing. This produce is an addition to the supply of the manufacturing districts; and, in proportion as it augments their means of subsistence, must tend to the increase of population. Supposing, therefore, that the produce of every farm under the new mode of management, were of the same total amount as under the old, the effect of the change would only be, to transfer the seat of population from the remote valleys of the Highlands, to the towns and villages of the South, without any absolute difference of numbers.⁵⁶

It is agreed, however, by the best authorities, that the produce is not merely changed in its kind, but augmented, by the improved management which has been introduced. No doubt can be entertained as to the augmentation of pasturage produce; but it may be questioned, whether this is not balanced by the diminution of tillage. The land, however, which is still kept in tillage, will certainly be much better managed; and, from a smaller number of acres,⁵⁷ the same, or nearly as great a produce, may perhaps be obtained.⁵⁸ - It is observed by Dr Adam Smith, that “the diminution of cottagers, and other small occupiers of land, has, in every

part of Europe, been the immediate forerunner of improvement and better cultivation.”⁵⁹ When the land is occupied by men in the lowest state of poverty, their penury and want of resources must affect their husbandry. It is only when farms are on such a scale, as to be objects of attention to men of education and capital, that agriculture can be carried on with that spirit and intelligence, which are necessary for obtaining the most abundant produce of which the land is capable.

Besides this, the change in the management of the Highlands will probably be followed by an increase of tillage in the Southern parts of the kingdom. It is well known, that in England a great deal of arable land is kept in grass, for rearing young cattle and sheep: but there will be the less necessity for this, when the mountains furnish a greater supply. Many of the arable pastures will then be broken up, and, in all probability, their produce will far exceed that of the fields hitherto cultivated in the Highlands, as the soil and climate are both so much better adapted for the production of grain. In this, as in many similar instances, motives of private interest lead to the same general arrangements, which the most enlarged views of public advantage would dictate.⁶⁰

But leaving out of the question these more remote consequences, the emigrations of the Highlanders have an immediate and direct effect in extending the productive industry of their own country.⁶¹ The extreme indolence of these people, where they are allowed to remain in their original seats under the old system, has often been remarked. That indolence, however, is not to be ascribed to inherent dispositions, but to the circumstances in which they are placed; to the want of sufficient incitements to industry, and to the habits which have naturally grown out of their situation.⁶² This is demonstrated by their laborious exertions when they come into the Low Country, and feel at the same time the spur of necessity and the encouragement of good wages. A stranger, who had seen them in their native spots, would scarcely believe them to be the same men. Though, in many branches of business, they cannot be equal to people of more practised industry, yet their labour, however unskilled, will admit of no comparison, in point of value and productive effect, with their former work, while lounging over their paternal farms.

Thus the same general circumstances, which lead a part of the Highlanders to emigrate, occasion a very great increase of productive industry among those who remain. There can be no shadow of doubt, that this increase is much more than equivalent to the trifling amount of work that was usually performed by the emigrants before any change took

place. Where the old system of management is broken up, the utmost that can be supposed with any probability is, that from an estate inhabited by 100 families, 25 or perhaps 30 may have the means of emigrating; and does any one acquainted with the Highlanders entertain a doubt, that 70 or 75 well employed labourers will perform work of more value than 100 small tenants and cotters? It would perhaps be nearer the truth to say, that they will do three or four times as much.

If, by restrictive laws, those who would otherwise have emigrated should likewise be brought under the necessity of seeking employment within the kingdom, it does not by any means follow, that the increase of productive industry would be in proportion to the additional numbers. The laborious life for which any of these people have to exchange their former habits, is a hard and unwelcome change, forced on them only by the pressure of severe necessity. Those who have capital enough to go to America, are not under such immediate necessity as those who have no property, and will be so much the more reluctant to conform themselves to their new situation. It is they who will feel with peculiar force the idea of degradation from the change; and, in proportion as their situation was formerly above their neighbours, they will rank below them as useful labourers. Deprived of the encouraging prospect of maintaining or improving their station in life, they will continue in a state of inaction or feeble exertion, as long as the remnant of their property will allow them. This little capital, which would have enabled them in the colonies to begin as settlers, will be wasted in indolence at home; and no effectual exertion of industry can be looked for from them, till they too are reduced to beggary.

But is it possible to suppose that a policy, which must occasion so much individual hardship, would be adopted for so trifling a public object, as any advantage that could be expected from the reluctant industry of those who might be restrained from emigration?

The peasantry, whom the necessity of their circumstances has brought from the Highlands to the manufacturing towns, have been found but ill suited for any of the nicer operations of mechanical industry, and have been chiefly employed as labourers in works of mere drudgery.⁶³ Though the Legislature has at times thought fit to interfere, for the purpose of preventing our manufacturers from being deprived of their choice hands, of workmen whose peculiar skill and dexterity were considered as of essential consequence; yet there is perhaps no precedent of regulations for obviating a deficiency of porters, and barrowmen, and ditchers.

If such a precedent should be found, is it for the advantage of Glasgow and Paisley, that the peasantry of the Highlands are to be debarred from the exercise of their natural rights?⁶⁴ It was, however, from a very different quarter that the adoption of restrictive measures has been urged.⁶⁵ The⁶⁶ principles of political oeconomy are too well understood among the leading merchants and manufacturers of that city, to allow them to suppose that, without giving adequate wages, they can procure the hands required for their work; nor will they entertain a doubt that good wages will attract all those they need. Any trifling advantage, that might arise from forcing a superabundant, and, of course, temporary supply of hands, is an interest much too inconsiderable to excite, in that liberal and enlightened body of men, any of the intolerant zeal which some individuals of a different description displayed upon this question.

If any partial interest, however, is promoted by measures of this kind, assuredly it is not that of the Highlands.⁶⁷ The utmost effect that can result from the regulations that have been adopted, or from any others of the same tendency, can only be to force a greater proportion of the people who must leave the Highlands, to settle in the seats of manufacturing industry, instead of going to America; to force the small tenants to follow the same course as the cotters. If the restrictions were even carried as far as a total prohibition of any person leaving the kingdom, it would not prevent the depopulation of the Highlands, unless the people were also restrained from moving to a different district.⁶⁸

We hear, indeed, from some gentlemen, that the spirit of emigration threatens such a complete depopulation, as will not leave hands even for the necessary business of cultivation.⁶⁹ This, however, rests upon mere conjecture, and is not supported by any one example. There is scarcely any part of the Highlands, where the new system of management has come to such full maturity, as to have reduced the population to that which is absolutely requisite for the business of the country.

In some districts, the more secluded valleys, lying in the midst of high mountains, retain scarcely any inhabitants; but numbers are everywhere found along the larger vales, and near the arms of the sea, by which the country is so much intersected. In these situations, where fishing affords some additional resource, and where opportunities of occasional employment occur, many proprietors have laid out small separate possessions or crofts, and have never found any deficiency of occupiers for them. The cotters seem always to prefer a situation of

this kind to any prospect they may have in the manufacturing districts; and hence there are, in almost every part of the Highlands, more of the inferior class of people than enough to carry on all the work that is to be done; a greater population than is proved by experience to be sufficient, among similar mountains in the South of Scotland.⁷⁰

That the population in the Highlands still bears a greater proportion to the demand for labour than in other parts of the kingdom, there is a satisfactory proof in the customary rate of wages. In some of the Southern districts of the Highlands, where the system of sheep-farming has been longest established, where the small tenants are entirely gone, and the alarm of depopulation was felt upwards of forty years ago, wages are higher than in the rest of the Highlands, but still below the rate of the Low Country of Scotland: and still there is, from among the remaining inhabitants even of these parts, a silent but continual migration towards the great centres of manufacturing industry. This drain is, perhaps, no more than sufficient to relieve the country of the natural increase of inhabitants. Be that, however, as, it may, it is evident that, if any circumstance should lead to a further diminution of numbers, such as to occasion a want of hands, the consequence would be a rise of wages, which would take away from the temptation to seek employment elsewhere, and, by rendering the situation of the labouring poor as favourable as in other parts of the country, would retain at home their natural increase, till every deficiency should be filled up.

Thus it must appear, that emigration produces no real inconvenience, even to the district most immediately affected.⁷¹ But these arguments are, perhaps, superfluous; for, if the subject deserves the interference of the Legislature, it is no more than justice, that among the interests that are to be consulted, that of the Highland proprietors ought to be the last of all. They have no right to complain of a change which is their own work, the necessary result of the mode in which they choose to employ their property. Claiming a right to use their lands as they see fit and most for their own advantage, can they deny their tenantry an equal right to carry their capital and their labour to the best market they can find? If the result of this should prove of such extreme detriment to the public welfare, as to call for a restrictive remedy, - if necessity demand a limitation on these natural rights of the peasantry, - would not the same principles justify, and would not equity dictate, a corresponding restriction on the proprietors in the disposal of their lands?⁷²

If the gentlemen of the Highlands are determined at all events to preserve the population of their estates, it is unquestionably in their

power - by replacing their farms on the old footing, and relinquishing their advance of rent. If they do not choose to make this pecuniary sacrifice, they must abide by the consequences; and it is with a bad grace they come to the Legislature for the means of obviating them.

If any one of these proprietors, while he lets his farms for the most advantageous rent he can procure, could also concentrate upon his estate a numerous population, enriched by productive industry, it would, no doubt, be much for his advantage. If he has a view to such improvements, it is incumbent on him to find the means of carrying them into effect, as it is to his advantage they will ultimately redound. It is his own business to provide the means of subsistence and employment for the people he wishes to retain; to render the situation advantageous and acceptable to them. If he cannot succeed in this, he has no more title to expect public assistance for keeping his dependants on his estate, than any other proprietor would have, for establishing a village, and compelling people to inhabit it, on the summit of the Cheviot mountains, or of the Peak of Derby.⁷³

VII. Means That Have Been Proposed for Preserving the Population of the Highlands / Improvement of Waste Lands / Fisheries / Manufactures / Cannot Obviate the Necessity of Emigration

Though the partial interests of the Highland proprietors do not seem entitled to all the regard that has been claimed for them from the Legislature; though it is contrary to every principle of justice, that unusual and unnecessary restraints should, for their benefit, be imposed on the personal liberty of their dependants; yet every friend to his country would rejoice, if they could find means of obviating the local depopulation of their district, by the introduction of suitable branches of productive industry.

Among these, the most promising is the cultivation of waste land. Some attempts have been made in the Highlands to turn the superfluous population to this employment. The success with which they have been attended is sufficient to encourage further experiments; and to

leave no doubt that, by this means, a number of people may everywhere be retained, more than adequate to any supply of labourers that can be required for the accommodation of the country. The maintenance to be derived from this resource is indeed a very wretched one: poor as it is, however, there are few of the class of cotters who would not readily accept any situation, where they could by this employment find a support for their families.

The plan upon which the gentry of the Highlands have proceeded in encouraging this branch of industry, does not seem calculated to draw from it all the advantage, which circumstances might admit. They have in general laid out patches of a few acres of waste land, which they have granted on very short leases, seldom exceeding seven years; leaving the occupiers to their own management, without further guidance, and with little or no pecuniary aid.⁷⁴ It is surprising, that under such leases, any improvements at all should be made; and it is only, perhaps, from the low value of labour, that the poor in the Highlands are disposed to consider a bare subsistence in the mean time, as a sufficient compensation for work, of which the benefit is in so short a period to revert to the landlord. Such, however, are the circumstances of the country, that these tenures are sufficient to encourage the occupiers to considerable exertions of their own personal labour; but there are few instances where that alone is sufficient for improving waste lands. Calcareous manure⁷⁵ is a requisite almost indispensable; and where it must be purchased from a distance, the poor occupier cannot be expected, on such a tenure, to undertake any share of the expense. If, therefore, the proprietor does not find it convenient to incur the expense himself, it is absolutely necessary that the terms of the lease should be much more encouraging.

It is not easy to judge, whether these poor people could by any means be induced, to sink in such improvements the little capital they may possess: but there is no probability that they would do so, without a lease of such duration, as to be nearly equivalent to absolute property. The calculations which a rich and intelligent farmer would make, as to the proportion between his outlay and its return, would by no means be suitable to a case of this kind. The poor Highland cotter finds so much difficulty in accumulating a small sum of money, that it is no wonder he should be disposed to hoard it with tenacity, and be reluctant to lay it out for a profit, which a person, accustomed to a liberal scale of business, might think more than adequate. In proportion as he finds his labour of little value, he must value his money the more, and will not part with it without a very evident advantage indeed. On the other hand, a very long lease would certainly have bad effects. The exertions of these poor cotters

are seldom carried further, than they are impelled by the necessity of providing a maintenance for their families. Whenever this becomes tolerably easy, their new and half-formed habits of industry relax; and at any rate they proceed in a trifling and unsystematic manner.

The improvements would be carried on with much more effect, if the proprietor would not only advance the pecuniary expenses which are indispensable, but make the occupier an allowance for every improvement, to such an amount, as will form (along with the first crop or two on the improved land) a fair compensation for his labour. In this way, there would be no necessity of giving him a permanent tenure, and the proprietor might carry forward the improvements with spirit and regularity, keep up the industry of the people, and render it far more effective. The temporary burthen, thus incurred, would soon be compensated by the increased value of the land, and those who have the means could not perhaps apply their capital in a more advantageous manner. How far pecuniary difficulties may prevent the proprietors in general through the Highlands from making these advances, and how far the situation of entailed estates may be an obstacle, are questions very interesting in an examination of the improvements of which the Highlands are capable, but not immediately connected with the subject of these observations; for there is no probability that this resource can have any effect in diminishing the emigrations. It is only to the poorest of the people that it can be rendered acceptable; by the tenants, even those of the lowest order, it would be considered as too great a degradation.⁷⁶

The same may, perhaps, be said of the fisheries, which seem, next to the cultivation of waste lands, the most important resource that is open to the Highlanders in their own country.⁷⁷ The extent to which they may be carried, will probably fall far short of any expectations formed upon the romantic ideas, which some authors have given of the abundance of fish. Without attending to these exaggerations, it is unquestionable that several stations are very productive, and a great extent of coast sufficiently so to afford an adequate reward for the labour of the industrious fisherman, and to employ a considerable number of people. It is also certain, that no other new employment could be devised more congenial to the habits and inclinations of the people; and without any very extraordinary encouragement, this branch of business may be carried as far, as natural circumstances and the extent of the market will permit.

The obstacles arising from the salt-laws, &c. are illustrated in so many publications,⁷⁸ that it is unnecessary here to dwell upon them;

but it may not be superfluous to observe, that the general change, in the management of Highland estates, is likely to remove the greatest of all the impediments, which now retard the progress of the fisheries on the Western coast and Isles: I mean the connection between fishing and the cultivation of land. The opinion of practical men, as to the absolute incompatibility of these employments, is uniform;⁷⁹ and experience has also proved, that a very trifling possession of land, by distracting the attention of a fisherman, will lead him to neglect opportunities of more important profits in his own business. The minute division of farms, which was the result of the feudal state, precluded entirely the separation of these employments. The natural remedy to this lies in the rise of the value of land, and its accumulation in the hands of active and intelligent farmers. When land becomes dear, some of those who cannot procure it, will be under the necessity of betaking themselves to fishing, as their only employment. The success, which may justly be expected to attend those, who first apply to it with steady and unremitting industry, is the only bounty which will be necessary to induce others to follow their example.⁸⁰

It is to be regretted, that the establishments of the British Society for the encouragement of Fisheries have not, in this respect, been conducted on just principles, and, in so far as they have had any effect, have tended to counteract, instead of aiding, the natural progress of the country. In the villages, where these gentlemen proposed to fix the head-quarters of the Highland fisheries, they have annexed to the building lots, portions of arable and meadow land at *low rents*, with a right of common for the pasture of a cow or horse. These patches of land, though they afford but a miserable subsistence, are yet a sufficient resource for men, whose rooted habits require the stimulus of absolute necessity, to bring them to a life of regular and persevering industry. Accordingly, the villages of Tobermory and Steen, on which very large sums of money have been expended, are scarcely possessed of a fishing-boat; their inhabitants are sunk in inactivity, and consist in general of the refuse of the population of the country.⁸¹

The custom so universally established in the Highlands and Western Isles, that every person whatever should have some portion of land, large or small, has tended to render fishing an entirely subordinate employment, followed in an irregular manner, only as it suits the intervals of leisure from business on shore. It is a natural consequence, that the fishing boats and apparatus are in general extremely bad; nor is it surprising, that from these combined circumstances, an idea should prevail among the peasantry, that it is impossible by fishing alone to earn a livelihood. Instances are quoted, where

proprietors, on dispossessing tenants of their lands, have been anxious to find employment for them in fishing; and have, with this view, made liberal offers of supplying boats, nets, and every requisite material, which have been rejected under that idea. It is only, perhaps, in a gradual manner that fishing can be established as a separate employment, by encouraging individuals to pay a greater share of attention to it, previous to their being totally deprived of land: and though this might not succeed with those who have property, there is no doubt that, among those who are too poor to have much land, many might be found who would pursue the business with activity, if they were assisted with credit for the purchase of the necessary materials, and if arrangements were made for securing them as advantageous a market as possible.

It is with pleasure I learn, that the practicability of this suggestion has been ascertained by experimental proof in a village on Loch Fyne, established by Mr Maclachlan Maclachlan.⁸² That gentleman, finding himself, some years ago, under a necessity of thinning the population on several of his farms, selected ten or twelve families of the poorest cotters, men, however, whom he knew to be capable of laborious exertion. These he fixed in a situation on the shore, where he furnished them with two substantial fishing-boats of the best construction, with all their apparatus, on condition that their cost should be repaid to him from the produce of their industry. Anxiety to discharge their debt, stimulated these men to exertion, and a season or two of successful fishing left them free proprietors of the boats they had been furnished with. The proprietor was sensible that, from the habits of these people, they would think it impossible to live without some land; and that in fact, from the want of markets for purchasing provisions, such an accommodation was to a certain degree indispensable in the present state of the country. He therefore laid out a part of a farm for them, and, to avoid disheartening them, allowed them to possess it for a year or two at an inadequate rent. By degrees, however, he raised it to its full value, so that the possessors cannot trust to the land for their support, having no means to pay their rent unless they are industrious in fishing. Other inhabitants have likewise been brought to the village, and the original portions of land subdivided, so as to become to every individual a mere accommodation, and an object entirely subordinate. When the further progress of the country towards a commercial state leads to the establishment of markets for provisions, these people, being already brought to such a degree of advancement, may be entirely deprived of land, without any fear of their being disconcerted by the change. The success of the first fishermen has been

such, that they have fitted out a number of additional boats, of the best construction, at their own charge, and several of them have accumulated considerable sums of money.

This experiment was made, in one respect, under favourable circumstances; as the situation, from the vicinity of the richer parts of Scotland; has the advantage of a constant and ready market for fish. In the remoter parts of the Highland coast, and Hebrides, the people can scarcely get any price for fish in small quantities; and in the establishment of a village there, it would be of essential consequence to obviate this difficulty by proper arrangements. But if, with a due attention to this point, experiments were made on the same principles, in each of the capital fishing stations in the distant Hebrides, a race of people exclusively fishermen would by degrees be formed, and would spread to every part of the coast that is adapted to the purpose.

The success of a few poor people, supported in the manner that has been alluded to, would overcome the prevailing prejudices, and encourage their neighbours to embark in the business on their own capital. It is not likely, indeed, that any of the middling or more opulent tenants could be brought to this; nor is there any reason to be anxious on that account; as there are certainly among the cotters a great many more people, than there is any prospect of employing in the fisheries of the Western coast and Isles, though carried on in the best manner, and to the utmost extent which the established demand of the market will admit.

Manufactures are another resource, frequently pointed out as capable of affording maintenance for all the people in the Highlands, who must be deprived of their lands.⁸³ This idea does not appear to be well founded. Manufactures may perhaps be carried on to a small extent in the Highlands in a domestic way, by the families of men engaged in other pursuits; but a large establishment could not succeed under so many natural disadvantages of situation. In fact, though much has been said on the subject by speculative writers, and every disposition has appeared on the part of the landholders to encourage the attempt, no practical manufacturer has ever shown the least inclination to make it.⁸⁴

The mechanical improvements, that have been introduced of late years, into so many branches of manufacture, leave but very few, which, like the linen manufacture of Ireland, can be carried on to advantage by a scattered population.⁸⁵ A manufactory, in which machinery is much employed, is seldom so profitable on a small, as on a large scale; and, on the smallest, requires an accumulation of people, that is rarely to be met with in the Highlands. There are, indeed, two or three villages, where the

population would supply hands enough for a small establishment; but other difficulties arise from the remoteness of the situation, and the infant state of the country as to every improvement in the arts. There are innumerable occasions on which a manufacturer must have recourse to the assistance of various mechanical artists. It is only in the great centres of commercial industry, that these are always at hand, and the want of this accommodation is a great inconvenience in an insulated situation. An inconsiderable breakage of machinery, which in a great town might, perhaps, be repaired in a few hours, will there be sufficient to interrupt the whole business for a long period.⁸⁶ To this inconvenience is to be added the want of regular and speedy conveyance for goods, and the tediousness of the posts.

All these difficulties might be obviated, were there any great advantage on the other hand, or any great profit to be the reward of success. But there is no prospect of the kind. The temporary superabundance of population and consequent low rate of wages, is the only favourable circumstance that can be named, and this is more than counterbalanced by the total want of skill, and of habits of regular industry, in the people. These could not be introduced without much assiduity and patience, and perhaps some loss to the manufacturer, who should undertake an establishment; and after all should he succeed in effecting this reform, it cannot be disguised that, as soon as he had rendered the situation desirable, other adventurers would follow him to it, and raise the price of labour by their competition.

All the permanent advantage arising from the establishment, would rest with the proprietors of the adjacent lands, and if the difficulties attending the attempt are to be overcome, the burthen also must rest with them. The exertions which may be made with a view to this improvement must be considered as laudable; but it is an object of no national importance, and of a totally different nature from the other resources which have been alluded to, as fit employment for the superabundant population. By the improvement of waste land, or the extension of the fisheries, a nett and absolute addition is made to the production of national wealth, a new supply is procured of human subsistence, which would otherwise be lost. But the success of a manufacturing establishment in the Highlands would have no further effect, than to fix the seat of a certain portion of industry in one part of the kingdom, instead of another. Manufacturing enterprises are limited by the extent of the market, still more than by the supply of hands. A manufactory, therefore, established in the Highlands, with much pains and expense, could only occupy the place of one, which would of

itself have grown up in those parts of the kingdom, where the undertaking is not subject to the same disadvantages, and where the Highlanders, who are so disposed, already find the employment they are in want of.

The establishment of manufactures in the Highlands, might thus affect the migrations of those, who now seek employment in the old established seats of industry: but to the small tenants, the same objections, which occur against a manufactory in the South, would apply equally to a similar employment in a situation a little nearer home. There is no probability therefore, that such establishments could have any effect on those who are inclined to emigrate to America.

VIII. Emigration Has No Permanent Effect on Population/ Legal Restrictions Useless and Dangerous/ Discontents in the Highlands / Emigration Conducive to the Public Peace

The concise view that has been taken of the different resources which have been proposed for preserving the local population of the Highlands, may be sufficient to show, that not one of them is applicable to the circumstances of those who are most inclined to emigration. It must also be observed that these resources are still to be found only in the regions of theory; and to their practical application there are impediments, which cannot be removed without much patience and exertion. The country is by no means arrived, and will require a considerable time before it can arrive, at such a state, that every man, who is industriously disposed, may have opportunities of employment adapted to his situation.⁸⁷

Independently of any question as to constitutional propriety, nothing seems more obvious, than the necessity of bringing resources of this kind to full maturity within the country, before any legal interference is hazarded for preventing the people from seeking them elsewhere. To act upon contrary principles would be productive of the utmost misery, and of a real, instead of an apparent depopulation. Let us suppose an extreme case; that, while the change of the agricultural system is allowed to go on, and no adequate means of support are provided for the superabundant population, invincible obstacles should be contrived to restrain the people

from removing to a different situation. The infallible consequence must be, that the lower classes would be reduced to the utmost distress: the difficulty of procuring either land or employment would amount almost to an impossibility; and if the people should escape absolute famine, few would be inclined in such circumstances to undertake the burthen of rearing a family, or would venture on marriage. The misery of the people would thus in time produce the effect which emigration is now working, and reduce their numbers to a due proportion with the employment that can be given them. On the other hand, if a number of people, who are under no absolute necessity, should emigrate, those who remain behind will find it so much easier to procure employment and subsistence, that marriages will more readily take place, and the natural increase of population will proceed with more rapidity, till every blank is filled up.

On this subject it will be sufficient to refer to the valuable work of Mr Malthus on the Principle of Population, in which these arguments are traced to such uncontrovertible general principles; and with such force of illustration, as to put scepticism at defiance.⁸⁸ I may be allowed, however, to state one or two facts, which, while they add to the mass of concurring proofs which Mr Malthus has quoted, may serve to show how immediately his principles are applicable to the particular case of the Highlands.

By the returns made to Dr Webster, in the year 1755, the seven parishes of the Isle of Sky contained 11,252 inhabitants.⁸⁹ By those to Sir John Sinclair, between 1791 and 1794, 14,470.⁹⁰ Some time after Dr Webster's enumeration, the emigrations commenced, and, since the year 1770, have been frequent and extensive. A gentleman of ability and observation, whose employment in the island gave him the best opportunities of information, estimates the total number who emigrated, between 1772 and 1791, at 4000.⁹¹ The number who, during the same period, went to the Low Country of Scotland, going in a more gradual manner, and exciting less notice, could not be so well ascertained; but from concurring circumstances he considers 8000 as the least at which they can possibly be reckoned.

Notwithstanding this drain, it appears that the natural tendency of population to increase has more than filled up the blank; and if, to the numbers which have left the island, we add the increase which has probably taken place among them also, in their new situation, we cannot doubt that there are now living a number of people descended from those who inhabited the island at the period of Dr Webster's enumeration, at least, double of its actual population. Now, let it be supposed, for the sake

of argument, that the whole of these could again be collected within the island: will the wildest declaimer against emigration pretend to say, that it could afford support or employment to them all? when its actual numbers are an oppressive burthen, what would be the case if such an addition were made? Can it possibly be believed, that, if the emigrations had not taken place, the same natural increase would have gone on? and does not this instance demonstrate, that to restrain emigration would only be to restrain the principle of increasing population?

Another instance of a similar fact is quoted by Mr Irvine.⁹² It was communicated, he says, by a gentleman of unquestionable veracity, who relates, from his personal knowledge, that 'in 1790, a place on the west coast contained 1900 inhabitants, of whom 500 emigrated the same year to America. In 1801, a census was taken, and the same spot contained 1967, though it had furnished 87 men for the army and navy, and not a single stranger settled in it.'

There is, perhaps, no part of the Highlands, where the people have so strong a spirit of emigration, and where the gentry are so much in dread of its effects, as in that part of the Hebrides called the Long Island, particularly in North and South Uist, and Barra. From these islands there have been very considerable emigrations at different times; some of which, though by no means all, are enumerated in the statistical accounts. How many people may have left these islands, I cannot pretend to say with precision; but from various circumstances the number appears to have been as great in proportion to the whole population as in most other parts of the Highlands. Nevertheless, these parishes, which, in 1755, contained 5268 people, were found to have 8303 at the date of Sir John Sinclair's statistical survey. The particulars that may be collected from that publication, as to the crowded state of population, and the poverty of the people in consequence of it, make it apparent that the inhabitants have multiplied to an inconvenient and excessive degree.

These facts might be corroborated by many other examples;⁹³ but these are perhaps sufficient to leave no doubt of the principle, that emigration does not imply the necessity of a permanent diminution of population, and is not even inconsistent with an increase, wherever there are adequate resources for its employment and support.

This principle, important in itself, leads to a conclusion of still more importance - the emigrations from the Highlands, without ultimately affecting the *numbers* of the people, operate a very desirable change in their *character* and composition.

A few of the small tenants, who combine industry and good management with some amount of capital, gradually extend their possessions, and grow up into farmers on a more respectable scale: the rest of this class, and the greater proportion, emigrate to America: the cotters, or as many of them as can remain in the country, fall into the station of labourers on these extended farms, and other subordinate employments, multiplying till every blank is filled up. The peasantry in this way takes the form most fit for a commercial state of society; and in order to complete the abolition of feudal manners, such a change in the people of the Highlands is absolutely necessary. Their established character, founded upon the habits which the former state of the country required, does not accord with the condition of the lower classes in an industrious community.

The obstacles to the requisite change are chiefly found among the more opulent of the commonalty: among them is it most difficult to excite a spirit of industry, or to direct it to any new pursuit, and, nearly in proportion to the amount of their property, are their dispositions intractable. The tenants are, no doubt, those who come nearest to the description of men whom an ancient chieftain would value. The cotters may not retain so much of the generous spirit of their warlike ancestors; but they will be more easily moulded into the character adapted to the present circumstances of the country, - into industrious and contented labourers.

While the small tenants emigrate, the cotters, if any productive employment is introduced as a resource for them, will feel their circumstances ameliorated in proportion to the growth of their industrious habits. Having little in their previous situation to excite feelings of regret, and animated by the prospect of bettering their condition, they will proceed with vigour and cheerfulness in the career that is opened to them.

If by any coercive means the small tenants should be obliged to remain, it must be with a very different spirit that they would follow the same pursuits. They would not forget that they were once in a higher station, nor would they allow their children to be ignorant that they were once on a level with the men who might assume a superiority over them. Instead of the animating prospect of rising in the world, they would have the idea of degradation constantly rankling in their minds, to damp their exertions and to sour their temper.

It is not to be overlooked, that among the peasantry of the Highlands, and particularly among the tenants, a spirit of discontent and irritation is widely diffused; nor will this appear extraordinary to any one, who pays a

minute attention to the circumstances attending the breaking up of the feudal system. The progress of the rise of rents, and the frequent removal of the antient possessors of the land, have nearly annihilated in the people all that enthusiastic attachment to their chiefs, which was formerly prevalent, and have substituted feelings of disgust and irritation proportionally violent. It is not the mere burthen of an additional rent that seems hard to them: the cordiality and condescension which they formerly experienced from their superiors are now no more: they have not yet learnt to brook their neglect: they have not yet accustomed to the habits of a commercial society, to the coldness which must be expected by those, whose intercourse with their superiors is confined to the daily exchange of labour for its stipulated reward. They remember not only the very opposite behaviour of their former chiefs; they recollect also the services their ancestors performed for them: they recollect that, but for these, no estate could have been preserved: they well know of how little avail was a piece of parchment and a lump of wax, under the old system of the Highlands: they reproach their landlord with ingratitude, and remind him that, but for their fathers, he would now have no property. The permanent possession which they had always retained of their paternal farms, they consider only as their just right, from the share their predecessors had borne in the general defence, and can see no difference between the title of their chief and their own.

Men in whose minds these impressions have taken root, are surely am a desirable population; and if they do not remove, the irritation that prevails among them may be transmitted from generation to generation, and disturb the peace of the country long after the causes from which it has arisen may be considered as worn out.⁹⁴ The example of Ireland may, perhaps, be quoted to prove, to what distant periods the effect of an antiquated ground of discontent may be pro-longed, by a train of consequences continually reviving the original impression.⁹⁵ Amidst all the variety of opinions that are entertained as to the immediate effect of more recent measures, no one who is acquainted with that kingdom will deny, that the mutual animosity of its religious parties is (at least in a great degree) the legitimate off-spring and consequence of the horrible feuds that raged in the 17th century and preceding ages; nor can it be doubted, that if after the forfeitures under Cromwell and King William, all who felt themselves immediately aggrieved by these acts of power, had found the means (as much as they doubtless had the inclination) to seek a distant asylum, the internal state of that country at this day would be much more satisfactory.

To state any comparison with a part of the empire so deeply agitated, may appear an exaggerated view; but incidents have occurred in the Highlands, sufficient to prove that the apprehension I have stated is not altogether visionary. For the truth of this, I may appeal to any gentleman, who was in the shire of Ross or Cromarty in July and August, 1792. I happened to be there myself at that moment, when the irritation alluded to broke out into actual violence.⁹⁶ Sheep-farming was then in the first stage of its introduction into that district, but the people had heard of its consequences in others. Roused by the circumstance of a particular estate being turned into sheep-walks, the tenantry of all the adjoining country took part with those who were ejected, and rose in arms. These poor and ignorant men, without leaders, and without any concerted plan, actuated by indignation merely against their immediate superiors, and as if they did not understand that they were committing an offence against the general government of the kingdom, proceeded to vent their rage by driving away the sheep that had been brought to stock the grazings. They had for many days the entire command of the country; and it was not from want of opportunity, that few acts of pillage or personal violence were committed. In a letter to the officers of government at Edinburgh, a general meeting of gentlemen expressed themselves nearly in these words: 'We are at the feet of the mob, and if they should proceed to burn our houses, we are incapable of any resis-tance.'⁹⁷

It is satisfactory to reflect, that this irritation of the common people has been hitherto against their immediate superiors only, and that the Highlanders have never given reason to impeach that character of loyalty towards their sovereign, which their ancestors maintained.⁹⁸ It is surely of some importance to preserve these sentiments unimpaired; and this object ought not to be overlooked in the consideration of any legislative measure, which may appear to these people the result of undue partiality for the interest of their superiors, or which can with any plausibility be deemed an infringement of the principles of equal justice towards the lower orders.

This, however, is not the only view, in which a direct attempt to restrain emigration may have pernicious consequences. There is scarcely any part of the Highlands that has not in its turn been in a state of irritation, as great as that of Ross-shire in 1792. Can any comment be necessary to show what would have been the dreadful state of things, if this had come to a height at the same moment over all the country? It has been the good fortune of Scotland, that, from the gradual manner in which the new system of management has advanced, this has happened in

different districts, at different times; and by means of the emigrations, the discontented people of one have been removed, before the same causes of discontent had produced their full effect in another. What must we think, then, of the policy which would impede this salutary drain, and would prevent a population infected with deep and permanent seeds of every angry passion, from removing and making way for one of a more desirable character?

IX. Prejudices of the Highland Proprietors Against Emigration / Mistakes From Which They Arise

If the preceding arguments are satisfactory, it must appear very unaccountable, that the gentlemen of the Highlands should express such extreme aversion against emigration. Since the removal of the superfluous population is necessary for the advance of their rents, why (it may be asked) do they quarrel with that which is so beneficial to them? But those who reflect how very common it is for men to mistake their own interest, will not consider this as a paradox. The change that has taken place in the Highlands, is so extensive, its effects are so complicated, and so many circumstances have concurred to disguise their operation, that it ought not to excite surprise if they are not generally understood.

The prejudices which many persons entertain on this subject arise from the most patriotic, though mistaken motives. Ascribing the spirit of emigration to mere capricious restlessness, they deprecate in it the loss of the nursery of soldiers that has hitherto been found in the Highlands, not advertng to the decay of those causes from which that advantage was derived. They see the possibility of employing great numbers in works of productive industry, and overlook the distinctions which render these unsuitable to a great proportion of the actual inhabitants.

To these have, in some instances, been super-added mistaken views of private interest. Some proprietors, accustomed to the advantageous facility of recruiting, would wish to preserve this power, at the same time that they profit by the advance of their rents. A few individuals have perceived the incompatibility of these objects, and, unwilling to relinquish

the antient splendour of a numerous train of dependants, have frankly resolved to make an adequate pecuniary sacrifice: but in a much greater number of instances, this incompatibility has been over-looked, or seen indistinctly; and the consequence has been a train of inconsistent management, vibrating between contradictory motives.

The ideas of the Highland gentry have also, perhaps, been influenced by the very unjust cry that has been prevalent against themselves, and the unfavourable impressions, as to the tendency of their conduct, which the public have been led to entertain. The long continued indulgence of the landlords, the sacrifice of rent to which they submitted for so many years to preserve their people, are little known beyond their immediate neighbourhood. It would be difficult to find a proprietor in other parts of the kingdom, who, to please his tenants, would accept a rent not half the value of his land. This has been done by many in the Highlands, and yet these gentlemen have been generally reputed severe landlords.⁹⁹

The old system of the Highlands, so long established and deeply rooted, could not be broken up without a great degree of popular odium. When any proprietor grew tired of the loss of rent he sustained, and resolved to enjoy the full value of his estate, his conduct was deemed oppressive and unjust; and the clamours of the tenantry were re-echoed from distant parts of the kingdom. When a populous valley was converted into sheep-walks, the author of the change was held up as an enemy of the public, who, for a sordid interest, promoted the desolation of his country; and the remote consequences through which these “partial evils” terminate in “universal good,” were not to be seen by superficial observers.

The gentlemen of the Highlands might have repelled these aspersions, by appealing to the general right of landed proprietors to manage their property to the best advantage: but this argument was too much at variance with the established prejudices of their neighbourhood to be well received. Conscious, therefore, of the unpopularity of their conduct, and sore under this impression, they acted as if diffident of the justice of their own cause, and, instead of meeting the question on fair and manly grounds, recriminated with accusations of capricious discontent on the part of the people, excited only by the artifices of men who had an interest to delude them.

Such motives of pique, and a remnant of the feudal pride, which a numerous clan was calculated to inspire, have perhaps more influence than any view of pecuniary interest, in exciting a violent jealousy against emigration in the minds of the more considerable proprietors of the

Highlands; and this may account for a singular contradiction that has been frequently observed. Many of these gentlemen, who, in their cooler moments have expressed their regret, at the loss they sustained from the excessive population of their estates, have nevertheless been warmed, even to indignation, when any of their own tenantry showed a disposition to emigrate. Their feelings have been roused, and the phantom of antient prejudice has put to flight every sober consideration of interest.

These impressions among the greater proprietors are sometimes, perhaps, strengthened by the clamour of certain persons among their dependants, or their neighbours of an inferior order; some of whom have an aversion against emigration, founded on motives not altogether so honourable, though more active, as arising more immediately from views of pecuniary interest.

Among the few branches of business which furnish more or less employment for labouring people in the Highlands, is the manufacture of kelp, which, to many landed proprietors, is a very considerable source of income.¹⁰⁰ The sea-weed, from which this article is made, is cut on rocks along the shore, which are sometimes annexed to the adjoining farms. In most cases, however, these rocks are reserved by the landlords, who let them from year to year, or more frequently employ labourers to make the kelp at a stipulated allowance per ton. Many gentlemen feel on this account an immediate interest in keeping down the wages of labour, and therefore imagine the crowded state of population to be an advantage. Some go so far as to assert that, if they had fewer hands, the making of kelp must be given up altogether, or, at least, that the increased expense of the work would reduce its nett profit to a trifle. This may be; but the difference of expense is not all clear gain to the landlord: the season of kelp-making is but a few weeks in the year; and in so far as any gentleman retains a greater number of people on his estate than full employment can be found for, he must do it by letting land to them below its value. In all the great kelp stations, the land is, in fact, made an object totally subordinate, and let at rents more disproportioned to its real value than in any other parts of the Highlands.

Were an accurate computation to be made, it is probable that the proprietor would find it more for his advantage, on the whole, to pay the most liberal wages for the manufacture of his kelp, and to let his land at its full value. A great proprietor, of a liberal mind, might perceive the force of such a statement, nor would his judgment be warped by the fear of losing 10 or 15s. per ton on his kelp. But the subject will be viewed in a very different light by those who have no permanent interest in the land, by

some of the tacksmen, and other inferior people engaged in this business. A small difference in the expense incurred may form a great proportion of their profit. They, too, feel all the benefit of the low price of labour, while the sacrifice that is necessary for maintaining that low price, is made at the expense of another. Among them, therefore, we find a zeal approaching to fury, when any thing threatens to interfere with this interest.¹⁰¹

To men of this class, the depression of the price of labour appears an object of importance in other respects. If they have not kelp to make, they feel the same interest in keeping down the wages of their agricultural servants, or of those they employ in any other species of work. From these causes a considerable body of men feel a direct interest in repressing emigration; and it is not to be wondered at that their clamours should impose on the greater proprietors.

These gentlemen are only occasionally resident on their estates; and, conscious that their own personal acquaintance with the internal state of the country is imperfect, are disposed to place too great a reliance on the opinions of others, whose practical information they believe to be complete, and whom they do not suspect to have interests so directly at variance with their own.¹⁰² This evil is much increased, by the practice (unfortunately too common with the proprietors of great Highland estates) of letting farms to their factors or land-stewards, and allowing them to engage in various petty branches of business, by which their interest is identified with that of the very people on whom they ought to be a check, and is set in opposition to that of their employers.¹⁰³

X. Conduct of the Highland Society / Emigrant Regulation Bill

If, from all these circumstances, individual proprietors so far mistake their own interest, it will not be surprising that the same mistakes should pervade and influence a public body. The respectable names which appear on the list of the Highland Society, and the benevolence which marks their proceedings in general, leave no reason to doubt of their conduct respecting emigration having been founded on the purest motives. Nevertheless, they have lent the sanction of their name to

representations of the most partial nature, and have recommended measures inconsistent with every principle of justice.

As this Society claim (and I believe without any competition) the merit of the bill passed in 1803, for regulating the transportation of emigrants,¹⁰⁴ the consideration of that bill cannot be easily be separated from a discussion of the arguments and statements, upon which they recommended the measure. They transmitted for the consideration of Government, and of several members of the Legislature, three Reports, on the emigrations from the Highlands, in which many topics, connected with the improvement of that district, are treated with great judgment, and on the most liberal principles of political economy.¹⁰⁵ Intermixed, however, with these discussions, we find some of a very different description.

The first Report commences with a statement of the causes of emigration,¹⁰⁶ among which are enumerated,

“1. Such an increase of population as the country, in its present situation, and with a total want of openings for the exertion of industry, cannot support.

2. The removal of many of the tenants from their farms, in consequence of a conviction on the part of the proprietors, that they will be better cultivated and managed, and pay better rents, when let in larger divisions; and more particularly, in consequence of the preference now very generally given to a sheep stock, of which the management does not, like that of a black-cattle pasture, admit of minute partition of the farm, nor require nearly so many hands.

3. The active circulation of seductive accounts of the immense advantages to be derived from going to settle in America.”

The two first of these causes are so candidly stated, and furnish so plain and consistent an account of the fact, that it must excite surprise in the reader to find the third insisted upon as the principal and the most extensive in its effects.¹⁰⁷

The Reporter indeed assumes the fact, that the condition of a labourer in America is not so advantageous as in Britain¹⁰⁸; and, taking for granted, that the flattering accounts which have reached the people as to America are all false, has to explain how in the course of so long an intercourse, as has been kept up between different districts of Scotland and different settlements in America, no contradiction of these falsehoods should have appeared. Here he does not think it beneath the dignity of the Society to repeat the threadbare and ridiculous story of Uncle James, and to assert, that all letters, not of a particular tendency, are detained¹⁰⁹; as if every letter had to pass a scrutiny, and as if there was no post office establishment in America.”¹¹⁰ Had some inquiry been made before

such an assertion was hazarded, the Society might have learnt, that throughout all British America at least, the posts are under the same regulations as at home, and that (under the authority of the Postmaster-General of England) letters may be conveyed from almost every part of the colonies, more tediously indeed, but (sea-risk excepted) with as much safety as within Great Britain itself.

It is truly surprising, that gentlemen of respectable abilities and information, should give credit to fables of so little apparent probability. If they expect, by repeating such stories without examination, to deter the common people from emigration, they will be miserably disappointed. There are so many of the people in the Highlands who have information of the situation of their friends in America on indubitable authority, confirmed by concurring testimonies, that it is in vain to think of concealing from them the true state of the fact; and the attempt to impose on their understanding can only tend to confirm the jealous suspicions, which they entertain against their superiors.

In another Report we find details of the emigrations going on, and representations of a spirit, from which the immediate and total devastation of the country is predicted.”’ The discussions contained in the preceding parts of these remarks, render it unnecessary to enter into any particular refutation of this assertion. It must, however, be observed, that this representation (as well as the particulars that are given of the artifices of individuals to delude the people) appears to have been transmitted from the Island of Benbecula, one of the principal stations of the kelp manufacture.¹¹² No reference is given in the Report, to the authority on which the facts are stated; and the tenor of the accompanying remarks may at least give room to doubt the candour and moderation of the narrator, a circumstance of no less importance than his veracity, for ascertaining the credibility of his information.

But, allowing every degree of credit to the circumstances related in this report, they are far from warranting the conclusions drawn from them, and are, in fact, nothing more than instances of that irritation, on the part of the common people, the grounds of which have already been explained.¹¹³ It cannot be thought extraordinary, that those who have determined on emigration, should express their discontents with little reserve, and avail themselves of the prevailing temper of the country, to induce others to join in their schemes.

Independently of any question as to the policy of retaining against their will, a population infected with a spirit of discontent, it seems very plain that their superiors are not following the best methods to allay the ferment. If there exist among the Highlanders any such wanton discontent and restlessness as the Society allege, nothing seems so likely to keep alive and extend this spirit, as the attempt to repress it by individual persecution. Every manly heart will revolt at such means employed to restrain the exercise of an acknowledged natural right; and the indignation which every act of oppression must excite, may actually impel those to emigration who otherwise would never have thought of it.

Should an unreasonable and unnecessary disposition to emigration be any where observed, those who wish to obviate it, may perhaps profit an example, which occurred in the island of Barra in 1802. A number of people were preparing to emigrate. The proprietor, without allowing any hint to escape of his regret at the circumstance, told his tenants, that since such was their determination, he wished to see them well accommodated, and would assist them to negotiate for a ship to convey them to America. The frankness of this procedure laid every murmur at rest, and no more was heard of the emigration.¹¹⁵ Nor is this the only instance that might be quoted, where a rising spirit of this kind has been allayed by the temper and moderation of a proprietor.

Though the machinations of the leaders of emigration, as described in the Reports, are nothing more than might reasonably be expected from men of that stamp in a country where a general tendency to irritation prevails; yet the Society consider these artifices as the prime source of all the discontent they observe, and assign as their ultimate motive, the unjust and tempting gains accruing to the traders in emigration.¹¹⁵ No explanation, however, is given of the mode in which these extraordinary gains arise, and therefore it may not be superfluous to state a few of the details which are passed over.

Whenever the circumstances of any part of the country induced the people to think of emigration, the usual procedure has generally been, that the leading individuals have circulated a subscription paper, to which all those, who agreed to join in chartering a ship for the purpose, signed their names; and whenever they had thereby ascertained their number, they called together all those who had declared their intention to emigrate. If

previous information had been obtained of the price at which shipping could be procured, it was usual for some person, of the most respectable situation and property among the associates, to make proposals to transact the business for them at a certain rate for each passenger; if his offer was accepted, one half of the price agreed upon was deposited by each in his hands. With the money so collected, he proceeded to some of the great commercial ports, where he made the best bargain he could with a ship-owner, contracting for such provisions and accommodation as were customary, and giving security that the rest of the passage-money should be paid previous to embarkation. When no individual was prepared to undertake the business in this manner, some one in whom the rest of the associates had confidence, was usually deputed to negotiate in their name, and to procure them the best terms he could. In either case, however, the price to be paid by the individual emigrants, was always well understood to be rather higher than the price bargained for with the ship owner. A difference of from 10 to 20s. on each passenger, was not considered as unreasonable, to compensate the trouble, expenses, and risks, to which the intermediate contractor was subject. The ship-owner seldom made more by the voyage than a mere freight; and the ordinary gains of the contractor, who was usually himself one of the emigrants, do not seem entitled to the epithet of unjust and tempting, or to be assigned as the motive for deceits and impositions, so artful and so extensive, as to be capable of diffusing the spirit of emigration all over the Highlands.¹¹⁶

It may be readily believed, that in the course of such a transaction as has been described, carried on among men of low rank and little education, (the contractor being sometimes but a few steps above his associates), much higgling would take place, sometimes deceit and imposition, and almost always a great deal of petty artifice and vulgar intrigue. It does not appear how the regulations proposed by the Society can operate to remedy any of the inconveniences arising from these circumstances, or to obviate the deceit and imposition which may occasionally be practised by contractors. In this, as in other trades, competition must be the best check to abuse. The emigrants understand the accommodation for which they stipulate, and competition alone can prevent them from paying too much for it. All that can be necessary, therefore, to put an end to the unjust and tempting gains, of which the Society complain, is to enforce, on the part of the ship-owner and contractor, a fair performance of their bargain; leaving it to every one to make the best terms he can for himself. It is surely an extravagant idea, that the ignorance of the people, as to the nature of the voyage, puts them on a footing with men who have no will of their own, and renders it as necessary to regulate their accommodation as that of the negro slaves.¹¹⁷

The necessity of regulation is, however, inferred from “the hard-ships to which the emigrants were subject on their passage from this country,” which, it is said, “were ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt by authentic documents.”¹¹⁸ It is rather singular, however, that, to find an instance in point, the Society go as far back as the year 1773. There is indeed one other instance quoted, in 1791, and from the details that are given, it is evident that the ship referred to was too much crowded to be comfortable. As to the actual result, however, all we can learn is, that being put back after twelve day boisterous weather, the passengers were tired, especially the women and children, and did not choose to proceed: - a consequence not at all surprising among people, who for the first time in their lives were heartily *sea-sick!*¹¹⁹

In speaking of the emigrations of 1801, the Society admit that minute particulars have not come to their knowledge: they state, however, *upon hearsay*. “that 53 of the passengers died on board one of the vessels before reaching America.” - A committee of the House of Commons, receiving this intelligence from so respectable a quarter, deemed it worthy of being quoted among the grounds for a legislative enactment.¹²⁰ They could not indeed suppose that the Highland Society would lend the sanction of their name to a mere vague report: but surely the Society, being informed of a fact so shocking to humanity, and giving such entire credit to it, ought to have followed out the inquiry, and brought the accusation home to those whose criminal negligence or avarice had occasioned the disaster. This, however, they have never yet thought proper to do, and have never even named the vessel to which they refer.

In calling for a remedy against the abuses they allege, the Society disclaim any view of restraining “the constitutional freedom of the Highlanders,” and declare that their only object is, “to regulate the transportation of emigrants in such a way, that no undue profit may arise from its being conducted in a manner destructive to the passengers. “z’ The sentiments here professed are liberal; and if the legislative provisions adopted on their suggestion correspond to this profession, the Society are entitled to the gratitude of the emigrants, as well as of the rest of the public. Let us see then how far this coincidence can be traced, and whether the regulations laid down are “absolutely necessary for the preservation of the health and lives of the emigrants.”¹²²

The most important clauses of the bill are those which regulate the number of persons which any ship is permitted to carry, and the provisions which are to be laid in and allowed to them.¹²³ As to provisions, the customary food of the people to be conveyed cannot be objected to, as an inadequate criterion of what is absolutely necessary. A passenger at sea, with little or no opportunity of exercise, cannot well be supposed to

require more or better food, than when engaged in a laborious life at home.

A bill of fare is laid down for the passengers, with no part of which they are themselves at liberty to dispense; and in this there is an allowance of farinaceous food, more than equal to the whole consumption of country labourers in any part of Scotland that I am acquainted with.¹²⁴ Over and above this, each person is obliged to take 3 I/2 lb. of beef or pork, weekly. The Highland Society indeed recommended 7 lb. "as absolutely necessary for a passenger."¹²⁵ Was it from their intimate knowledge of the domestic economy of the peasantry of the Highlands, that the Society were led to judge such an allowance of animal food indispensable, - even for an infant at the breast? and is no credit to be given to the gentlemen, who were employed by the Board of Agriculture to examine the Highlands, when they inform us, that "animal food is rarely tasted by the lower order of tenantry:"¹²⁶ and that among the farmers "there is not 5 lb. of meat consumed in the family throughout the year."¹²⁷

In the regulation which they recommended as to the numbers which any ship should be allowed to carry, the Society surely did not mean a censure on His Majesty's Government: yet the allowance of room which they lay down as absolutely necessary for the health of the passengers, is far greater than, in voyages similar to those of the emigrants, is given to soldiers when conveyed in transports. In such cases, the number of men allotted to each ship is usually reckoned at one for every ton-and-a-half of her burthen; and these passengers are, of course, all full-grown persons. The Emigrant bill requires two tons for every passenger, including the youngest child in the enumeration.

It will not be asserted that an infant requires as large a bed as a grown man, and, whatever be the proper number of passengers for any ship to carry, some modification ought surely to be admitted when a great proportion of them are children. On this point the regulations, which were customary among the emigrant passage-ships, deserve attention. With respect both to the payment of passage-money, and the allowances of provisions and birth-room, children were rated according to an established scale; a greater or less number, according to their age, being considered as equivalent to one full-grown person.¹²⁸ The rules, founded on this principle, were deduced from experience, and acted upon for many years, by all those who had most interest in their accuracy: they may therefore be depended upon as not materially incorrect. Now, it is to be observed, that, upon an examination of several emigrant ships, in which the passengers consisted of entire families, with the usual proportion of young and old, the number of full passengers at which they were rated, was found to be in general about two-thirds of the number of individuals of all ages.

Unless, therefore, the principles upon which these people proceeded were grossly erroneous, it must be admitted that two tons for every individual is as great an allowance as three tons for a grown person - an allowance double of that of the transport service, and not far from the proportion that the tonnage of a man of war bears to her crew alone.

These regulations of the Emigrant Bill are so far from being *absolutely necessary*, that it is difficult to see what object they can serve, except to enhance the expense of passage. This object, indeed, is not entirely disavowed by the Society; and in the history of their Transactions the regulations are spoken of as `having the effect of a certain necessary burthen on the voyages of emigrants."²⁹ It is rather an unfortunate coincidence, that an object of so very different a nature, should be combined with the regard which is professed for the comfort and safety of the emigrants. Some persons may be inclined to doubt whether humanity was the leading motive of the Society.

Whatever may have been their views, it has certainly been a subject of exultation to many individuals, that the bill, by rendering the passage too expensive for the pecuniary means of the tenantry, must leave them at the mercy of their superiors. But, I apprehend, that however oppressive its consequences may be, the bill can produce this effect only in a very inconsiderable degree.

Every one who is acquainted with the characteristic obstinacy of the Highlanders, must be sensible how much the attempt to keep them at home by force, will rivet their determination to take the first opportunity of leaving the country. The circumstances of the times may compel them to defer the execution of this intention; but, if peace were re-established, and trade relieved from its present difficulties, the increase of expense arising from the regulations laid down, would not be sufficient to prove an effectual obstacle to the greater number of the Emigrants. It has been observed, that the tenants in general have been hitherto enabled, by the sale of their farming stock, not only to defray the expense of their passage, but to carry some money along with them. The Highland Society estimate the average amount¹³⁰ which is carried in this way, by the emigrants, at 10 £. for each family of the poorest class, and by some a great deal more: they instance one ship, in which they give reason to suppose, that

the whole party carried with them 1500 £. The enhanced expense of passage arising from the regulations, will encroach upon this reserve of cash, and, in some cases, may totally exhaust it. Should this happen, it will not deter the emigrant from trying his fate. Few of the Highlanders are so ignorant of America, as not to know that a persevering exertion of personal industry will supply the want of every other resource; and that, if they should have to land there without a shilling, they may be thereby exposed to temporary hardships, and retarded for a few years in their progress; but the independence, which is their great object, will still be within their reach.

What is to be thought, however, of the superabundant humanity of the Highland Society, of which this is all the result - which, to save the emigrants from the miserable consequences of being as much crowded on shipboard as the king's troops themselves, and of living there on the same fare as at home, reduces them to land in the colonies in the state of beggars, instead of having a comfortable provision beforehand?

Humanity apart, can such waste be considered as a matter of indifference in a national view? The money which the emigrants carry with them serves as capital, by means of which the forests of the colonies are brought into a productive state, the markets of Great Britain supplied with various articles of value, and the consumption of her manufactures extended. Is it consistent with any rational policy, that individuals should be compelled to waste this capital in expenses absolutely futile and useless? The framers of the bill, indeed, can perceive no distinction between the money expended by the emigrants for their passage, and that which they carry with them to the colonies; they set it all down alike - as "lost to the kingdom for ever."¹³¹

It cannot, for a moment, be supposed, that these considerations can have occurred to the Highland Society, or that they would have recommended the measure in question, if they had been aware of all its consequences. It would, perhaps, be unjust to blame them for not having considered the subject with perfect impartiality, or extended their views to the general interests of the empire. The peculiar objects of their institution lead them to pay an exclusive attention to the local interests of one district. They have given their opinion not in the character of a judge, but as a party in the cause, as representing one class of men, for whom they appear as advocates at the bar of the public.

It has fallen to my share to plead a too long neglected cause, in opposition to these powerful adversaries: I have treated their arguments with the freedom which belongs to fair discussion, but, I trust, without any sentiment inconsistent with that respect to which they are so justly entitled, from the general tenor of their patriotic labours.¹³²

XI. Importance of the Emigrants to Our Colonies / Custom of Settling in the United States / Means of Inducing a Change of Destination / Will Not Increase the Spirit of Emigration

Keeping in view the distinction already insisted upon, between the cotters and the small tenants, I think it may now be assumed as sufficiently proved, that emigration, to a greater or less extent, is likely to go on from the Highlands, till the latter class is entirely drained off. If this be admitted, I need not take up much time to prove, that it is an object deserving of some attention, and of some exertion, to secure these emigrants to our own colonies, rather than abandon them to a foreign country.

Some persons, indeed, have insinuated, that the colonies are altogether of little use.¹³³ That is a point, which it would be foreign to my present purpose to discuss. Those, however, who are of that opinion, ought to argue, not for their being neglected, but relinquished. If they are to be retained, it cannot surely admit of a doubt, that it is better the overflowings of our own population should contribute to their improvement, than to that of a country with which we are unconnected, and which may become hostile to us. It is besides of no small importance, that our own colonies should be peopled by men, whose manners and principles are consonant to our own government.

It is with regret I have heard persons of distinguished judgment and information give way to the opinion, that all our colonies on the continent of America, and particularly the Canadas, must inevitably fall, at no distant period of time, under the dominion of the United States. That continued mismanagement may bring this about, cannot be denied; but, I think it equally clear, that, by steadily pursuing a proper system, such an event may be rendered not only improbable, but almost impossible.

The danger to be apprehended, is not merely from an invading military force, but much more from the disposition of the colonists themselves, the republican principles of some, and the lukewarm affection of others. From the origin of some of the settlements, formed at the close of the American war entirely by refugee loyalists, we might naturally expect to find among them a population firmly attached to the interests of Britain. The fidelity, of which they had given proof during the war, was recompensed by the scrupulous attention of Government to their relief and support, when the contest became desperate; and, in all the situations where an asylum was

provided for them, they received advantages unprecedented in the history of colonization. This generous conduct of Government has not been forgotten; and the most satisfactory dispositions still remain among these loyalists and most of their descendants.¹³⁴

But the general character of some of the colonies has received an unfortunate tinge, from the admixture of settlers of a very different description. Numbers of Americans, of principles the most opposite to the Loyalists (many of them worthless characters, the mere refuse of the States), have since found their way into these provinces.¹³⁵ Unless effectual means are adopted to check this influx, there is every probability that it will continue; for, in consequence of some capital errors in the original regulations laid down for the disposal of waste lands, and from the state of landed property, which has been the result, there is a continual encouragement to settlers of the same description. In some parts, where, from local circumstances, it is peculiarly desirable to have a well disposed population, these intruders are fast approaching to an absolute majority of numbers: there is, besides, but too much probability of their principles infecting the mass of the people throughout the provinces.

Under these circumstance, it is evident what important services may be derived from such a body of settlers as the Highland emigrants would form. It is not merely from their old established principles of loyalty, and from their military character, that they would be a valuable acquisition. It is a point of no small consequence, that their language and manners are so totally different from those of the Americans, as this would tend to preserve them from the infection of dangerous principles. But, it seems, in this view, of essential importance, that, whatever situation be selected for them, they should be concentrated in one national settlement, where particular attention should be bestowed to keep them distinct and separate, and where their peculiar and characteristic manners should be carefully encouraged.

It is much to be regretted, that so little attention has been paid to this principle, not only with respect to the Highlanders, but also the Dutch and Germans, who, in some parts, form a considerable proportion of the colonists. Had these also been separated into distinct national settlements, they would have formed a strong barrier against the contagion of American sentiments; and any general combination against the mother country would have been rendered almost impossible.¹³⁶

The local circumstances of the different provinces, the political and commercial advantages to be expected from the further colonization of each, the precautions requisite for their security, and the means which may be found for remedying the errors of their former administration, are topics which would lead me into too great length, and which this is not the proper place to discuss.¹³⁷ The only point immediately connected with the subject of this work, is to consider the measures that are necessary for diverting the current of emigration, and directing it to any part of the colonies, which may appear to government most advisable. It has been supposed that this could not be done without such encouragements, as would tend very much to increase the evil in general: but I hope to make it appear that this is a mistake; and that the object may be accomplished without adopting any measure that can have a permanent bad effect.¹³⁸

The difficulty of directing the emigrations of the Highlanders, arises from their uncommonly gregarious disposition; a singularity which is easily accounted for, when we consider how much their peculiar language and manners tend to seclude them from intercourse with other people. Circumstances, in a great measure accidental, induced the first persons, who left the different districts of the Highlands, to fix themselves in various situations. The first steps of this kind were taken with feelings of awful uncertainty. They were decided upon, under a total want of information respecting the country, towards which their course was directed; except, perhaps, from interested representations of persons concerned in land speculations. It is said that some of the first adventurers had fatal experience of the falsehood of these; - that they were misled and ruined.¹³⁹

Whether from the tradition of such events, or from the habitual jealousy, which is generally found among men in the ruder stages of society, it is certain that the Highlanders always show great distrust of any information, which does not come from their own immediate connexions; and, in consequence of this disposition, those adventures which have proved fortunate, have been scarcely more important to the persons immediately embarked in them, than to the friends whom they had left behind. These were soon informed of their success; and to men who foresaw the necessity of similar steps, it was highly interesting to be certain of any asylum. The success of those with whom they were acquainted, was a sufficient motive to determine their choice of situation; and having found a rallying point, all who at subsequent periods left the same district of Scotland, gathered round the same neighbourhood in the colonies.¹⁴⁰

No one of these settlements, however, gained an universal ascendancy. A number were formed about the same period of time, and each attracted the peculiar attention of the district from which it had proceeded. The information sent home from each, as to the circum-stances of the country in which it was situated, did not spread far. The difficulty of mutual intercourse in a mountainous country, tended to confine any information to the valley in which it was first received. This effect was still more promoted by the feudal animosities of the different clans, which were not entirely forgotten at the period of the first emigrations. Thus it often happened, that the inhabitants of one estate in the Highlands acquired a strong predilection for a particular place in America, while on the adjoining estate, separated only by a lake or a mountain, a preference as decided was given to another settlement, perhaps extremely remote from it.¹⁴¹

In this manner the people of Breadalbane and other parts of Perthshire, as also those of Badenoch and Strathspey, and part of Ross-shire, have generally resorted to New York, and have formed settlements on the Delaware, the Mohawk, and the Connecticut rivers.¹⁴² A settlement has been formed in Georgia, by people chiefly from Inverness.¹⁴³ Those of Argyleshire and its islands, of the Isle of Skye, of the greater part of the Long Island, of Sutherland, and part of Ross-shire, have a like connexion with North Carolina, where they have formed the settlement of Cross Creek, noted in the history of the American war for its loyalty and its misfortunes.¹⁴⁴ This settlement has been since named Fayetteville, and is perhaps the most numerous colony of Highlanders on the American continent. Some people from Lochaber, Glengary, &c. who joined the settlements in New York at the eve of the American war, were forced, by the ensuing disturbances, to remove themselves, and take refuge in Canada, to which they have attracted the subsequent emigrations of these districts.¹⁴⁵ The people, again, of Moydart, and some other districts in Inverness-shire, with a few of the Western Isles, are those who have formed the Scottish settlements of Pictou in Nova Scotia, and of the Island of St. John.¹⁴⁶

The communication arising from repeated emigrations, and the continual correspondence between these settlers and their relations in Scotland, have given the people of every part of the Highlands a pretty accurate acquaintance with the circumstances of some particular colony; and the emigrants, though their ideas are often sanguine, are by no means so ignorant of the nature of the country they are going to, as some persons have supposed. But the information which any of the peasantry have of America, is all confined to one spot; to the peculiar circumstances of that place, they ascribe all those advantages, which it

has in common with other new settled countries. Of the other colonies they are perfectly ignorant, and have often very mistaken notions. Those, in particular, whose views are directed towards the southern states, have received very gloomy impressions of the climate of Canada, and of all the northern colonies. But to rectify these mistaken opinions, is by no means the greatest difficulty in bringing them to change their plans. The number of their friends or relations who have all gone to the same quarter, give it the attraction almost of another home.

It is therefore indispensable, that, to overcome these motives, some strong inducement should be held out to the first party, who will settle in the situation offered to them.¹⁴⁷ To detached individuals, it would be difficult to offer advantages sufficient to counterbalance the pleasure of being settled among friends, as well as the assistance they might expect from their relations. But a considerable body of people, connected by the ties of blood and friendship, may have less aversion to try a new situation: and if such a settlement be once conducted safely through its first difficulties, till the adventurers feel a confidence in their resources, and acquire some attachment to the country they are placed in, the object may be considered as almost entirely accomplished. All those circumstances, which operate against the first proposal of a change, will serve to confirm it, when it is brought to this stage of advancement.

The encouragement, thus proposed to be given to emigration, would be so limited in extent, and continued for so short a period, that it could afford no rational ground of alarm. It ought, besides, to be considered, that the degree of encouragement, which may be sufficient to induce people to change their destination, must be very far short of that which would induce men, who have no other motive, to think of emigration. To excite a spirit of emigration where no such inclination before existed, is a more arduous task than those who have not paid a minute attention to the subject may imagine. To emigrate, implies a degree of violence to many of the strongest feelings of human nature - a separation from a number of connexions dear to the heart - a sacrifice of the attachments of youth, which few can resolve upon without absolute necessity. Dr Adam Smith has justly observed, that "Man is of all species of luggage the most difficult to be transported:"¹⁴⁸ the tendency of the labouring poor to remain in the situation where they have taken root, being so strong, that the most palpable and immediate advantages are scarcely sufficient to overcome the force of habit, as long as they find a possibility of going on in the track they have been accustomed to. In one out of a hundred, this

tendency may be overcome by motives of ambition or enthusiasm; but when a general disposition to emigration exists in any country, it would need strong grounds indeed, to justify the supposition, that it arises from any accidental or superficial cause.

There occurs, in the history of the Highland emigrations, one striking example, how little permanent effect arises from any casual and occasional encouragement. I allude to the settlement of Georgia in 1722.¹⁴⁹ The patrons of that undertaking, conceiving the Highlands to be people of a description likely to answer their purpose, sent agents to Inverness to publish their proposals. The causes, which have since produced so strong a spirit of emigration in the Highlands, had not begun to operate; and nothing of the kind had taken place, except in the case of some few detached individuals, who by various accidents might have found their way to America. The settlement, however, was to be conducted under such respectable patronage, the terms were so liberal, and the advantages offered to people of the poorest class so extraordinary, that there was no difficulty in finding a considerable number of that description, who entered into the undertaking.¹⁵⁰ But this event does not appear to have had any effect in occasioning a general spirit of emigration. It was forty years afterwards, before any such spirit was to be observed. We neither find that the people who went to Georgia were the subject of regret in the country they left, nor that the transaction, by its subsequent effects, produced any such inconvenience as to give rise to the slightest complaint.

This example seems to prove that the utmost effect of such encouragement will by itself be inconsiderable and transitory; and that there is no reason to be apprehensive of the consequences of any temporary inducements, which Government may judge proper for the purpose of diverting the emigration into a different channel. I have observed that there would be no necessity for continuing this encouragement long, or affording it to any but the first who should enter into the measures proposed, or, at most, to a few people from each district. Supposing that such a party were even wholly composed of persons who would not otherwise have emigrated, it is not clear that they would form a nett addition to the body of emigrants; for, if I have been successful in proving that the disposition we observe in the Highlands arises from unavoidable and radical causes in the state of the country, then must it go on till these causes are exhausted, and the population is brought to that level which natural circumstances point out. A certain number of people must leave the country; and whether it falls to the lot of this or of that man to go, the general result will not be affected. If a set of people, who had no such intention, are by any means induced to go, they make room for others

to stay, who would otherwise have been under the necessity of emigrating.

The force of this principle is illustrated by the feelings of the country people themselves on the subject; by the anxiety they frequently show that others should emigrate, though they have no such intention themselves; merely that they may have a chance of procuring the possession of lands which would not otherwise be attainable. It has been known in more than one instance, that an individual, who felt that his example would have some weight, has even pretended to join in a project of emigration, and made every demonstration of zeal for the undertaking, till his neighbours have been fully committed; and has then deserted them, as soon as he could see any vacant farm, that he could have a chance of procuring.

But if peculiar advantages are to be given, to encourage a party of emigrants to settle in a new situation; is it to be supposed that these must all be people who would not otherwise have left the country? or rather is not such a supposition contrary to every probability? Let encouragement be held out, even in the most indiscriminate manner, the persons most likely to accept the offer, will certainly be those, whose views were previously directed to emigration. Perhaps, indeed, the more opulent among the people who have taken such a resolution, will not be easily diverted from their preconcerted plans, and will be little influenced by the offer of assistance. Those who feel some difficulty in accomplishing their views, will be more ready to listen to terms, by which the attainment of their object is rendered more easy. The encouragement held out, must therefore be of such a nature as to suit those whose means are scanty. There is a chance, no doubt, that, in this way, emigration may be brought within the reach of a few, who could not otherwise have made the attempt. The effect of this, however, must be trifling; and, at any rate, the object in view deserves some sacrifice. There are individuals, perhaps, in the Highlands, who may think it better that a hundred persons should emigrate to the United States, than that a hundred and one should go to our own colonies. But this is a sentiment in which, I trust, they will not be joined by many whose opinions deserve respect.

XII. Measures Adopted in Pursuance of These Views by the Author / Settlement Formed in Prince Edward's Island / Its Difficulties / Progress / and Final Success

When these general principles are understood, the part which I have myself taken, in regard to the settlers whom I conveyed, in 1803, to Prince Edward's Island, will need little explanation.¹⁵¹ Of these settlers, the greatest proportion were from the Isle of Sky; a district which had so decided a connexion with North Carolina, that no emigrants had ever gone from it to any other quarter.¹⁵² There were a few others from Ross-shire, from the North part of Argyle-shire, and from some interior districts of Inverness-shire, all of whose connexions lay in some part of the United States. There were some also from a part of the Island of Uist, where the emigration had not taken a decided direction.¹⁵³

If my views had extended no further than to the mere improvement of a property in the colony I have mentioned, I might, without any loss, and with much less trouble, have found settlers enough in the districts, where the custom of emigrating to the same quarter was already established. But this was not my purpose. I had undertaken to settle these lands with emigrants, whose views were directed towards the united States; and, without any wish to increase the general spirit of emigration, I could not avoid giving more than ordinary advantages to those who should join me. The prejudices entertained against the situation I proposed, were industriously fomented by some persons, who had conceived a jealousy against my undertaking; and, in consequence of this obstruction, I found it necessary to extend my offers of encouragement as far as I could, without a total disregard of my own interest.¹⁵⁴

To induce people to embark in the undertaking, was, however, the least part of my task. The difficulties which a new settler has to struggle with, are so great and various, that, in the oldest and best established colonies, they are not to be avoided altogether; and it is rare that any one does not, at some time in the course of the first two or three years, feel disheartened and repent of his conduct. Of these discouragements the emigrants are seldom fully aware. It was to be expected, that men who had been induced to deviate from their own plans, would ascribe all these unforeseen difficulties to the peculiar disadvantages of the place they were settled in; and if, under this impression, they had become disgusted,

as might naturally have happened, the experiment, instead of tending to divert the current of emigration, would have had an opposite effect.

There cannot be a more extreme contrast to any country that has been long under cultivation, or a scene more totally new to a native of these kingdoms, than the boundless forests of America. An emigrant set down in such a scene feels almost the helplessness of a child. He has a new set of ideas to acquire: the knowledge which all his previous experience has accumulated, can seldom be applied; his ignorance as to the circumstances of his new situation meets him on every occasion. The disadvantages to which he is thereby subjected are so great, that emigrants who are taken at once from Europe to such a situation, and abandoned to their own exertions without aid or guidance, rarely avoid involving themselves in inextricable difficulties. To settlers of this description, success can be insured only by well calculated arrangements, and an unremitting attention in directing their efforts.

A detached and unsupported settler is liable, in the first place, to lose a great deal of time before he fixes on a situation. Unskilled in those indications, by which the nature of the soil in the forests is to be judged of, he wanders about with all the jealousy which conscious ignorance inspires. His vague researches terminate probably in a choice made at random; in the mean while, he has not only lost his time, but his ideas have become unsettled. He will again, perhaps, take a dislike to the place he has chosen, and, by repeated changes, sustain more loss, than if he had employed his time on the most barren and unfavourable spot he had met with.¹⁵⁵

Those whose interests have been intrusted to the care of their superiors, have not always fared much better in this respect. A gentleman, who had accompanied a party of emigrants to Cape Breton in 1802, informed me, that, on their arrival, a situation was pointed out to them where they might have grants of land.¹⁵⁶ Comparing it with that they had left, they were delighted, and were inclined to settle immediately. Another place, however, was shown to them, and they were allowed to choose. This situation was still more agreeable to them; but, before they could make their determination, they heard of another that was yet finer, and proceeded to view it. Here, again, they found that they were at no great distance from some relations, who had formerly settled in Nova Scotia. Having found every new situation better than the former; and, concluding that their friends must have chosen the best of all, they determined to join them. They proceeded therefore, with their families and their baggage, to that settlement, where they found that all the best situations were taken up.

They would willingly have returned, but had incurred so much expense, as well as loss of time, that they were under the necessity of remaining upon inferior land, with diminished resources.

Those who receive gratuitous grants of land are often subjected to delays, which more than counterbalance all the advantages. The loyalists, who were brought at the end of the American war to Nova Scotia, had to wait above a year, some of them nearly two, before the survey-ors had completed their work, and their allotments were pointed out to them.¹⁵⁷ In Upper Canada, I met with some emigrants, who had left Scotland about two years before.¹⁵⁸ On their arrival in that province, they had received a promise of grants of Crown lands, for which (though every disposition to accommodate them had been shown by the officers of Government) they had till then been waiting, and not till then had they received possession. In the interval, most of the money they had brought with them was expended, and, in this exhausted condition, they were beginning the cultivation of their property.

When the new settler is fixed on his land, his difficulties are not at an end: he is still exposed to much waste of time, and can seldom proceed in his work without interruption. He must first procure provisions; and, though no pecuniary difficulty should occur, he generally, from his ignorance of the country, loses more time than necessary in this business. In bringing them home, he often finds himself much at a loss, from the wild and almost impassable state of the roads through the woods; the same difficulty occurs whenever any article, however inconsiderable, is wanted from the mill, the forge, or the store. From the want of a general attention to keep the settlements compact, and within reach of mutual assistance, most of the people who begin on new and untouched land, are reduced to a situation of more than savage solitude. The new settler from Europe is unacquainted with the methods, by which a practised woodsman can find his way through the trackless forest. Every time he leaves his hut, he is exposed to the danger of being bewildered and lost; if he has been sufficiently warned of this danger, to teach him the requisite degree of attention, still he can feel no confidence that his children will have the same caution; and must still shudder, when he thinks of the howling wilderness that surrounds him. The horror of these impressions has, in many instances, completely un-nerved the mind of the settler, and rendered him incapable of any vigorous exertion.

But, though his mental energy should remain unimpaired, the practical difficulties that await him are sufficient to discourage the most hardy. In every work he has to perform, he is unpractised, and has all the awkwardness of a novice. The settler, who begins on new lands, has little access to the assistance of professed artificers. He must build his own house, construct his own cart, and make almost all his own implements. Amidst the variety of these operations, to which a European is unaccustomed, it is well if he be not often totally at a loss, and unable to proceed. Winter may overtake him with his house unfinished, or, when completed, he may find it insufficient to resist the rigours of the season. If illness attack him in his solitary residence, remote from medical assistance, his deplorable situation may easily be imagined. If, however, he escape this disaster, and proceed with industry to clear his land, this work, on which all his hopes are founded, is so new to him, that it must be expected to advance with a discouraging degree of slowness. His awkwardness, too, exposes him to frequent accidents: the falling of the trees, which an experienced axe-man regulates with almost mathematical precision, often takes a novice by surprise; and it is no rare occurrence, that he is severely wounded in the course of his work. If he escape unhurt, he will probably, as the reward of a great deal of severe labour, have but a small spot of land cleared in the course of many months, perhaps not the fourth part of what a man accustomed to the business might have accomplished with less exertion. To cut down the trees is but half the work; in destroying them, and preparing the land for the seed, a number of minutiae must be attended to; if, from want of experience, these are omitted, the consequence may be fatal to the crop. The sea-seasons of sowing, and many details in the management of unknown kinds of grain, are all to be learnt. Thus, independently of the accidents of seasons to which all are subject, and over and above the danger of losing his seed-time altogether, by not having his land ready, the new settler has to add many chances that, from his own ignorance and mismanagement, his crop may totally fail.

All these disasters are within the bounds of probability, though the settler should be in no degree deficient in exertion. But, in the management of a number of people, it is a matter of much delicacy to keep alive their industry, and seldom in any great undertaking has this been fully accomplished. In such instances as that of New South Wales, where the progress of the colony depended on men who had no interest in their own work, the difficulty is obvious.¹⁵⁹ But even where the settlers are to reap the entire benefit of their own industry, circumstances, apparently inconsiderable, may tend to diminish their energy. When, to obviate the disadvantages of a new situation, assistance has been granted with a

liberal hand, particularly when gratuitous rations of provisions have been allowed, the effect has almost invariably been, by taking away the pressure of necessity, to render the settlers inactive, and to damp their exertions for overcoming the difficulties of their situation. A great proportion of the loyalists and disbanded provincials, in Canada and Nova Scotia, performed scarcely any work, as long as they received rations from Government; and, when these were discontinued, found themselves almost as destitute, as if no aid had ever been given. The Maroon settlement near Halifax was totally ruined by mismanagement of the same kind.¹⁶⁰

The industry of new settlers has likewise been damped, in many cases, by injudicious regulations as to the disposal of land. Some grantees of large tracts in America, have attempted to settle them with people holding their farms on lease, like the tenantry of Europe.¹⁶¹ Experience has proved, that this is impracticable within the reach of other places, where, for a low price, land may be had in absolute property. At any rate, the people who begin a new settlement, ought to have every stimulus to exertion, which the most permanent tenure can afford. But the opposite extreme has also its dangers; the profusion with which gratuitous grants of Crown lands have been given in some situations, has been scarcely less pernicious. It has taught the settlers to despise what they procured with so little difficulty; and, by diminishing their estimation of the spot on which they were fixed, and their attachment to it, has tended to enfeeble their exertions for its improvement.

The combined effect of these accumulated difficulties is seen in the long infancy of most new settled countries. Till the colonists, from their own lands, and the produce of their own labour, reap a harvest adequate to their maintenance, they cannot be considered as fairly established. In most instances of the kind, there has been a long and critical period of dependence on extraneous and precarious supplies. I do not refer to the first establishments which were made on the continent of America, at a period when little experience had been obtained on the subject of colonization, and when the principles, on which a new establishment ought to be conducted, were perhaps unknown. But so lately as the year 1783, when the loyalists were settled in Nova Scotia and Canada, it was not supposed that they could provide for themselves in less than three years. A great proportion did not accomplish it even in this period; and when the bountiful support of Government was discontinued, many of the settlements were abandoned. The colony in New South Wales was for six or seven years dependent on imported provisions; and, during all that time, was in hazard of famine, whenever a store-ship was unexpectedly retarded.¹⁶² The very island where I have established my own settlers,

affords an instance in point: when it was first colonized by the English about the year 1770, many farmers were brought from Europe, who, after being supported for two years by extraneous supplies, went away in disgust, spreading the idea that the country was incapable of cultivation.¹⁶³

I will not assert that the people I took there have totally escaped all difficulties and discouragement; but the arrangements for their accommodation have had so much success, that few, perhaps, in their situation, have suffered less, or have seen their difficulties so soon at an end.

This island of St. John, or Prince Edward, is situated in lat. 46 degrees and 47 degrees, in the gulph of St. Laurence, near the coast of Nova Scotia, to which province it was formerly annexed.¹⁶⁴ It now forms a separate government, having a civil establishment, on a small scale, but on the same plan as in other colonies.¹⁶⁵ The island is about 120 miles long, and much intersected by arms of the sea, on the shores of which there is a thinly scattered population, estimated at about 7 or 8000. The whole of the lands were granted by the crown in the year 1767, in large lots. A great proportion of these fell into the hands of absentees, who have paid no attention to their improvement, and in consequence many very extensive tracts are totally uninhabited. I had acquired the property of some of these neglected lots, and the settlement I had in view, was to be fixed in a part of the coast, where, for upwards of 30 miles, there was not a single habitation. The spot selected for the principal establishment was separated by an arm of the sea, from any older settlement. Those that were nearest at hand, were of inconsiderable amount, and little benefit was derived from any intercourse with them; so that the emigrants, who arrived on this occasion, were placed in circumstances scarcely more favourable, than if the island had been completely desert.

These people, amounting to about 800 persons of all ages, reached the island in three ships, on the 7th, 9th, and 27th of August 1803.¹⁶⁷ It had been my intention to come to the island some time before any of the settlers, in order that every requisite preparation might be made. In this, however, a number of untoward circumstances concurred to disappoint me; and on my arrival at the capital of the island, I learned that the ship of most importance had just arrived, and the passengers were landing at a place previously appointed for the purpose.

I lost no time in proceeding to the spot, where I found that the people had already lodged themselves in temporary *wigwams*, constructed after the fashion of the Indians, by setting up a number of poles in a conical form, tied together at top, and covered with boughs of trees. Those of the

spruce fir were preferred, and, when disposed in regular layers of sufficient thickness, formed a very substantial thatch, giving a shelter not inferior to that of a tent.

The settlers had spread themselves along the shore for the distance of about half a mile, upon the site of an old French village, which had been destroyed and abandoned after the capture of the island by the British forces in 1758.¹⁶⁸ The land, which had formerly been cleared of wood, was overgrown again with thickets of young trees, interspersed with grassy glades. These open spots, though inconsiderable as objects of cultivation, afforded a convenient situation for the encampment, - indeed the only convenient place that could have been found, for all the rest of the coast was covered with thick wood, to the very edge of the water. I arrived at the place late in the evening, and it had then a very striking appearance. Each family had kindled a large fire near their wigwam, and round these were assembled groups of figures, whose peculiar national dress added to the singularity of the surrounding scene. Confused heaps of baggage were every where piled together beside their wild habitations; and by the number of fires the whole woods were illuminated. At the end of this line of encampment I pitched my own tent, and was surrounded in the morning by a numerous assemblage of people, whose behaviour indicated that they looked to nothing less than a restoration of the happy days of clanship.

After our first meeting, I had to occupy myself in examining the lands, and laying them out in small lots for the settlers. In this business I soon began to feel the inconvenience of not having arrived at the time I had intended. The plans which had formerly been made of the land, were too inaccurate to be of much use, and there was not time for completing a new survey. Some measurements, however, were indispensable, and these occasioned a delay that could ill be afforded. From this cause, combined with some of those errors, from which a first experiment is rarely exempt, it happened that three or four weeks elapsed before the settlers could have their allotments pointed out to them; and during all this time they were under the necessity of remaining in their first encampment.

These hardy people thought little of the inconvenience they felt from the slightness of the shelter they had put up for themselves; but in other respects the delay was of very pernicious tendency. There are few parts of America, where there are not people ready to practise on the ignorance of new comers, and by representations, true or false, to entice them to some place where the officious adviser has an interest to promote. Some attempts of this kind were made, and, though not

ultimately successful, gave much trouble. The confidence of the settlers seemed to be shaken; and from their absolute ignorance of the country, argument had no effect in removing any unreasonable fancy. The lands, upon which I proposed to them to settle, were offered at very low rates, scarcely amounting to one-half of the price usually demanded by other proprietors of the island; yet they acceded to these terms with much hesitation, and a long time elapsed before they became sensible of the uncommon degree of favour they had experienced.

At one period, indeed, there seemed to be a probability of the settlement breaking up entirely.¹⁶⁹ As long as the people remained together in their encampment, they partook, in some degree, of the versatility of a mob. It was not till they had dispersed to their separate lots, till by working upon them they had begun to form a local attachment, and to view their property with a sort of paternal fondness, that I could reckon the settlement as fairly begun.

In this interval, an alarming contagious fever broke out, and gave me no small degree of anxiety, by its progress among the settlers. My apprehensions, however, were relieved by the presence and assistance of a medical gentleman, whom I was fortunate enough to have as my companion, and whose professional skill was equalled only by his amiable and humane attention to every class of patients.¹⁷⁰ Though his assiduous and unremitting exertions, the disease was soon alleviated; and few fatal cases occurred. There were not many of the settlers, however, that escaped the contagion altogether: it was difficult to intercept it among people living in such close vicinity, and in a continual intercourse, which no means could be found for preventing. This fever was occasioned by some accidental importation, and certainly not by the climate, which is remarkably healthy. The disease was nearly eradicated, when the people began to disperse to their separate lots, upon which they had all begun to work before the middle of September.

I could not but regret the time which had been lost; but I had satisfaction in reflecting, that the settlers had begun the cultivation of their farms, with their little capitals unimpaired. The principal expense they had to incur was for provisions to support them during the winter and ensuing season; besides which, all the more opulent purchased milch cows, and some other cattle.

Provisions, adequate to the whole demand, were purchased by an agent." He procured some cattle for beef in distant parts of the island, and also a large quantity of potatoes, which were brought by water carriage into the centre of the settlement; so that each family received their share

within a short distance of their own residence. Some difficulties occurred, indeed, in procuring a full supply; for, though the crops of the islands afforded a great superabundance, most of the farmers who could spare any considerable quantity, had taken up the idea, that, from so large an additional number of consumers, they could get what prices they pleased, and raised their demands to such an extravagant degree, that it would have been better if the whole provisions for the settlement had been imported from a distant market. In fact, it was found necessary to send to Nova Scotia for a quantity of flour. Throughout this business some trouble was unavoidable; but of this the settlers in general had no share. From the moment they were fixed in their respective allotments of land, they were enabled to proceed without interruption in their work.

A gentleman of medical knowledge, who had accompanied the emigrants, and assisted in the management of the undertaking, settled among them in a central situation, from whence his professional aid could soon be afforded to any part.¹⁷² Not very far from the same place, a forge was erected. A blacksmith was the only artificer who was judged to be indispensably requisite; for, in consequence of the small progress of the division of labour among the Highlanders, every man is in the habit of doing for himself most of the other branches of work, for which the aid of professed tradesmen would be required, by people more accustomed to the habits of commercial society.

To obviate the terrors which the woods were calculated to inspire, the settlement was not dispersed, as those of the Americans usually are, over a large tract of country, but concentrated within a moderate space. The lots were laid out in such a manner, that there were generally four or five families, and sometimes more, who built their houses in a little knot together, and the distance between the adjacent hamlets seldom exceeded a mile. Each of them was inhabited by persons nearly related, who were always at hand to come to each other's assistance, and in some instances carried on all their work in common. This enabled them to proceed with more vigour, as there are many occasions, in the work of clearing away the woods, where the joint efforts of a number of men are requisite, and where a single individual can scarcely make any progress. There is a great advantage in clearing a considerable field, rather than the same extent of land in separate places, as it does not suffer so much from the shade of the surrounding woods. Besides this, the work of several men being collected in one place, made so much the greater show. In detached and insulated spots, the progress of each might have appeared poor and insignificant; but when their labours were united, when the forests were seen

receding on every side, all were animated by the encouraging prospect of advancement. Experience, too, was rapidly communicated among people thus concentrated; emulation was kept alive; and, when any one was inclined to despondency, the example and society of his friends kept up his spirits. To their families, this social style of settlement was a comfort of the utmost importance for cheering their minds, and preventing them from sinking under the gloomy impressions of the wilderness.

This plan was the more readily acquiesced in, from its similarity to the former situation of the small tenants in their native country; and, in many instances, a party of relations were willing even to take all their land in one large lot in partnership. This, as a sociable arrangement, I was disposed to encourage: it was found, however, to lead to much trouble in the subsequent stages of the business, as the partners soon began to wish for a subdivision, and this was seldom accomplished without a good deal of wrangling. The advantage of concentrating the settlements might have been attained without incur-ring this inconvenience, and is of such essential consequence to people who are unaccustomed to the woods, that it ought not to be given up for any motive of secondary importance.

While the settlers were still in the encampment which they had formed on landing, some of the inhabitants of the island were employed to build a house in the neighbourhood, so that all had access to learn the methods used: and some land was afterwards cleared in a situation which they had frequent opportunities of visiting. From these examples they appeared to receive no small instruction; for, though their first trials of the axe were awkward, they improved rapidly.

Their houses were, indeed, extremely rude, and such as, perhaps, few other European settlers would have been satisfied with. The first buildings of the American *woodsmen*, from which our people took their model, are constructed without any other materials than what the forests afford, and without the aid of any tool but the axe. The walls are formed of straight logs, about eight inches in diameter, rough and undressed, laid horizontally, and crossing each other at the corners of the building, where they are coarsely grooved or notched about half through, so as to allow each log to touch that immediately below it: the chinks between them are stuffed with moss, clay, and small wedges of wood. The roof is formed of bark, either of the birch or the spruce fir, peeled off the trees in large unbroken pieces, which are secured by poles tied down on them with wythes or pliable twigs. This covering, if well laid, is sufficient to keep out any rain, but must be protected from the sun by a thatch formed of aquatic

grasses, or the small twigs of the spruce and other sorts of fir. Houses of this kind, of fifteen or eighteen feet, by ten or fourteen, were the dwellings of many of the settlers for the first season.

The hardy habits of these Highlanders gave them, in this respect, a great advantage over people who are accustomed to better accommodation, and who would have employed a great proportion of their time in building comfortable houses. They, on the contrary, had soon secured themselves a shelter, poor indeed in appearance, and of narrow dimensions, but such as they could put up with for a temporary resource; and immediately applied themselves with vigour to the essential object of clearing their lands. They proceeded in this with assiduity; and though the work was of a nature so totally new to them, they had made a considerable progress in cutting down the trees before the winter set in. The same work was continued during winter, whenever the weather was not too severe; and, upon the opening of spring, the land was finally prepared for the seed.

The zeal with which they proceeded in their work, was exemplified by a man of above sixty years of age, who, with his three sons, inhabited one of the little hamlets that have been described. The young men had agreed among themselves, that as this new species of labour would be too severe for their father, he should do nothing, till, from the progress of the clearing, he could employ himself in some sort of work he had formerly been accustomed to: the veteran would not, however, be dissuaded from taking up the axe, till his sons found they had no resource but to secrete it from him. In another instance, this zeal appeared rather in a whimsical manner. In walking among the settlements, I came unexpectedly to a house newly erected by an elderly widow and her two sons. The young men had gone from home upon some business; the mother, having no immediate occupation within the house, had taken up one of the axes they had left behind, and, with Amazonian vigour, had begun to attack a tree. She had made some progress, when my coming up interrupted the work - rather fortunately, I believe; for the good old lady had proceeded with more ardour than skill, and there appeared to be some danger that, in the progress of her work, the tree would have fallen on the roof of her new habitation.

The settlers had every incitement to vigorous exertion from the nature of their tenures. They were allowed to purchase in fee simple, and to a certain extent, on credit. From 50 to 100 acres were allotted to each family at a very moderate price, but none was given gratuitously.¹⁷³ To accommodate those who had no superfluity of capital,

they were not required to pay the price in full, till the third or fourth year of their possession; and, in this time, an industrious man may have it in his power to discharge his debt out of the produce of the land itself.

The same principle was adhered to in the distribution of provisions; for, though several of the poorer settlers could not go on without support, every assistance they received was as a loan, after due enquiry into the necessity of the case, and under strict obligations of repayment with interest. Thus, while a remedy was provided for cases of such extreme necessity as might otherwise have put a stop to the progress of the settlers, they were not encouraged to reliance on any resource but their own industry; and their minds were not degraded by the humiliating idea of receiving any thing like charity. The proud spirit that characterized the antient Highlander, was carefully cherished among them: the near prospect of independence was kept constantly within their view, to stimulate their exertions, and support them in every difficulty.

Having determined on the arrangements necessary for the progress of the settlement, and leaving the charge of their execution in the hands of an agent, whose fidelity and zeal I had been well assured of by long previous acquaintance, I quitted the island in September, 1803;¹⁷⁴ and, after an extensive tour on the continent of North America, returned in the end of the same month the following year. It was with the utmost satisfaction I then found, that my plans had been followed up with attention and judgment. Though circumstances had intervened to disturb, in some degree, the harmony of the settlement, they had produced no essentially bad effect; and the progress that had been made was so satisfactory to all concerned, that little difficulty occurred in healing every sore.¹⁷⁵

I found the settlers engaged in securing the harvest, which their industry had produced. They had a small proportion of grain of various kinds; but the principal part of their crop consisted of potatoes, which were of excellent quality, and would have been alone sufficient for the entire support of the settlement. The prospect of abundance had diffused universal satisfaction, and every doubt as to the eligibility of the situation seemed to be removed. In the whole settlement I met but two men who showed the least appearance of despondency. There were three or four families, who had not gathered a crop adequate to their own supply; but many others had a considerable superabundance. The extent of land in cultivation at the different hamlets, I found to be in general in the proportion of two acres or thereabouts to each able working hand: in many cases considerably more. Several boats had also been built, by means of

which, such a supply of fish had been obtained, as formed no trifling addition to the stock of provisions. Thus, in little more than one year from the date of their landing on the island, had these people made themselves independent of any supply that did not arise from their own labour.

To their industrious dispositions and persevering energy, the highest praise is justly due. Without these, indeed, every other advantage would have been of no avail; for, if the arrangements that have been detailed have any merit, it may all be comprised in this, - that by their means the industry of the individual settlers was preserved unimpaired, was allowed full scope to exert itself, and was so directed, as to produce all the effect, or nearly all, of which it was capable.

These first difficulties being over, the further progress of the colonists may be left to their own guidance. They are now acquainted with the local circumstances of the country, and understand how to turn them to advantage: their future condition must entirely depend on the perseverance with which their first exertions are followed up.

Having secured the first great object, subsistence, most of them are now proceeding to improve their habitations, and some are already lodged in a manner superior to the utmost wishes they would have formed in their native country. These second houses are constructed on the same general plan as their first huts, but in a more careful manner. The logs are partly squared, and well fitted together; they are supported on a foundation of stone; for the roof, boards or shingles take the place of bark and thatch; a wooden floor is introduced; the doors and windows, the chimney and partitions, are all executed with more care; and some attention is bestowed on neatness and ornament. This last circumstance, though it may be deemed of inferior consequence, is a very pleasing indication of a progress in the ideas of the people as to comfort, and of the attachment they have formed for the spot that is to be the inheritance of their children.

The commencement of improvement to be seen in some of these habitations, is, I believe, the result, not so much of an immediate desire for better accommodation, as of the pride of landed property; a feeling natural to the human breast, and particularly consonant to the antient habits of the Highlanders; a feeling which, among the tenantry, has been repressed by recent circumstances, but not extinguished; and which is ready to resume its spring whenever their situation will permit. These sentiments are not confined to the superior classes of the settlers. One of very moderate property, who had held a small share of a farm in the Isle of Sky, traces his lineage to a family, which had once possessed an estate in Ross-shire, but had lost it in the turbulence of the feudal times. He has given to

his new property the name of the antient seat of his family; has selected a situation with more taste than might have been expected from a mere peasant; and, to render the house of Auchtertyre worthy of its name, is doing more than would otherwise have been thought of by a man of his station.

The chief point, however, on which the opulence and comfort of a settler ultimately depend, is the assiduity with which he proceeds in clearing away the woods, and extending his cultivated land. It has been observed of some Highlanders, who on former occasions have been established on this island, that after the first two or three years their exertions have relaxed. They had, by that time, found themselves able to maintain their families with ease, and to procure all the com-forts they had been accustomed to; and, having no further ambition, preferred the indulgence of their old habits of indolence, to the accumulation of property by a continuance of active industry. There is reason, however, to doubt, whether this has not been more the effect of an insecure or discouraging tenure, than of any inherent disposition.

This effect has certainly been aggravated in no small degree, by the unsystematic manner in which the inhabitants of the island have been allowed to scatter around it. They have settled, with few exceptions, on the seashores only, in spots abounding with coarse hay, produced on marshes occasionally overflowed by the tide. These are very convenient to a new settler, as they supply an immediate maintenance for his cattle; but are observed, in many other situations, as well as in this island, to be a great impediment to industry. They tempt the settler to keep a greater number of cattle than he can provide for in a proper manner, or turn to real advantage. These cattle must be allowed to range in the woods; and the attention required in looking after them, is a serious interruption to the progress of laborious work, as well as to the habits of steady industry, which the circumstances of a new settler require. The most important part of the season too, is taken up in cutting, preparing, and bringing home the hay; while those improvements must be neglected, which would not only give the immediate return of a crop, but create a permanent acquisition of productive land.

But, though too great an abundance of marsh hay has these pernicious effects, a small quantity is of great importance to a new settler during the first two or three years, till by the progress of his cultivation he can provide winter forage, independently of this resource. With a view to preserve this advantage for future settlers, as well as to obviate the bad effects that have arisen in other cases, I laid out the allotments for my

settlers on a different plan, from that which is usually followed by other proprietors in the island. Instead of annexing the marshes entirely to the adjoining lands, I assigned to each lot only a small portion of marsh, not of sufficient extent to be a permanent dependence, or to supersede the necessity of going on with improvements.

The prevailing soil of Prince Edward's Island may be described as a sandy loam, such as in England would be reckoned of a medium quality.¹⁷⁶ In some spots on the coast, it seems a mere barren sand; yet the crops in these places are generally much better than a stranger would expect from the appearance of the soil. It is a remarkable fact, that the land immediately adjoining the coast and rivers, is almost without exception worse than that which lies further back, even at a short distance. The country, in its natural state, is entirely covered with timber; with the exception only of the salt-marshes, which form but a small portion. The most common species of timber are the beech and the maple, among which are frequently intermixed birch of different kinds, spruce firs, and other species of the pine tribe. In some places the pines entirely predominate: this is considered as indicating a soil of an inferior quality: but, to compensate this disadvantage, the timber of the white pine is valuable for exportation. That of the black birch is also in great estimation. Some of the many varieties of maple are valuable and beautiful timber, but these are not in so great abundance.

The mode in which the woods are cleared away, is a matter of surprise to the European, who has been accustomed to consider timber as an article of value. The extent of land, which an industrious man may bring into cultivation in the course of a year, furnishes a quantity far beyond the consumption of any settler for fuel and other purposes. A small proportion only is fit for exportation; the rest must be destroyed by fire, and the ashes serve as manure.¹⁷⁷

The brush-wood, with which the forests generally abound, is first cut close to the surface, to allow the workman free access; he then begins on one side of a piece of land, and fells the trees in a regular progress. By making his cut on the two opposite sides of the tree only, he can regulate the direction in which it is to fall, and generally lays it towards the quarter where he began. The stumps are left about three feet high. The timber lies till the proper season arrives, when fire is applied, and runs over the whole field, burning not only the branches, but the vegetation on the ground, and leaving the whole surface, to appearance, charred. This first fire is not of sufficient intensity to consume the larger branches; these must be cut off, and the trees cut across into logs of 12 or 15 feet long, which are rolled together, piled

up, and again set on fire. When the timber is of great size, oxen are used for dragging the logs together; but their assistance is not in general necessary on this island.

By an expert workman the trees of an acre of land may be cut down and cross-cut in six or eight days: to pile and burn them requires about as much more labour. The whole work may be executed for three guineas, or three and a half per acre, at the usual rate of wages in the island. After the timber is burnt, little more remains to be done: the fire has destroyed the vegetation, which might have been inconvenient, and the surface, having been preserved in a mellow state by the shade of the trees, needs no tillage, further than to cover the seed with a hoe. In some parts of America, the harrow is used; but, in all the northern parts, the surface is too rough, owing to trees that have been blown down by storms, and have torn up the earth along with their roots, so as to form little hillocks, which remain long after the timber is entirely gone to decay.

With this slight preparation, the soil will produce any kind of grain; or, if potatoes are planted, the digging up of these roots is sufficient tillage for a crop of grain the second year. After this, all judicious farmers leave the land in grass, till the roots of the trees decay. In the beech and maple lands, the stumps may be pulled out with little difficulty after five or six years; if left a year or two longer, they come out with perfect ease. Where the timber consists of pine, the decay is much more tedious.

When the stumps are removed, the plough may be used, though for the first or second time with some difficulty, from the roughness of the surface, and the remnants of decayed roots. After that, however, a farmer may follow the same agricultural process as in England, and, according to his management, may expect nearly the same produce as on a similar soil in this country.

Upon newly cleared land, encumbered with stumps and other obstacles, which not only occupy a great deal of the surface, but prevent any effectual tillage, it is impossible to expect the same produce as from the same land when well cultivated. The ashes of the burnt timber, however, serve as a powerful manure to the virgin soil of the forest lands, and enable them for one or two years to produce crops which are surprising, when we consider the state of the land in other respects. Notwithstanding the extreme imperfection of the tillage, the usual produce of wheat is 15 or 16 bushels per acre; of barley or oats, from 20 to 25; of potatoes, 150 bushels are considered as a very moderate crop, and 200 by no means extraordinary. From 10 cwt. to a ton, of timothy or clover hay,

may be expected, if grass seeds are sown; but this is not usually practised in the early stage of clearing. When the clearing is completed, the land may easily be brought, by tolerable cultivation, to produce crops of double the amount that can be raised in the first instance. But it must be allowed, that there are but few settlers who manage their land with sufficient judgment.

The quantity of land which may be annually brought into cultivation from the forest, varies with the dexterity of the workman, as well as the size of the timber. In this island, the timber is seldom so heavy as in the more southern parts of America, where it has often been known that one man has cleared ten acres in the course of a year, besides the other work of his farm. This, however, is a great exertion. In this island six or seven acres are not in general too great a task for an industrious settler, though not more expert at the axe, than any active man may become in the course of two or three years practice. A mere novice could not do so much; but any one who does not accomplish two or three acres, must either be a very indifferent hand, or deficient in industry.

The climate is not capable of ripening Indian corn with certainty; but every article that comes to maturity in England, seems in Prince Edward's Island to reach as great perfection, as can be expected from the slight and careless culture generally bestowed. The summer is rather warmer than that of England; the winter longer; but in severity not perhaps very different from that of the Netherlands. The cattle are often left to support themselves in the woods during the early part of winter; but, to carry them through the whole season, a supply of hay, to the amount of 1 ton, or 1 1/2 to each head, is considered as requisite. In summer, the cattle find abundance of food in the woods sufficient at least for the young stock; but the settlers are too much in the habit of allowing those of all descriptions to take their chance alike. The consequence is, that the produce of the dairy is inconsiderable, and that the full aged cattle are not well fattened. The few who pay more attention, find their advantage in providing better pasture for their cows and their feeding cattle. The sheep are more generally kept in inclosed pastures; as they cannot, without danger, be allowed to go into the woods.

These particulars may be sufficient to enable the intelligent agriculturist, to form an estimate of the ultimate situation, to which any emigrant may attain, according to the degree of his industry.

The advancement already made by the settlers, whose progress I have more particularly described, has been spoken of above as uncommon. This, however, is not to be understood as in comparison with that,

which might have been made, in the same circumstances, by natives of America. It is by no means unusual among settlers of that description, that the first crop they reap, after beginning to clear a new farm, is more than sufficient for the support of a family, and for maintaining them in a degree of luxury, which to the Scottish peasantry would appear absolute extravagance. But the Americans have a great advantage, in their perfect acquaintance with the woods, and in the dexterity which continual practice has given them in the use of the axe. No comparison can be stated between their case, and that of men, who, from a country where they had scarcely ever seen a tree, were taken at once to a situation, where they could with difficulty find room even to place their huts, till they had cleared away the wood.¹⁷⁸

These people could not, perhaps, have attained a state of independence so soon, but for a combination of advantages rarely enjoyed by European emigrants. Their industry, with all the arrangements for giving it effect, would not have been sufficient, if their habits had been less hardy, or their ideas of the necessaries of life less moderate. So many instances, indeed, are quoted of the ill success of Europeans, when placed at once in the heart of the wild woods, that I have heard several gentlemen, of the highest abilities and experience in the United States, pronounce an unqualified opinion, that a new settlement could not be formed without a basis of native Americans.

The decisive experimental proof to the contrary, that has been stated in these pages, seems to me of some public importance. It shows the advantage that may be derived from a class of people, who have hitherto been lost to their native country, and abandoned to their fate in a foreign land. It proves that, though of little service as manufacturers, they may be made excellent colonists; and that our North American possessions may be peopled and brought into cultivation, without introducing into them men, whose manners and principles are so repugnant to our own constitution and government, as those which are prevalent among the natives of the United States.

Of the possibility of inducing the Highlanders to go to our own colonies, I presume that no further doubt can be entertained; and I cannot help flattering myself, that no immaterial progress has already been made towards this object. In some considerable districts, the current appears already to be decidedly turned.¹⁷⁹ How far the example of these may operate on other parts of the country, time only can show; but it can scarcely admit of a doubt, that some further exertion in the same line might secure to our own colonies, all those of our countrymen, who cannot be retained in the kingdom.

This, however, is an object, which cannot be accomplished by the unsupported exertions of any individual. The experiment that has been detailed, may perhaps be useful as a preparatory step, and serve to point out the principles, on which effectual national measures might be grounded - measures which, if followed up on an extensive scale, while the object is within our reach, might secure to the empire most important advantages. Whether these are to be sacrificed from a deference to the prejudices of individuals, or to be attained by an adequate and timely effort, must rest with those, to whom the interests of the nation are more particularly intrusted.

Appendix

[A]

Among the estates forfeited after the rebellion in 1715, that of the earl of Winton, in East Lothian, stood the first in the list.¹⁸⁰ It appears, however, from the evidence on his trial, that when this nobleman joined the rebel army, he was accompanied by no more than fourteen men; though, on the same occasion, many Highland chieftains, even of middling rank, whose estates bore no proportion in pecuniary value to Lord Winton's, had brought along with them three, four, or five hundred. In like manner, in the year 1745, the military force of the rebels was entirely raised by the Highland proprietors, though, of the estates forfeited on that occasion, those in the Lowlands were at least one half of the value. Pennant [Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland 1769* (Chester, 1771)] mentions this, and at the same time observes the small amount of the whole. - 'The power and interest,' he says, 'of poor. twelve thousand per annum terrified, and nearly subverted the constitution of these powerful kingdoms.'

Of the estates to which he alludes, those in the Highlands, then not exceeding 5 or 6000 l. a-year, may now be valued at about 80,000 l., including two or three which escaped forfeiture from accidental circumstances, though the proprietors were engaged in the rebellion. The military force of the rebels appears never to have exceeded five thousand men. There are various documents, partly traditional, which ascertain the number of men which particular chiefs could bring out previous to that era; and, on comparing them with the present value of their estates, the proportion appears to be in general between ten and fifteen pounds for every man.

This sum is not very different from the yearly expense of a farm-servant in the North of Scotland. In the Agricultural Survey of the

Northern Counties drawn up in 1793, for the Board of Agriculture, the total expense of wages and maintenance for an able-bodied workman is computed at 9 l. 10 s. for the whole year. Since the date of that publication some advance has taken place; to what exact amount I am not informed, but probably about 30 or 40 per cent.¹⁸¹

[B]

To those who are not familiar with the ancient history of Scotland, these observations on the former state of the Highlands will be illustrated by a reference to Buchanan's *History of the Feuds and Conflicts of the Clans* [[George Buchanan,] *The History of the feuds and conflicts among the clans in the northern parts of Scotland and in the Western Isles; from the year M.XXXI. unto M.DC.XIX* (Glasgow, 1764)], to Martin's *History of the Western Isles* [Martin Martin, *A Description of The Western Islands of Scotland* (London, 1703)], and to Mr Home's *History of the Rebellion in 1745* [J. Home, *The History of the Rebellion in 1745* (London, 1802)], particularly the introductory chapters: many characteristic anecdotes are also interspersed through Pennant's *Tours*. These books being in general circulation, particular quotations are unnecessary; but the inquisitive reader may be glad to see a few passages from some publications of the period referred to, which are not so generally known.

In a pamphlet published immediately after the suppression of the rebellion in 1745, entitled, "Superiorities displayed, or Scotland's Grievance by reason of the Slavish Dependence of the People upon their Great Men," is the following passage:

"With respect to this and other depredations committed by the Highlanders, the first parliament after the Revolution sent up their grievances to King William, desiring a redress of them; whereof this was one: - 'That an effectual course may be taken to repress the depredations and robberies committed by the Highlanders.' - See Act 18, anno 1689. The king's instruction to the duke of Hamilton, commissioner to the parliament, was in these words, 'You are to endeavour to procure an act for an effectual course, to repress the depredations and robberies by the Highland clans; and when this matter is digested, you are to transmit the proposals to us, that you may get particular instructions thereanent.' A gentleman, in an *Account of the Affairs of Scotland*, printed about that time, gives us his observation upon this: it is, 'That the depredations by the Highlanders are certainly a great inconvenience to the kingdom, whereby the inhabitants of the Lowlands are not only obliged to keep

numbers of armed men, to watch and guard the passages and descents from the Highlands, but likewise to pay considerable compositions to these robbers, to procure their protection and assurance, which the law discharges; and this acknowledgement is called *black mail*, whereby these thieves are sustained without industry or virtue, who are hard to be reduced or brought to justice because of the inaccessibleness of the mountains, and that forces are not able to find subsistence there, nor march as far in two or three days in a body, as the Highlanders can do in one, and therefore the grievance is just; but there is no method proposed for accomplishing the redress: therefore the king did remit to the parliament to consider and digest effectual courses for repressing the Highlanders, which are to be transmitted to his majesty, that he may give particular instructions to his commissioner. Like as, though in the mean time the parliament did refuse to grant a supply, yet the king hath maintained a considerable army upon his own charge this summer, and hath planted some considerable garrisons round the verge of the mountains to secure the Lowlands; and if his majesty should withdraw or disband these forces, which he hath not been enabled to pay, the Highland clans being now combined in arms and open rebellion against the government, they would quickly destroy that kingdom, and raise such a flame in England as might have fatal effects, before it could be effected.’ A method for repressing the depredations in the Highlands, was agreed to in the third session of the first parliament of King William and Queen Mary, Act 4, September 10, 1690. But, so far as I can understand, it was no effectual remedy.”

A very curious description of the state of the Highlands in the early part of last century is given in a book entitled, [Edward Burt] “Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to his Friend in London,” printed in 1754 [London, 2 vol.]. The date of the letters, however, appears to have been about 1725 or 1730. Though anonymous, the internal evidence of their authenticity is so strong, as to leave no impression of doubt: and the writer (who appears to have been an officer of engineers quartered at Inverness) shows himself a man of observation and of candour. As the book is now rare, and the account of peculiar value from being a detail of facts immediately under the eye of the writer, a large extract may not perhaps be unacceptable.

“The Highlanders are divided into tribes, or clans, under chiefs or chieftains, as they are called in the laws of Scotland, and each clan again divided into branches, from the main stock, who have chieftains over them. These are subdivided into smaller branches of fifty or sixty men, who deduce their original from their particular chieftains; and rely upon them as their more immediate protectors and defenders.

But, for better distinction, I shall use the word chief for the head of a whole clan; and the principal of a tribe, derived from him, I shall call a chieftain.

The ordinary Highlanders esteem it the most sublime degree of virtue to love their chief, and pay him a blind obedience, although it be in opposition to the government, the laws of the kingdom, or even to the law of God. He is their idol; and as they profess to know no king but him (I was going further) so will they say they ought to do what-ever he commands, without inquiry.

Next to this love of their chief is that of the particular branch from whence they sprung, and in a third degree to those of the whole clan or name, whom they will assist, right or wrong, against those of any other tribe with which they are at variance; to whom their enmity, like that of exasperated brothers, is most outrageous." * * * * Vol. II. p. 91.182

"The chief exercises an arbitrary authority over his vassals, determines all differences and disputes that happen among them, and levies taxes upon extraordinary occasions; such as the marriage of a daughter, building a house, or some pretence for his support, and the honour of the name. And if any one should refuse to contribute to the best of his ability, he is sure of severe treatment; and if he persisted in his obstinacy, he would be cast out of the tribe by general consent. But instances of this kind have very rarely happened.

This power of the chiefs is not supported by interest as they are landlords, but as lineally descended from the old patriarchs, or fathers of the families; for they hold the same authority when they have lost their estates, as may appear from several, and particularly one, who commands in his clan, though at the same time they maintain him, having nothing left of his own.

On the other hand, the chief, even against the laws, is to protect his followers, as they are sometimes called, be they never so criminal. He is their leader in clan-quarrels, must free the necessitous from the arrears of rent; and maintain such who by accidents are fallen to total decay.

If by increase of the tribe any small farms are wanting for support of such addition, he splits others into lesser portions; because all must be somehow provided for. And as the meanest among them pretend to be his relations by consanguinity, they insist upon the privilege of taking him by the hand, wherever they meet him.

Concerning this last, I once saw a number of very discontented countenances, when a certain lord, one of the chiefs, endeavoured to evade this ceremony.

It was in presence of an English gentleman in high station, from whom he would willingly have concealed the knowledge of such seeming familiarity with slaves of so wretched appearance; and thinking it, I suppose, as a kind of contradiction to what he had often boasted at other times, viz. his despotic power in his clan.

The unlimited love and obedience of the Highlanders to their chiefs, are not confined to the lower order of their followers; but are the same with those who are near them in rank.” * * * * * p. 94, et seq.

“Some of the chiefs have not only personal dislikes and enmity to each other, but there are also hereditary feuds between clan and clan; which have been handed down from one general to another for several ages.

These quarrels descend to the meanest vassal; and thus, some-times, an innocent person suffers for crimes committed by his tribe at a vast distance of time before his being began.

When a quarrel begins in words between two Highlanders of different clans, it is esteemed the very height of malice and rancour, and the greatest of all provocations, to reproach one another with the vices or personal defects of their chief, which, for the most part, ends in wounds or death.” * * * * * p.100.¹⁸³

“By an old Scottish law, the chief was made accountable for any depredations, or other violences committed by his clan upon the borders of the Lowlands; and in extraordinary cases he was obliged to give up his son, or some other near relation, as a hostage for the peaceable behaviour of his followers in that respect.

By this law (for I never saw the act) he must surely have had an entire command over them; at least, tacitly, or by inference understood. For how unreasonable, not to say unjust, must such a restriction have been to him, if by sanction of the same law he had not had a coercive and judicial authority over those in whose choice and power it always lay to bring punishment upon him? If he had such an absolute command over them, was it not to make of every chief a petty prince in his own territory, and his followers a people distinct and separate from all others?” * * * * * p. 103.¹⁸⁴

“I have heard many instances of the faithfulness of particular Highlanders to their masters, but shall relate only one; which is to me very well known.

At the battle of Glenshiels, in the rebellion of the year 1719, a gentleman, (George Munro of Culcairne) for whom I have a great esteem, commanded a company of Highlandmen, raised out of his father's clan, and entertained at his own expense. There he was dangerously

wounded in the thigh from a party of the rebel Highlanders, posted upon the declivity of a mountain, who kept on firing at him after he was down, according to their want of discipline, in spending much fire upon one single officer, which, distributed among the body, might thin the ranks of their enemy.

When after he fell, and found by their behaviour they were resolved to dispatch him outright, he bid his servant, who was by, get out of the danger, for he might lose his life, but could be of no manner or succour or service to him; and only desired him, that when he returned home, he would let his father and his family know that he had not misbehaved.

Hereupon the Highlander burst out into tears, and asking him how he thought he could leave him in that condition, and what they would think of him at home, set himself down on his hands and knees over his master, and received several wounds, to shield him from further hurt; till one of the clan, who acted as a serjeant, with a small party dislodged the enemy, after having taken an oath upon his dirk that he would do it.

This man has often waited at table, when his master and I dined together, but otherwise is treated more like a friend than a servant.” *
*****p.104.etseq.

“The gentlemen who are near relations of the chief hold pretty large farms, if the estate will allow it, perhaps twenty or thirty pounds a-year, and they again, generally, parcel them out to under tenants in small portions. Hence it comes, that by such a division of an old farm (part of an upper tenant's holding) suppose, among eight persons, each of them pays an eighth part of every thing.” * * * * * p. 104. et seq.

“You will, it is likely, think it strange, that many of the Highland tenants are to maintain a family upon a farm of twelve merks, Scots, per annum, which is thirteen shillings and fourpence sterling, with, perhaps, a cow or two, or a very few sheep or goats; but often the rent is less, and the cattle are wanting.

What follows is a specimen taken out of a Highland rent-roll, and I do assure you it is genuine, and not the least by many.” (See illustration facing page 192.)

‘The poverty of the tenants has rendered it customary for the chief, or laird, to free some of them every year from all arrears of rent; this is supposed, upon an average, to be about one

year in five of the whole estate.' * * * * * p. 154. et seq.

'When a son is born to the chief of a family, there generally arises a contention among the vassals, which of them shall have the fostering of the child, when it is taken from the nurse; and by this means, such differences are sometimes fomented as are hardly ever after thoroughly reconciled.

The happy man, who succeeds in his suit, is ever after called the foster-father; and his children, the foster-brothers and sisters of the young laird.

This they reckon not only endears them to their chief, and greatly strengthens their interest with him, but gives them a great deal of consideration among their fellow-vassals; and the foster-brother having the same education as the young chief, may, besides that, in time become his hanchman, or perhaps be promoted to that office under the old patriarch himself, if a vacancy should happen: or otherwise, by their interest, obtain orders and a benefice.

This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready upon all occasions, to venture his life, in defence of his master; and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived, and watches the conversation, to see if any one offends his patron.

An English officer being in company with a certain chieftain, and several other Highland gentlemen, near Killichumen, had an argument with the great man; and both being well warmed with usky, at last the dispute grew very hot. A youth who was hanchman, not understanding one word of English, imagined his chief was insulted, and thereupon drew his pistol from his side, and snapped it at the officer's head; but the pistol missed fire, otherwise it is more than probable he might have suffered death from the hand of that little vermin." * * * * * p.156.et.seq.

"When a chief goes a journey in the hills, or makes a formal visit to an equal, he is said to be attended by all or most part of the officers following, viz.

- The Hanchman, before described.
- Bard, his poet.
- Bladier, - spokesman.
- Gillimore, carries his broad sword.
- Gilli-casflue, carries him, when on foot, over the fords.
- Gilli-comstraine, leads his horse in rough and dangerous ways. Gilli-trushanarnish, ... the baggageman.
- The Piper, who being a gentleman, I should have named him sooner.
- The Piper's Gilli,..... 'And lastly, who carries the bagpipe.

APPENDIX B.

	Scots Money.	English.	BUTTER. stones, lb. oz.	OATMEAL.	MUTTONS.
' Donald Mac Oil vic illi Challum	L. 3 10 4	L. 0 5 10½	0 3 2	0 2 1 3	½ and ⅙
' Murdoch Mac illi Christ	5 17 6	0 9 9½	0 6 4	0 3 3 3	¼ and ⅙
' Duncan Mac illi Phadrick	7 0 6	0 12 3½	0 7 8	1 0 3 0½	¼ and ½

' I shall here give you a computation of the first article, besides which, there are seven more of the same farm and rent, as you may perceive by the fraction of a sheep in the last column.

- ' The money L. 3 10 4 Scots. = L. 0 5 10½ sterling.
- ' The butter, three pounds, two ounces, at 4d. per lb. 0 1 1½
- ' Oatmeal, 2 bushels, 1 peck, 3 lippys and ¼ at 6d. per peck 0 4 9¼ and ½
- ' Sheep, one eighth and one sixteenth, at 2s. 0 0 4½

' The yearly rent of the farm is L. 0 12 1½ and ⅙

There are likewise, some gentlemen, near of kin, who bear him company; and besides a number of the common sort, who have no particular employment, but follow him only to partake of the cheer.

I must own that all these attendants, and the profound respect they pay, must be flattering enough; though the equipage has none of the best appearance.

But this state may appear to sooth the pride of the chief to a vast degree, if the declaration of one of them was sincere; who at dinner, before a good deal of company, English as well as Scots, myself being one of the number, affirmed, that if his estate was free from incumbrances, and was none of his own, and he was then put to choose between that and the estate of the duke of Newcastle, supposing it to be thirty thousand pounds a-year (as somebody said it was), he would make choice of the former, with the following belonging to it, before the other without it. Now his estate might be about five hundred pounds a-year.' * * * * * p. 158. et seq.

'The tribes will not suffer strangers to settle within their precinct, or even those of another clan to enjoy any possession among them; but will soon constrain them to quit their pretensions, by cruelty to their persons, or mischief to their cattle, or other property. Of this there happened two flagrant instances, within a few years past.

'The first was as follows: Gordon, laird of Glenbucket, had been invested by the D. of G. in some lands in Badenoch, by virtue, I think, of a wadset or mortgage. These lands lay among the Macphersons; but the tenants of that name refused to pay the rent to the new landlord, or to acknowledge him as such.

This refusal put him upon the means to eject them by law; where-upon the tenants came to a resolution to put an end to his suit and new settlement, in the manner following.

Five or six of them, young fellows, the sons of gentlemen, entered the door of his hut; and in fawning words told him, they were sorry any dispute had happened. That they were then resolved to acknowledge him as their immediate landlord, and would regularly pay him their rent. At the same time they begged he would withdraw his process, and they hoped they should be agreeable to him for the future. All this while they were almost imperceptibly drawing nearer and nearer to his bed-side, on which he was sitting, in order to prevent his defending himself (as they knew him to be a man of distinguished courage), and then fell suddenly on him; some cutting him with their dirks, and others plunging them into his body. This was perpetrated within sight of the barrack of Ruthven." * * * p. 170.

“The other example is of a minister, who had a small farm assigned him, and upon his entrance to it, some of the clan, in the dead of the night, fired five balls through his hut, which all lodged in his bed; but he happening to be absent that night, escaped their barbarity, but was forced to quit the country. Of this he made to me an affecting complaint.

This kind of cruelty, I think, arises from their dread of innovations, and the notion they entertain, that they have a kind of hereditary right to their farms; and that none of them are to be dispossessed, unless for some great transgression against their chief; in which case every individual would consent to their expulsion.” * * * * * p.173.

“The chiefs (like princes upon the continent, whose dominions lie contiguous) do not invade each others boundaries, while they are in peace and friendship with one another, but demand redress of wrongs; and whosoever should do otherwise, would commit an offence in which every tribe is interested, besides the lasting feud it might create between the two neighbouring clans.” * * * p. 176.

This last remark is confirmed by many curious antient papers, in which the chiefs of different clans make treaties of various kinds exactly in the style of independent princes.

On the state of the Highlands, at the period alluded to, there are some valuable observations in a pamphlet published in 1748, entitled, “A letter to a noble Lord, containing a Plan for effectually uniting and sincerely attaching the Highlanders to the British Constitution and Revolution Settlement.” * * * * * p. 14. et seq.

“My lord, the Highlanders have been oppressed and enslaved by their chiefs, yet oppressed and enslaved after such a manner, that they have joyfully submitted to their tyrants, and gloried, nay triumphed, in their base and ignominious servitude. The large, extensive, and universal *property of their chiefs*, and the *manner* in which they planted and *tenanted that property*, was indeed the cause of great influence and power on one hand, as it was of great poverty and ignorance on the other; and by this method alone the people might have been induced, through mere fear and dread, to a submission and compliance with the will and command of their lords; but, my lord, the connections prevailing there have yet a deeper and a stronger root, that of family, blood, relationship, kindred.

The chief, who is the eldest branch of the first stock, is considered as the guardian, *protector*, and father of his clan. The relationship runs from him; and is counted, through innumerable degrees, to the very remotest and lowest slave of the tribe. The blood is honourable to the last; and the

meanest clown on the mountains will maintain his title of alliance at the point of his sword. In this manner, my lord, the various tribes and clans of the Highlands consider themselves as so many separate and distinct families, each family having one common interest, one great aim, one principal and ultimate end in view, which is, the honour, the dignity, the interest of the chief: and a discipline suitable to these notions and principles is observed; for, from the earliest moments of their youth, they are instructed what degree of blood and relationship they bear to him; informed of the honour thereby accruing to themselves: and taught, that all respect and veneration is due to him, as being the representative of that extensive family of which themselves are but parts, and as being the head by which the energy, dignity, and power of the clan is exerted and displayed. They see but every where an universal and constant obedience paid him, an obedience which all think themselves honoured in paying, as it is paid to their own blood, the head and fountain of their kindred.

Habit and example fix and rivet these principles in the heart: and what finally cements and binds this union between the chief and his clan is, a maxim invariably pursued, that whoever insults or injures the most insignificant member of the clan, wounds the honour and reputation of the family; insomuch that the chief and his whole family, or clan, look upon themselves as most sacredly bound to revenge and wipe off every such injury and insult, even at the hazard and expence of the last drop of their blood.

My lord, I hold this *system of relationship*, and the *manner of planting the property* of the country, to be the principal and secret springs of all the power and influence of the Highland chiefs, all the servitude and dependence of the people composing the Highland clans; and however others may overlook or despise the first of these, your lordship will easily perceive the difference between *the last exerting itself alone, and exerting itself in union with the first*: for though the last might by itself have reduced the people to a state of dependance and servitude, yet that servitude would have been such as would have rendered the people entirely base, abject, and spiritless; such are, for instance, the subjects of the Turk: and such hath been, and always will be the case, of every people who are ruled and governed only by the mere influence and effect of property vested in the person of one man. For in this case there is raised no generous sentiment, no natural leading, no friendly ties to quicken and accelerate the native passions and courage of a man. Nothing, my lord, prevails here, but the cruel and stupefying hand of irresistible power, which cramps and distorts every thing naturally good and excellent.

But join this to the first, as is the case of the Highlanders, and though power and oppression take place, yet it shall appear to be otherwise: or, by this combination of principles, the Highlander considers the bread he eats under his master, not as the starved fare of a tyranny, but as the natural and kind distribution and appointment of the great parent and head of his family and clan. The service and obedience required is not viewed by him as a cruel and compelled subjection to a princely stranger, whose interest and views are as infinitely removed from his, as is his royal blood and pedigree; but as the natural and necessary obedience of a child of that family, whose honour and dignity is supposed to consist in the honour and dignity of the chief, and whose own private excellence and importance is thereby presumed to grow and increase with that of his head.

His spirit, therefore, is not broke, or rendered timid, by a constant service and submission to his lord; but enlivened and exalted through a love of glory and desire of fame. Nor would his affection or obedience change along with the property, to a new master; as is the case in Turkey. For his natural affection would remain, when the power of the chief was gone; nay, it would grow with his misfortunes; for he would consider them as the disgrace and misfortunes of the family, and of himself. I say then, my lord, that, distinct from property, there is another cause of the extraordinary power of the chiefs, I mean the bond of relationship; and as this cause is very strong, and can affect and influence when the other no more exists, it ought to be considered in a particular manner, in settling the future liberty of the Highlands.”

In confirmation of these very profound observations, may be quoted a remarkable anecdote of the celebrated Lord Lovat, who was attained on account of the part he took in the rebellion in 1745. It is mentioned in the *Memoirs of his Life* [*Memoirs of The Life of Lord Lovat* (London, 1746)], published about that time, that the estate which he claimed as heir male and chief of the clan of Frasers, had fallen into the hands of a gentleman of another name, whose claim resting upon a female title, was of no validity, according to the established customs of clanship. From a concurrence of circumstances, however, that gentleman (MacKenzie of Fraserdale) had been maintained in possession for some years; till, on the breaking out of the rebellion in the year 1715, he joined the Pretender’s army with five hundred men; but, says the writer of the *Memoirs*, “at least half that clan refused to rise, declared their true chief was arrived in England, and they would wait for his coming; which was treated with great ridicule and contempt by Seaforth and Fraserdale, and the latter marched with a detachment of between six and seven hundred men to force them into

the service, but it had a contrary effect. For though they did rise under the lairds of Struy and Foyer, yet they showed such a resolution to defend themselves, that Fraserdale and his people did not think fit to attack them.” * *

Lord Lovat, having made his way into the country, put himself at the head of the clan; and, from enmity against his rival, joined some other chiefs who had risen in favour of government, and gained some advantages over the adherents of the Pretender. “Their success, how-ever,” proceeds the author of the *Memoirs*, ‘ did not satisfy Lord Lovat; he was resolved to show his interest and power as a Highland chief, and therefore sent a trusty person to Perth, where the whole force of the rebels was assembled under Lord Mar, to summon the Frasers, under the command of his competitor, to join their lawful chief; and though his friends looked upon this as a very wild and strange attempt, yet it had all the success he could desire: for his clan, taking a favourable opportunity, marched off in a body, and actually came to Inverness and joined Lord Lovat.’ * * * * *

The arts of popularity, which were used on the other hand, by the chiefs, in order to preserve and strengthen these sentiments among their followers, have continued to affect the manners of the Highlands even till a recent date. Pennant appears to have been much struck with them. “On the side of the chieftain,” he observes, “no art of affability, generosity, or friendship, which could inspire love and esteem, was left untried, to secure a full and willing obedience, which strengthened the impressions of education.” * * * *Tour through Scotland*, Vol. III. p. 428.

The manners arising from these principles have remained in vigour long after the motives which first prompted them could have no immediate influence. Those chieftains, in particular, who still cherished the antient ideas of the country, and were anxious to preserve the affection of their followers, continued to behave towards them in the accustomed style of cordiality. This did not escape the observant eye of Dr Johnson, who, in speaking of his residence at the house of Mr M’Lean, of Col, says, “Wherever we roved, we were pleased to see the reverence with which his subjects regarded him. He did not endeavour to dazzle them by any magnificence of dress, his only distinction was a feather in his bonnet; but as soon as he appeared, they forsook their work and clustered about him: he took them by the hand, and they seemed mutually delighted.” ‘ * * [Samuel Johnson], *Journey to the Western Islands*, [London, 1775], p. 297.

Among the numerous characteristic anecdotes which are related of the Highlanders of former times, and which show in how singular a

degree they combined the most refined sentiments of fidelity and generosity, with a total disregard of what in civilized society are deemed the common principles of honesty, we may instance the well-known fact related in the Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. VIII. p. 359. "Mac Ian, alias Kennedy, after the defeat of the unfortunate Charles Stewart, at Culloden, watched over him with inviolable fidelity for weeks, and even robbed, at the risque of his life, for his support, at the very time that he himself and his family were in a state of starvation, and that he knew he could gain 30,000 £. by betraying his guest. This poor man was afterwards executed at Inverness for stealing a cow. A little before his execution, he took off his bonnet, and thanked God that he had never betrayed his trust, never injured the poor, and never refused a share of what he had to the stranger and the needy."

The contradiction which shows itself in this conduct is not perhaps so great as it may at first sight appear. There is no want of proof, that among the antient Highlanders it was always reckoned disgraceful to steal from one of the same clan, though they were not in the least ashamed of theft or robbery committed against distant or inimical tribes; and that every chieftain dispensed justice among his own followers with strict impartiality, though he protected them against others, however criminal in the eye of the law. In fact, the clans were little separate nations, and acted on a small scale, on the same principles on which we see the great kingdoms of Europe conduct themselves. Mac Ian, when he stole the cow for which he was hanged, was no more ashamed of what he had done, than a captain in the British navy would be of having taken a Spanish galleon laden with dollars. This circumstance of the clans being separate and distinct political communities, and the chiefs, in effect, petty independent princes, is the fundamental principle on which the whole of the antient state of the country essentially depended.

Here, indeed, I must observe, that in speaking of the feudal system in the Highlands, I do not use the term in the strict and technical sense in which it is understood by lawyers, but as some historians have employed it, to signify the state of society, which arose from the partial independence of the great barons, during the period when the executive government of the different kingdoms of Europe had not attained sufficient power to exercise a steady and effectual control.

The regular system of feudal tenures never was fully established in the Highlands. It was only in latter times that the chieftains were induced to apply for charters from the crown, in the legal and feudal form, to corroborate the most effectual title they derived from the right of the strongest. Some of them even disdained to accept of such

titles, and declared they would never hold their lands in a sheep's skin. One of considerable note (Mac Donell of Kepoch) acted on this principle down to the year 1745; and after the rebellion his lands fell into possession of another chief, who had claimed them for many ages on the ground of a charter from the crown, without ever having been able till then to make his title effectual.

From this, too, it appears, that the system of Heritable Jurisdictions had by no means so great an effect on the ancient state of the Highlands as many have ascribed to it. In fact, there were some chiefs who nominally held these jurisdictions over very extensive territories, but never could enforce their authority beyond the limits of their own immediate clannish power. On the other hand, the chiefs who had no legal jurisdiction at all, exercised every power of the highest courts of law. Dr Adam Smith quotes an instance of this kind: - "It is not thirty years ago, since Mr Cameron, of Locheil, a gentleman of Lochaber in Scotland, without any legal warrant whatever, not being what was called a lord of regality, nor even a tenant in chief, but a vassal of the duke of Argyle's, and without being so much as a justice of peace, used notwithstanding to exercise the highest criminal jurisdiction over his own people. He is said to have done so with great equity, though without any of the formalities of justice." *Wealth of Nations*, Book III. Chap. iv.

[C]

Extremely small possessions of land, while they keep the cultivation of the country in the hands of men incapable of attempting any improvement that requires expense, lead, at the same time, to an excessive want of oeconomy in the most essential points.

In the Highlands we frequently see as many horses employed upon ten or twelve acres of land, as might have been sufficient for the cultivation of thirty or forty. In the Agricultural Survey of the Northern Counties, p. 151, we are informed, that "in the parish of Far there are fifty ploughs; in that of Eddrachylis only ten: and it is said that two good ploughs, constantly employed, might do the labour of the whole."

In the Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. XIII. - parish of North Uist, - it is mentioned, that the number of horses kept in that parish and island amounts to 1600, though the black cattle are only 2000. The whole population is stated at 3218; and perhaps there is not any other part of the kingdom where the number of horses bears such a proportion to that of the human species as in some instances in the Highlands. By throwing

several farms into one, the number of these expensive and unproductive animals is immediately reduced. Were there no other advantage than this, the occupier would be enabled to pay a higher rent in proportion to the extent of land. It cannot be denied that the change produces also a public benefit, inasmuch as in place of horses, the land will be occupied by productive cattle which add to the food of man.

[D]

In the Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. X. p. 366, - parish of Harris, - are some detail concerning these different classes of occupiers of land; which may serve to illustrate the outline that has been given: - "The whole of this, like most other estates in the Hebrides, is occupied by three different orders of tenants: 1st, Principal tacksmen, or gentlemen; 2d, Small tenants; 3d, Cotters. The common and antient computation of lands in these countries is by pennies, of which the subdivisions are halfpennies, farthings, half farthings, clitigs, &c. Of these, a gentleman, according to the extent of his tack, possesses a vast many, perhaps twenty pennies, perhaps many more. This reckoning comprehends muir, pasture, and arable lands, for which the tacksmen pays so much yearly rent in the lump during the currency of his lease. Of this extensive possession he may subset a third or a fourth. Each sub-tenant in Harris generally holds the division of a farthing, for which he pays, according to the supposed value of the lands, from 20 s. to 40 s. in money, besides personal services, rated at a day's labour per week, to the principal tacksmen. The personal services of so many sub-tenants are reckoned indispensable under the present mode of management, in addition to the prodigious establishment besides of cotters and household servants, both male and female, which a gentleman supports in order to carry on the common business of the farm throughout the year. The single article of fuel costs a vast expense of labour. A gentleman, according to the number of fires his farm requires him to keep up, cuts of peats from thirty to fifty irons, and the cutting of an iron employs four men; the drying, stacking, and leading them home, require an expense of hands in proportion. Repairing of the fealdykes and inclosures, (a work of perpetual labour), weeding of corn, making kelp, reaping of the different crops, hay, barley, oats, and potatoes, in harvest, and the laborious tillage for raising these crops in winter and spring; besides the thatching and repairing of houses, tending and herding the cattle, cows, horses, and sheep, separately, with a great variety of other processes in this complex system,

all require such a multitude of servants, that a stranger is naturally struck with astonishment, and wonders how the produce of the most lucrative farm is able to support the expense of so large an establishment of domestics.” * * * * *¹⁸⁵

“A small tenant farm is a little commonwealth of villagers, whose houses or huts are huddled together with too little regard to form, order, or cleanliness, and whose lands are yearly divided by lot for tillage, while their cattle graze on the pastures in common. The small tenants in this country, who hold immediately of the proprietor, have leases like the principal tacksmen, and possess some a penny, some half a penny, and some a farthing of lands.

The stock or *sooming* for the pasture of a farthing land, is four milch cows, three, or perhaps four, horses, with as many sheep on the common as the tenant has the luck to rear. The crops vary according to the different qualities of the farms, but may be computed in general at four or five bolls a farthing, for which the tenant generally pays from 30 s. to 40 s. rent. This might be reckoned a good pennyworth of lands; but when it is considered that the cattle of these tenants, miser-ably fed throughout the year, and often dying through mere want in the spring season, are neither marketable nor yield much milk; besides, that their crops are commonly insufficient to support their families for half the year; the poverty of this class of people, in general, is easily accounted for.” The author goes on to state, that “the pro-duce of the small farmer only supports his family from harvest until the end of spring; and that he pays his rent, and subsists during summer, by the manufacture of kelp and other employments.” - p. 368.¹⁸⁶

“The third class of the people, whom we have denominated cotters, are tacksmen’s servants, constantly employed in the labours of the farm. They have generally grass, on the same pasture with their masters’ cattle, for one milch cow with its followers, i.e. a three-year, a two-year, and one-year old; a working horse and breeding mare, besides sheep, in the number of which they are seldom restricted, and a farthing’s division of land for corn and potatoes, with its proportion of sea-ware for manure. They have also a kail-yard, fuel, and a weekly allowance of a peck of meal. They are allowed a day in the week to work for themselves, which, with the help of their families, is sufficient for raising and repairing their crops. A grieve or overseer, and grass-keeper, if married men, and holding lands in lieu of wages, have more in proportion to the weight of the several charges committed to them. Having no rents to pay, and being seldom under the necessity of buying meal, unless the harvest prove very bad, they live, on the whole, better than the tenant of a farthing land.” - p. 369.

[E]

It is observed in the Statistical Account of Scotland - that “if a Highlander is forced or induced to leave the small circle which occupied his first affections, he cares not how far he goes from home. Going to another parish, or the district of another clan, is to him an entire banishment; and when he has resolved to set out, whether from necessity or choice, he would as soon cross the Atlantic as he would cross an arm of the sea. It is only an immediate and very clear advantage that would induce him to stop.” * * * * * Vol. IV. p. 574. *parish of Strachur.*

Of the truth of this observation I had myself a remarkable proof. Among the people engaged for my settlement in America, were a few bound under indenture to a certain number of years service, and who at the end of that time were to receive small lots of land. Not having a convenient opportunity of taking them out along with the other settlers, I found employment for them for some months on my estate in the south of Scotland. 117 Some of my friends imagined that they might be induced to settle in that neighbourhood, and, though I was not sanguine as to the probable result, I did not wish to dissuade the attempt. Every reasonable encouragement was accordingly offered; but the most favourable answer that could be obtained was, that if the same quantity of land was to be given to them, and on the same terms as in America, they would *take the proposal into consideration.*

[F]

“When the 42d regiment was first raised, and particularly when the heirs of Ardinglass and Strachur were appointed officers in Lord Loudoun’s regiment in 1745, though it was not then the mode to make officers’ commissions depend upon raising a certain quota of men, yet the two young gentlemen got most of their company, who followed them as volunteers from their paternal estates. How different the sentiments of the people in 1778! When it was proposed to raise a West Fencible regiment, the gentlemen of Argyleshire engaged to furnish a certain number of men; but though they had an express promise from government that they should not be called out of the kingdom, not even into England, except in case of invasion, the heritors were obliged to bribe them high.” * * * *Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. IV. p. 574 - parish of Strachur.*

[G]

In [Francis] Bacon's History of Henry VII. [The Historie of The Raigne of King Henry the Seventh, London, 1622] we Find the following passage: - "Inclosures at that time began to be more frequent, whereby arable land, which could not be manured without people and families, was turned into pasture, which was easily rid by a few herds-men; and tenancies for years, lives, and at will, whereupon much of the yeomanry lived, were turned into demesnes. This bred a decay of people, and by consequence a decay of towns, churches, tythes, and the like. The king likewise knew full well and in nowise forgot, that there ensued withal upon this a decay and diminution of subsidies and taxes; for the more gentlemen ever the lower books of subsidies. In remedying of this inconvenience, the king's wisdom was admirable, and the parliament's at that time. Inclosures they would not forbid, for that had been to forbid the improvement of the patrimony of the kingdom; nor tillage they would not compel, for that was to strive with nature and utility; but they took a course to take away depopulating inclosures and depopulating pasturage, and yet not by that name, or by any imperious express prohibition, but by consequence. The ordinance was, "That all houses of husbandry that were used with twenty acres of ground, or upwards, should be maintained and kept for ever.' "

In the preambles to several acts of parliament about that date, we find references to the same progress, e.g. 4th Henry VII. c. 16.

"Forasmuch as it is to the king our sovereign lord's great surety, and also to the surety of this realm of England, that the Isle of Wight, in the county of Southampton, be well inhabited with English people, for the defence, as well of his antient enemies of the realm of France as of other parties, the which isle is lately decayed of people, by reason that many towns and villages have been beaten down, and the fields ditched and made pastures for beasts and cattles; and also many dwelling places, farms, and farmholds, have of late times been used to be taken in one man's hold and hands, that of old time were wont to be in many persons holds and hands, and many several households kept in them, and thereby much people multiplied, and the same isle well inhabited, the which now by the occasion aforesaid is desolate and not inhabited, but occupied with beasts and cattles, &c. &c.:" the enactment is, that none shall take more farms than one in the Isle of Wight exceeding ten merks rent.

Another preamble, not less remarkable, is that of 25th Henry VIII. chap. 13: - "Forasmuch as divers and sundry persons of the king's

subjects of this realm, to whom God of his goodness hath disposed great plenty and abundance of moveable substance, now of late within few years have daily studied, practised, and invented ways and means how they might accumulate and gather together into few hands, as well great multitude of farms as great plenty of cattle, and in especial sheep, putting such lands as they can get, to pasture, and not to tillage, whereby they have not only pulled down churches and towns, and enhanced the old rates of the rents of the possessions of this realm, or else brought it to such excessive fines that no poor man is able to meddle with it, but also have raised and enhanced the prices of all manner of corn, cattle, wool, pigs, geese, hens, chickens, eggs, and such other, almost double above the prices which have been accustomed; by reason whereof a marvellous multitude and number of the people of this realm be not able to provide meat, drink, and clothes, necessary for themselves, their wives, and children, but be so discouraged with misery and poverty, that they fall daily to theft, robbery, and other inconveniences, or pitifully die for hunger and cold; and as it is thought by the king's most humble and loving subjects, that one of the greatest occasions that moveth and provoketh those greedy and covetous people so to accumulate and keep in their hands such great portions and parts of the grounds and lands of this realm from the occupying of the poor husbandmen, and so to use it in pasture and not in tillage, is only the great profit that cometh of sheep, which now be come to a few persons hands of this realm, in respect of the whole number of the king's subjects, that some have four-and-twenty thousand, some twenty thousand, some ten thousand, some six thousand, some five thousand, and some more and some less; by the which a good sheep for victual, that was accustomed to be sold for two shillings fourpence, or three shillings at the most, is now sold for six shillings, or five shillings, or four shillings at the least; and a stone of clothing wool, that in some shires of this realm was accustomed to be sold for eighteen-pence or twenty-pence, is now sold for four shillings, or three shillings fourpence at the least; and in some countries where it hath been sold for two shillings four-pence, or two shillings eight-pence, or three shillings at the most, it is now sold for five shillings, or four shillings eightpence the least, and so raised in every part of this realm; which things, thus used, be principally to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the decay of the hospitality of this realm, to the diminishing of the king's people, and to the let of the cloth making, whereby many poor people have been accustomed to be set on work; and in conclusion, if remedy be not found, it may turn to the utter destruction and desolation of this realm, which God defend."

[David] Hume, in his *History of England* [*The History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688*, 8 vol., London, 1763.], remarks, that “during a century and a half after this period, there was a continual renewal of laws against depopulation, whence we may infer that none of them were ever executed. The natural course of improvement at last provided a remedy.” - Vol. III. p. 425. edit. 1763.

Of the popular clamours on the subject, a curious specimen occurs in some lines, preserved in Lewis’s *History of the English Translations of the Bible* [*The New Testament ... translated by ... J. Wiclef, ... to which is praefixt a history of the several translations of The H. Bible ... into English ... by J. Lewis, n.p., 1731.*].

“Before that sheep so much did rayne,
Where is one plough then there was twayne;
Of corne and victual right great plentye,
And for one pennye egges twentye.
I truste to God it will be redressed,
That men by sheepe be not subpressed.
Sheepe have eaten men full many a yere,
Now let men eate sheepe and make good cheere.
Those that have many sheepe in store
They may repente it more and more,
Seynge the greate extreme necessitee,
And yet they shewe no more charitee.”

These ideas appear to have had no less a sanction than that of Sir Thomas More. - In a dialogue on the causes of the prevalence of crimes in England, which he introduces in the first book of *Utopia*, he expresses himself as follows:

“Your sheep, that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I hear say, be become so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses, and cities. For look in what part of the realm doth grow the finest, and therefore dearest wool, there nobelmen and gentlemen, yea, and certain abbots, holy men, no doubt, not contenting themselves with the yearly revenues and profits, that were wont to grow to their forefathers and predecessors of their lands, not being content that they live in rest and pleasure nothing profiting, yea, much knowing the weale publike, leave no ground for tillage: they enclose all into pastures: they throw down houses: they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing, but only the church to be made a

sheep-house. And, as though you lost no small quantity of ground by forests, chases, lands, and parks, those good holy men turn all dwelling places, and all glebe land into desolation, and wilderness. - Therefore that one covetous and unsatiable cormorant and very plague of his native country, may compass about and enclose many thousand acres of ground together within one pale or hedge, the husbandmen be thrust out of their own, or else either by covine and fraud, or by violent oppression they be put besides it, or by wrongs and injuries they be so wearied, that they be compelled to sell all: by one means, therefore, or by other, either by hook or crook they must needs depart away, poor silly wretched souls, men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woful mothers, with their young babes, and their whole household, small in substance, and much in number, as husbandry requireth many hands.

Away they trudge, I say, out of their known and accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in. All their household stuff, which is very little worth, though it might well abide the sale, yet being suddenly thrust out, they be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought. And when they have wandered abroad till that be spent, what can they then else do but steal, and then justly perhaps be hanged, or else go about a begging? And yet then also they be cast in prison as vagabonds, because they go about and work not: whom no man will set at work, though they never so willingly profer themselves thereto. For one shepherd or herdsman is enough to eat up that ground with cattle, to the occupying whereof about husbandry many hands were requisite. And this is also the cause why victuals be now in many places dearer. Yea, besides this, the price of wool is so risen, that poor folks, which were wont to work it, and make cloth thereof, be now able to buy none at all. And by this means very many be forced to forsake work, and to give themselves to idleness."

From these observations of so great a man, combined with the testimony conveyed in the preamble to the act of 25th Henry VIII. no doubt can be entertained, that in England the change from the feudal to the commercial system was accompanied by an unusual prevalence of crimes: nor is this difficult to be explained. Men educated amidst the idleness and irregularities of the feudal times, could not at once acquire the habits of industrious workmen; and nothing is more probable than that on being deprived of their accustomed means of support, they should seek relief in criminal practices. Perhaps this effect might have been alleviated, if such a vent as emigration affords, had then been open to people of this description.

[H]

The fact is perhaps even stronger than is here stated.

There is no part of the Highlands where the change in the system of management has advanced so far towards maturity as in Argyleshire. In Dr John Smith's Survey of that County [*General View of the Agriculture of the County of Argyl, etc.*, Edinburgh, 1798], drawn up for the Board of Agriculture, we find this remark:

"The state of population in this county, as it stood in 1755, and as it stands at present, may be seen in the statistical table. Although many parishes have greatly decreased in their number of inhabitants, owing to the prevalence of the sheep system, yet, upon the whole, the number is greater now than it was forty years ago. This is owing to the greater population of the town of Campbleton and village of Oban, which have more than doubled their joint numbers in that period; so that, if these are left out of the reckoning, the population in the county will be found to have decreased considerably." p. 291.

This fact is curious and valuable: the population of Argyleshire has not diminished on the whole, yet the value of produce which is now sent away to feed the inhabitants of a distant part of the kingdom, is much greater than formerly. Independently of that circumstance, this fact throws light on the nature of the change which has taken place by the abolition of the feudal system, and on the source of the fallacy which has been prevalent on the subject of population. The diminution in the country is evident to the most inattentive eye; no one can avoid seeing ruinous cottages and decayed villages: but the increase in the towns is not so obvious. This effect, though simultaneous, often takes place in a distant situation, where it can be traced only by careful enumerations.

According to the advancement of commerce, we find in every country a greater proportion of the whole population collected in towns. This, indeed, is an effect which, in a moral point of view, may justly excite feelings of regret; but it seems so unavoidable a consequence, that we ought to consider it as the price which is paid by society for the blessings of civilization and regular government.

[I]

Dr Smith, in his Survey of Argyleshire, drawn up for the board of Agriculture, complains much of the effect of sheep-farming on population: at the same time he acknowledges its superior productiveness. "That our mountains (he says) are better adapted for sheep than for black cattle,

cannot admit of a doubt. Under the sheep system they make a much better return both to the farmer and to the landlord, and furnish in the wool of the sheep a large fund for manufacture and for commerce.” - p. 260.

Mr [Alexander] Irvine, speaking of the new grazing system, says, “till this system was adopted, our hills were little better than useless wastes to the owners and the public.” - *Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration*, [Edinburgh, 1802], p. 34.

The fact is distinctly explained in an Essay on the Improvement of the Highlands, by the Rev. James Headrick. - “There are physical reasons which render black cattle an improper stock upon high mountains. In such situations they are always exposed to danger, and are seldom able to collect above one-third of the herbage which could be gathered by sheep. * * * * * As the extent of mountainous pasturage far exceeds that of the arable land in the valleys, cattle in such situations cannot be properly foddered and taken care of in winter, of course, great numbers die of hunger, while the survivors are very much diminished in value.” - *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society*, Vol. II, p. 455.

The same opinion is strongly expressed in the Agricultural Survey of the Northern Counties, [Sir John Sinclair, *General View of the Agriculture of the Northern Counties and Islands of Scotland*. London, 1795] p. 110. - “For every pound of beef that a Highlander can send to market, a shepherd can at least bring three pounds of mutton. This is besides the wool, which furnishes the staple for an useful manufacture that never existed before. Hence the shepherd is enabled to pay at once a double rent with ease; and it can hardly be questioned, that in process of time Highland property would be tripled or quadrupled in value by sheep-farming.”

Mr [William] Marshall, in his Survey of the Central Highlands [*General View of the Agriculture of The Central Highlands of Scotland*, London, 1794], speaks of the increase of produce as so vast, that he entertains a doubt whether a market can be found for it: - “Where could be found a market for such a number of sheep as the entire Highlands would produce? Hitherto the demand has been greater than the produce, and must continue to be so, until the country be stocked. Young sheep now travel northward from the central Highlands, and from the south of Scotland; but whenever the rage of stocking ceases, though it may happen before the entire Highlands be completely stocked, sheep of every age and sex will, in the ordinary course of things, return in myriads, and overflow the central and southern markets; and unless some new market could be opened in

England (a thing which under the present spirit of breeding sheep there, is not likely to happen), the Highlands would be under the necessity of returning to the corn and cattle system." * * * * * p. 56.

Since the period when Mr Marshall visited the Highlands, sheep-farming has been progressively extending. The country cannot yet, indeed, be said to be completely stocked, and young sheep still (as he says) travel northwards: but the markets of Falkirk, &c. now receive a great and continually increasing supply of sheep from the Highlands. It is observed, too, by persons well informed on the subject, that the value of cattle brought to the same markets from the Highlands has not undergone a diminution by any means equivalent to the increase in the supply of sheep. No symptom, however, can yet be traced of any such deficiency of demand as Mr Marshall apprehends.¹⁸⁸

If, indeed, this very intelligent agriculturist has bestowed as much of his attention on Political as on Rural Economy, he could scarcely have failed to perceive, that the present spirit of breeding sheep in England will be no absolute bar to the sheep of the Highlands finding a market there. There is no other management which in these mountains will bear a comparison with the rearing of sheep; and therefore, if the farmer cannot otherwise dispose of his produce, he must reduce his price, till he forces a market. The price will be very far reduced indeed, before sheep-farming sinks to the level of the old management of the Highlands in point of profit. - The farmer who breeds sheep on the arable lands of England is in a very different situation: he can employ his land for many other purposes with nearly equal advantage. Independently of breaking it up for tillage, he may apply his pasture to the dairy, to fattening cattle, or even to feeding these very sheep from the highlands. Whenever, therefore, the price of young sheep falls below a certain level, he will give up breeding them as an unprofitable business; and if the sheep which can be reared in the mountainous districts of the kingdom are found adequate to the full supply of the market, the practice of breeding them on fertile arable lands, however fashionable it may now be, must decline and fall into disuse. - At all events, the progress of sheep-farming in the Highlands must tend to the diminution of this practice; and of the lands which will thereby fall to be converted to a different purpose, it is reasonable to suppose that a great proportion at least will be employed for the cultivation of grain.

[K]

Having communicated these observations, while yet unfinished, to a gentleman of Glasgow (Mr Dugald Bannatyne) [later author of *Observations on The Principles Which Enter into The Commerce for Grain*, Glasgow, 1816], whose means of information on this branch of the subject entitle his opinion to the greatest weight, I was favoured with the following remarks:

“You are quite correct in what you say about finding employment for the Highlanders in the manufacturing towns. We have had a good deal of experience upon that part of your statement at our mills at Rothsay, where we weave as well as spin. - We have at different times, when wanting hands, recruited from the Isle of Mull, and brought to Bute many families from thence, but we scarcely ever derived benefit except from the children: the grown up people (for want of early associations, I suppose), seeming almost to be without a capacity of acquiring dexterity in the very common operations.

What you say upon the introduction of manufactures into the Highlands is unanswerable: they possess no advantages to induce the attempt. - The only manufacture that ever occurred to me, as naturally connected with the Highlands, was to prepare and spin up the wool from their own sheep, something of which I believe is already done at Bunaw in Argyleshire, and the yarn sold in the clothing counties in England.”

This¹⁸⁹ small commencement of a woollen manufactory at Bunaw, is carried on, as I am informed, chiefly by the wives and families of the men, who are employed at that place in an iron furnace, established many years ago, for the sake of the fuel supplied by some extensive copse woods in the vicinity. This fact is therefore perfectly consistent with the reasonings in the text (p. 108).

Mr Bannatyne's remarks are confirmed, in the most material points, by Mr David Dale, [1739-1806, founder of New Lanark and Robert Owen's father-in-law] whose well known benevolence has prompted him to invite many families of Highlanders to his extensive cotton mills near Lanerk [sic.]; but there, as well as at Rothsay, the children alone are found to be useful in the manufacturing operations. The grown men can only be employed as porters, or in work that requires nothing but the mere unskilled exertion of bodily strength.

Since this work was first laid before the public, I have been informed of a fact which strongly illustrates the natural difficulties, that must attend any attempt to introduce manufactures on a large scale into the Highlands. The experiment has been actually made in the most complete manner.

An establishment was set on foot about 15 years ago, chiefly at the suggestion of Mr [George] Dempster [1732-1818], who, in concert with his brother Captain Dempster of Pulrossie, offered the most liberal encouragement to induce persons of capital in Glasgow, to undertake a manufactory on their estates in Sutherland. The universal regard entertained for the character and public services of Mr Dempster, was a powerful motive with several eminent merchants at Glasgow to second his views, and a company was formed, in which Mr David Dale and Mr George M'Intosh took the lead, and in which they were joined by many other public-spirited individuals. A situation was selected for the purpose, possessing every advantage that could be expected, having a convenient harbour for small vessels on the Firth of Dornoch, and lying in the midst of the most populous districts of Sutherland and Ross-shire. By a small alteration in its former orthography, the name of the place was changed to Spinningdale. A cotton work was erected, and a number of hands kept in employment, both in spinning and weaving. The undertaking has been prosecuted for a number of years with unwearied assiduity, in spite of every difficulty; but, notwithstanding the low price of labour, it has been uniformly a losing concern. With the utmost exertion on the part of the managers, they never could succeed in producing the amount of work, which is generally expected in other manufactories, from the same machinery and the same number of hands.

The patriotic views, with which this establishment was begun, induced the gentlemen concerned in it, to persevere long after they had sufficient indications, that the chance of profit was very small. In the year 1797, however, the capital originally advanced was found to be entirely exhausted, and most of the partners then retired; but Mr Dale and Mr M'Intosh were unwilling to abandon their benevolent attempt, without further trial, and continued to carry on the work on their own account. No advance of capital was withheld, that could tend to insure success; but in the end they found it necessary, about two years ago, to relinquish the concern, and on winding it up, the loss incurred was found to amount to a very considerable sum. That the buildings and machinery might not be entirely thrown away, they were sold at a low price, payable by instalments at distant dates. By this accommodation, a person has been induced to continue the work under doubtful prospects of success. This experiment must be considered as the more decisive, from the circumstance of its having been conducted by persons of the first mercantile talents, who, in their other undertakings, have been eminently successful. The failure, therefore, can be ascribed to nothing but those

radical difficulties, which the situation of the country must oppose to every similar attempt.

It may, perhaps, be too much to conclude from this fact, that no manufactures can ever be successful in the Highlands; but it is certainly decisive as to this, that no exertion of capital and skill can force their rapid and extensive establishment. If manufactures are ever to flourish there, they must arise, as they have in most other places, by gradual and slow growth from small beginnings. A long period must therefore elapse, before they can be relied upon as a resource for any great number of people.

[L]

On this point my opinion is confirmed by the respectable testimony of Mr [Charles] M'Lean of Coll, who, in addition to the reasonings in the text, makes the following important observation: "I have always looked upon the indolence attributed to the Highlanders as proceeding in a very great measure, from the misplaced attachment of friends and relations, and even the native spirit of hospitality, in this respect too general amongst the lower orders. It is a common practice for people to go to service in the Low Country for several years; but they almost uniformly return, and are often sent for by their friends, to remain idle at home, when tired, as they say, of work. Those friends have frequently but a scanty subsistence for themselves, but no one will refuse a residence, or a share of his homely fare, to a friend or connection. They frequently (unknown) share their little portions of land, so that no one dreads the danger of absolute want, however idle; and thus a great spur to industry is withdrawn. From this cause it proceeds, that no Highlander can be got to be sufficiently industrious, or to work hard in his own country."

[M]

Of this fact we have, among many other proofs, a strong testimony from Mr Irvine. - "In some valleys the population is so excessive, that it is a question with many discerning people, how the one half of the inhabitants could subsist, though they should have the land for nothing. Those who would be tenants are so numerous, and the land fit for cultivation so scanty, that all cannot be satisfied. The disappointed person, feeling himself injured, condemns the landlord, and seeks a

happy relief in America. The tradesmen are in the same predicament; they cannot be all equally well employed, because they are not all equally deserving; because there are too many of them, and because customers are too few. They curse their country, and make haste to abandon it.

In some spots with which I am acquainted, there may be from ten to twelve inhabitants, in some places more, to an acre of arable land. Most of them have no trade. They apparently live by the produce of the place; and, making every allowance for the scantiness of the fare, their patience of hunger, and trifling importation of necessaries, it is to me inexplicable how they subsist. To equipoise population they spread themselves begging." * * * *Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration*, p. 7.

With all this the reverend author is an enemy to emigration; and this, too, is the country which, according to the Highland Society, "is fast approaching to the point of complete depopulation!" - See *Third Report on Emigration*, p. 1. and 2.

[N]

The following description of the situation of the *Mailers* is extracted from the Survey of the Northern Counties drawn up for the Board of Agriculture, p. 56. and with slight variations may be applied to the class of people who improve waste land in all parts of the Highlands.

"In the Black Isle we have numbers of this description of cultivators, by whose exertions many considerable acquisitions of arable land have been gained from our barren wastes and moors, in addition to different properties in this district. They generally follow some handicraft employment, such as weaver, shoemaker, taylor, carpenter, mason, dyker, &c. &c. and many are mere day-labourers only. These poor people are often indiscriminately planted on the skirts of waste or moor lands, next adjoining to those last cultivated, and now we shall suppose in the hands of a farmer or tenant. After his house is erected for the Mailer, he is left at freedom to dig away and cultivate what ground he can, for there is rarely occasion to limit him. The aids afforded him, and terms granted, are various, and generally, I suppose, proportioned to the expectations from his exertions.

I find that some give seven years lease gratis, wood for his house, and some other pecuniary allowances. At the expiration of the lease, a small acknowledgment is imposed, and perhaps not, for three or four years more, as his industry deserves.

Some assign them one, two, or three acres, and never remove them, on paying, viz. the men 10 s. and widows 5 s. per ann. and giving 15 days service in harvest; but, however, paying 6 d. per day to the men, and 4 d. to the women and all others able to work, a little drink, but no victuals.

Some with seven years lease, rent free at first, give them labouring utensils, and also seed for the first three years; and some give a life rent, and wood for their houses, on paying 1 s. per annum, but must yearly take in two acres. Day services in harvest, and some other trifling exactions, may possibly be stipulated for by all. The only means the Mailer has for cultivation are, his own and family's personal labour with the spade, his ashes, and the dung from his miserable animal of a horse, which he keeps for the purpose of bringing home his turf for fuel: and he generally commences with potatoes: when he thrives, he possibly acquires two horses, a few sheep, and perhaps a hog.

I find that there are advocates for and against this practice. The general objections to these settlers are, that they are great depredators, are in declared hostility to all inclosures and improvements of any higher nature than their own, and unmerciful destroyers of all the grounds around them, scalping and tearing up every bit of better soil, and digging holes and pits either for their turf, or procuring earth or gravel for their dung-heaps; and this to such a degree, that when removed, no farmer can meddle with such abused and ill-conditioned lands: also the small and tedious progress they make, and their natural indolence and inefficiency. On the other hand, there are those who think this mode of improvement sure, though very slow and tedious: that they are the only means within the reach of many proprietors, and not rejected even by those who might adopt a higher and more effectual system, and both have already experienced their good effects in the increase of their rent-rolls. Almost all acknowledge the accommodation derived from the assistance of their services, at a certain easy rate, in harvest and other husbandry-work; and particularly here where day labourers are not otherwise to be procured."

[O]

“The landlord enlarges his farms to make way for a mode of agriculture or pasturage, which he conceives more advantageous. He removes the former occupants, and admits a person of more understanding, and more efficient capital: he makes a provision for those who may be dispossessed, by offering them a small tenement; but pride and irritation scorn to accept his provision.”****

“Where it is found more profitable to lay a district under grass to the half or two-thirds of its extent, it is obvious, that unless you make a previous provision of some kind, many must leave their country to seek food and employment in some other place. In this case, one of the most improveable farms should be divided into crofts or fields of one or three acres; and a judicious selection should be made of those to whom they should be offered; for some men, who pride themselves upon being men of spirit, would *spurn at the thought of descending from the rank of a tenant into the station of a crofter*. If a man of this kind, however, refuses any rational accommodation, the country is better without him; he is ripe for emigration. He may be cured by changing his residence. His spirit is not sound. This is the touch-stone.” * * * * * *Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration, by the Rev. A. Irvine, p. 34. and 104.*

These expressions are rather too severe to be applied to a feeling so natural and so universal among mankind. The desire of bettering our condition, the reluctance and mortification that is felt at any retro grade step, seem to be almost inseparable from the human mind. They may be traced in every rank of society: the greatest monarch on earth is not exempt from their influence, nor is the meanest peasant. If these feelings meet with indulgence in one rank, ought they to be censured with so much rigour in another? - We do not think it extraordinary that a gentleman of large property should be averse to sink into the station of a farmer or a shopkeeper: the reverend author himself would not, perhaps, be well satisfied if he were reduced to the condition of a small tenant: and is the tenant to be blamed, because he too clings to the small degree of rank he possesses, and will not submit to sink in the scale of society without an effort to maintain his station?

In this passage Mr Irvine has perhaps been influenced by a glimpse of the arguments which are insisted on in page 117 & *seq.* of these Observations; and by this he has been led to a practical conclusion more just than the general tendency of his

work can be deemed. He certainly cannot be accused of being a friend to emigration; yet if the gentlemen of the Highlands agree with him in the sentiment that the country is better without those whose “*spirit*,” as he describes it, “*is not sound*.” they will not find many among the emigrants to excite their regret.

[N]

Innumerable authorities might be quoted for this fact: the following may be sufficient:

“No two occupations can be more incompatible than farming and fishing; as the season which require undivided exertion in fishing, are precisely those in which the greatest attention should be devoted to agriculture. Grazing, which is less incompatible with fishing than agriculture, is even found to distract the attention and prevent success in either occupation. This is demonstrated by the very different success of those who unite both occupations, from those who devote themselves exclusively to fishing. Indeed, the industrious fisher finds the whole season barely sufficient for the labours of his proper occupation. From the middle of spring the fishing season continues frequently till after Christmas, and the intervening space is barely sufficient for refitting his nets, lines, and fishing tackle. But the population of the coasts of the Highlands is sufficient to admit of the professions being separated, which only injure each other when con-joined.”
- Essay on the Fisheries, by Mr R. Melvill, at Ullapool, in Ross-shire. - Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society, Vol. II. p. 413.

[Q]

“From the aera of introducing sheep-stocks, a very great change is observable in the dispositions of the people. Till then they showed no predilection for a sea-faring life.” * * * * *

“Within these last thirty years, especially since sheep stocks have been introduced, it is remarked that a number of people from this district have become sailors: but it appears that necessity, not choice, has been the cause.”
Statistical Account of Scotland, Vol. IV. p. 574 and 575 - parish of Strachur, in Argyleshire.

[R]

In reasoning on this subject, I have taken for granted that, according to the received ideas, there is a difference arising from the accumulation of people in the Highlands, and that the expense of making kelp would be greater if the

population should fall to its natural level. In this, however, I must be understood as speaking hypothetically; for I am by no means convinced, that those who have work to be executed in the Highlands derive any real benefit from the present low rate of wages. The same circumstance, from which this arises, occasions also a want of industry and skill, which is probably more than sufficient to counterbalance the advantage.

In several parts of the Highlands I have found that when labour was done by the piece, the prices given were higher than would have been required for similar work on my own estate; yet, in the same places, the wages of a yearly servant were scarcely more than half of those which an ordinary workman would have procured in the south of Scotland.

With respect to kelp-making, it is difficult to state so direct a comparison. The shores of the south of Scotland are seldom so productive as to render kelp an object of general attention, or to lead to those improved methods of manufacture which will naturally arise where the quantity is very considerable. The plan upon which the workmen are employed and paid is different in different places; and even where the same mode is followed, little instruction can be gained from a mere comparison of prices, because the labour required for making any specified quantity of kelp is various, according as the situation is more or less difficult. A comparison in which so many complicated circumstances are involved, would require a more minute acquaintance with the business than I can pretend to; but I may venture to state some grounds for suspecting that there is much fallacy in the ideas commonly entertained on the subject.

A very intelligent overseer of work in the south of Scotland, who has had much experience in kelp-making, and is not unacquainted with the Hebrides, informs me, that in situations not less difficult than most of the shores he has seen there, he could in a good season make five and a half tons of kelp, and in the worst season four tons, for each workman employed under him. This I apprehend is considerably more than is generally done on the coast of the Highlands and Western Isles: at least in those parts I have visited I have not heard of so great a quantity being *usually* done. - In the Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. x. parish of Harris, it is mentioned that one ton is the proportion commonly allotted to each working hand. - In the account of North and South Uist, this point is not so fully stated; but circumstances are mentioned which give reason to believe that the proportion cannot in general exceed two tons.

It is also mentioned in the same work, that the land rent of these islands is entirely paid away in wages for kelp-making; and I have heard the same circumstance reported from other authorities. - From the description of these islands it appears, that on their western coast

there is a uniform range of arable land naturally of a fine quality, though from the miserable style of agriculture not so productive as it ought to be. In the island of South Uist, the extent of good land, though not accurately surveyed, seems to be at least thirty square miles, besides six or eight times as much of moorish pasture, partly improvable. Were this land well managed, and let at its fair value, it cannot appear improbable that the rent would exceed considerably the whole price of the eleven hundred tans of kelp which the shores are reckoned to produce; but when the use of all this land is given away for the mere expense of manufacture, at what rate is an acre to be valued, if this be an oeconomical mode of management; or where is the profit the landlord derives from his kelp?

The expenses of making kelp in the western Highlands and isles, are in various situations from thirty-five to fifty shillings per ton: in some few instances as high as three pounds. Where local circumstances are similar, I do not apprehend the expenses in the low country of Scotland are much, if at all, higher. - On inquiring of the man I have mentioned above, at what rate he could undertake to make kelp in those parts of the Hebrides he was acquainted with, on the supposition that he could have no assistance from the inhabitants, and that all his workmen must be hired in other parts of the country, and conveyed there for the season, he formed an estimate of prices not very widely different from those that are at present paid.

Though I am far from supposing that the natural progress of things in the Highlands will ever render such expedients necessary, yet this may be sufficient to show how little foundation there is for the idea, that the manufacture of kelp may be totally annihilated by emigration.

[S]

See First Report to the Highland Society, on Emigration, p. 5.¹⁹⁰ It may easily be supposed, that of those who make the fatal experiment, the few among the survivors who are capable of relating the fatal tale, find it impossible to warn their friends at home of the discovery they make, while surrounded by none but those whose interest it is to keep up the delusion. There is an anecdote, for the truth of which the committee cannot pledge themselves, but which is generally believed in that part of the country where it is said to have happened, which is very applicable to this point. It is related of a sagacious Highlander, who had emigrated, that being desirous to warn his friends of their danger, and yet aware of the

impossibility of doing it in plain language, the consequence of which would only have been the detention of his letter, he wrote a letter glossing over the hardships of his voyage, and advising his friends to follow him, but with one caution, that they should persuade his uncle James to accompany them, without which he would not recommend the measure. His friends, who received this letter, knew that his *uncle James* had been dead before he left home, and understood perfectly his hint against under-taking such a voyage.”

It may not be amiss to compare this passage with the opinion of a clergyman resident in the centre of the Highlands. “I am persuaded there is not a family, hardly an individual, who has not a father, brother, sister, cousin, or kinsman, in America, with whom they keep up a regular correspondence.” *Irvine’s Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration*, p. 66.

[T]

See Third Report of the Highland Society on Emigration, - *page 4. & seq.*

The long detail of uninteresting circumstances contained in the Report, would be tedious if extracted at full length, and a short summary of the material points will render them sufficiently intelligible.

The ground of the whole is a complaint which is stated to have been made by some tenants in Benbecula to the justices of the peace, against two men of the names of [Archibald] M’Lean and [Roderick] M’Lellan, whom they accused of having enticed them to sign agreements for going to America, of the import of which they were not aware. 191

It must be observed, by the way, that allegations of this kind are very frequently made by the common Highlanders without any foundation. All written transactions are in the English language, which is understood only by a small proportion of the people, and any one who repents of a bargain he has made, has so obvious an excuse in this pretence, that it ought always to be received with some degree of jealousy. On this occasion, however, the justices seem to have been perfectly well disposed to believe the tenants on their word.

It is further mentioned, that M’Lean and M’Lellan had conversed with the people assembled at a place of religious worship about America, and among other observations has said, that “they were not troubled with landlords or factors [i.e. land stewards], but that all the people were

happy, and on an equal footing, and there there were no rents paid there.” One of them also read a letter from a settler in Canada, exhorting his countrymen “to throw off the yoke of bondage and the shackles of slavery, and to quit the land of Egypt, and come to this land of Canaan:” adding, “How can I say otherwise when I never knew what actual freedom or the spirit of equality was till I came to Canada? We have wholesome laws and impartial judges; we have the blessings of the Gospel and peace in the midst of plenty. - Here are no landlord, no factor, no threatening for your rents at Martinmas.”

“Such appears then,” says the Reporter, “to be the train of sentiments, such the deceitful hopes and *seditions* discontents, which the emigrant traders make a liberal use of.” - He goes on to comment on the circumstances above noticed, and to observe that “when this traffic draws into its service the preaching of sedition, and *even the calumniating* landlords, *factors*, and still more the magistracy of the country, in such a way as to irritate the people, and thereby put the public peace in hazard, there is at common law, full power vested in the magistrate to restrain and punish such irregularities.”

Those who will not take the trouble of investigating the real origin and effective causes of any evil they observe, are generally inclined to cut the Gordian knot by some such short hand remedy as this gentle man hints at. A more accurate examination would have shown him, that the circumstances on which he insists, as the prime causes of the disorders of the country, are the mere symptoms of its morbid state. However mistaken on this head, the reporter has given us facts that are important, as an example of that irritation which has been already insisted on, as prevalent among the lower orders in the Highlands, in consequence of the change in the system of the country.

It cannot escape notice, that the language of M’Lean and M’Lellan, however objectionable, derived all its force from the previous existence of discontent in the minds of the people whom they addressed. If the same language had been used in the days of genuine clanship, how differently would the people have received the idea of going to a country, where they could have no protection from the chief! - The topics of complaint brought forward, are all founded on the peculiar circumstances of the Highlands, and totally different from those which a preacher of sedition in any other part of the kingdom would have dwelt upon. Not a word is said of the Government or Laws of the kingdom;

nothing is spoken of but the harshness of the landlord, and the unusual burthen of rents.

The praises bestowed on the government and judicature in Canada, may seem indeed to imply a censure on that of our own country; but this would not be a fair construction, when we consider how little the advantages of the British constitution have yet reached to these people. This may not be understood by those who are accustomed to the regular administration of justice in all the southern parts of the kingdom, and who imagine that things are every where conducted in the same manner. The law, indeed, is the same as in the rest of Scotland; the heritable jurisdictions are abolished: - nevertheless, the circumstances of the Highlands still give the proprietors of land a degree of power over their immediate dependants, which is not seen in the more commercial parts of the kingdom. This cannot be said equally of *all* the Highlands; for in the southern and more improved districts, things are approaching to a similarity with the rest of Scotland; but in remoter situations there is still a considerable remnant of the arbitrary spirit of the feudal times.

From the observations that have been made on the general state of society in the Highlands, it will be understood that no man can live there as an independent labourer; that every inhabitant of the country is under an absolute necessity of obtaining a possession of land; and as the competitors for such possessions are so numerous that all cannot be accommodated, every one who is not determined on quitting the country, feels himself very much at the mercy of the proprietor, on whom he depends for the means of remaining. To this is to be added, the poverty of the lower orders; the great extent of particular estates; the remote insulated situation of many; their distance from the ordinary courts of justice, and the great expense which must on that account be incurred by an attempt to procure redress for any wrong. - All these circumstances combine to give a landlord in these remote situations an extraordinary degree of personal weight; and the regular authority of a magistrate being super-added, no individual among his dependants can venture to contest his power.

The laws passed after the year 1745, for abolishing the feudal jurisdictions in the Highlands, were certainly useful in so far as they had an effect, but were of much less consequence than has sometimes been supposed. The substantial change on the state of the Highlands has arisen from other circumstances already sufficiently explained. To extend the spirit as well as the forms of

the British constitution through these remote districts, it is necessary that the progress which has been going on, ever since the year 1745, should come to maturity; that a commercial order of society should be fully established, and complete the subversion of the feudal system.

In the present state of things, it is not perhaps too much to say, that in a great part of the Highlands the proper administration of justice still depends less on the regular checks of law, than on the personal character of the resident gentry. The power that is in their hands is, in a great proportion of the country, exercised with a degree of moderation and equity highly honourable to individual gentlemen; but unless the proprietors of the Highlands were a race of angels, this could not be without exceptions. - Above all, when it is considered that many extensive estates are scarcely visited by their owners once in the course of several years, and that the almost despotic authority of the landlord is transferred to the hands of underlings, who have no permanent interest in the welfare of the people, it is not to be supposed that abuses will not prevail, and that oppressions will not be practiced.

The complaints of the common people are in many parts as loud as they dare to utter them; but the instances of injustice which they may occasionally experience, produce on their minds an aggravated impression, from the great and constant sources of irritation arising out of the general state of the country; and hence perhaps their complaints are too indiscriminate.

That there is some ground, however, for complaint, does not rest on the authority of the common people alone. In [John] Knox's *Tour through the Highlands [A Tour Through The Highlands of Scotland, and The Hebride Isles, in 1786, London, 1787]*, p.191. we find the following remark on one of the Hebrides: - "The fishery of the island has long been monopolized by the factor, who pays the fishermen thirteen pounds per ton for the ling, and gets, when sold on the spot, eighteen. When to these advantages we add the various emoluments arising from his office, and his traffic in grain, meal, cattle, &c. his place is better than the rent of many considerable estates in the Highlands."

It may perhaps be imagined that Mr Knox, being a stranger, has been misled by exaggerated representations; but this cannot be supposed of the patriotic author of the *Agricultural Survey of the Northern Counties of Scotland* [Sir John Sinclair], who, in laying down a plan for the management of a Highland estate, particularly insists on the factors being "restrained from exacting

services, accepting presents, or dealing as drovers in the purchase of cattle, under any pretence whatever.” p. 166.

On the prevalence of abuses we have also the testimony of a resident clergyman, Mr Irvine, in his *Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration*.

“Were it consistent,” he says, “with my inquiry, I would willingly pass over the conduct of the factors in silence.” p. 41.

“If a person is so unfortunate as to give any one of them offence, no matter how, he either privately or publicly uses every artifice to render him odious to his neighbours or his landlord, till in the end he finds it necessary to withdraw.

It would be tedious and irksome to enumerate the various methods, by which a factor may get rid of a person whom he hates, or let in (as it is termed) one whom he loves.” p. 42.

Mr Irvine goes on with various other observations, and concludes with saying: - “He that could bear the tyranny of such masters, might have been born a Mahometan.” p. 45.

The power with which the factors of many Highland estate are invested, seems to carry with it temptations almost too great for human nature: but though it is on this class of men that the weight of popular odium chiefly falls, ought not the blame, in just reason, to lie with those, who suffer such abuses to be committed in their name?

Taking things, however, as we find them, it will not appear extraordinary, that the crime, newly laid down in the *code* of the Highland Society under the title of *calumniating factors*, unknown as it is in the laws of England, should in some places be deemed the most dangerous and unpardonable of all species of sedition.

[V]

A most satisfactory and decisive illustration of this subject may be drawn from a comparison of the population of all the Highlands, as ascertained by the enumerations made by Dr Webster in 1755, by Sir John Sinclair between 1791 and 1798, and recently by the commissioners under the Population Act.

In stating this comparison, some intricacy arises from the circumstance that the Highlands have no precise and ascertained boundary, coinciding with the limits of any civil jurisdiction. The tract of country, however, in which the patriarchal government of the chiefs remained longest in force, after the authority of regular law had been fully established in the rest of Scotland, coincides very nearly with that in which the Gaelic or Erse language is in common use. Taking this, therefore, as the most definite criterion that can be

referred to, a selection has been made of those parishes, where that language is so prevalent, that the clergy are required to perform divine-service in it. The shires of Sutherland, Ross, Cromarty, Inverness, and Argyll, with the islands of Bute and Arran, though including some tracts of champain country, must, in this view of the subject, be considered as entirely Highland. To these counties are to be added the parishes of Reay, Thurso, Halkirk, and Latheron in Caithness, those of Nairn, Ardclach, and Calder in Nairnshire, Duthel in Elginshire, Kirkmichael in Banffshire, Luss and Arrochar in Dumbartonshire, and those of Balquhider, Blair and Strowan, Callander, Comrie, Dull, Fortingall, Kenmore, Killin, Kirkmichael, Logierait, Mouline, and Weem in Perthshire. Besides these, there are some parishes, where a part of the inhabitants, though not the majority, use the Gaelic language; but, as there is no possibility of ascertaining what proportion, such parishes are not included. The amount of the Highland population, thus omitted, cannot perhaps exceed 4 or 5000, and being left out of view equally in all the different statements which are here subjoined, cannot affect the accuracy of the comparison they afford between different periods of time.

From the annexed Table it will be seen, that the whole population of the Highlands, amounted in 1755 to 255,845, and in 1801 to 296,844, - a result which is very remarkable. To those who have studied the principles of political economy, it may appear a paradox, that in spite of the operation of so powerful a cause of depopulation, as that which has been explained in this work, so little change should have taken place in the actual numbers, and that, in so many parts of the district, they should even be increased. The explanation of this fact is to be found partly in the extension of the fisheries on the western coast and isles, but much more in the cultivation of potatoes, which, though scarcely known at the period of Dr Webster's enumeration, are now in universal use. From some recent investigations, it appears probable, that the population of Ireland has at least been doubled in consequence of the introduction of potatoes as the principal food of the people. The same circumstance would probably have had as remarkable an effect in augmenting the population of the Highlands, if this cause had not been counteracted by the change that has taken place in the state of landed occupancy. On the other hand, if the effects of the grazing system had not been modified by such a cause of increase, the depopulation of the Highlands must have proceeded with much more rapidity.

The general result arising from the combination of these opposite tendencies, has been different in different parts of the Highlands,

as will be observed on an examination of the Table. On the western coast, and in the isles, the increase of population is considerable; this seems to be owing to the fisheries, as well as to the circumstance that, in a great part of this tract, the new system of management has not made so much progress, as in the Highland districts lying farther south and east. On the other hand, the diminution in the Highlands of Perthshire, an inland district adjoining to the Lowlands, appears to be uniform, though not perhaps so great as from general reasonings might have been expected.

TABLE.			
Population of	in 1755	in 1791-8	in 1801
Sutherland, and Highlands of Caithness, and Cromarty,	47,656	55,430	34,443
and Argyleshire, Bute and Arran,	6,866	10,563	56,577
Nairnshire, parishes of Elginshire, parishes of Banffshire, parishes of Dumbartonshire, parishes of Perthshire,	3,743 1,785 1,288 1,444 32,367	4,648 1,110 1,276 1,296 31,446	155,642 11,285 4,647 1,113 1,332 1,423 30,382
Total population of the Highlands,	255,845	291,440	296,844

The two first columns of the above table are extracted from the Population Table in vol. xx. of Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Survey of Scotland: the third from the Population Abstract, printed by order of Parliament. But, to make the corresponding articles in the different columns refer, in every case, to the same precise tract of country, some corrections were necessary. The supplementary Table here subjoined, with the observations which follow, will explain the grounds on which these are made.

	1755	1791-8	1801
Ross-shire,	42,493	50,146	52,291
shire, 5,163		5,284	3,052
Parish of Kirkmichael and Cullicudden	-	-	1,234
Total, as in the preceding Table,	47,656	55,430	56,577
Argyleshire,	63,291	76,101	71,859
Inverness-shire,	64,656	73,979	74,292
Parish of Killinichan,	-	-	3,002
Island of Tyree	-	-	2,446
Do. Rum, Muck, and Canay,	-	-	940
Part of Abernethy (stated to Elgin)	-	-	2,206
Total, as above,	127,947	150,080	155,642
Sutherland,	20,774	22,961	23,117
parishes of Caithness,	11,975	12,630	11,326
Total, as above,	32,749	35,591	34,443

The numbers, here annexed to the names of shires, are their respective totals, as they appear in the abstracts of the different enumerations referred to. But, in the two former of these, extracted from Sir John Sinclair's work, these totals comprehend the population of some places, which are not included under the same heads, in that of 1801. An addition must therefore be made in the third column, equal to the population of those places, in order to give a fair comparative statement. The discrepancies alluded to, arise from two circumstances:

1. In the enumeration of 1801, no return was obtained from the parish of Kirkmichael and Cullicudden in Ross-shire, from that of Kilfinichan in Argyleshire, or from the Islands of Tyree, Rum, Muck, and Canay. To

supply this omission, the population of these places is added, on the supposition of its remaining the same as reported to Sir John Sinclair a few years before; a supposition which, though not perhaps minutely correct, cannot lead to any material error.

2. The parishes of Abernethy, Croy, Moy, and Urquhart, though chiefly belonging to Inverness-shire, extend into the adjoining shires of Elgin and Nairn. The whole population of these parishes is included by Sir John Sinclair, in that of Inverness-shire: but, in the enumeration of 1801, the people in each division of these parishes are separately stated to their proper shires. To reconcile this difference, that part of the population of these parishes, which is included under heads of Elgin-shire and Nairn-shire, is added in the third column to the total of Inverness-shire.

There are other parishes, which are, in like manner, divided between the shires of Ross and Cromarty, those of Argyle and Inverness, and those of Sutherland and Caithness. This renders it necessary to throw these shires together; for otherwise a mere comparison of the totals, as they appear in the different abstracts, would give an incorrect view.

The numbers in the first Table, set down under the heads of Bute and Arran, Highland parishes of Nairn-shire, Elgin-shire, &c. are found by merely adding together the population of such parishes in each of these shires, as have been above enumerated as using the Gaelic language in divine-service.

References

¹ Selkirk to Lord Hobart, 9 February 1803, SPPAC, 13856-7.

² See editor's introduction, pp.

³ Selkirk to Hobart, 9 February 1803, SPPAC, 13856-7.

⁴ War between Great Britain and France was resumed on 11 May 1803.

⁵ See Patrick C. T. White, ed., *Lord Selkirk's Diary, 1803-1804* (Toronto, 1958).

⁶ This date is omitted from the first edition.

⁷ The best modern studies are A. J. Youngson, *After the Forty-Five: The Economic Import on the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1973), and Malcolm Gray, *The Highland Economy 1750-1850* (Edinburgh, 1957).

⁸ As well as Youngson and Gray, see also David Turnock, *Patterns of Highland Development* (London, 1970), 1-37, and J.M. Bumsted, *The People's Clearance*, 27-53.

⁹ Selkirk's footnote read: "See Appendix [A]."

¹⁰ The foregoing was probably based upon "A Highlander," *The Present Conduct of The Chieftains and Proprietor: of Lands in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1773).

¹¹ The 1805 edition has "achievements."

¹² Selkirk's footnote reads "See Appendix [B]."

¹³ Selkirk here echoes the comments of Dr. Samuel Johnson. See Mary Lascelles, ed., *Samuel Johnson: A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. Yale edition, IX (New Haven and London, 1971), and James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson LL.D.* (London, 1785).

¹⁴ Especially the Duke of Argyll, The Earl of Seaforth, and the Earl of Sutherland. See *The People's Clearance*, p. 32.

¹⁵ Selkirk's footnote reads: "See Appendix (U)."

¹⁶ Selkirk himself was later associated with one exception to his argument, involving the people of Kildonan in Sutherlandshire. See *The People's Clearance*, 207-210, and especially James Armour to William McDonald, 27 February 1813, SPPAC, 14088-89.

¹⁷ Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*, 169-180.

¹⁸ The reference here, of course, is to the infamous “Highland Clearances.”

¹⁹ For a good discussion of Highland topography, see J. Fraser Darling and J. Morton Byrd, *The Highlands and Islands* (Glasgow, 1964).

²⁰ Selkirk’s footnote reads: “See Appendix (C).” The 1805 edition reads: “The further enlargement of farms throws them into the hands of men of education and efficient capital, who, by following improved modes of cultivation, increase the productiveness of the soil: thus, according to the observation of Dr. Adam Smith, ‘The diminution of cottagers, and other small occupiers of land, has in every part of Europe been the immediate forerunner of improvement and better cultivation.’ [Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*.]”

²¹ The 1805 edition reads: “Hence a number of small occupiers must be dispossessed. When large farms are already established, many of the people, who were thought necessary in the feudal times, and have since been suffered to remain on the land, will, under any system of cultivation, be found superfluous as workmen, and dismissed. All these have been hitherto enabled to live by possessing land at a rent below its value.”

²² The 1805 edition begins a new paragraph here.

²³ Selkirk’s original footnote reads: “Called in the Gaelic language *baile*; in the Low Country dialect *touns*.”

²⁴ In 1783 the Earl of Breadalbane’s Chamberlain wrote: “Many farms have eight tenants ... These eight tenants labour the farm and carry on all their other works together. First they plow the whole land, then they divide every field or spot of ground which they judge to be of equal quality into eight parts or shares and cast lots for what each is to occupy for that crop. After this each sows his own share and reaps it again in harvest and so they go on year after year. If men’s dispositions and tempers in the same situation of life were nearly equal and if they considered their neighbours’ good at all times as nearly connected with their own, such a method of carrying on the works of a farm might do very well, but the contrary is the fatal truth and verified in a strong degree amongst these people. For often more time is spent in contending not only what work is first to be done but also the manner in which it is to be done than would actually carry the double into execution, and that none may do less than his neighbour, all go to a piece of work which perhaps might be done by one ... Further, by this method there is no encouragement for one man to improve and manure his lands better than his neighbours, as what he occupies this year may not fall to his share next. The diligent and industrious reaps no more benefit than the most lazy and indolent of his neighbours.” Quoted in Margaret M. McArthur, ed., *Survey of Lochtayside 1769* (Edinburgh, 1936), liv-lv. There is some dispute among scholars as to the prevalence of such joint tenancy by the end of the eighteenth century, but contemporaries thought it common.

²⁵ For black cattle, see Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*. 168-169.

²⁶ For a general discussion of subtenants, see Bumsted, *The People’s Clearance*, 35-37.

²⁷ Selkirk’s footnote reads: “See Appendix [D].”

²⁸ Selkirk's footnote reads: "See [Sir John Sinclair] *Survey of the Northern Counties of Scotland* [London, 1793] drawn up for the Board of Agriculture, page 76 to 84."

²⁹ Contemporaries regarded this redeployment of population as reasonable and legitimate, providing as it did a labour force for industrialization. See *The People's Clearance*, 77-78, and *After the Forty-Five*, 48-49, 72-3 and *passim*.

³⁰ Selkirk perhaps overemphasized the importance of sheep-farming in the Highland situation of his time, but he did recognize other factors. See *The People's Clearance*, 26-51 and *passim*.

³¹ This argument represents Selkirk's most crucial assumption and one often attacked by contemporaries, containing as it does two contentious points: (a) that ordinary Highlands were entitled to a better future than day-labourers in industrial towns, and (b) that North America provided that future. See, for example, Robert Brown, *Strictures and Remarks on the Earl of Selkirk's Observations on the Present State of the Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1806), especially p. 62.

³² This interpretation of the "indolence" of Highlanders, while patronizing, was considerably more positive than that of many contemporaries. See, for example, Alexander Irvine, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration from the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1802).

³³ In Irvine's *An Inquiry*, for example, and more particularly by The Highland Society of Edinburgh and those responsible for emigration regulations in 1803. See *The People's Clearance*, 108-152.

³⁴ Selkirk was undoubtedly thinking of Alexander Irvine and The Highland Society here.

³⁵ For cattle prices, see *The People's Clearance*, p. 133.

³⁶ See Malcolm Gray, "Scottish Emigration: The Social Impact of Agrarian Change in the Rural Lowlands, 1775-1875," *Perspectives in American History*. VII (1973), 95-174.

³⁷ Selkirk's footnote reads: "See Appendix [E]."

³⁸ For substantiation of this argument, see *The People's Clearance*, 155-187.

³⁹ See *The People's Clearance*, especially p. 134.

⁴⁰ See W.F. Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World* (New Haven, 1932).

⁴¹ For the family nature of the Highland movement of population, see Bumsted's "Scottish Emigration to the Maritimes 1770-1815: A New Look at an Old Theme," *Acadiensis*. X (1981), P. 71.

⁴² Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*. 47-67.

⁴³ *Vie People's Clearance*, 189-191.

⁴⁴ See, for example, "State of Emigration from the Highlands of Scotland, its extent, causes & proposed remedy London March 21, 1803." National Library of Scotland, Ms. 35.6.18.

⁴⁵ Especially active were the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Searforth, the Earl of Sutherland, Lord Macdonald, and Macdonald of Glengarry, although a number of tacksmen also recruited. See David Stewart of Garth, *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland. with details of the Military Service of the Highland Regiments* (Edinburgh, 1822).

⁴⁶ On the negative side, consult John Prebble, *Mutiny* (London, 1975).

⁴⁷ Highlanders were also appreciated because they were regarded as "Strangers to the levelling and dangerous principles of the present Age." See "Plan for raising Sixteen Thousand Men for internal Defence by embodying the Highland Clans," [Feb. 1797], National Library of Scotland Acc. 4285.

⁴⁸ Selkirk thus accepts the arguments of the Highland developers (see Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*, 46-100), but shows their inconsistency.

⁴⁹ For substantiation of this line of argument, see the case of the "Canadian Regiment" detailed in *The People's Clearance*, ISS-187.

⁵⁰ Selkirk's footnote reads: "See Appendix [F]."

⁵¹ Prebble, *Mutiny*.

⁵² See Bumsted's "Lord Selkirk's Highland Regiment and the Kildonan Settlers," *The Beaver*, outfit 309.2 (autumn, 1978), 16-21.

⁵³ The first edition has a substantially different paragraph at this point: "The importance which has been ascribed to the population of the Highlands, does not, I apprehend, arise from the mere number of the recruits which they supply, but from their peculiar excellence, and the ideas entertained of their high military character. If this character can be preserved, it must be on different principles from those that have hitherto operated; and while the change in the system of the country goes on without interruption, no remedy can be expected from compulsory measures against emigration."

⁵⁴ The first edition reads as follows at this point: "In addition to all that has been said, every person, acquainted with the description of people of which the emigrants consist, must perceive, that these are not the men who, in ordinary circumstances, can be expected to enlist. Men with money in their pockets, and with families to take care of, are not those whom a Serjeant Kite [a notorious recruiting sergeant in] would assail. From their personal and domestic situation, they must entertain objections against a military life, which cannot be overcome by any motive less powerful than those which influenced the feudal tenantry. There is no reason therefore to expect, that any direct obstruction to emigration, however severe, can add a single recruit to the army."

⁵⁵ Selkirk's text reads: "See Appendix [G]."

⁵⁶ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [H]."

⁵⁷ The first edition reads at this point: "the produce may be nearly as great."

⁵⁸ The remainder of this paragraph is new to the 1806 edition.

⁵⁹ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [C]."

⁶⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [I]."

⁶¹ In the first edition, this paragraph begins: "Even if the question were limited to the Highlanders alone, it is an undeniable fact, than an increase in the productive industry of the nation is a consequence of the emigrations."

⁶² Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [L]."

⁶³ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [K]."

⁶⁴ In the first edition, this paragraph begins: "If such a precedent should be found, I am confident it is not from Glasgow that any application would come for a renewal of expedients, devised at a period when the first principles of political economy were buried in darkness."

⁶⁵ Selkirk's reference is to the Highland Society, and ultimately, the government. See *The People's Clearance*, 83-107.

⁶⁶ The first edition reads "These".

⁶⁷ The first edition adds: "but of Glasgow and Paisley."

⁶⁸ Selkirk's note in the first edition reads: "_____ and unless also they were empowered by act of parliament to live without food."

⁶⁹ See *Report from The Committee on The Survey of the Coasts, &c of Scotland, Relating to Emigration. (1803)* and *The People's Clearance*, 108-153.

⁷⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [M]." The southern mountains to which he refers are those in his own district of Galloway.

⁷¹ The first edition has no commas in this sentence.

⁷² A point raised by many observers, including Thomas Telford in his *A Survey and Report of the Coasts and Central Highlands of Scotland* (1803), a report commissioned by the government. See *The People's Clearance*, 140-141.

⁷³ This policy of alternate employment was pursued by some landlords, including the Sutherland family. See Eric Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth: The Sutherland Fortune in The Industrial Revolution* (London, 1973). The people, of course, did not want to be redeployed.

⁷⁴ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [N]."

⁷⁵ Le., lime.

⁷⁶ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [O]."

⁷⁷ For the fisheries, see Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*, 101-119, and Jean Dunlop, *The British Fisheries Society 1787-1893* (Edinburgh, 1978).

⁷⁸ For the salt law controversy, see Youngson, *After the Forty-Five*, pp. 69, 108-109, 121. Acts of 1719 and 1735 exempted from excise all salt used to cure fish for export, but the legislation was too complicated to be useful.

⁷⁹ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [P]."

⁸⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [Q]."

⁸¹ For a more favourable view, see Dunlop's *The British Fisheries Society*.

⁸² Loch Fyne, is an inlet approximately 12 miles west of the Firth of Clyde and immediately northeast of Kintyre. Nothing more is known of Mr. Maclachlan and his scheme.

⁸³ For advocacy of manufacturing, see *After The Forty-Five*, esp. 72-81.

⁸⁴ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [K]." Also see *The People's Clearance*. 48-49. David Dale (Robert Owen's father-in-law) did make one abortive effort in Sutherland-shire.

⁸⁵ For linen, see Alistair Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in The Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1979).

⁸⁶ Selkirk ignored this observation when he sent a steam-driven sawmill to Hudson's Bay in 1812.

⁸⁷ Selkirk seeks not only full employment, but suitable full employment.

⁸⁸ Thomas Robert Malthus, *First Essay on Population* (London, 1798), reprinted in many editions. For a modern study, see M. W. Flinn, ed., *Scottish Population History From the Seventeenth Century to the 19311's* (Cambridge, England, 1978).

⁸⁹ Alexander Webster, "Account of the Number of People in Scotland in the Year 1755," not published until 1952. Selkirk obviously had access to a manuscript copy. See A. J. Youngson, "Alexander Webster and his Account of the Number of People in Scotland in the Year 1755," *Population Studies*, XV (1961), 198-200.

⁹⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "See Statistical Account of Scotland. General Table of Population, Vol. XX [Sir John Sinclair, comp]."

⁹¹ No further evidence survives on this estimate.

⁹² Selkirk's note reads: "See Irvine's Inquiry into the Causes and Effects of Emigration &c, p. 9.11

⁹³ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [V]."

⁹⁴ See Eric Richards, "Patterns of Highland Discontent, 1790-1860," in R. Quinault and J. Stevenson, eds., *Popular Protest and Public Order: Six Studies in British History 1790-1920* (London, 1974).

⁹⁵ Consult, for example, Robert Dudley Evans, *A New History of Ireland* (Toronto, 1970) or Maire MacEntee O'Brien, *A concise History of Ireland* (London, 1972).

⁹⁶ This passage is the only surviving evidence of Selkirk's location in the mid-summer of 1792. For the riots, see Kenneth J. Logue, *Popular Disturbances in Scotland*

⁹⁷ What the gentry of Ross meeting at Dingwald actually wrote was: "We are at present so completely under The Heel of this Populace that should they come to Burn our houses, or destroy our property in any way their Caprice may lead them to feel us an incapable of Resistance." Sir Hugh Munro to Robert Dundas, 31 July 1792, SRO RH2/4/64/258.

⁹⁸ Lord Adam Gordon, commander of the King's Scottish armies, wrote in 1792, "... no *disloyalty* or spirit of *rebellion*, or dislike to this Majesty's *Person or Government* is in the last degree concerned in these tumults...." Quoted in Henry Meikie, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 83.

⁹⁹ Selkirk ignores the question of whether the ancient clan chieftains were entitled to become landowners.

¹⁰⁰ See Malcolm Gray, "The Kelp Industry in the Highlands and Islands," *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series, IV (1951), 197-209; James Hunter, *The Making of The Crafting Community* (Edinburgh, 1976); and *The People's Clearance*, especially 39-43, 84-96.

¹⁰¹ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [R]."

¹⁰² For the absentee nature of the kelping proprietors, see *The People's Clearance*, 84-86.

¹⁰³ Selkirk's note reads: "See the latter part of Appendix [T]."

¹⁰⁴ For a full discussion of the background of the passage of 43 George 111 cap. 56 ("An Act for regulating the Vessels carrying Passengers from the United Kingdom to his Majesty's Plantations and Settlements Abroad, or to Foreign Parts, with respect to the Number of such Passengers") see *The People's Clearance*.

¹⁰⁵ Selkirk's original note reads: "These Reports have never been published, but are noticed in the Introduction to Vol. II. of The Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society. The first was presented to the Society in January, 1802-the second

in June following - the third in March, 1803. - Some extracts have been printed as an Appendix to a "Report of a Committee of the House of Commons on the Survey of the Coasts, &c. of Scotland, relating to Emigration - ordered to be printed, June 9th, 1803." The quotations I have occasion to make, refer to the MS copies engrossed in the Records of the Society, with which they have been collated, and in which the First Report occupies 10 pages, and the Third, 13. To the Second Report, I have no occasion to refer."

¹⁰⁶ For the report, see the still unpublished Highland Society Sederunt Books, Royal Highland Society, Edinburgh, III, 475-487.

¹⁰⁷ For further elaboration of this point, see *The People's Clearance*, 99-101.

¹⁰⁸ Selkirk's original note reads: "First Report - page 11."

¹⁰⁹ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [S]."

¹¹⁰ This charge was answered by John Stewart in the introduction to his *An Account of Prince Edward Island* (London, 1806).

¹¹¹ Selkirk's original note reads: "Third Report - page 1 and 2." See "Third Report of the Committee on Emigration, 25 March 1803," Highland Society Sederunt Book, 111, 647-655.

¹¹² Selkirk's original note reads: "This Island is apart of the Long Island, concerning which some particulars are stated in page -: sufficient to enable the reader to judge what grounds there are for apprehending a total devastation." For further details, see *The People's Clearance*, 117-118.

¹¹³ Selkirk's note reads: "See Appendix [T]."

¹¹⁴ Selkirk's original note reads: "- at least for the time. The circumstances of that island render it probable, however, that no very long period can elapse, before it will be absolutely necessary, that it should be relieved of a part of its population." No further evidence survives for this incident.

¹¹⁵ Selkirk's original note reads: "Third Report-page 4 to 6. See also Introduction to Vol. II. Transactions of the Highland Society, p. 8 and 9."

¹¹⁶ As Selkirk notes, most contractors were not professionals and were themselves emigrants. The critics saw the situation quite differently, however. See *The People's Clearance*, esp. 125-6.

¹¹⁷ Selkirk's note reads: "See First Report, p. 7." Both the Highland Society and the parliamentary committee which recommended the legislation explicitly modelled it upon the regulation of the slave trade. See *The People's Clearance*, 101-102.

¹¹⁸ Selkirk's original note reads: "Vol. 11. Transactions of the Highland Society. Introduction, p. 7."

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¹¹⁹ For further details of this incident, see *The People's Clearance*, 76-77.

¹²⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "See the Appendix to the Report above referred to from a Committee of the House of Commons, 'on the Survey of the Coasts, &c of Scotland, relating to Emigration.' "

¹²¹ Selkirk's original note reads: "Third Report."

¹²² Selkirk's original note reads: "Transactions of The Highland Society Introduction."

¹²³ The law called for a limitation of one passenger for every two tons of vessel burthen, and daily provisions of one-half pound of meat, one and one-half pounds of bread, biscuit or oatmeal; one-half pint of molasses, and one gallon of water per passenger. The limitation on numbers was more severe than The Highland Society had suggested.

¹²⁴ That is, a cereal ration of one and one-half pounds per day was more than Scots consumed at home.

¹²⁵ Selkirk's original note reads: "See First Report, p. 9."

¹²⁶ Selkirk's note reads: "Agricultural Survey of the central Highlands [General View of The Agriculture of The Central Highlands (London, 1794)] by Mr. [W.] Marshall, p. 21."

¹²⁷ Selkirk's note reads: "Ditto of the Northern Counties [i.e., *General View of the Agriculture of The Northern Counties and Islands of Scotland* (London, 1795) by Sir John Sinclair], p. 82."

¹²⁸ For discussion of this point, see *The People's Clearance*, 91-92.

¹²⁹ Selkirk's note reads: "Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society, Vol. II. Introduction, p. 9." This object was also not disavowed by Charles Hope, who drafted the legislation. See Hope to John King, 3 September, 1804, quoted in *The People's Clearance*, p. 155.

¹³⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "Third Report."

¹³¹ Selkirk's note reads: "See a 'Communication from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland,' inserted in Appendix C to the Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, on The Survey of The Coasts, &c. of Scotland, relating to Emigration."

¹³² Selkirk's note reads: In the Highland Society, and I presume in every other that is equally extensive, the whole business is managed by a very small proportion of the members: nine-tenths of them, perhaps, scarcely hear of the proceedings that are carried on in the name of the whole. Having the honour to be upon their list myself, I should certainly be very sorry to think that every member of the Society is held responsible for all their proceedings.

¹³³ The ruling classes of Britain, and especially Scotland, were not particularly sympathetic to the colonies, especially after the American Revolution, and those who

favoured Highland development saw the overseas colonies as competition for capital and attention. See Klaus E. Knorr, *British Colonial Theories. 1570-1850* (Toronto, 1944), 201-250.

¹³⁴ For the Loyalists, see Wallace K. Brown, *The Good Americans: The Loyalists in The American Revolution* (New York, 1969).

¹³⁵ This observation was especially true for Upper Canada. See Gerald M. Craig, *Upper Canada: The Formation Years* (Toronto, 1963), 1-65.

¹³⁶ For further elaboration of Selkirk's ideas, see his "Outlines of a Plan for the Settlement & Security of Canada 1805" SPPAC, 13919-13926, discussed *infra*, 99-101.

¹³⁷ Selkirk did discuss these points in papers submitted to the government. See, for example, "Granting Lands in North America, 1806," SPPAC 13937-13949, "Prince Edward Island Statement, 1806," SPPAC 13966-13972, and "Suggestions respecting Upper Canada, 27 March 1806," SPPAC, 13927-13936.

¹³⁸ For further elaboration on general strategy, see Selkirk's "Memorial on Irish Emigration transmitted to Lord Sidmouth, 19 November 1806," SPPAC 13875-92.

¹³⁹ Particularly the *Hector* settlers of 1774; see Donald MacKay, *Scotland Farewell; The People of The Hector* (Scarborough, Ontario, 1980) and *The People's Clearance*, 55-82.

¹⁴⁰ Especially New York and North Carolina in the United States, and Prince Edward Island, the Pictou area of Nova Scotia, and the Glengarry area of Upper Canada in the loyal colonies.

¹⁴¹ For a general discussion of early Scottish emigration, see Ian Graham, *Colonists from Scotland: Emigration to North America 1707-1783* (Ithaca, New York, 1956).

¹⁴² Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*.

¹⁴³ Founded in 1736, on the Altamaha River in the southernmost part of the colony. See Harold E. Davis, *The Fledgling Province: Social and Cultural Life in Colonial Georgia, 1733-1776* (Chapel Hill, 1976), pp. 20-21. Consult also Larry E. Ivers, *British Drums on the Southern Frontier: The Military Colonization of Georgia, 1733-1749* (Chapel Hill, 1974), *passim*.

¹⁴⁴ On Cross Creek, where Highlanders loyal to the king mustered in February 1776 only to be badly beaten by rebel troops at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge, see Duane Meyer, *The Highland Scots of North Carolina 1732-1776* (Chapel Hill, 1957), 78-79, 110-112, 146-157.

¹⁴⁵ Glengarry. See Hazel C. Matthews, *The Mark of Honour* (Toronto, 1966), 30-92.

¹⁴⁶ For Pictou, consult D. Campbell and R. A. MacLean, *Beyond The Atlantic Roar: A Study of the Nova Scotia Scots* (Toronto, 1974).

¹⁴⁷ This rationale was, obviously, directed to Selkirk's own settlement ventures.

¹⁴⁸ The editors have been unable to locate this quotation.

¹⁴⁹ For early Georgia, see Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia: A History* (New York, 1976), especially 1-54.

¹⁵⁰ 166 Highlanders left Inverness on October 21, 1735, and several hundreds followed in 1737 and 1741. But as Selkirk notes, their success did not prompt a general exodus. Coleman, *Colonial Georgia*, 49-50.

¹⁵¹ This statement is somewhat disingenuous. See Bumsted's "Settlement by Chance: Lord Selkirk and Prince Edward Island," *Canadian Historical Review*, LIX (1978), 170-188.

¹⁵² No listing of Selkirk's settlers survives, but most of the names are included on "State of lands upon the Earl o(Selkirk's Estate Prince Edward Island North America, Nov'r 1807." SPPAC, 14562-14869.

¹⁵³ The Uist people were added at the last minute and did not pay their own costs, as did the others.

¹⁵⁴ See introduction, *infra*.

¹⁵⁵ These observations are the result of Selkirk's experiences in 1803 recorded in his *Diary*; see 4-42.

¹⁵⁶ Neither the informant nor the party can be positively identified, although the party was probably that on board the *Northern Friends of Clyde* which arrived at Sydney in 1802. See D. C. Harvey, "Scottish Immigration to Cape Breton," *Dalhousie Review*, 21:3 (1941), 313-24.

¹⁵⁷ See Marion Robertson, *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shetburne, Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1983).

¹⁵⁸ See *Diary*, 199-200.

¹⁵⁹ Selkirk's reference here is to the convicts transported to early Australia.

¹⁶⁰ The Maroons were refugees from a slave insurrection on Jamaica; see James St. J. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone 1783-1860* (New York, 1976), 229-230.

¹⁶¹ Selkirk is probably referring here to Prince Edward Island.

¹⁶² See A. G. L. Shaw, "1788-1810," in F. K. Crowley, ed., *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne, 1974), 1-44, esp. 10-11.

¹⁶³ See Bumsted's "Sir James Montgomery and Prince Edward Island, 1767-1803," *Acadiensis*, VII (1977), 82-84.

¹⁶⁴ The best general history of Prince Edward Island is F. W. P. Bolger, ed., *Canada's Smallest Province: A History of Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, 1973).

¹⁶⁵ See Bumsted's "British Colonial Policy and the Island of St. John, 1763-1767," *Acadiensis*, IX (1979), 3-18.

¹⁶⁶ See Bumsted's "The Origins of the Land Question on Prince Edward Island, 1767-1805." *Acadiensis*, XI (1981), 43-56.

¹⁶⁷ Selkirk, *Diary*, 1-36.

¹⁶⁸ Pinette village.

¹⁶⁹ See *Diary*, 345-6.

¹⁷⁰ Selkirk's note reads: "Dr John Shaw, jun. now at Annapolis, in Maryland."

¹⁷¹ James Williams. See Bumsted's biographical sketch in vol. VI of *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, (forthcoming).

¹⁷² Dr. Angus MacAulay. See Bumsted's biographical sketch in vol. VII of *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (forthcoming).

¹⁷³ For the allocations, see "State of the Sale of Lands upon the Earl of Selkirk's Estate Prince Edward Island North American Nov'r 1807," SPPAC, 14862-14869.

¹⁷⁴ James Williams was not a good choice. See Bumsted's "Lord Selkirk of Prince Edward Island." *The Island Magazine* no. 5 (1978), 3-8.

¹⁷⁵ Selkirk was over-sanguine here. Controversy between Williams and MacAulay (and their supporters) continued for many years.

¹⁷⁶ Selkirk's discussion of the geography of Prince Edward Island in the following pages may be compared with the modern analysis in Andrew Hill Clark, *Three Centuries and The Island: A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada* (Toronto, 1959), esp. 42-82.

¹⁷⁷ This discussion was written by Selkirk only a few years before the closing of the Baltic made Island timber a much more desirable export.

¹⁷⁸ Selkirk's note to the second edition reads: "The subsequent progress of these people has hitherto been equally satisfactory. According to a report transmitted in August last, they were then on the point of reaping their second harvest, which had every appearance of being very productive, and affording a considerable superfluity. A detailed survey was taken of the state of the settlement at that date, and the extent of land under crop was estimated from the quantity of grain of different kinds sown by each of the settlers. From this it

appeared, that, on an average of the whole, each family had about 3 1/2, or 4 acres of grain, besides potatoes, of which they had nearly the same quantity as the first year. - It must be observed, however, that, in spite of every remonstrance, several of the settlers had removed from the allotments they had first chosen: and, in consequence of this fickleness, were scarcely farther advanced than others had been at the end of the first year. If these individuals were set aside, and the estimate confined to those who had remained steadily on the same land, the average would be about 5 acres of grain to each family. There were also a number of small patches of turnips, cabbages, flax, &c. besides a considerable extent of land newly cleared, and nearly prepared for sowing with wheat for the ensuing year, (January, 1806.)

¹⁷⁹ See *The People's Clearance*, 155 ff.

¹⁸⁰ The first sentence of this Appendix reads as follows in the original edition: "it appears from the State Trials held after the suppression of the rebellion in 1715, that the earl of Winton, whose estate in Lothian stood among the first in the list of forfeitures, had joined the rebel army with fourteen men: Highland chieftains even of middling rank had on the same occasion brought along with them three, four, or five hundred."

¹⁸¹ The original edition here reads "25 or 30 per cent."

¹⁸² The first edition here adds "& seq."

¹⁸³ The first edition here adds "& seq." ¹⁸⁴ The first edition here adds "& seq."

¹⁸⁵ The first edition adds here: "The small tenants are described p. 368."

¹⁸⁶ The first edition adds here: "The cotters are described p. 365."

¹⁸⁷ These were the settlers listed in the 1804 passengers list of the *Oughton*, bound for Upper Canada and Selkirk's Baldoon settlement. See *The People's Clearance*, 262-264.

¹⁸⁸ This paragraph is new to the 1806 edition.

¹⁸⁹ The remainder of Appendix K is new to the 1806 edition.

¹⁹⁰ The first edition adds: "(N.B. the entire MS. contains 16.)"

¹⁹¹ See *The People's Clearance*, 117-118, 135-136.

¹⁹² The following Appendix is new to the second edition.

A

With Lord Selkirk's Compliments

LETTER

TO THE

PEERS OF SCOTLAND

BY THE

EARL OF SELKIRK.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. TAYLOR AND CO., 38, SHOE-LANE.

1807.

The following pamphlet was privately printed and distributed to all Scottish peers and eldest sons in March o/ 1130%. A number of copies survive in collections of private papers, but feu' libraries hold this this item, and it does not usually appear on bibliographic listings of Selkirk's publications. Formally, of course, it was never "*published*."

A Letter to the Peers

Within these few days, and since the following pages were sent to the press, circumstances have occurred which cannot be indifferent to those, who take an interest in the discussion, which is the object of this Letter.¹ The personal views and prospects of several of the Peers may be materially altered by these occurrences. These changes, however, have not in the least degree affected the sentiments of the writer of this Letter as to the propriety and the importance of the measure which he here recommends. His opinions upon the subject have been formed on mature consideration, and are grounded upon principles, not to be shaken by the fleeting circumstances of the day.

March 26th, 1807

.....London, Feb. 19, 1807.

MY LORDS, on the 8th of December last, I had the honour to communicate to your Lordships the proceedings of a meeting of some of our Order, held at Edinburgh on the 5th, and, at their request, to submit to your consideration the proposition, "Whether it would or would not be advantageous to the Peerage of Scotland that their representatives should be elected for life, provided the Peers not elected should have the same privileges of eligibility to the House of Commons as enjoyed by the Peers of Ireland."²

The share which I have had in bringing forward the discussion of that proposition, calls upon me to lay before your Lordships a concise statement of the reasons upon which my own opinion is grounded, and which lead me to think, that if the affirmative of that proposition should meet with the approbation of the Order in general, and if the measures which are thereby suggested should be carried into effect, it would be an acquisition of infinite value to the Peerage of Scotland.

Before entering upon the argument, however, it may be proper shortly to recapitulate the circumstances in which the discussion originated.

Your Lordships are aware that last year, upon the Earl of Eglintoun taking his seat in the House of Lords as a Peer of Great Britain, a question arose hether [sic.] a vacancy was thereby occasioned in our representation. Several of the Peers, who conceived that there was a vacancy, thought it necessary to bring the subject before the House of Lords by petition. We understood, however, that a noble Lord, very high in administration, was hostile to the principle for which we contended; and it occurred to me as adviseable, previously to the public discussion of the question, to request an interview, in order to learn the grounds of his Lordship's objection, and to see whether there was any possibility of averting so formidable an opposition to our claims.³ I did not find that there was any probability of this kind: but the reasons which were assigned impressed me with the fullest conviction, that the objection did not proceed from any inclination to infringe upon the privileges of the Peerage of Scotland. On the contrary, his Lordship expressed a most liberal disposition to ameliorate the condition of our Order; and in particular, on the privileges of the Irish Peerage being alluded to, as more valuable than ours, his Lordship declared that he felt no disinclination to their being extended to us, and did not seem to think that such a measure was by any means impracticable, if the Peers of Scotland should unite in expressing a general desire for its adoption.

When I reported the circumstances of this interview to some of the Peers, who had taken an active part in bringing forward the petition already mentioned, they concurred in opinion, that the prospect which seemed thus to be opened to us, was of more importance than the point for which we were immediately contending, and that it would therefore be proper to suspend any further proceedings upon the petition, till an opportunity could be had of collecting the sense of the Peers of Scotland in general upon this new suggestion.

Measures were accordingly taken for calling a meeting to consider the subject. These were interrupted by the dissolution of Parliament; but at the election of the representatives of our Order, a number of the Peers, who were in Edinburgh upon that occasion, thought it adviseable to take the opportunity of communicating their sentiments to each other. Not being prepared, however, to enter fully into the discussion, they did not proceed any further, than to give me the directions which were fulfilled by my circular letter of the 8th of December.⁴

The proposition submitted to the consideration of your Lordships is strictly *one* question: for though the measure suggested consists of two distinct branches, yet there is no probability that the one of these could be attained without the other. It would, therefore, be foreign to the purpose to enter into any argument to prove that the one or the other part of the proposal would by itself be for our interest or other-wise: we have simply to consider whether or not the two combined would be an amelioration of our present condition. But though the two branches of the proposition are thus in practice inseparable, it is necessary, for the sake of perspicuity, to consider them in succession, and to distinguish on the one hand the advantages or disadvantages which may be conceived to arise to the Order from our representatives being elected for life rather than for a parliament; and on the other, the advantages or disadvantages which we should derive from our being eligible to the House of Commons.

On the first of these topics there seems to be fair ground for a variety of opinion; but upon the latter it is difficult to imagine how any radical difference of opinion can exist. - To be eligible to the House of Commons is a privilege upon which some may be disposed to put a higher, some a lower value; but that it is a privilege of more or less value can scarcely be denied. As long as it is optional to every individual to use his right of eligibility or not, it is not easy to perceive how it can be a disadvantage, or how any one can maintain such a paradox, as, that it is better to be debarred from any situation, than to be *at liberty* to acquire it. This could not be true even if the object were of the most trifling and insignificant nature; but when we add, that the situation in question is one of great distinction and influence, one which may lead to power and emolument, to the highest and most honourable employments in the State; one, in short, which is an object of ambition to almost every man who has the means of attaining it; one which the heirs of the first families in the kingdom are anxious to fill, How can it be denied that to be debarred from such a situation is a great disadvantage - to be admitted to it, a privilege of the first importance?

In the peculiar circumstances of our Order, this privilege becomes of paramount importance: for without it, the Peers of Scotland can never be on a fair level, in point of weight and influence in the State, with any other class of men their equals in property and character.

We see, my Lords, that there are always more candidates for our representation than there are places to be filled up; and there are many reasons which lead to the opinion, that, among our Order, the number of individuals desirous of taking a part in public affairs will be on the

increase rather than the contrary. Thus there must always be a number of disappointed candidates. Many of these, by their own property and influence in England, or through that of their connections, may have the means of obtaining seats in the House of Commons. Debarred from this resource, they are now excluded entirely from public life, and from the pursuits of an honourable ambition. This, too, is not to be considered as a mere temporary privation. In the case of many individuals it may operate permanently, and deprive the country entirely of the benefit, which might be derived from the talents of men qualified to render the most eminent public services.

A body like ours, my Lords, is naturally - perhaps unavoidably - subject to the influence of party; and I fear the day is yet far distant, when the merit of the different candidates will be the only consideration, which will regulate the disposal of our votes. A combination of men acting in concert must always have a great advantage over detached and unconnected individuals. When, therefore, one set of men unite as a party, and co-operate for the attainment of their object, it becomes a matter of necessity for those who differ from them to unite in like manner. Thus we actually see, and probably ever shall see, two parties among us ranged and marshalled in opposition to each other. In this state of things it is evident, that if one party, acting in perfect concert, have a majority, though ever so scanty, they may carry the election of the whole sixteen representatives, and exclude all who are opposed to them. If we suppose that in our Order there are sixty-five persons possessing effective votes, and that thirty-three of these are closely united as a party, concurring unanimously in favour of a particular set of candidates, and not giving a single vote to any other, it is evident that these thirty-three Peers would carry the election of the whole sixteen representatives, and that the remaining thirty-two would not have the least influence in the election. Fortunately, we seldom see parties so perfectly well disciplined as this comes to, and therefore something more than such a bare majority is necessary to enable a party to command the whole election. Still, however, it has been seen on many occasions, that a party not consisting of any great or disproportionate majority of the Peerage at large, has carried the whole sixteen representatives, and excluded all their antagonists. Through the influence of this principle it has often happened, that men of the most distinguished talents and the most respectable character have been excluded from the representation, while a preference has been given to others, whom no impartial person would have deemed worthy of being set in comparison. This is, indeed, an occurrence so common in our elections, that for a

candidate to be defeated is now scarcely considered as any mark of the disapprobation of his fellow Peers: it is almost a matter of course, that any one who does not act along with the prevailing party will find himself excluded.

From such exclusion, my Lords, none of us, in the present state of our elections, can flatter himself with being exempt: to-day the vindictive *ostracism* may fall on the head of our adversaries; to-morrow it may light on our own. It deserves, therefore, our serious consideration, and equally so whatever be our political partialities, that the vengeance which a prevailing party may thus be expected to wreak on their opponents, is such as cannot be used against any other class of men in the state, except ourselves. If a member of the House of Commons has distinguished himself, so as to obtain the approbation of a large proportion of the nation, he cannot be totally excluded from Parliament by the influence of his opponents. He may be defeated in the place with which he is most immediately and personally connected; but, should this happen, still, if his services are deemed of great public importance, and if those to whose principles he adheres, are numerous and possessed of extensive property and influence, many other places will be ready to open the door to him.⁶ In the elections of the Commons, the representation is so much divided, the influence scattered in so many different hands, that no party can ever engross it all. The prevailing party can never obtain such a complete ascendancy, as to exclude their adversaries entirely from the House of Commons. The minority, if respectable in numbers and property, will always carry their point in some places, and will always find some opportunity of bringing into Parliament any man, whom they look to as a distinguished supporter of their cause. - But if this individual be a Scottish Peer, there is no such resource. Suppose any one of our Order to be possessed of abilities as transcendant as either of the great political leaders, whose loss the nation now deploras, - suppose him the equal of Pitt or of Fox; yet, if the party to which he adheres be but by a single vote less than the majority of our Order, he may be excluded, absolutely and irremediably excluded, from any participation in public affairs. Let his merit be in ever such high estimation with one half of the kingdom, they have no possible means of obtaining the benefit of his public services. The disadvantage, my Lords, to which a Scottish Peer is thus liable, is such as no other person in the kingdom can be equally exposed to: a man of no other class can be excluded from public life by the influence of a prevailing party, if he carries along with him the wishes of a great proportion of the people and property of the kingdom. A Scottish Peer is the only man who, in spite of the most distinguished and acknowledged merit, may

be sunk in oblivion and condemned to obscurity.

The hardship to which individuals may thus be exposed is not the only circumstance to be considered. The consciousness which our Representatives must feel, of the danger of being so excluded, may produce in many cases an abject sense of dependence, degrading to the character, and unworthy of the situation, of those who participate in the deliberations of the most dignified assembly in the world.

If the adoption of the measures which I have had the honour of stating to your Lordships, had no other effect than to relieve our Order from this degradation of mind, I should consider it as a very important object. But it will be scarcely less important, in the general effects which it must have, in adding to the weight and political influence of the Order at large.

In this view there is one consideration abundantly evident. If in addition to the regular and direct representation of the Peerage in the House of Lords, any considerable number of our Order should obtain seats in the House of Commons, this must be a clear addition to the influence of the Scottish Peerage, and to their weight altogether in Parliament. It would in some respects have nearly the same effect as if an addition was made to the number of our own direct Representatives. The immediate advantage of this increased influence would no doubt accrue in the first instance to the individuals who might obtain these additional seats; but it would not be confined to them alone. It would benefit the Order in general in various ways.

In the first place, If the door of the House of Commons were opened to us, it would diminish the competition for the ordinary and regular representation of the Peerage. It is well known that in the opinion of some very distinguished characters, the House of Commons is a more favourable theatre for the display of the powers of oratory, and than an individual possessing talents adapted to the situation, is likely there to command more influence in the State, than he could acquire by means of the same talents in the House of Lords. These views may, in the minds of some individuals, outweigh the attraction of superior splendour and dignity, and induce them even to prefer a seat in the Lower House. It is needless here to inquire whether these ideas are well founded, or whether these motives are such as each of us in his own case would allow to influence his conduct. Those who disapprove of them the most, those whose feelings are the most remote from being influenced by any such motive, may yet derive

advantage from the door being open to others who are of a different way of thinking. To our present purpose it is enough that such ideas are entertained. Every individual who acts upon them is of course a candidate withdrawn from the competition in our own elections; and in so far the chance of all the other competitors is bettered. Even among those who do not absolutely prefer a seat in the House of Commons, the idea of having another resource may induce some not to press their pretensions to our representation with the same zeal, as must be expected while this is the only avenue they have to public life; and this would be to a certain degree in favour of other candidates.

In the second place, When [sic.] several of our Order have the means of obtaining seats in the House of Commons, over and above those who regularly sit in our own House, an addition is made to the number of those individuals, who are likely to acquire sufficient political importance, to give them a chance of obtaining hereditary seats in the upper House. Nothing is of more importance to our Order, than that as many as possible of our number should obtain British Peerages.⁷ Every such creation not only gives independence to the family of the individual immediately concerned, but removes a candidate from the competition at our elections. Some persons go so far as to anticipate the time when, through the progress of such creations, no more than sixteen Peers will remain in a situation to be eligible as representatives; and thus the whole Scottish Peerage will under one title or another sit in the Senate of the United Kingdom. This is certainly a distant prospect, yet no doubt can be entertained that, were it realized, our condition would be incomparably better than it is. It is, therefore, for our interest to hasten as much as possible the accomplishment, or at least an approximation to this state of things. Thus every individual Peer of Scotland who obtains a hereditary seat for his own family, does at the same time an important service to the Peerage at large.

In this point of view, it must be for the general advantage of the Order, that our representatives should individually possess all the weight which can be bestowed upon them: and here the other branch of the proposition, which I have had the honour of submitting to your Lordships, appears to deserve a very favourable consideration. If our representatives were elected for life, they would certainly feel them-selves more independent, and would more frequently be placed in situations, where they might expect the high favour of a hereditary seat in the legislature. The advantage which would thus indirectly accrue to the Peerage of Scotland, from the increased permanency of the situation of their representatives, can scarcely admit of a doubt; but in the opinion of some, this may be overbalanced by the direct disadvantage to which

the rest of the Peers would be subjected; since the expectation, which any one might entertain, of being elected on a future occasion, would be thrown to a greater distance than it is under the system of frequent general elections. To a certain degree this might be the case; but not so much as may at first sight appear.

It is to be observed in the first place that, though there is a possibility of the whole representation being changed at every general election, yet there is very little probability that this should actually happen, or even that a greater number of new candidates should be successful, at any one election. When in any instance we see a candidate supported by a particular line of connections or of influence, there is some reason to presume that he will continue for the future to receive the same support; and if that support has been sufficient to carry his election, we may reasonably suppose, that it will have equal weight on another occasion. - The representatives who are once elected may therefore be reckoned to have, *coeteris paribus*,⁸ a better chance of being re-elected than any new candidate has of supplanting them. Peculiar circumstances, or great political changes in the empire at large, may occasion a deviation from this probability; but in the ordinary and regular course of events, the real and effective openings that occur for new candidates will bear but a small proportion to the apparent number of elections.

In the course of twelve years, preceding the end of last session of Parliament, there have been two general elections, and four occasional vacancies to be filled up. The Peers of Scotland have therefore elected apparently to thirty-six seats: yet in the course of this time there have been only ten successful candidates, over and above those who were previously representatives. Counting back in like manner for thirty years, we find only thirty-two new representatives, in a period which includes five general and eleven special elections, and therefore ninety-one apparent vacancies.

Taking any series of years since the Union, we shall scarcely ever find more new representatives, than in about the average proportion, of one for every year. If, on the other hand, our representatives were elected for life, it may be inferred from the established principles of the probable duration of human life, that vacancies would recur in some other average proportion to the period elapsed. If we could ascertain the period, in which a vacancy might thus be expected to occur, and compare this with the average period in which new candidates have hitherto obtained seats, it would afford a fair criterion for estimating the prospect held out, under each system, to those who may hereafter aspire to the representation.

This comparison I have attempted to make, with the assistance of a gentleman who is versed in the calculation of annuities. The question is not of very easy solution, as the calculation must be grounded on the age of the Peers, who are to be elected, a point which can only be assumed hypothetically. After trying the question, however, on a variety of the most probable suppositions, this gentleman came to the general conclusion, that, if the proposed system were to be established, the period of a probable vacancy would at first be about two years, but that it would become progressively less and less, till it came to be only about a year and a half.

Though it may be true, therefore, that under the system of election for life, a Peer who is not among the representatives may not have quite so near a prospect of attaining the object of his ambition as under the present system, yet the difference is but small. It must be remembered too, that, if the object be thrown to a distance rather greater, if it be made in some degree more difficult of attainment, yet when attained it will be of far greater value. A man may be content to wait a little longer, in order to obtain a secure permanent and independent seat in the legislature, rather than a temporary precarious and dependent one. A smaller chance, for so much greater a prize, may surely be considered as of more value, on the whole, than a greater probability of a trifling acquisition. There are few men who would not prefer adventuring in a lottery where there was a prize of £20,000, rather than in one where there was a much greater chance of obtaining only a few hundreds.

We have also to consider that under the proposed arrangement, if the future prospects of an unsuccessful candidate become more remote, yet he would not be, as under the present system, excluded in the mean time from all share in public affairs. He would have the House of Commons open to him; he would remain as it were in the situation of an heir apparent for a few years longer. Thus the right of eligibility to the House of Commons comes in to compensate and alleviate every hardship, which can possibly be supposed to arise from the permanency of the representation of our own Order, and seems to be amply sufficient for doing away every valid objection to the measure.

The advantages, thus arising from the right of eligibility to the House of Commons, are however, in the opinion of some noble Lords, overbalanced by the degradation which they conceive would be involved in the exercise of that right.

It is true that, according to the Act of Union with Ireland, a Peer who makes use of his right of eligibility, must for the time waive the

honorary privileges attached to Peerage. This however is merely temporary. If he is afterwards elected a Representative Peer, or if otherwise he ceases to be a member of the House of Commons, he re-enters to the enjoyment of every hereditary right. His situation in the mean time may be fairly assimilated to that of an heir apparent; and it does not appear how he can be considered as degraded, any more than if his father had lived so many years longer. At all events, the temporary sacrifice which he makes affects his own person only: he does not in the least derogate from the future rights of his family, far less from those of the Order at large.

As it is perfectly optional to every individual Peer, to make this sacrifice or not, every one may surely be allowed to judge for himself, of the importance of the sacrifice, or of the force of the motives which impel him to make it. Any one, who considers the temporary suspension of these honorary privileges as a privation too great to be borne, can be in no respect compelled to forego them. But it does not readily appear, why one who entertains these sentiments should object to that sacrifice being made by others, who may not see the loss in the same point of view, or who may have more cogent reasons for submitting to it.

To draw from this topic any solid argument against the measure proposed, it would be necessary to show, that the conduct of an individual Peer, in thus foregoing for a time the honorary distinctions to which he is entitled, has some fatal effect on the privileges of the Order at large. Such an idea has, I believe, been entertained; but upon what grounds, I am utterly at a loss to imagine. Those noble Lords who have expressed this sentiment, have never entered into any explanation that I have been fortunate enough to hear and comprehend: and till some explanation is given, I cannot perceive how we are to get over this plain conclusion of common sense, That the dignity of the Order at large cannot be affected by the circumstance of an individual fore-going the exercise of his rights, any more than it would be, if, by the common course of the law, that individual had been deprived of his privileges.

If any individual now upon the list of the Peerage should commit a high offence against the laws of his country, and should in consequence be degraded from his rank, and forfeit the honours of his family, does any one imagine that his fate would be a disparagement to the Order at large? How can it then be supposed that such a disparagement should arise, if the law, instead of depriving an individual of his privileges, had merely allowed him to lay them aside for a time?

Granting then that the individual who lays aside his privileges, is to be considered as acting in an unbecoming manner, the imputation could not in the least degree affect the rest of the Order. If in cases of the highest possible misconduct and the deepest guilt, no one imagines the disgrace to affect any but the guilty individual, how fanciful must it be to suppose that, by any act of merely doubtful propriety, an individual can throw a disparagement on the whole Order! Does it not follow then, that those who put the highest value on the honorary distinctions of Peerage, those whom no consideration would tempt even to a temporary suspension of their rights, those who would deem it most unbecoming in themselves to make such a sacrifice, have no reason on that account to object against others being allowed so to do? And I have already attempted to show that those of the Peerage, who do not choose to make use of the right of eligibility to the House of Commons, may yet derive advantage from that right being exercised by others, inasmuch as this must tend to diminish the competition in the elections of our own Order.

But, My Lords, I am by no means ready to admit the principle, that in making use of the proposed right of eligibility, an individual Peer would be guilty of an unbecoming act. When I say this, I trust that your Lordships will not imagine that I am inclined to undervalue the honorary distinctions of our Order: - I am very far from treating these distinctions as objects of little importance. These privileges and distinctions are the memorials of the greatness, and of the achievements of our ancestors; and I, for one, feel too much pride in reflecting on what my ancestors were, and what they did, to count as of small moment, any thing which tends to recall their memory. On this principle, circumstances in themselves the most insignificant acquire a real and well-grounded importance. - That it is on this principle that the honorary distinctions of Peerage are to be valued, clearly appears from this, That where these distinctions have notoriously no real connection with that ancient glory of which they are meant to be the type and the representation, they cease to excite that respect which it is their object to attract. Were Buonaparte, for instance, to confer the rank of a Duke on a porter, that of a Marquis on his tailor, would all the trappings with which he could invest them, excite in the public mind the same feelings as if similar emblems were borne by the representative of an ancient and honorable family?

These principles, at the same time that they establish a solid and rational ground for our attachment to the honorary privileges of our rank, point out also the limit which reason prescribes to that attachment. For here the question arises - If it is as the type and memorial

of the former greatness, power and influence of our ancestors that we value these privileges, does it accord with sound reason to put them in competition with the possession, or with the means of attaining in our own persons to similar greatness, power and influence?

On this point it may not perhaps be amiss to refer to the conduct of our ancestors themselves, and to form an idea how they would have acted under similar circumstances. Which would they have preferred, - the substantial possession of power and influence, or the shadow and representation of it? If, at the period when every chieftain maintained his consequence among his neighbours by the military services of his followers, and enforced the respect due to him, only by having in his hands the power of taking summary vengeance for an injury or an affront, - if in these days, a King of Scotland had addressed any one of his Barons, the least distinguished of the Peers of his kingdom, and had proposed to invest him with the highest honours of the state, with the *insignia* of a dukedom, but on this condition, That he should give up the command of his vassals and dependants, maintain no retainers, and relinquish the military services of his followers, - can there be a doubt what answer would have been made?

These times are now happily over: the Peers of the realm no longer go out into the field to measure their strength against each other in private warfare: their relative importance, their weight and influence in the state, no longer depend on the number of vassals and retainers whom they can employ as the instruments of their violence. The preeminence which once depended on the services of vassals and retainers is now obtained through the attachment of freeholders and burgesses. It is no longer the ferocious valour of the feudal chieftain that leads to the highest honours of the state, but the talents of the statesman and the orator. The senate, in short, is now the *arena*, in which individuals have to struggle for personal consequence and distinction. But under the alteration of circumstances that has taken place, are we not entitled, or rather, are we not compelled, to put the same value on the means and the opportunity of parliamentary influence and distinction, that our ancestors did on the means of private warfare? If they would not have relinquished the services of their followers to obtain mere honorary distinctions, ought we to prefer these distinctions to objects, which are now of the same value to us as their vassals and retainers were to them? If it is only as the type and emblem of the greatness, power and influence of our ancestors, that we value

the hereditary distinctions to which we are entitled, would it not be sacrificing the substance for the shadow, if for the sake of these emblems we should forego the substantial means of attaining in like manner to actual power and influence?

How far these principles could be allowed to carry us with propriety, might still remain a question, if a Peer, in making use of his right of eligibility, had to make a permanent and irrevocable sacrifice - above all, if he should thereby derogate from the future rights of his family. But under the arrangement that is proposed, nothing of this kind can ever be in question. The sacrifice to be made would be of a nature the most temporary possible, since a Peer in foregoing his privileges would have the power of re-entering to the enjoyment of them *whenever he should be so inclined*. To stigmatize with the epithet of *degrading*, a sacrifice so completely optional, does indeed mark a strange disposition to exaggeration. As well might it be said that a Knight of the Garter, who should go out hunting in a plain riding-jacket, would be guilty of derogating from the dignity of his Order, by leaving his star and his ribbon at home in his dressing-room, and appearing in the field without his full insignia.

I cannot dismiss this branch of the subject without remarking, that among those who have expressed themselves with most warmth upon this topic of the degradation of the Peerage, are some of those who possess hereditary seats in the legislature in addition to their Scottish Peerages. It is far from my intention to question the right of such noble Lords to be consulted upon the subject; but I must take the liberty of observing, that upon this particular point they cannot be fair judges of the interests or of the feelings of the rest of the Order. Combining in their own persons the splendid distinctions of rank with the advantages of an effective station, which secures to them the permanent possession of substantial influence in the State, they can never have occasion in their own case to weigh the comparative value of these different objects, and cannot, therefore, be supposed to enter fully into the feelings of the rest of the Peerage, who have not all the same advantages, and who may be called upon to make an option between the *utile* and the *dulce*.⁹

Those Peers of Scotland, who likewise possess hereditary seats in the legislature, are placed, as to every substantial advantage, in a situation so incomparably superior to the rest of the Order, that the elections of our representatives must be to them a matter of comparatively trifling concern. These elections are on the other hand of the highest importance to those who are Peers of Scotland only, and who, from this source, derive all the consequence they possess in the State. Any regulation, therefore, which relates to these elections, must be considered as affecting more

particularly the interests of those who are Peers of Scotland only: and it seems no more than justice, that their interests should be attended to in the first place, that their feelings should receive a superior degree of attention, in the consideration of any measure which may be proposed on the subject. No doubt that, if any proposed measure should appear to encroach on the just rights of those who are Peers of both kingdoms, the objection must be allowed its due weight; and there can be no reason to apprehend that the rights of those Peers will be neglected, since they sit themselves among those who must ultimately decide upon the question.

But it may surely be hoped that, in a matter where those who have British Peerages are interested in so very remote a manner, and to so inconsiderable a degree, they will in general be disposed to act with more liberality, than to set themselves in opposition to the wishes of the rest of the Order, unless the proposal should be such as to infringe in a direct and tangible manner on their own separate rights.

I need scarcely take up your Lordships' time in discussing another observation that has been made upon this proposition. It has been said, That, from the situation of the Peerage of Ireland before the Union of that kingdom, there were peculiar reasons, which made it indispensable that some of them should remain eligible to the House of Commons - reasons which do not apply to the case of the Peerage of Scotland. If this argument should be urged against us in any discussion in Parliament, I trust that it will not be difficult to make a satisfactory reply; but the topic is altogether foreign to our present purpose. The only question which I mean now to touch upon is, What is for the interest of the Peerage of Scotland?

The same may be said of an objection, which will probably be brought forward, that the question is precluded by the Articles of Union. The Peers of Scotland are the only persons, who have an interest in the stipulations of the Treaty of Union on this subject; and if the Peers themselves are of opinion, that a change is for their advantage, it does not appear on what principle any other party can object to it. But whatever force there may be in these topics, when urged as arguments against our demands being acceded to by the Legislature, they can have no weight as objections against our agreeing to an arrangement which appears to be for our advantage.

Another apprehension has been stated; viz. That we may have to encounter an opposition from the most distinguished of the Commons of Scotland, under the idea that we might interfere with them in the representation, which Scotland possesses in the Lower House. But this idea is founded on a complete misapprehension of the proposition in question: for were the measure adopted, it could not affect the interests of

the Commons of Scotland in the slightest degree. The principle adopted by the Irish Union was, That an individual, though a Peer in Ireland, might still be a Commoner in Great Britain; and the Peers of Ireland were therefore made eligible for places in England or Scotland, but not for any in their own kingdom.¹⁰ Upon the same principle we might expect to be rendered eligible for England or Ireland, but not for any place in Scotland. The representation of the Commons of Scotland would thus remain exactly as it is at present.

I shall trespass on your Lordships' attention with but one observation more. If the proposal which I have had the honour of laying before you should meet with the approbation of your Lordships upon its general principles, no moment could be chosen for its adoption more unexceptionable than the present, - none which could give to every one of the Peerage a fairer chance of obtaining an equal share of the benefit of the measure. No peculiar advantage could accrue to the Peers actually in the representation. They have been elected for a Parliament, and can be continued no longer. A new election must of course take place for the Peers who are to sit for life; and as a considerable number of years may be expected to elapse before the next general election for the kingdom at large, no one can now anticipate what may be the state of parties among us when that period arrives, or what may then be the situation of the general politics of the kingdom. There is, therefore, no certainty what individuals may at that distance of time have an opportunity of obtaining any adventitious support, or what party may have the best chance of securing a majority. I trust, therefore, that whatever objections may be urged on other grounds, no one will be disposed to think that the measure has been brought forward with any unfair design, or that those who support it have it in view to profit by the circumstances of the times to obtain an undue advantage.

For my own part, My Lords, I leave the business in your hands, with the consciousness that I have done nothing more than my duty, in bringing it under your consideration. Seeing a probability that such a measure might be carried through, and deeply convinced that its adoption would be of infinite consequence to our Order, I should ill have deserved the honour which you have recently conferred upon me, if, upon finding one or two of my personal friends averse to the proposal, I had relinquished it without its being submitted to the fair consideration of the Peerage at large. - Strongly impressed with the force of the reasons which I have here attempted to state, I flatter myself that a cool and candid discussion will obviate the prejudices which some individuals may entertain; and that as we all can have but one interest, we may come to one

sentiment. If, contrary to my hope, it shall prove that the general opinion of your Lordships is adverse to that which I have expressed, far be it from me to object to your decision. With the general concurrence of your Lordships, the measure may probably be carried into effect. If it does not meet your general concurrence, it is not to be imagined that any other person, a stranger to our Order, can wish to force upon you advantages which you do not value. - In your own hands, therefore, My Lords, the matter rests; and the only remaining wish I have on the subject is, that the question, "What is for your interest," will meet from you a calm and deliberate examination.

I have the honour to be, My Lords, Your Lordships' most obedient and faithful servant, SELKIRK.

References

¹ See introduction, p. 124.

² Irish peers were eligible at this time for election to the Commons, waiving the honorary privileges of the peerages in England while serving.

³ William Wyndham Baron Grenville (1759-1834) was First Lord of the Treasury in the “Ministry of the Talents” 1806-1807.

⁴ For the text of the circular letter, see SRO GU I50/2382.

⁵ For an overview, consult Michael W. McCahill, “The Scottish Peerage and The House of Lords in The Late Eighteenth Century.” *The Scottish Historical Review*, 51(1972),172-196.

⁶ Selkirk is, of course, referring to electoral practices in an unreformed House of Commons. See Sir Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, 2vol.(London, 1929), 77-192.

⁷ British peerages carried with them hereditary membership in the House of Lords.

⁸ The expression should be “ceteris paribus,” other things being equal.

⁹ The useful and the sweet.

¹⁰ Irish Union came into effect on 1 January 1801, and the provision Selkirk notes had the effect of putting Scottish peers, whose privileges were governed by the Union of Scotland and England in 1707, in a different position from their Irish counterparts.

SUBSTANCE
OF
THE SPEECH
OF
THE EARL OF SELKIRK,
IN
THE HOUSE OF LORDS,
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 1807,
ON
THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN HATCHARD, (BOOKSELLER TO
HER MAJESTY) 190, PICCADILLY,

BY R. TAYLOR AND CO., SHOES-LANE.

1807.

The following pamphlet represents Selkirk's text delivered in the House of Lords on 10 August 1807 in the course of debate over the Militia Transfer Bill, which he had printed by John Hatchard, the Royal Bookseller. A version of the speech appears in Parliamentary Debates 1807, 1122-1151, but that text was derived from the printed version and does not represent a more authentic report of the speech as actually delivered. A 5th edition was published in London in 1807.

Substance of the Speech

Lord Hawkesbury, after stating at considerable length the measures proposed by Government for the Defence of the Country, moved the second reading of the Militia Transfer Bill.¹ He was answered by Lord Sidmouth: after whom Lord Borringdon spoke in support of the Bill, and Lord De Dunstanville against it. Lord Selkirk then rose, and spoke nearly as follows:

Though I concur in many of the objections which have been stated to the particular provisions of the bill before us, yet I cannot consider these details as an interesting subject of discussion, when the measure is liable, in its very principles, to an objection of paramount importance - I mean, that it is totally inadequate to the exigencies of the crisis in which we are placed. The noble secretary of state who moved the bill, has opened the subject with many forcible observations on the dangers with which we are surrounded, and on the necessity which we are under, of making extraordinary exertions, in consequence of the recent great successes of the enemy? But when the noble lord proceeded to specify the exertions, which he wishes the country to make, I could not help thinking the measures which he proposed, a strange contrast to the exordium of his speech. When the noble lord, after taking such ample time to consider the subject brings forward a proposal prefaced with such observations, we are surely led to expect, that the preparations to be made, should be in some degree commensurate with the exigency, and with the amount of the

force, which we may expect to be brought against us. But, supposing that the measure now proposed were free from all the particular objections which have been urged against it - to what does it amount? All that is even proposed is, to raise 44,000 men in the course of twelve months; and that by a ballot, of which the acknowledged effect will be to impede and nearly to suspend the ordinary recruiting, by which in the same space of time at least one half of that number would be raised. The noble lord then considers an addition of 20 or 24,000 men to our regular and militia force, as a counterpoise to the increase of power, which France has obtained during the last three campaigns. With this additional number of men we are to be enabled to resist the gigantic power, which is now preparing to overwhelm us.

Good heavens! my lords, is it possible that the noble secretary can be serious in making such a proposal? or are we to believe that his majesty's ministers have never at all reflected on the nature and amount of the danger with which we are menaced? Have they forgot that we have to contend with the most formidable military power, which the world has ever seen? - that we have to contend single-handed, not against the power of France alone, but, I may almost say, against that of all Europe. Every resource, which the continent can afford, we may soon expect to see arrayed for the subjugation of this country; and all this immense power is in the hands of one, who is not apt to neglect his advantages. The conqueror who with such unexampled rapidity has crushed the most formidable military powers on the continent - he who has humbled Russia, who has laid Austria prostrate, and has scattered the legions of the great Frederick like dust before the wind, is preparing, with still increased resources, to carry his victorious arms into England, urged on by every motive that ambition and revenge can dictate.³ This island is now the only bar that stands between Napoleon and the empire of the world. He knows that when England is crushed, no other power on earth will dare to give him any further molestation; - but that while England exists, he will ever have a jealous rival, a watchful and a formidable antagonist. Can we doubt, that every sinew will be stretched to accomplish the annihilation of a power, which has so repeatedly obstructed his views? - Nor is it by ambition alone that he is animated. He makes no secret of the implacable hatred he bears to this country, and the vengeance which he meditates for the repeated mortifications, which he traces to the enmity of England.

Assuredly, it is now no ordinary war that we have to wage - no war of colonial contests or distant campaigns; - the blow is now aimed at our heart - our struggle is to be for the existence of Britain.

It is not the humiliation of a rival that France now aims at, - it is the annihilation of a foe, that has for ages been the rallying point of her enemies. Nothing short of total and absolute conquest can now be expected to satisfy her ambition. To others the conqueror has shown moderation, only that he might direct his efforts with more security and effect against his main enemy. To others he has shown moderation, only that he might the better accomplish our destruction. But if England be once at his feet, as Austria and Prussia have been - never - never will she be allowed to raise her head again. Calamities severe enough have followed the conquests of France in Italy, in Swisserland [sic.], in Holland; but the fate of these countries has been mildness itself, when compared with that which is now preparing for England. In these countries ambition and avarice were the only motives to excess - here they will be aggravated by rancorous vengeance, and national hatred, not confined to the commanders alone, but extending to the lowest soldiers. Hitherto the French have been more or less restrained by motives of policy - but if they conquer England, they may safely give a loose to every brutal passion; and the Englishman that survives the ruin of his country, must expect to see every horror, to which rapacity and insolence can prompt a licentious soldiery, and a jealous usurper.

With such a prospect before us, from the gigantic power of the French empire, - with the task of guarding against the destruction of every thing that is dear to us, his majesty's ministers are satisfied with an increase of 20 or 30,000 men to the army. Surely, my lords, when we consider the horrors to which any deficiency in our preparations may lead, it is the duty of those who conduct the affairs of the nation, to see that at all events our means of defence should be amply sufficient. Were the chance of successful invasion but as one to a hundred, it ought not to be neglected. Where we risk every thing, we should guard against the possibility of defeat, with as much solicitude as, in cases of ordinary concern, against the strongest probability. The noble secretary of state seems to entertain doubts as to the probability of an invasion being attempted: even if these doubts were well founded, to act upon any such presumption would be an unpardonable breach of duty. Though it were ever so improbable, yet if there is the slightest possibility, that by any concurrence of chances the enemy can make good their landing, we ought to be ready to meet them. To act otherwise would be to trust our existence to chance, and to throw away the security that is in our power.

But, my lords, is the chance of invasion a mere possibility? - When we look at the vast extension of the resources of France, at the

means of recruiting her navy, which she has acquired by her continental conquests, it would be blindness not to perceive, that her naval power must soon become far more formidable than it has ever yet been. France is now in possession of the finest forests in Europe, and of countries capable of affording ample supplies of every naval store: she may command the services of all the seamen which the continent can afford, from Memel to Cadiz, and from Cadiz to Constantinople. We may look too to the certain prospect, that the whole energy of the French government will now be directed to this object: we know in fact that during all the pressure of their continental wars, the most active exertions in ship-building have never been discontinued in their naval arsenals: they have now no other object to divide their attention: and we may be well assured that all the ability of the ruler of France will now be turned to naval affairs. The same genius, which has created such an astonishing change in the discipline and tactics of the French army, will now be unremittingly employed in the improvement of their navy; and if we recollect that the disorganized bands, which a few years ago were flying before Suwarrow out of Italy, are now the victorious legions of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Friedland, we shall not be disposed to underrate the change, which the same genius may effect in the navy of France. - We have therefore every reason to believe, that the naval superiority of England must ere long be exposed to a more severe contest, than any which it has recently had to maintain. Whatever confidence we may entertain in the valour and skill of our seamen, it is not the part of a prudent politician, under such circumstances, to overlook the possibility of our navy being worsted. This, my lords, is an event for which we ought to be prepared; and fortunately there is room to hope that we shall have sufficient time to prepare against it. But any one who considers well what the state of this country would be, if the French had obtained a superiority at sea, will certainly not be disposed to think, that we can begin too soon to provide against such an emergency.

But, my lords, this is not all - we have dangers more closely pressing upon us, dangers which if we are to meet, we have not a moment to lose. An invasion is certainly no impracticable undertaking for the French, even at this moment, notwithstanding all our actual superiority at sea. The ablest and most experienced naval officers have given their opinion of the practicability of the enemy landing in force on our shores. Repeated experience has proved the impossibility of effectually blockading the ports of the enemy, notwithstanding the greatest naval superiority; and when we consider the vast range of coast that is now under their influence - a range which ere long may have no other

limits than those of Europe itself, it is evident that we may be threatened at the same moment from so many different points, that it will be more difficult than ever to watch them all, and that thus the chances are greatly increased, of the enemy being able to convey an armament to the most vulnerable points of our empire. Our ablest admirals have repeatedly seen the French fleets escape from them, even when their whole vigilance was directed to the single port of Brest: But what would be the case, if armaments were ready at the same time in Cadiz, in Ferrol, in Rochefort, in Brest, in Cherbourg, in Flushing, in the Texel, in the Elbe, and perhaps even in Norway? What rational hope could be entertained that some one or other of them would not escape, and land either in England or in Ireland a force sufficient to put the existence of our empire on the hazard of the die?

But why, my lords, should I speak of armaments that are yet to be prepared? Have we forgotten that the enemy have already a most formidable one in full readiness, that they have only again to fill the camp of Boulogne to give us the most serious ground of alarm.⁴ It may be admitted that the embarkation of an army to pass the channel, while our navy continues as superior as it now is, must be a hazardous undertaking; but we have every reason to believe that the attempt will be made in spite of every hazard. We know that our enemies are not very tender of the lives of their men; and though they were certain of the loss of one half of their army, they would not scruple on that account, if with the other half they can hope to accomplish their object. With such determination on their side, and taking into account the number of accidental circumstances which may favour their attempt, What are we to think of the blindness of those, who affect to treat this as a danger against which there is no need of guarding?

Three years ago, when the French armies occupied the camp of Boulogne, our wisest statesmen were sensible that invasion was no empty threat, and England was all alive to the danger. Yet in comparison with the present time the danger was inconsiderable. The ruler of France, if he had then made the attempt, would have staked the existence of his power on the success of the enterprise. His authority in France was ill secured: his enemies without were formidable. He had unequivocally pledged himself to lead the expedition in person; and even if he had not, the undertaking was too great to be delegated. An unfortunate result, though it had not been fatal to his person, would have occasioned a counter-revolution in France; and even a doubtful contest would have drawn upon him a dangerous attack from the

continental powers. In the present circumstances all these obstacles are removed. Napoleon has reaped an ample harvest of glory, and may now afford to delegate the conquest of England to some of his generals. He may take that course, without appearing to imply any doubt of its success, or any wish to avoid personal danger. The continental powers are so completely crushed, that there is no reason to apprehend any obstruction on their part; and the power of Bonaparte in France is so confirmed, that even the failure of the expedition to England would not shake it. When he has so little to apprehend from an unfortunate result, and when the effect of success will be to confirm Napoleon as the master of the world, have we not every reason to suppose that the greatest hazard will be run for such a prize?

In those who shut their eyes against the danger of immediate invasion, there is something like absolute infatuation. Because our enemy is at a distance, and has for a while had his back turned to us, we seem to imagine, that he can never again threaten our shores. His army indeed is now on the banks of the Vistula: - But have we forgot the rapidity with which he moved from Boulogne to Vienna, and from the Rhine to Berlin? nor are France and the adjacent provinces left so entirely destitute of troops, but that a week or two, perhaps, would be sufficient to collect again at Boulogne, such a force as might be sufficient for the invasion. Even before the next winter sets in, it is not impossible that a French army may be on English ground; and if the blow is delayed, it will only be that it may be struck with greater certainty. Under these circumstances, not only is the nation sunk in apathy; but his majesty's ministers, setting the example of blind insensibility, are not ashamed of bringing forward such a proposition as the bill before us, telling the nation that 20 or 30,000 more troops are to ensure their security. - If ever, my lords, there was an example of that infatuation which seems to be the natural forerunner of the fall of empires, is not this one? In what are we more wise than the Prussians, who, a year ago, rushed headlong on destruction, and would not believe in the possibility of defeat? They thought that the legions of the great Frederick were invincible, as we seem now to think that the Channel is an impassable barrier. Will no experience teach us wisdom? and is England destined to afford another terrible example that "*quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*"⁵

Let us rouse, my lords, from this fatal security: let us trust no longer to a barrier that may be overcome. It is not to the Channel that we must look for security, but to the hands of Englishmen fighting for their liberties, for the glory and the independence of their country. To put our trust in the sea, if it were not the extreme of folly, would be the extreme of cowardice.

Shall the descendants of the men, who conquered at Agincourt and at Cressy, acknowledge that they cannot meet the armies of France hand to hand, and that it is only at sea that we can cope with our enemies? Away with the base idea, that England must entrench herself behind a miserable ditch, instead of coming out into the field! Let us look the danger in the face, and prepare for our defence, as if the cliffs of Dover touched those of Calais, or as if the fleets of France had been as victorious as her armies. Till we can hear without dismay that the flotilla of Boulogne has effected a landing on the coast of Kent; that a French army of *120,000* men are in possession of Dover, and that 20 or 30,000 more have made their way to Ireland - till we can hear all this without a well-grounded apprehension, I shall not consider the state of our defence as worthy of the name of England. The probability is, that a year may not elapse before such news will reach our ears: and when it does come upon us, what consequence can any reasonable man anticipate, if our state of defence remain such as it now is, or such as it will be, with all the addition which his majesty's ministers now call for? Let any man of military knowledge, who is acquainted with the present situation and disposition of our regular and militia force, calculate the time that would be necessary, for bringing together an army capable of opposing 100,000, or even half that number, of the troops of Bonaparte, flushed with all their late astonishing successes. Let him look back to the rapid marches of these troops in the campaigns of *1805* and *1806*, and let him figure to himself what their movements would probably be, were they at this hour landed on the shores of England. Let him say, whether the enemy might not be in possession of London, and of all our military depots, before our army could even be collected? whether, advancing with his usual rapidity into the centre of the country, he might not intercept our scattered battalions, before they could reach a rendezvous, or form the semblance of an army fit to oppose him. - Last year, we saw Prussia overwhelmed after a short and feeble resistance: Heaven grant that England may not shortly exhibit a parallel, or a still more disgraceful spectacle! Prussia at least fought a battle before she submitted to the conqueror - England may probably be overrun, before her army is even in readiness to take the field and to face the invader; and this far-famed empire may be crushed, without our having the glory of making one stand for the liberties we value so highly!

Great, my lords, as the dangers are, with which this country is now surrounded, nothing is farther from my mind than to say, that the contest is beyond our strength, or that the resources of this country, if

well directed, are not adequate to meet all its dangers. But if that is to be done, it must be by very different measures from this that is now before us, and by exertions of which Englishmen have as yet been little accustomed to think.

In considering the means of resisting the now gigantic extent of the power of France, there is one point abundantly evident, that some-thing more than a standing army, or any description of regular force, is absolutely necessary. I am perfectly sensible, that a strong regular army must be the basis of our defence; that every other description of force can only serve as accessories; that, without a large army, nothing can be done by volunteers, or any similar local force, or by an exertion of the zeal and courage of the civil population of the kingdom. On the other hand, my lords, it is equally clear, that if we trust to our regular army alone, if we cannot find means of giving effectual support to our army by some species of accessory force, we must be overwhelmed: it is physically impossible for us to raise a regular army strong enough, to meet that which may be brought against us.

It has been justly observed, that our army is already so numerous, as to form a greater drain on the population of this kingdom, than that of any other country in Europe has to supply. There is no other country, in which so great a number of men, in proportion to the total population, are employed in the military service of the state. In this calculation, the militia, and the seamen in his majesty's navy, must be taken into the account, as much as the troops of the line: for they are equally withdrawn from the pursuits of industry, in which they would otherwise be engaged. Thus, independently of foreigners, the total number of our own people, who have no other business but to defend the British empire and its dependencies, amounts to about 375,000, which is not less than one fortieth of our whole population. In several of the petty German principalities, where the princes were the most oppressively severe in their demands of military service from their subjects, it was found impossible to carry the numbers of their troops to a higher proportion than one sixtieth of the population, and few of the greater powers in Germany have ventured even this length. It has been argued from this fact, that we are already arrived at the utmost limit, to which the numbers of our regular force can be carried, and that no improvement in the system of recruiting, or in the condition of the soldiery, will enable us to make any very great addition to our army. The idea certainly has some plausibility; but whether it be correct or not, this at least is clear, that there must be some limit to the numbers of our regular forces - that there is some proportion to the population, beyond which no country can extend its army; and we

have no reason to suppose that we can afford a greater proportion of our population, than our enemies can of theirs.

It is therefore quite impossible that the British islands, with a population of about 15 millions, can maintain a standing army equal to that, which may be drawn from the countries under the control of the French emperor, peopled with 50 or 60 millions: and the disproportion of numbers is too great to be counterbalanced by any superiority of personal prowess. If, therefore, we were reduced to the necessity of maintaining the contest against France by our regular armies alone, no hope could be entertained that we should ultimately prevail; and our subjugation would be inevitable. Happily, however, for the liberties of mankind, there is a natural and a material difference between the case of a nation which has to defend its own independence [sic.], and that of a nation engaged in offensive warfare. An invading power can act only by its regular armies; but the nation that is invaded may bring the great mass of its population to support its army. The bulk of the people, who are engaged in the pursuits of peaceful industry, can give no assistance in attacking a neighbouring country, but may be of great use in the defence of their own. To the employment of this great resource, France herself owed the preservation of her independence, from the dangers with which it was threatened in the early periods of the revolution. It was by the *levee en masse*, that the united Austrian and Prussian armies were repulsed; and it is only by similar means that we can now hope to save our country from still more imminent perils.

Here, my lords, I shall no doubt be told, that our Government does not mean to trust to the standing army alone. The noble secretary of state has spoken of the necessity of a varied force, and has hinted at improvements which he has in view in the system of the volunteers. I could have wished, my lords, that if such ameliorations are in contemplation, they had been brought forward for the immediate consideration of parliament, instead of being put off for months, as if it were a matter in which delay can produce no inconvenience. In my view of our situation, never was there a time when we could less afford delay. Whatever measures are to be adopted for our defence, there is not a month, not a week, to be lost in applying them to practice. A delay of no long period may be fatal.

Without waiting, however, till the noble lord may explain what his views are, I feel confident in asserting, that it is impossible to devise any plan, by which the volunteers can be rendered a defensive force adequate to the present crisis.⁶ I am far, my lords, from feeling the least

disposition to undervalue the merits of a body of men, who have made the noblest and most patriotic sacrifices; but the system of their institution is liable to fundamental objections, which no exertions on their part can ever overcome. I have seen too much of the patriotic zeal of the volunteers not to honour the spirit which animates them, and not to trust that, when the hour of peril comes, they will meet it with all that determination, which an enthusiastic attachment to the cause of their country's freedom can inspire. - I am sensible too, that the volunteer establishment, even if it were to be broken up immediately, has already done important services to the country. It has diffused a military spirit, and no inconsiderable portion of military knowledge throughout the nation. It has infused into the people a confidence in our own resources; and, above all, it has removed every clog to the full employment of these resources, by extinguishing totally, and I trust for ever, those jealousies which formerly prevailed between the Government and the people, in regard to military force. Formerly there was an excessive diffidence on the part of Government, to put arms into the hands of any but the standing army; while on the other hand a corresponding jealousy subsisted in the people and in parliament, against intrusting the crown with a considerable standing army. While this spirit mutually prevailed, the exertions of the country were cramped. There was no mode in which our military resources could be called forth, that was not, on one side or the other, an object of jealousy. This spirit is now at an end, and it is the volunteer establishment that has annihilated it. At the commencement of the present war, the Government, with a magnanimous confidence in the spirit and loyalty of the people, threw itself upon their spontaneous efforts for support, and put arms into the hands of 4 or 500,000 volunteers. This act of confidence was met by a reciprocal confidence on the part of the people. Indeed it could not be otherwise. How could the people entertain any suspicion of a design against their liberties on the part of a Government, which did exactly what a treacherous and designing ruler would be most afraid of doing? How could they fear that the army would be turned against their liberties, by those men who gave them the arms by which every such attack might be repelled? This great measure was not only a mark of confidence on the part of Government, but an unequivocal earnest of the rectitude of their intentions; and as such it has been received by the country. We hear no more of scruple about granting to the crown the most numerous armies that can

be raised. The only question now is, how their numbers can be most effectually augmented; and were any member of parliament now to repeat the declamations against standing armies, that were formerly so popular, what would he meet with but ridicule? The result then of this magnificent experiment has been, not only to prove the perfect safety with which the people may be trusted with arms, but to establish a degree of mutual confidence between the crown and the people heretofore unknown, and to fix it on an immoveable basis. If the volunteer establishment had done no other service to England than this, I should think the ministers, who had accomplished so noble a work, entitled to the lasting gratitude of their country.

But, my Lords, while I pay a just tribute of praise, both to the individual merit of the volunteers, and to the utility that has been derived from the institution, I cannot shut my eyes on the intrinsic difficulties, which stand in the way of every attempt to form on this basis an efficient defensive force; and, at a moment like this, when every exertion of which this nation is capable, will not be more than adequate to the crisis in which we are involved, I should think it a very ill judged compliment, to persist in expecting from the volunteers, a species of service for which they are not formed, and to neglect the means that are in our power, of drawing from the mass of the people a more efficient species of defensive force.

It is admitted on all hands, that the discipline as well as the numbers of the volunteers has experienced a material decline. On this I should not be disposed to insist much, if it were merely an accidental circumstance; for I am well convinced, that when the necessity of renewed exertions becomes manifest, the energy of the volunteers may be revived in proportion to the apparent exigency of the crisis. - But, my lords, it would be deceiving ourselves, to consider this decline of the volunteers as an accidental circumstance: it has arisen from the very nature of the institution. A system, the efficiency of which rests so entirely on individual exertion, cannot be permanent and steady in its effects. At the period when the volunteer establishment was formed, the loyalty and patriotic spirit of the people had been roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. The apparent danger of the country called forth unprecedented exertions of spontaneous zeal; but as the exigency became less apparent, these exertions naturally relaxed. Even before there was any evident change in the situation of public affairs, the energy of this spirit had begun to decline. Such vehement efforts of enthusiasm could not be of long continuance: the public mind had been on the stretch, and naturally sunk back into a state of languor. To this is to be added, that military exercises were, to many of the

volunteers, so great a contrast to their ordinary occupations, as to be a recreation while the attraction of novelty continued; but when that zest was lost, it has been found in general very difficult to preserve their attention unimpaired. From this cause men of experience have observed, that the state of discipline in the volunteer corps, has in many cases followed an opposite rule, from that which is found to obtain among regular troops: among regular regiments the oldest is generally supposed to be the best corps, among volunteers it is more frequently the newest.

This instability must be expected in every institution, the efficiency of which rests on the efforts of voluntary zeal; and even if we could reckon with certainty on the revival of an enthusiastic spirit, upon every occasion of danger, that would not be enough. The danger of the country may often be seriously great, when it is not apparent to vulgar eyes. In the present circumstances of Europe our danger may be considered as permanent; for, even if peace should be concluded, we must look to the probability that our enemy will renew the attack, if ever he can take us unawares. In these circumstances, our defensive preparations cannot be safely trusted to the desultory efforts of spontaneous zeal: they ought to be arranged on a permanent system, that shall never relax in its energy, and that will keep our defensive force in a constant state of efficiency, in peace not less than in war.

For this reason, were there no other, the volunteer system must be considered as inadequate to the present necessities of the country; and it seems to be admitted, even by the warmest advocates of the volunteers, that there is a necessity of devising some establishment of a more permanent nature to replace them. In considering what that establishment ought to be, it becomes us to profit by the experience which has been already obtained; and that we may steer clear of the errors which have obstructed the utility of the volunteers, it is necessary to examine into the inconveniences, which have actually been observed in that system. In the first place, the privilege of each individual to quit his corps, though essential to the idea of a volunteer force, is a material obstruction to the perfection of its discipline. The slender tenure upon which the officers hold their authority, compels them to humour every caprice of the men under their command: and though a corps, composed of men of education, sensible of the importance of the object for which they are associated, may be induced to pay that zealous attention, which will enable them to acquire a considerable proficiency in military evolutions; yet it is scarcely possible that the common run of men, placed under so precarious an authority, can acquire that steady habit of ready and implicit obedience, which is the

most important and perhaps the most difficult lesson, that a soldier has to learn.

Secondly, from the composition of the volunteer corps in general, they are of less efficiency and at the same time of more inconvenience to the business of the country, than corps differently composed might be rendered. - Many of the volunteers, though not beyond the age proper for military service, are yet so far advanced in life, as neither to have the same facility in acquiring new habits, nor to be capable of going through the fatigues and hardships of real service with as little personal suffering, as men in the prime of youth. - From circumstances too in the original formation of the volunteer establishment, the greatest proportion of the men are above the lowest class. To serve in a volunteer corps, requires in most instances a pecuniary sacrifice, sufficient to deter the most numerous class of the people, while, on the other hand, many incidental motives have contributed to induce men in the middle classes of society to enter very generally into this service. In consequence of this, the men who are to be employed in repelling the enemy, are in a very great proportion heads of families, or persons whose superintendance is essential, for the management of various agricultural manufacturing and commercial establishments, of a more or less extensive scale. These men I have no doubt would fight with spirit, if they were led at once to meet the enemy; but if their absence from home should be protracted for a long period, the interruption to their domestic concerns might be of material inconvenience. From this cause it is a matter of great and almost insuperable difficulty to bring together a large body of volunteers, or to keep them embodied for any great length of time. The operations of the enemy may, how-ever, render it indispensable to require this sacrifice from the persons who compose our defensive force. Previously to their grand attempt, the enemy may harass us by frequent false alarms. The volunteers may thus be fatigued by long continued preparations, or may be disgusted by the frequent recurrence of a summons to the field, repeatedly terminating to no apparent purpose; and, under the impressions to which this may lead, they may perhaps be remiss in their exertions at the moment of the serious attack. - This disadvantage would be in a great measure avoided, if the persons who compose our defensive force were of a different description. A young journey-man, or farm-servant, might certainly be spared from his occupation and his home with infinitely less inconvenience than his master; and he would probably fight as well, and stand the fatigues of service much better. - There is another important consideration, which leads to the same conclusion. Since lives must be lost in the defence of the country, either the risk ought to fall equally on all; or, if any difference is to be made, those ought to be exempted from the post of danger, whose lives are of most consequence to the good of society.

In the volunteer system the very opposite to this rule takes place: those who are selected to be exposed to the weapons of the enemy, are chiefly men of the middle classes of society, upon most of whom there are many other individuals dependant for their maintenance and their welfare. By any great slaughter among men of this description, the oeconomy of society would be deranged, infinitely more than in proportion to the mere numerical amount of lives lost. Such a loss upon a class of men, the peculiar pride and distinguishing feature of our country, would be a national calamity not easily to be repaired; and in this view the employment of a military force, composed as the volunteers in general are, must be considered as a species of profusion, for which no pecuniary advantage can sufficiently compensate.

Lastly, It does not seem equitable that those who are from their age and circumstances the most suitable persons to defend the country, should be exempted from this duty, merely because they are not so well disposed as others, who are perhaps by nature less qualified. - Still more must it be reckoned unfair, that the pecuniary burden of the defence of the country should be made to bear harder on the loyal and zealous, than on those who are otherwise. In the establishment of the volunteer corps a preference was shown, from very natural motives of public oeconomy, to those corps which agreed to serve on terms apparently the least burdensome to the public revenue. It cannot however be overlooked, that any advantage which could thus be gained to the revenue, could only arise from the individual volunteers taking upon themselves a greater share of the actual expense of their own establishment. The burden, to which many of them have thus subjected themselves, is of very serious amount, and is evidently a real and effective tax, not less than if it were collected from them, and paid out again from the exchequer - and this tax is levied exclusively from the liberal and the zealous. - It must surely appear more consistent with justice, that the whole expense of the defence of the kingdom should be paid by the public at large, and raised from every man according to his pecuniary means; and also that the personal service required should be fixed by law, - that a general rule should point out the description of persons on whom this duty ought to fall, and impose it on them without partiality.

For all these reasons, my lords, I think the volunteer system is inferior in equity as well as in efficiency, to the system of training the people at large, first laid down by the act of 1803, commonly called the *Levy en Masse Act*. That act, though its principles are in my opinion unquestionably just and important, has unfortunately not been carried

into execution, and was replaced last year by a new Training Bill, differing from it in no essential point, and in scarcely any that can be deemed an improvement. Both acts, however, distinctly lay down and proceed upon the great and important principle, that military service for the internal defence of the kingdom is a general duty on all the subjects of the crown - that it is the right of the state to call for that service, in any way that may be deemed most proper and expedient.

The rules for apportioning this service among the people, appear to me to be founded in juster principles in the act of 1803, than in that of last year. A classification is made of the male population of the kingdom, within the ages of military duty, according to the age and domestic circumstances of each individual; and it is the clear intention of the act that the youngest of the men who are come to the age of maturity, and those who are least incumbered with families, ought to be the first called on for military service. The evident propriety of this principle is such as to need no commentary; but in the application of this principle I would incline to deviate in a small degree, from the provisions of the act to which I have alluded. By this act, the first class is to include all unmarried men between the ages of seventeen and thirty. The age of seventeen is perhaps too young: - that of eighteen is low enough to be taken as the standard of manhood: and I should think the first class sufficiently extensive, if it included all from that age to twenty-four or five. Within these limits it does not appear necessary to make any distinction of married or unmarried. The number of married men of this age will not be very numerous: and there is no probability that they should have such numerous families, as to call for any relaxation in their favour. Those who have paid a due attention to the valuable speculations of Mr. Malthus, certainly will not think it a politic measure to make any distinction, that might operate as a temptation to premature marriages among the common people; and, since we must consider the measures now to be adopted as of permanent continuance, these remote effects are not to be overlooked. At all event, the number of married persons of this age cannot be so considerable as to occasion much inconvenience, even though it were necessary to adopt some means of providing for their families at the public expense; and this would be preferable to the allowance of an exemption, which might have the effect of deranging the whole system.

Calculating upon this principle, from approved tables of the ordinary duration of human life, the population of Great Britain would afford nearly 600,000 men between the ages of eighteen and twenty five; and from the returns made under the Levy en Masse Act, there is ground to believe that, after deducting sea-faring men and all others exempted by that act, there

will remain liable to military duty upwards of 500,000 men within the description of the first class here laid down. This number, my lords, I am inclined to consider as sufficient for the object in view; and on this account it appears to be unnecessary to extend the first class any further. Perhaps, however, it would be advisable to form the men between the ages of twenty-five and thirty into a second class, or body of reserve, to be resorted to in cases of extreme urgency.

The most important question, however, relates to the measures to be adopted for giving these men a sufficient degree of training. It is certainly of more importance, to give a complete training to a moderate proportion of the people, than to extend over the whole that slight degree of instruction, which will not render them capable of the service that may be required from them. The men who are to be trained ought, in my opinion, to be rendered complete soldiers; and I think it a very ill-judged oeconomy not to give them a sufficient allowance of time for becoming so. The provisions both of the Levy en Masse Act, and of the Training Bill of last year, are in this respect equally objectionable. The duty required is limited in both of them within such narrow bounds, that it is scarcely possible to expect from it any real practical utility. The men are not to be called out more than twenty-four days in the year, and even these can only be reckoned half days, as the men have to go and return from their homes. The limitation too, provided by the Training Bill, that the men are not to be called to a greater distance than five miles from their homes, will in most instances effectually prevent the assemblage of any considerable body of men together, without which the exercise in petty platoons will be of very little use in preparing men for real service.

The anxiety of the framers of these bills, not to interfere with the ordinary avocations of the people, in the attempt to give them military instruction, appears to have been carried to excess, and has led them to adopt regulations calculated totally to defeat the principal object they had in view. A training so very slight and desultory, as that which is provided for, would in all probability prove entirely useless; the whole expense would be thrown away; and all the inconvenience arising from the interruption of labour would be incurred to no purpose. Thus, by an over anxiety to oeconomise the time of the people, an absolute waste is occasioned. In fact, something like this is ever the result of an attempt to reconcile objects that are incompatible. To train men to military discipline without interfering with their civil avocations, is an absolute impossibility. If men are to act as soldiers, a portion of their time must be devoted to the object of learning the duty of soldiers; - for a certain length of time they

must be separated from their families, and cease to be any thing but soldiers. The truth of this principle is fully evinced by the experience of the volunteers. The testimony of every volunteer officer, who has paid attention to the improvement of his corps, is uniform upon this point, that the greatest number of days, devoted to drilling in an unconnected and desultory manner, has never enabled them to make the same progress, that has been obtained in a very small space of time, when the men were assembled in quarters at a distance from their homes, and kept on permanent duty under military law.

In making arrangements, therefore, for training the people to arms, we must reckon upon a considerable sacrifice of their time as absolutely unavoidable. No unnecessary sacrifice ought to be required; but, on the other hand, we ought not to hesitate to make the sacrifice, to the full extent that is necessary for the complete attainment of the object. We have then to inquire, what length of time devoted to military discipline may be considered as sufficient, to form new recruits into good soldiers. This is a question on which professional men only can pretend to judge; but on the authority of officers of eminence I am led to believe, that three or four months, when well employed, may in general be sufficient. An advantage will certainly be found, in this respect, from the description of men who are proposed to be trained. Young men below twenty-five are at a period of life when new habits are easily adopted, and when impressions readily become permanent. Men of this age will probably become good soldiers in a much shorter time, than men of a more advanced age, and will also retain more permanently what they learn. When they have once thoroughly attained the habits of military discipline, a very little practice will be sufficient to keep up these habits even to a late period of life.

Upon these principles, my lords, I would propose to arrange the details of the measure. There should be formed in each county a corps, to consist of all the young men from the age of eighteen to twenty-five. They should be fully officered, and regularly organized as a local militia, but should remain peculiarly under the superintendance of the lieutenancy, not to be called out of their respective counties, except in cases of emergency. The young men, who have recently entered into this militia, and are in the first year of their service, should be considered as forming a separate class, to be kept embodied for at least three months, and during this time

assiduously employed in military exercises. Those who have gone through their first year, and have attained the requisite degree of proficiency, would not require more than a few weeks practice in the course of each of the succeeding years of their service, to keep up the habits of discipline, and ought not to be called out on duty for any longer period than is necessary for this purpose. - The most advantageous arrangement would be, that for a few weeks in every summer the whole of this local militia should be assembled in suitable encampments. Being thus collected in considerable numbers, they could the better practise those exercises, which have the nearest resemblance to the operations of real service against the enemy. All officers are agreed as to the importance of collecting men in large bodies for exercises of this kind; and to obtain this benefit in a higher degree, it would be proper that during this general assemblage of the local militia, those of two or three adjacent counties should join in the same encampment, and carry on their exercises in one body.

Immediately after the breaking up of this general assemblage, the annual enrolment should be made of the young men who, in the course of the preceding year, have attained the age of service. Instead of collecting all of them at once, it would be preferable, that they should be classed into different divisions to join their corps in rotation. By this means the labour of training them would be less burdensome, and a smaller number of officers would be sufficient for the task. By this means, also, a certain proportion of the local militia of each county would always be embodied. Corresponding to this proportion, there should be in each county a permanent establishment of officers, drawn from the regular army and acquainted with real service, whose duty it would be, not only to direct the training of the men, but to instruct the younger officers. The superior officers of the local militia ought to be selected, like the officers of our present militia, from among the principal landed proprietors of the county. Of the subaltern ranks a considerable proportion would naturally be composed of the young men of superior station, who are enrolled in the local militia, as falling within the ages of service. Young men destined for a military life could not perhaps have a better school, than to be thus employed for a few years, under the superintendance of men of experience, in training a continual succession of recruits to military exercises. According to the arrangement which has been proposed, there can be little doubt that these corps of local militia would be rendered completely effective, and little inferior even to regular troops which have not actually seen service. This would be done, too, with as little interruption to the ordinary avocations of the people, as could perhaps be reconciled with the effectual accomplishment of the essential object. In the beginning, indeed,

a great and extraordinary effort would be necessary: but after the proposed measures had been brought into a regular train, the burden of duty would be very light on all except the young men of eighteen or nineteen, who are in the first year of their training. There is no other description of men whose absence from their homes and their ordinary occupations would so little interfere with the business of the country. The men of this description may be calculated at between 90 and 100,000 over the whole of Great Britain; and if they join their respective corps according to a plan of rotation each for three months, there would only be one fourth of these constantly embodied, i.e. never above 25,000 men at one time; and the interruption to the ordinary business of the country would not be greater, than would be occasioned by an addition of this amount to the regular army. To this are to be added the few weeks during which the whole of the local militia would be assembled. If this should be reckoned at three weeks, the individuals subject to this service would not be called upon for a greater sacrifice of their time than many of the volunteers submit to, - all of them, indeed, who are in any degree fit for real duty; so that this plan cannot be considered as a greater burden on the country, than an establishment of an equal number of volunteers. It would indeed be less burdensome; for the volunteer corps are in great part composed of men, the real value of whose time is far greater than that of the young men, of whom it is proposed to form this local militia.⁷

An exception must no doubt be admitted, for the first moments of this establishment, when a great and extraordinary effort will be necessary, for bringing our state of preparation up to what it would have been, if this system had been sooner adopted. If it had already gone on for some years, all the young men from the age of nineteen to that of twenty-five would now be in a state of full preparation, having entered the local militia at eighteen, and having undergone a thorough training during the first year of their service. As matters actually stand, however, there is a great arrear to be cleared off; and to make up for the tardiness which we have shown in resorting to the system, we have no choice now but to take immediate measures for training all the young men below the age of twenty-five - a great and a burdensome effort, no doubt, but one which the exigency of the crisis imperiously demands.

When the system which has been proposed is compared with that of the volunteers, no doubt can be entertained that its efficiency must be incomparably greater. The men within the ages that have been stated, cannot be reckoned at less than 500,000; and to this extent we should

at all times have a force ready at an hour's warning to march against the enemy; a force regularly and systematically disciplined, and on which a commander might fully rely; a force composed of men in the full vigor of life, and animated with all the ardour which characterizes the prime of youthful manhood. With such a force to back our regular army, we might bid defiance to all our enemies. A local militia, constituted in the efficient manner that has been proposed, would certainly be alone sufficient for the defence of all those parts of the coast that are not peculiarly exposed, and where the principal descent of the enemy is not to be expected. The whole of the troops of the line, and of the regular or old established militia, might then be concentrated in one powerful army, in a position calculated to meet the main invasion. If the enemy should succeed in landing an army of such force, as to be an overmatch for that which is thus prepared to receive him in the first instance, the skill of our commanders would be tried, in avoiding a general action as long as possible. Our army retiring from one strong position to another towards the interior of the country, would be continually approaching to their reinforcements, and the local militia pouring in from all sides would soon form such an addition of force, as to be capable of overwhelming the most powerful army, that the invader would choose to risk in the undertaking. - In the course of these operations, indeed, some part of our country would unavoidably be left exposed to the ravages of the enemy, but it is not likely that we should be under the necessity of abandoning the metropolis; for the metropolis itself would furnish so large a reinforcement, as might, in all probability, decide the fate of the campaign.

The measures that have been suggested, would thus be of great importance in enabling us to meet the immediate exigency, which now presses upon us. But this is only a part of the benefit to be expected from them. Were they established as a permanent system, our means of defence would go on, in a continual progress of improvement. Every year a new crop, if I may use the expression, of nearly 100,000 youths would enter into the local militia to begin the acquisition of military discipline; every year a corresponding proportion would quit this militia, but would carry with them habits firmly fixed in that period of life when lasting impressions are most easily made. Every year, therefore, a greater and a greater proportion of our people would be ready to take up arms in defence of their country; and if the dangers of our situation should continue to increase, so that even a force of 500,000 well disciplined men in aid of our regular army, should appear insufficient for our security, the second class of local militia would soon be composed of men who had been thoroughly

trained in the first class, and who would still be perfectly capable of doing the duty of soldiers. In process of time the whole people will have gone through a course of discipline; we shall become, like our enemies, a nation of soldiers; and then England will assuredly be invincible.

There is no reason for apprehending that this institution will ever relax in its efficacy. Established on a systematic plan, the training of the local militia must go on in peace, as well as in war. If there be any probability that peace can be obtained, on terms which this country can accept without disgrace, we must assuredly look upon it as a hollow and insecure peace, as a mere truce which the enemy will be ready to break, whenever he can see an opportunity of taking us unawares. But, with the institution that has been sketched, we never can be unprepared to meet an invader. Whether therefore we look to the continuance of war, or whether we may hope for peace, it is of equal importance that we should establish our defence on a system of this kind; a system of permanent efficacy, commensurate with the prospects that are before us, of a long period of unabated danger.

It is not perhaps the least of the recommendations of this proposal, that it will render it possible for us to make peace with a prospect of security. If a peace should be made, we have no reason to suppose that our enemy will abandon his views of conquest, or relinquish his naval preparations. His means of making a successful invasion will be continually on the increase; and an interval of peace will only enable him to augment his naval force with the greater rapidity. On this account many persons, who on general principles are sincere friends of peace, are now advocates for the continuance of war, as being, under our present circumstances, absolutely necessary for our immediate safety. If however we adopt the system which has been proposed, our means of meeting invasion will also be on the increase; and whatever addition our enemy may be able to make, during an interval of peace, to his naval power and his means of attack, we shall be able fully to keep pace with him in the improvement of our means of defence by land. Being thus under no danger of losing in our relative strength during an interval of peace, or of being obliged to renew the war under circumstances of greater disadvantage, in the comparative state of our own force and that of our enemies, the obstacles which now stand in the way of peace, will be in a great measure removed. We may then conclude a peace, with the prospect of undiminished security, and therefore with a prospect of permanence. Perhaps, indeed, if such a system as that now proposed, had been established ten years ago, Europe might have been spared the whole of the present war, and all its disastrous

consequences. Our rupture with France might have been avoided, if our internal situation had been such, as both to deter the enemy from hostile designs, and to enable our own government to entertain a confidence in our means of defence. Soon after the rupture it was emphatically observed, that we were at war because we could not be at peace. But if our means of defence in the year 1803 had been such as the system now proposed might soon establish, we should not have been under the necessity of resorting to measures of hostility, with a view to our immediate security; neither would the enemy have been disposed to give the provocations which he did, to a power in a contest with which, he could have entertained but little hope of any great or signal success.

When I compare the system which I have now ventured to propose, either in its immediate or its more remote effects, with the measure which has been brought forward by his majesty's ministers, I can scarcely imagine how there can be a doubt in deciding between them, or how your lordships can be satisfied in such a crisis as the present, with a mere temporary expedient for making a small addition to our regular force: nor is it easy to comprehend on what principle his majesty's ministers can hesitate to adopt this or some other plan of equal efficacy, if it be not that they dread the unpopularity of calling upon the people for severe and burdensome sacrifices. If this idea has really been entertained, I am persuaded it is a mistaken one. The people of this country are not so dead to every feeling of patriotism, they are not so insensible to the value of what they have to lose, as to be unwilling to make the sacrifices that are necessary for preserving the name and the privileges of Englishmen, provided they are made distinctly to perceive the necessity, and are fully persuaded that the sacrifices they are to make will secure their object. On this ground I am persuaded they will acquiesce with more cheerfulness, in such measures as those I have now suggested, than in those which his majesty's ministers call for.

The ballot for which we are desired to vote, lays upon the people an oppressive, because an unequal, burden, without affording any reasonable probability that our liberties are thereby to be preserved. The ballot, under the name of a demand for military service, we all know to be in effect nothing more than a mode of compelling individuals to pay for substitutes: these substitutes differ in nothing from the recruits who enter the army by voluntary enlistment, except that in the one case the bounty is paid out of the general revenues of the state, in the other the payment is imposed on individuals, without any regard to their ability to pay: the ballot is thus nothing more than a tax, the most objectionable in principle that can be

imagined - a mere poll tax, the most unequal and oppressive form in which money can be levied. - When this burden is laid upon the people to make a trifling addition to our regular force, such an addition as will scarcely diminish in a perceptible degree the perils of our situation, can it be supposed that the people will submit to it with the same alacrity, as they would to an effective demand of real military service, imposed according to an equal and impartial rule, on those to whom it will be least burdensome, and the operation of which must be to put an end to all anxiety respecting the security of the kingdom?

But in truth, my lords, I cannot bring myself to believe that in such a crisis as the present, his majesty's ministers can be actuated by such a despicable motive as the fear of unpopularity - that their anxiety for the preservation of their places can go so far, as to make them in over-look the danger to which they expose themselves, as well as their king and their country. The situation of things is now such, that there is no possibility of saving the nation, without resorting, in one form or another, to burdensome and severe measures. It would be mere state quackery to delude the people with any different expectation. The time is past when a minister might have indulged a tenderness for the comforts and the convenience of the people. We have now to make our measures effectual, - to that consideration must every other bend; and of those who complain of hardship there is but one question to be asked, whether the hardships imposed on them are worse than the rigours of French despotism?

Perhaps, however, it may be alleged, that I am now proposing a superfluous and unnecessary degree of preparation. - But this, my lords, I cannot admit. When we consider the immense military resources that may be brought to bear against us, when we consider the number of points from which we may be assailed, and the extent of coast which we must be prepared to guard; above all, when we consider the hazard in which the whole empire is involved, from the prevalence of disaffection in Ireland, the force that would be gained by the adoption of the measures I have now suggested, cannot be deemed extravagantly great for meeting the exigencies to which we may ere long be reduced. But were it otherwise, it is right that our preparations should be superabundant: if the least shadow of doubt can remain as to their sufficiency, they are not what they ought to be. Even on principles of oeconomy, our defensive force ought to be ample and superabundant. Granting that a more scanty plan of preparation should ultimately prove sufficient, and that the invader should in the end be repulsed; yet if this is to be done after a severe contest on English ground,

our country would suffer from the desolation of a protracted warfare, far greater losses than would be sufficient to balance the utmost inconvenience, that could possibly be apprehended from preparations unnecessarily great. By providing ample means of defence, we have the best chance of deterring our enemy from the attempt at invasion, and thus saving our country from the ravages of war, or at least of shortening their duration by insuring the speedy overthrow of the invader. - But can any one reflect for a moment upon the countless horrors that would ensue if our means of defence should prove inadequate, can any one reflect that it is for the liberties, for the very existence of England that we are to fight, - and be content with scanty preparations? Who is there that can imagine without horror, our aged and beloved monarch weltering in his blood, - his place occupied by a heptarchy of French usurpers, the minions of the conqueror, - the family of our sovereigns, along with the sad remains of all that is now eminent and dignified in England, wandering as exiles in foreign lands, while the mansions of our nobility are parcelled out to French generals, and every thing that is desirable in England becomes the prey of a Frenchman, - all the comforts which industry and oeconomy have accumulated around the dwellings of our yeomanry our tradesmen and our manufacturers, scattered to the winds, the pillage of a licentious soldiery, - all the civil and religious institutions, that have hitherto been the boast of Britain, trampled under foot, - our people left to groan under the oppression and contumely of insolent and domineering strangers, forced to submit to every wrong and to every insult, with the sad reflection, that they have no longer the protection of English law, of an English magistracy, or an English jury.⁸ All this, my lords, and yet more than this, we have to guard against; and shall we then consider the inconvenience, of making preparations rather greater than absolutely necessary, as deserving of a moment's thought?

By the adoption of the measures which I have detailed, our situation may be rendered perfectly secure; and if our activity and resolution be commensurate with the exigency of the crisis, a very few months may be sufficient to bring our preparations to maturity. With such a local militia, as I have suggested, to back the efforts of our regular force, I should consider our army as already sufficiently numerous; or at least there would be no necessity, of resorting to a measure so objectionable as the ballot, for obtaining an immediate augmentation of our disposable force. I am ready to admit to the noble secretary of state the advantages, which a regular and disposable force must have over an equal number

of troops of any other description, even for the purposes of defence. But these advantages may be purchased too dear: and certainly, if ever there was a conjuncture of affairs, in which these advantages were of less value than usual, it is the present. If ever there was a time when the immediate defence of the kingdom ought to engross our thoughts, to the exclusion of every distant object, it is now. But, from the observations of a noble lord, who spoke in support of this bill, it would appear that ministers are thinking of Alexandria, and the Cape, and South America, when they should be looking to Kent and to Essex. Gracious heavens! is it possible that infatuation can be carried to this length? - that when the existence of England is in question, her strength is to be wasted in distant expeditions and colonial conquests? Gladly would I hope that the noble lord has misconceived the ideas of his friends; but the extreme anxiety which is manifested for a disposable force, and the whole tenor of the measure before us, form such a commentary on the observation that dropped from the noble lord, as fills me with dread and anxiety. As if our internal defence were not already sufficiently precarious, his majesty's ministers propose to make a trifling augmentation to our disposable force, at the expense of disorganizing the militia, suspending its efficiency at a most critical moment, and disgusting its officers; and to gain a momentary addition to the total amount of our force, they propose an expedient which will give a serious interruption to the measures, that have lately been adopted, for the permanent improvement of the regular army.

Looking, my lords, to the dangers of our situation as likely to be permanent, I cannot agree to sacrifice to a mere momentary convenience, the lasting and important advantages arising from the measures I have alluded to - measures, founded on a just and profound view of human nature, the benefits of which every year's experience will render more apparent, and which will do lasting honour both to the administration which carried them into effect, and to the enlightened individual with whom they more particularly originated. The observation of the noble secretary of state, that the interference will only be temporary, is not in my mind a satisfactory answer to the objection; for the benefit to be expected from these measures depends in so great a degree, on a general belief in the permanence of the new system, that any thing which has even the appearance of tampering, must have a destructive effect in shaking the confidence of the country. I am the more inclined to insist on this objection, because the interference which I deprecate, is wholly unnecessary. I have stated, my lords, that by the establishment of an extensive and well trained local militia, we should preclude the necessity of any great and immediate addition to our regular force. But it is not on

this alone, that I rest my objection; for if such an addition be necessary, and if a compulsory levy for the immediate augmentation of our regular and militia forces be unavoidable, that levy may be enforced, without affecting in any degree the success of the new system of enlistment.

The mode in which the ballot interferes with the recruiting of the regular army, has been repeatedly and amply illustrated. It is now admitted on all hands, that the demand for substitutes establishes a competition against the recruiting service; and that when an extensive ballot is to be enforced, the price of substitutes will be so high, that no recruits can be expected to accept of the low bounty now offered for the regular army. This is the unavoidable effect of a ballot accompanied, as ours now is, with the power of substitution; but it is evident, that this effect arises from substitution and not from ballot, - that no such effect would arise from a ballot, if the individuals balloted were to serve in person. - I know, my lords, that the power of serving by substitute is considered as necessary, for mitigating the severity of the ballot, and for obviating the excessive hardship which might be occasioned in particular cases, if the individual whose name is drawn were under the absolute necessity of quitting his home and his business. But this hardship may be obviated by other means less objectionable than the power of serving by substitute. I would propose, my lords, as a commutation for this power, that those who are anxious to avoid the necessity of serving in person, should be allowed, upon payment of an adequate pecuniary fine, before the ballot takes place, to take their name out of the list of those subject to be drawn. When every individual has thus an opportunity of withdrawing himself beforehand from the operation of the ballot, there would be no necessity of leaving any power of serving by substitute, and those whose names are actually drawn, should be bound to serve in person. It is evident, that by this arrangement, we should avoid the pernicious effect of the ballot, in drawing off, as substitutes, persons who would otherwise be disposed to enlist into the troops of the line. At the same time, it does not appear that such an arrangement would occasion to individuals any greater oppression than the present form of ballot, since the payment of a fine before the ballot would not be a more severe tax, than the burden of paying a substitute after it.

I do not mean, my lords, to argue, that this arrangement would be sufficient to do away every objection to the ballot. That is certainly an institution which I think it would be very desirable to avoid altogether; and I would anxiously wish that the supply of men, for our regular force, of all descriptions, could be trusted entirely to the operation of voluntary

enlistment. If, however, that is impracticable; if a compulsory levy must be made, and if ballot must be resorted to, I cannot but consider this as a less objectionable form of ballot than that now established. Perhaps, by some further ameliorations, the oppressive severity of that institution might be still more alleviated. The age of the men subject to the operation of the ballot should be reduced, and ought not, I think, to extend beyond twenty-five years: the period of service imposed should also be limited to three years, as in the original institution of the militia. The unavoidable hardship of the ballot, its interference with the personal liberty of individuals, ought to be compensated by great liberality in pecuniary bounty. In particular, all the fines paid for exemption from the ballot, ought to be applied, by the magistracy of the district in which they are levied, to the use of the balloted men, or of their families.

The ballot, thus mitigated, would be liable to infinitely less objection than it now is; and might perhaps be used for obtaining a much larger addition to our regular domestic force, than that now proposed by his majesty's ministers. There are some parts of the empire, to which a local militia, such as I have proposed, could not perhaps be safely extended. The inhabitants of these parts would thus be exempted from the burden of a military duty, imposed on the rest of their fellow subjects; and as a commutation for this duty, it may not be improper, that the corresponding class of men there should be subject to a ballot in the mitigated form, which I have now pointed out. The population of the districts, to which I allude, might afford a large supply of men, without any material interruption to agricultural or manufacturing industry: and all the supply that can be obtained would be doubly useful, both as directly adding to the military force of the empire, and as draining off a leaven which may eventually become dangerous.

But, my lords, whatever compulsory levy may be resolved upon, I must concur in the opinion, which has already been urged with irresistible force of argument, that the balloted men ought to be placed in the second battalions of our marching regiments, on the principle of the army of reserve act, rather than in the militia. To ballot for an addition to the militia, in order to have an opportunity of drawing off a corresponding number of men from the militia into the line, seems to me to involve a very inconvenient complication, without any adequate motive whatever. - The pernicious effects which may be expected, from disturbing the discipline and efficiency of the militia regiments at such a moment as this, have been clearly pointed out by a noble viscount (Sidmouth), as well as the effect which this measure must have, in undermining the present militia

establishment altogether, by disgusting the officers. Their patience has already been sufficiently tried, in the frequent repetition of this same expedient, tending to impress them with the idea that their corps are to be degraded into mere subsidiary battalions, to be employed in drilling recruits for the line. But if ever this expedient was objectionable, it is doubly so at this moment, when the defence of the kingdom should be our chief concern, and when the militia is more likely than ever to be called into that active service for resisting invasion, for which their institution was peculiarly framed.

These topics, my lords, have already been so ably discussed, that it would be presumption in me to suppose, that I could add any thing to the force of the arguments that have been urged. I shall conclude, therefore, with declaring that I cannot give my assent to the Bill now before us, when its particular provisions appear to me so objection-able, when the advantages to be expected from it are so inconsiderable, and when its immediate objects would be rendered wholly superfluous, by the adoption of measures commensurate with the exigency of our situation.

References

¹ For a summary of Lord Castlereagh's Militia Transfer Bill of 1807, see Sir John W. Fortescue, *A History of The British Army*. VI (London, 1910), 79-83.

² For the general military situation in 1807, consult Richard Glover, ed., *Britain at Bay: Defence against Bonaparte, 1803-1814* (London, New York, 1973), Eric William Sheppard, *A Short History of the British Army* (London, 1926), 122-158, and Corelli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army 1590-1970: A Military, Political and Social Survey* (London, 1970), 250-271. For army reform, see Richard Glover, *Peninsula Preparation: The Reform of the British Army 1795-1809* (Cambridge, 1963), esp. 214-254.

³ Selkirk spoke at the point of Napoleon's greatest success - the victory at Fresland, the Anglo-Russian alliance of Tilset and the danger that the fleets of all northern Europe could be mobilized against England. His speech occurred before a British victory at Copenhagen eased the crisis.

⁴ Selkirk's original footnote reads: "It has been the fashion to treat the preparations of the enemy in that quarter, as a subject of derision; but some of the ablest of our naval officers have considered them in a very different light. Some details as to the nature and powers of the flotilla might here be stated, upon authority of the first eminence, and they are withheld only from prudential considerations, and from the apprehension that information might thereby be conveyed to the enemy. Were it not for this restraint, these particulars might be sufficient to convince the most sceptical of the danger of immediate invasion, perhaps in the very face of our fleet, but at least under circumstances, the occurrence of which could not be prevented by the utmost vigilance on the part of our commanders."

⁵ "Those whom God seeks to damn, he first makes demented."

⁶ For the difficulties of the volunteers, see Sir John Fortescue, *The County Lieutenancies and The Army, 1803-1814* (London, 1909).

⁷ Selkirk's note reads: "According to the plan which has been here sketched, the expense incurred to the public would not be widely different from that of the volunteers, when their establishment was at its height."

⁸ Selkirk's note reads: "This is but a faint and feeble sketch of the consequences of French conquest: but the picture has been drawn in detail, and with a masterly hand, by the author of *The Dangers of the Country*, - a picture which Englishmen would do well to look at, while yet the danger *may* be averted ..."

ON
THE NECESSITY
OF A
MORE EFFECTUAL SYSTEM
OF
NATIONAL DEFENCE,
AND
THE MEANS OF ESTABLISHING
THE PERMANENT SECURITY
OF
THE KINGDOM.

BY THE EARL OF SELKIRK.

London:

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1808.

The following book was published by J. Hatchard in London and A. Constable and Co. in Edinburgh early in 1808. It represents an expansion of Selkirk's schemes for military reform first outlined in his House of Lords speech of 10 August 1807. This work was reprinted in 1860 in London by Sir John Wedderburn, with an enthusiastic and fulsome introduction pointing out that Selkirk had been too far ahead of his time in 1808.

National Defence

I. Advertisement

In the course of the following pages, some topics occur, into the discussion of which it may seem presumptuous to enter, without having had direct experience of military affairs. As an apology for this, I may be allowed to mention that, on every question of this nature, I have studied to correct my own ideas by a reference to the opinion of professional men. The military reasonings which I have ventured to introduce, may, perhaps, meet with some attention from the public, when it is known that they have received the approbation of men highly distinguished by their military talents.

It forms no part of my object to discuss the merits of a plan, which has recently been submitted to Parliament by His Majesty's Ministers. Before that plan was brought forward, these pages were nearly ready for the public eye. I have entered, however, into many general reasonings, which may, perhaps, be found to bear upon the proposal.

The term "Local Militia," which I have had occasion to repeat very frequently, has been applied by Lord CASTLEREAGH to an establishment of a very different nature, and upon a much more limited scale.¹ I could have wished to avoid the ambiguity to which this circumstance may give

rise. But in the actual state of my publication, I found it impossible to alter the term which I had adopted. I must therefore entreat the reader, not to confound the Local Militia, which I have ventured to recommend, with that which is proposed by the noble Secretary of State.

II. Inadequacy of Our Present State of Defence

Within the last three years an entire change has taken place in the aspect of European affairs. A train of disastrous events, terminating on the plains of Friedland, has annihilated every appearance of a balance of power on the Continent. The main principle and foundation of the system of European politics is thus at an end. A new aera in history is begun; and the maxims on which the conduct of nations has hitherto been governed, can no longer be referred to, as applicable to the actual circumstances of the world.

Though Great Britain has not been immediately involved in the catastrophe of the Continent, yet her policy cannot remain uninfluenced by so vast a change in all that surrounds her. To us, as well as to the nations of the Continent, this must be a new aera: our arrangements, internal as well as external, must be adapted to our new circumstances. Britain has long maintained a rivalry against a country containing more than double her population, and, in point of natural advantages, still more her superior. If, against so great a disproportion of physical strength, we have been enabled hitherto to maintain an equal contest, it is not to be entirely ascribed to the advantage of our insular situation. Our inferiority in regular military force has not yet occasioned very imminent danger to our national independence, because the great military powers of the Continent kept our adversary in awe, and prevented the full exertion of her strength against us. That check is now no more. We are deprived of all extraneous support, while the force against which we have to contend, has been increased beyond all bounds. If, therefore, we are to remain on the list of nations, it must be by exertions yet unprecedented in the improvement of our internal resources. Formerly we have been engaged in struggles for dominion: the question now is, whether we can maintain our national existence. Formerly our independence may have been in peril, under some fortuitous concurrence of circumstances: it will now be in a permanent state of danger. Temporary expedients are out of date; and

we can have no hope of safety, unless our means of defence be extended in proportion to the increased power of our rivals, and placed on a basis as permanent as the ascendancy of France on the Continent.

That our naval superiority can alone be sufficient to secure us from all attack, is an idea on the futility of which it is scarcely necessary to dwell. The extensive preparations, which have hitherto been made to repel invasion, are a sufficient proof that our Government has not given way to an infatuation of so dangerous a tendency. The animated zeal, too, with which all ranks came forward, four years ago, to assist in the defence of the country, shows that the great body of well-informed men were then sensible, that our independence was not secure from hazard. Our danger has since been incomparably increased; yet indifference and apathy have succeeded to a rational and manly vigilance. Now, indeed, our adversary utters no threats of invasion: but was it only because he threatened, that we thought our-selves in danger? When he was encamped at Boulogne, his threats redoubled in exact proportion to the motives, which weighed against his leaving the Continent; but he uttered no threats against the Austrian monarchy, which he was then ready to overwhelm. Shall we, too, be lulled into security, and only begin our preparations when the mine is sprung?

Whether invasion be an event remote or near at hand, we have no reason to expect long previous notice of the movements of the invading force. In the ports of Holland the enemy may collect a multitude of coasting vessels and river craft, which, with their activity and skill, may be converted, even in a few days, into a most formidable military conveyance. I shall not here enter into any minute investigation of the means, by which such a flotilla may be enabled to elude or to defy our naval superiority. It is enough that such men as Lord Nelson and Sir Sidney Smith have deemed the attempt not impracticable.² Difficult it is, undoubtedly; and a concurrence of favourable circumstances may be requisite to give it effect. These difficulties, however, do not amount to an impossibility: repeated experience has proved that the greatest naval superiority may be eluded; and a successful landing of the enemy is still to be reckoned among the events, for which Great Britain ought to be prepared.

True it is, that invasion has often been threatened by our enemies, and they have never seriously made the attempt; but to infer that they never will, would be rash indeed. We are placed in circumstances so entirely new, that the events of other times afford no criterion, by which to judge of future probabilities. A successful invasion of England would not be

more remote from the course of ordinary events, than many of those which the history of the last three tremendous years will record. Four years ago, Napoleon must have staked both his power and his personal safety on the success of the enterprise: his situation is now such, that the failure of an attempt at invasion would endanger neither. We are engaged with an enemy, whose implacable rancour can only be equalled by his formidable power, and the singular ability with which all his enterprises are concerted. The dangers which in former times may have deterred men less bent on their purpose, will now be little regarded. We may be certain, that no sacrifices will be deemed too great, if they can purchase our destruction; that the lives of 100,000 men will be counted as nothing: and if our enemy be thus determined to despise every hazard, there is no enterprise, however desperate, in which a concurrence of fortunate accidents may not open the road to success.

Those even who rely the most on our maritime superiority, - those who are the least disposed to admit the possibility, that, by any contingency, our fleet may be disabled from intercepting the passage of the enemy, - must rest their confidence on the presumption, that our fleet is always to be managed with perfect judgement, and in the most effectual manner.³ But is this a supposition upon which we can safely proceed? Can no instance be pointed out, in which an English admiral has been guilty, even of an error of judgement? When the misconduct of one man, the mismanagement of a single day, may open our country to that foe, who has laid the powers of the Continent in the dust, shall we think it unnecessary to provide against the dreadful consequences which might ensue? The fleet is, indeed, our proper weapon of attack, the instrument of the greatness and the glory of England; but to rest our defence on that alone, is only for men who dare not look their real situation in the face. Our wooden walls are with us a never-ceasing theme of praise; and of praise well-merited: but it is no disparagement to our wooden walls, that we should not rest content, while the garrison within is in such a state, that the first breach may prove our ruin.

Without pretending, therefore, to define at what period invasion is to be expected, - whether a few weeks only or years may intervene, - we cannot lose sight of the probability that it will be attempted, unless we are soon in a better state for resistance. It is on shore that we must ultimately be prepared to defend the liberties of our country; and unless we can maintain the contest upon our own ground, we have no right to expect that our existence, as a nation, will long be preserved.

Since, then, the obstacles to the passage of the enemy are not physically insuperable, it is at least a possible supposition, that they may succeed in landing an army of 100,000 men on the coast of Kent or Essex. It becomes us to consider coolly whether our means of defence are now sufficient to afford a certainty, or even a fair probability, that we may overcome such an invading force.

No one, I presume, will venture to assert, that our regular forces are adequate to the contest even with the addition of the militia. Of the numerous army maintained by this kingdom, a great part is detached into distant colonial stations, while those at home have so extensive a tract to guard, that there is much difficulty in collecting any considerable number in one place. Those who are best acquainted with the actual state of our military establishments, with the present distribution of our forces, and the extensive demands upon their ser-vice, will not be ready to believe that we could easily collect an army, bearing as great a proportion to the supposed force of the invaders, as the Prussians did to the French in the campaign of 1806.

If our commanders attempt to make a stand with a force much inferior in numbers to the enemy, may we not see another such catastrophe as that of Marengo, or of Austerlitz, or of Jena?⁴ Our country does not abound in military positions of sufficient strength, to compensate for a very great disproportion of numbers. It is the system of our enemies to trust much to fortune; they will risk every thing to bring the contest to the issue of a battle; and if, in so many enterprises of desperate hazard, they have hitherto been the favourites of fortune, may they not be favoured again? In their style of operations, if the hazards are great, successes are decisive; and if once they prevail in a general engagement, we can have little hope that our army could again collect to make a second stand.

Under all the circumstances of the case, our commanders may naturally wish to avoid a decisive action. The enemy, however, on their part, will lose no opportunity of bringing on a general engagement; and this can only be avoided by continually retreating before them. In a country like England, every where highly cultivated, and altogether of narrow bounds, it is impossible to carry on, with advantage, those plans of protracted warfare which might be followed with effect by an inferior army, in an extensive country thinly inhabited, and full of forests, mountains, or morasses. There is every probability, then, that the attempt to avoid an engagement could not long be successful, and that our army would soon be forced to a battle, under circumstances which would leave no room for any sanguine expectation of a favourable result.

The regular and permanent military force being thus insufficient, our hopes of safety must rest on the support which our army may obtain, from the voluntary zeal and patriotism of the nation at large.

We have no reason to believe that our people will be inclined, like the nations on the Continent, to bend the neck to the yoke, and submit without a murmur to a new master. Neither the exaggerated declamation of Jacobin zealots, nor the disgusting wrangling of party leaders, have yet convinced the people of England, that their country is not worth fighting for.⁵ But it would argue an ignorance of human nature to imagine, that, because our people are brave and attached to their government, no extremity can ever shake their resolution, no circum-stances give a check to the promptitude and vigour of their exertions. In the history of the most courageous nations in the world, instances are recorded of the effects of panic; and what so likely to produce a sensation of this nature, as a state of things so unusual; one which the people are not prepared to meet, one which of late years they have even been sedulously taught to believe remote from all probability? If the struggle were to be of long duration, the inherent spirit of the nation might overcome every disadvantage. Britain has had her Alfred and her Wallace;⁶ and such would yet again appear, if the circumstances of our times were similar; but we have not now to expect a protracted struggle. We have an antagonist rapid and decisive in his movements, vigilant to preserve every advantage which he gains; and before the nation could have time to discover around whom they might rally with confidence, the struggle would be at an end. Against an enemy such as we have to contend with, the natural resources of the country can be of little avail, unless they be in full readiness for immediate employment.

Confident as we may be in the loyalty of the people, we cannot expect the necessary degree of promptitude in their efforts, except by means of complete previous arrangements. Not a day can be lost without additional danger; and in the critical moment which must decide the fate of the country, any doubt as to the duty required from each individual, may be productive of an embarrassment and confusion, not less fatal than if cowardice and disaffection were the prevailing habits of our people. Every man ought to know exactly what his task is: - How that task is to be performed, is not a lesson to be taught to him when the enemy is on English ground.

It will not be asserted, that our arrangements are already sufficient for giving the utmost possible effect to the exertions of the people at large; and those men whose opinions upon military subjects best deserve attention, are not in general sanguine enough to believe, that our

domestic force, in its present state, could give such effectual support to our regular army, as to enable it to cope with a very superior army of invaders. The Volunteer establishment is universally admitted to have lost much of its discipline, and to be in a lower state of efficiency than at any former period. The benefits which have been derived from that institution, the salutary effects which it has produced on the public mind, the brilliant display which it has afforded, of the energy and patriotic ardour which pervade this country, form no argument for adhering to a system of defence, which is not adapted to our present circumstances.

Since the first institution of the volunteers, our relative situation to the rest of Europe is totally changed. Our danger might then have been expected to pass away: it has now assumed every appearance of permanence, and cannot be warded off by any momentary effort of spontaneous zeal. The most zealous advocates of the volunteers seem now to be satisfied of the instability, which is involved in the very principle of their formation. It is by no means improbable, that the spirit of the nation might again be roused, that the Volunteers establishment might be restored to as great a state of efficiency as it had formerly attained: but this, even if it were enough for our present emergency, could not be done without great exertions on the part of the people, and great expense to the public treasury. It is to be considered, whether that expense and these exertions may not be better applied; whether, with the same burden on the country, we may not obtain a domestic force more effectually organized, liable to no fluctuation, and to no principle of decay, - a force which will not only provide for the exigency of the moment, but lay a solid and permanent foundation for our future safety.

Impressed with a conviction that, under the present circumstances of the country, the means of defence hitherto adopted are not sufficient, I took occasion, in the course of the last session of Parliament, to state my opinion of the necessity of providing against the permanent dangers with which we are surrounded, by measures of as permanent efficacy. In that view I ventured to recommend the establishment of a Local Militia, in which every young man, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, throughout Great Britain, should be enrolled, and completely trained to military discipline.⁷

Not having then an opportunity of entering into minute details, it was not easy for me to explain completely the nature and consequences of the proposed institution. I now lay before the public a more enlarged view of the plan, rather for the purpose of illustrating the general principle, and of showing its practicability, than with any idea of exhibiting a perfect

system. On a subject so extensive, it is perhaps impossible to bring forward at once such a complete arrangement, as to leave no room for objection or amendment. I trust, however, that the imperfections to which these suggestions may be found liable, will not be so great as to affect the general principle, on which the outlines of the plan are founded.

I hope at least to satisfy the reader that, in our own exertions, this nation may find security from every foreign attack. Without pretending to deny that an institution, such as I recommend, must be, in some degree, inconvenient and burdensome to the public, I may boldly appeal to the feelings of every thinking man, whether the demands I would make, on the time and the exertions of the people, are such as to bear any proportion, to the inestimable value of the objects for which the sacrifice is required. We have no alternative between such sacrifices and the prospect of subjugation by an inveterate foe; nor do the exertions which I propose, appear to be greater than the circumstances of our situation justly demand. In a case in which every thing is involved, that is valuable to us as a nation, it would be a mean and a short-sighted oeconomy to be sparing in our preparations. Better, surely, to make sacrifices rather greater than may be absolutely necessary, than to leave our ultimate security in any hazard!

III. Proposed Organization of the Local Militia

That the Government has a right to call for the personal service of every man capable of bearing arms, in the defence of the country, is a position which no loyal subject will deny. This principle is recognised in many of our laws, and is the only ground on which an attempt can be made, to justify the hardship imposed on individuals by some of our institutions. The present system of militia ballot is an application of this principle; but it is an injudicious and improper application. That service, which is equally the duty of all, is now unfairly distributed, and thrown with oppressive severity on a few. Such an institution must necessarily be the occasion of murmurs; but if the burden of the public service can be so equally divided, as that each individual shall scarcely perceive his load, the country will be served with cheerfulness, whilst the national strength may be augmented in a degree almost incalculable.

At the age of 18, at that period of life when a young man has scarcely determined on his profession, when he is unfettered by the ties of a family, and his habits are as yet unfixed, it is proposed, that three months shall be devoted to the service, which his country has a right to demand of him. Every youth may be allowed to enrol his name for service in any district which he prefers, and the period of the year, at which he is to perform his three months duty, may be left to the determination of the magistracy of the district, so that the convenience of individuals may, as far as possible, be consulted. From the age of 19 upwards, only three weeks, at a fixed period of the year, will be required annually, till the age of 25, after which no one will be subject to any further demands of military service.

In the performance of this duty, no individual will be under the necessity of going to a great distance from his usual residence. The period of three months, employed in the first training, may be spent entirely within his own county. For the exercises of the subsequent years, he may perhaps be called a little further; but, except in the case of actual invasion, never to any remote part of the kingdom. The sacrifice of time required of him, not amounting altogether to eight months in the course of seven years, cannot form an interruption of serious detriment to the plans of life, which any individual may have laid down for himself. The lower orders will not be oppressed by any pecuniary burden, such as the present militia ballot imposes. An adequate allowance of pay will be made by the public to defray all their expenses. The service required does not essentially interfere, either with their domestic ties, or with their prospects of advancement in life; and there is no ground to believe, that great anxiety will be felt to avoid the duty required. By young men in general, it is more probable that the proposed military exercises will be looked upon as a scene of animated recreation.

The demand which is thus made on the exertions of each individual is surely moderate; yet the aggregate of these small contributions will be sufficient to establish the public security on an immoveable basis, and to render every foreign attack absolutely insignificant.

From the tables constructed by Dr. Price, grounded on a general enumeration of the population of Sweden, and on the registers of mortality kept in that kingdom,⁸ it is calculated that, in a population of 100,000 persons of all ages and descriptions, there will be about 811 males between the ages of 18 and 19, and 4724 between 19 and 25, making in all 5535 between the ages of 18 and 25. According to this proportion, the population of Great Britain, amounting to nearly eleven millions, should contain about 605,000 males within these ages.

Of this number, however, besides those disabled by infirmity, there must be a considerable proportion already engaged in the army and navy. Seafaring men too, of all descriptions, being subject to the impress, are justly exempted from all demands of military service on shore. To ascertain, with precision, the deductions to be made on account of these and other exceptions, would require documents, which are not, perhaps, attainable at present. But some approximation to an estimate may be formed, from the enumerations made in the year 1803, under the General Defence Act.⁹ At that time, returns were made of 1,831,315 men in Great Britain, effective and liable to duty, between the ages of 17 and 55. According to Dr. Price's tables, the total numbers of males, between these ages, corresponding to the population of Great Britain, would be about 2,766,000, which is nearly in the proportion of 3 to 2 of those returned in 1803 as effective. If, therefore, from the ascertained population of any district, we calculate, by the tables, the proportion of males between the ages of 18 and 25, and then make a deduction of one third, we shall obtain a result, not very wide, probably, of the real number of men who may be found effective, in the proposed enrolment. According to this estimate, the young men between the age of 18 and 25, liable to serve in the Local Militia, will amount to about 400,000, of whom nearly 60,000 will be between 18 and 19.

Variations from this rule must, no doubt, be expected, as there are some districts from which a larger proportion of men may have been drawn off to the army, or to the sea, than from others; but these local varieties will not affect the general result, and their amount will not, in all probability, be such, as to deserve attention in the practical arrangement of the measure. A doubt of more importance may perhaps arise on another point: Though it is ascertained that the persons, effective and liable to military duty, according to the principles of the General Defence Act, between the ages of 17 and 55, amount to two-thirds of the total number of males between these ages, yet it may be questioned whether the same proportion will hold good between the ages of 18 and 25. It is probable that a greater proportion of young than of middle-aged men are absent from their native places, in the army, and in the royal or commercial navy. On the other hand, a smaller proportion will be disabled from service by infirmity in the early periods of life. If, however, on the whole, it should prove that the effective men between 18 and 25 fall very short of the proportion which has been supposed - that the number of men, requisite for the defence of the country, cannot, therefore, be found within these ages, the deficiency may be supplied by extending the period of service a year or two further.

The arrangements necessary for the instruction of these men in military discipline, will be most readily understood by taking as an example a particular district, as, for instance, the county of Kent. If the proportion above stated should hold good, the young men in that county between 18 and 19 will amount, after all deductions, to about 1662¹¹ liable to duty as local militia. These men may be allotted into four different divisions, and instructed in succession by the same officers. As soon as the men of one division have been brought to a due degree of discipline, they may return home and be replaced by another; and three months being allotted to each division, the whole will be gone through in the course of the year.

The training of the young men throughout the kingdom may thus proceed in a continual succession, and afford uninterrupted employment to a permanent establishment of regular officers. Men of experience in actual service ought to be selected for this purpose; and, under their command, each successive body of recruits should be organized into a battalion, and instructed in all the maneuvers of regular troops.

The total number of recruits to be annually trained in this county may be divided into four divisions, of 415 each. That arrangement would have the advantage of simplicity, but it would involve one inconvenience, that, at the end of every three months, the officers would have to begin anew upon a whole battalion of recruits totally uninstructed. In order to distribute the burden of duty more equally over the year, it may be advisable to form the recruits into a greater number of divisions. Thus, for instance: - let the whole be allotted into ten divisions of 166 men each; in the commencement, let only one division be assembled, so that the attention of the officers may be devoted to them alone for four weeks. After this period, the first division will be, in some degree, advanced in discipline; a second division may then join them, and after four weeks more, a third. The drudgery of instructing the first division may thus, in a considerable degree, be over, before that of the second is begun: the men of the subsequent divisions, being mixed among those already in a state of some proficiency, must derive benefit from the example of their comrades, and their instruction will be a less laborious task, than if the whole battalion were to be taught at once from the beginning. Each division being supposed to remain 12 weeks on duty, the first may return to their homes at the time when the fourth joins the battalion; and at the end of every four weeks, another division will be dismissed, and replaced by a similar number of men entering upon their period of duty.

Thus, through the greater part of the year, there will be constantly assembled three divisions of 166 men each, or in all about 500 men, a number which may be conveniently manoeuvred as one battalion. To the corps thus composed, I would give the name of the Training Battalion. In such a county as Kent, it will require an establishment of two field officers, eight captains, eight lieutenants, and thirty-two serjeants. When the recruits of the first division only are assembled, 166 men, being divided into eight companies, there will only be about 20 men in each, to occupy the attention of two commissioned and four non-commissioned officers. There can be no doubt, that in the course of four weeks, they may bring this small number of men into such a state of proficiency, that, during the next four weeks, their chief attention may be devoted to the second division. When the third division joins, the companies will be at their full complement of about 60 men each; and by this time, it is probable that some of the most intelligent men of the first division may have made a sufficient progress, to be capable of acting as non-commissioned officers, under the direction of those of more experience.

According to this progressive plan of instructing the Local Militia, it will be thirty-six weeks, after the commencement of the rotation, before the tenth, or last division of the recruits of the year, will enter upon their period of duty in the Training Battalion, and after twelve weeks more, all will have gone through their allotted course of discipline. Four weeks will still remain to complete the year, in the course of which, I would propose a general assemblage of the whole Local Militia of the county, including the recruits who have been trained during the preceding eleven months, along with all other young men between the ages of 19 and 25. The whole should remain encamped for about three weeks, practising the duty in which they have been instructed, and applying themselves more particularly to those manoeuvres, which can only be executed by large bodies of men, and to those exercises which have the nearest resemblance to the operations of real warfare.

When this plan has arrived at maturity, all the young men included in the Local Militia will have been formed to military discipline, by three months drilling in one or other of the seven preceding years. The annual recurrence of a sufficient period of exercise will serve to keep up the habits of discipline, which have been acquired in the first training; so that the eldest classes of the Local Militia will continue as completely masters of their duty, as those who have been recently instructed. At the same time, the exercises of the annual assemblage may be made to give, both to the officers and men, a more perfect idea of their duty, than can be imparted

by any drilling of separate battalions in quarters. The whole body of Local Militia will be formed according to the same organization, and will go through the same operations as if they were in presence of the enemy; and every man will learn exactly the duty which may then be required of him.

If the alarm should be given in the course of the ensuing year, every individual, on joining his battalion, will take the same place which he occupied at the general assemblage. These exercises will thus form a rehearsal of the duties to be performed, in case the actual services of this militia should be required. Following out this principle, it must be observed that the young men who, being in their first year's training, have never yet joined in the general assemblage, will not be reckoned among those from whom real service is to be expected. Thus each individual, though enrolled for training at the age of 18, will not be called upon for real duty against the enemy till he is 19; and, on the other hand, though his last attendance at the ordinary exercises of the Local Militia will be at the age of 25, yet during the ensuing year, he must still be ready for duty, if an occasion of emergency should occur.

The period of the general assemblage may be fixed at any season of the year least likely to interfere with the labours of agriculture. The beginning of summer, after the business of the seed-time is brought to a close, and before the harvest is likely to commence, will probably be found the most convenient. From the difference of climate in different parts of the island, it may be advisable that the militia of the southern counties should assemble earlier than those of the northern. It is by no means necessary that the assemblage of all adjoining counties should be at the same time; - on the contrary, many reasons may be stated for appointing them at established intervals: but, in each particular county or district, it should be permanently fixed at one constant period. All the other arrangements for the Local Militia will be determined by the time of the general assemblage. Immediately after it, the annual enrolment should be made, of the young men who, in the course of the preceding year, have attained the age of 18. The progressive plan for their instruction will then commence, and will occupy the officers during the whole interval till the next general assemblage.

In the county which has been taken as an example, it has been calculated that the local Militia, united in the general assemblage, will form a body of above 11,200.¹² This number may be conveniently divided into 16 battalions of 700 men each. The different battalions should be assigned to different local subdivisions of the county, to be arranged according to the population of each district. These may be called the Local Battalions, as distinguished from the Training Battalion, of which the

organization has already been explained. The Training Battalion is supposed to be constituted merely for the purpose of instructing the successive divisions of recruits; and, at the end of every year, when that purpose is accomplished, the battalion will no longer remain as a separate body; the men who have passed through it being parcelled out to the different Local Battalions, to which by residence they are naturally attached. The Local Battalions, on the other hand, though in ordinary circumstances meeting only once in the year, are to be considered as permanently constituted for actual service, and to be always ready to assemble whenever invasion takes place. These Local Battalions must therefore be fully officered, and completely organized for real duty against the enemy.

The chief command of each battalion I would propose to be given to a gentleman of respectable property and popular character in the county; and, as far as possible, resident, or personally connected with the district to which the battalion belongs.

If this country has hitherto resisted the storm which overwhelms the rest of Europe, it is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to the internal energy, resulting from that happy connection which subsists between the different orders of society. The insensible gradation of ranks, the mutual dependence of the aristocracy and their inferiors, arising from the peculiar nature of our government, diffuses widely the influence of public opinion, and binds the nation into an united mass, by the firm chain of reciprocal good offices. Hence it is, that the law, which in other countries seldom obtains more than a reluctant obedience, or at best, a cold acquiescence, is here the object of zealous and affectionate support from the great mass of the nation. This principle it is of infinite consequence to preserve unimpaired: and in all our arrangements, military as well as civil, the surest road to success is, that every new establishment should be adapted to the general spirit of our national institutions.

The personal influence of popular characters will at all times be of importance, in smoothing the difficulties which may occur in the execution of such measures as those now suggested. In the first establishment of a system so new, as well as so extensive, this aid must be of peculiar value. Besides this, we adhere to the principles of our original militia establishment, in giving the command of each battalion to a gentleman of respectable property in the county. The volunteer system has diffused a degree of military knowledge so extensively, that there will probably be no great difficulty in finding persons properly qualified for such a command. But, that there may be no risque from a deficiency of professional knowledge, the second in command in each battalion may be an officer

of the regular service. The persons who, during the course of the year, have acted as captains and lieutenants in the Training Battalion, should, in the general assemblage, act as major of the Local Battalions.

It has been observed that the Training Battalion of the county of Kent may be conveniently arranged into eight companies; and two commissioned officers being allowed to each, will afford one field officer to each of the 16 battalions, into which the whole Local Militia of the county may be arranged. These battalions being assigned to local subdivisions of the county, it would be advisable that the Training Battalion should be apportioned into companies, on the same principle. This battalion being divided into eight companies, each of these will require for its supply an eighth part of the county, or two of the sixteen districts to which the Local Battalions are assigned. The recruits from each particular district being placed in a particular company of the Training Battalion, all the men who have been trained under the same captain and lieutenant, will be distributed into two Local Battalions. To one of these two battalions the captain, and to the other the lieutenant should be appointed to act as major, in the general assemblage of the Local Militia. They will thus have under their command the same men whom they have previously had under their charge in the Training Battalion; they will have an opportunity of displaying the proficiency of those whom they have instructed. The prospect of this continued personal connection with the same individuals, will be a spur to the exertions of these officers, and insure their attention to the improvement of the men whom it is their duty to train.

On the same principle, the serjeants of each training company ought to be appointed to some office of distinction, in the two battalions connected with the company which they have been employed in training.

With respect to the inferior officers of the Local Battalions; the captains and subalterns, as well as non-commissioned officers, may be selected from among the young men who are enrolled for duty. Of those who come within the general description of the Local Militia, and from their age are liable to the proposed military service, there will, of course, be many of a condition superior to the common mass; and there can be no difficulty in selecting, from among them, a sufficient number of persons, capable of being instructed in the duty of officers.

In order to avoid any unpleasant interference with the established manners and accustomed order of society, I would propose that all the young men who choose to serve at their own expense should be enrolled

in a separate corps, under the name of Cadets. Of these there may be two companies, one of cavalry, and one of infantry, leaving it to the discretion of each individual to choose the species of service most suitable to his inclination, or to his pecuniary resources. These companies may be allowed to drill and to mess apart from the rest, and may be indulged in any other distinction, which is not deemed inconsistent with the acquisition of that military knowledge, and those habits, which it is the object of the proposed institution to diffuse. In their military duty, however, no relaxation can be admitted; and there is no probability that their proficiency will be inferior to that of the battalion at large. The Cadet Companies will, in general, be composed of young men of better education than the rest of the Local Militia. Among the volunteers it has been experienced, that men of education have been much more ready in acquiring a knowledge of military exercises, than the recruits who commonly enter into the regular army.

From among these Cadets, all the captains and subaltern officers of the Local Battalions may be selected. The young men appointed to these offices would otherwise be subject to the duty of privates in their respective companies. It is natural to suppose that the situation of an officer will be deemed more agreeable, and that most of the Cadets will be ambitious of such an appointment. There is no reason, therefore, to apprehend any difficulty in finding a sufficient number of persons willing to act as officers; and the duty, either of a captain or a subaltern, is not so difficult, but that any young man of intelligence may soon render himself master of it.

The persons thus appointed cannot in general be expected to take upon themselves the duty of officers any longer than they remain subject to the legal demand of military service. After that period is expired, some perhaps may be willing still to contribute their spontaneous exertions. Those who are disposed to remain ought to be encouraged, in order to preserve a greater proportion of experience among the officers of the Local Battalions. It is probable, however, that most of the officers will retire at the expiration of the regular period of duty. Vacancies will therefore occur; these, according to the custom established in other military corps, will be filled up from among the officers of a lower rank. Promotions may thus be expected to take place annually, proceeding through every step, till among the subalterns of the lowest rank there will remain a number of vacancies, to be filled up from among the cadets.

In order to insure a thorough knowledge of military duty, no one should be appointed an officer, till after a certain period of service as a

private in the Cadet corps. That period, however, need not be very long. Considering the superior facility with which young men of intelligence and education may acquire a proficiency in their military duties, a young man of the cadet company, after four or six weeks training as a private, may perhaps be deemed capable of being appointed to receive a commission as a subaltern. Each of the cadets appointed to fill up the vacancies of the year, should then be required to perform a period of duty, as officers in the Training Battalion, under the direction of the regular and permanent officers, whom they may assist in drilling and manoeuvring the successive divisions of recruits, at the same time that they are themselves instructed in their own duty as officers.

It is probable, that, in this way, a young man of good ability may acquire a sufficient knowledge of his duty to act with propriety as an officer in the general assemblage of the Local Militia, though he should not devote more time to military instruction than the period required of the ordinary recruits. But it would be of essential benefit to the discipline of the Local Militia, if a number of these officers were to remain for a longer period in the study of their duty, under the superintendence of the permanent officers of the Training Battalion. It may deserve consideration, whether this might not be enjoined as a preparatory exercise for young men destined for a military life. If, in the disposal of subaltern commissions for the regular army, some advantage were given to those who had served for a year or two as assistant officers to the Training Battalions of the Local Militia, and who, in that duty, had merited the approbation of their superior officers, this arrangement would be of benefit to the regular service as well as to the Local Militia. The Local Militia would obtain officers more thoroughly instructed in their duty; and, on the other hand, this employment, of training a succession of recruits, under the direction of experienced soldiers, would be a most instructive exercise for a young officer, and an excellent school for the habits of a military life.

While the discipline of the Local Militia may thus be of peculiar utility to young men destined for the army, the habits of military sub-ordination can scarcely fail to have a beneficial effect even on those who are intended for the pursuits of civil life. It may, perhaps, be apprehended, that the period of military training will form a serious interruption to the studies of the youth of superior condition. But there is no good ground for this apprehension. The period of duty will never be of longer duration than the vacations between the different academic terms; and to accommodate still more the convenience of young men attending the universities, separate local corps might be formed of the students in these institutions.

With respect to the mass of the people, the time which the young men have to pass in military duty, may be rendered of material service in diffusing the benefits of education. When a great number are collected together, they may be instructed in many branches of useful knowledge, with a facility which cannot be obtained while they are scattered over the country in their ordinary places of residence.¹³

Without dilating upon a topic which may appear foreign to the subject immediately under consideration, I may be allowed to remark that a military life is not necessarily a life of idle and dissolute habits. On the contrary, if the intermediate hours when the young recruits cannot be employed in their military exercises, be applied to instruction of a different description; if the studies suggested to them be judiciously chosen, and such as are likely to interest their curiosity, the period of the proposed military duty may be rendered eminently conducive to those habits of application, which are so important in every pursuit of sober industry.

When the whole Local Militia is assembled, either for real service against the enemy, or for their annual exercises, their organization will approach as nearly as the circumstances of the case can admit, to that of a regular army. From every county there will be a number of battalions, each of them commanded by a gentleman of property, with an officer of experience from the regular service, as his major, or second in command. Under them, the battalions will be officered by young men, selected from among those, on whom the general obligation of service is imposed, and regularly instructed in the particular duty of the situation to which they are appointed. The whole of these battalions will form a brigade or division under the general superintendence of the Lieutenant of the county;¹⁴ and the immediate military command will naturally rest with the field-officers of the Training Battalion, who, during the temporary assemblage of the whole body of Local Militia, may act in the capacity of general and staff-officers. In this way, both in the chief command of each county, and in all inferior stations of importance, if an ostensible precedence be allowed to persons of local influence, they will always have the assistance of experienced military men; and in every corps there will be a proportion of professional men, sufficient to impart the requisite technical knowledge to the rest of the officers.

The establishment, which has been calculated as suitable for the county of Kent, must admit of some variations in the detail, according to the circumstances of each district. In a county of moderate extent, such as Cheshire, the population amounting to 191,751, will afford about¹⁵ 7000 Local Militia. The Training Battalion will amount to 300 at its full

complement, and may therefore be arranged into five companies of 60 men; while the general assemblage will form ten Local Battalions of 700. But, in a county of much smaller population than this, the men under training at one time cannot be sufficiently numerous to be conveniently manoeuvred as one battalion. On this account the smaller counties should be classed together into districts of a sufficient extent, to afford a Training Battalion of a convenient scale; and, for the same reason, the most extensive and populous counties should be subdivided. On this principle, the kingdom may be arranged into 42 military districts,¹⁶ in each of which there will be a separate establishment of permanent officers; that is to say, in every district two field-officers, with as many captains and lieutenants as there are companies of 60 men in the Training Battalion.

The employment thus proposed to be assigned to officers of the regular service, as field-officers, captains, and subalterns of the Training Battalions, and to act occasionally as general and field officers, in the annual assemblage of the Local Militia, is a portion of duty for which the experience of real service is requisite. Many persons, however, may with propriety be employed in this way, who are not capable of the severer toils, for which an officer must be prepared, when on foreign stations, or in constant active service. The superintendence of the Local Militia will be a situation highly desirable, and an employment perfectly suitable for officers who, though not entirely disabled, have suffered in some degree from the effects of hard service; for those who are past the first vigour of youth, and for all those who are married, and desirous of a more settled life than can be reconciled with a continual change of quarters. This plan would therefore furnish an opportunity of employing, with great advantage to the public, many meritorious and valuable officers, whose services are now either lost, for want of a situation suitable to their circumstances, or who are engaged in a species of service for which they are not so well calculated. The duty, however, is not such as can be done by mere invalids, nor would it be proper to consider an appointment of this kind as a provision for superannuated officers. If this idea should be acted upon, the whole duty of training the Local Militia would probably be executed in an imperfect and slovenly manner. As a check upon this abuse, there should be an absolute prohibition against any officer being employed on the establishment of the Local Militia unless within some limited age.

Under the organization which has been detailed, the Local Militia, in their general assemblage, will be sufficiently prepared to practise every evolution, which regular troops can be required to perform. As the militia

of two or three adjoining counties may be brought together into one encampment for these annual exercises, they may be assembled even to the amount of 20,000 or 30,000 men together. They may then be manoeuvred in bodies sufficiently numerous, to practise all the movements which bear the closest resemblance to the operations of a real campaign. The opportunities of practice thus obtained, will be a school of military science scarcely inferior to any, except to the experience of actual warfare.

We cannot, indeed, expect to render the Local Militia equal to troops who are inured to the dangers of real service. The most important lesson which a soldier has to learn, is one which nothing but the presence of an enemy can teach. Men who are completely habituated to situations of peril, and have learned by practice to preserve their coolness under every circumstance, must undoubtedly be superior troops to those who have not that experience, however well practised in military evolutions at home. The utmost that can be done, by any system of discipline for a militia, is to prepare them well for this last, and most essential lesson. This, however, is not peculiar to the pro-posed plan; the same disadvantage attends our present militia, and every species of troops that are confined to home service.

New levies, however, have been known occasionally to distinguish themselves greatly in their first action. Troops of this description, if thoroughly practised in their manoeuvres, if accustomed to prompt and implicit obedience to their officers, if commanded by officers in whom they have confidence, and who have confidence in themselves, will certainly be more likely to act with steadiness when brought against the enemy, than if they had been imperfectly instructed, and had to encounter the embarrassment of a situation for which they are ill prepared, in addition to the agitation which the presence of danger may excite. Next to the acquisition of habitual coolness amidst danger, the most important lesson of military duty, is the habit of prompt and implicit obedience to command, - a habit which, when thoroughly impressed on the minds of soldiers, and accompanied by some degree of awe for their officers, may go far to counteract the strongest feelings of the human mind, and prevent the individual from yielding to impressions of terror, which his own strength of mind could not have resisted.

Habits of strict obedience are therefore of infinitely more consequence, to form soldiers for the purposes of real service, than dexterity in the use of their arms, or even precision in their manoeuvres. In this respect there seems to be an essential defect in the Volunteer System, in which the authority of the officers is necessarily precarious, and

precludes the possibility of enforcing strict military discipline. In the formation of these corps, we have begun at a wrong point: objects of secondary importance have been insisted upon, before the necessary foundation has been laid in the habits of implicit obedience; and thus the pains which these corps have taken in acquiring a proficiency in their manoeuvres have, in a great measure, been thrown away.

In the proposed organization of the Local Militia, this error is avoided. The authority of the officers will be as complete as in the regular service. The men will be, from the first, under the strictest discipline which martial law can enforce; and this for an uninterrupted space of three months, during which the recruits will be withdrawn from every other avocation, from every thing which can interrupt the acquisition of military habits. Whether this be a sufficient period of exercise, to confirm these habits effectually, is a question upon which professional authority must decide. Upon this point I find a difference of opinion. Some officers of experience consider three months as sufficient, and in confirmation of that opinion refer to the French armies, in which the conscripts are esteemed fit for duty in a still shorter time. There are on the other hand, officers of great eminence, who think this period too scanty, for the complete formation of a body of soldiers. It is, however, so much beyond any, which has hitherto been allowed to our domestic forces, that a fair trial may at least be made, before we conclude that more is necessary. If experience prove that it is not sufficient, more time must undoubtedly be allowed, rather than that the Local Militia should remain in a state of inefficiency.

It will have occurred to the reader, that under the arrangements which have been hitherto explained, this system of Local Militia can-not, for several years to come, be considered as in a state of maturity, and capable of effecting the purposes for which it is intended. The whole plan proceeds on the supposition, that every recruit is, in the very commencement of his service, to be completely instructed in his military duties, and that a space of three months uninterrupted discipline is to be devoted to this instruction. In the arrangements that have been explained, the means of this instruction are provided only for the young men between 18 and 19. In the course of seven years, those who are now 18 will have reached to 25, and every one below that age, will then have gone through the prescribed course of discipline. The observations hitherto made, have been chiefly directed to the regular and permanent effects of the proposed plan; and to put these in a distinct point of view, they have been described, as if the plan had been established for some time. If, however, the young men between 19 and 25 were now to be assembled, without any further

preparation than that which has already been explained, they would be in a very different state of proficiency; they would neither be capable of the duty which is expected from them, nor prepared to profit by the opportunities of exercise, which the great annual assemblage would afford to those who have received a sufficient previous instruction.

If the dangers which we have to apprehend were so remote, that we could safely wait for some years, the plan, as it has been already stated, would produce the desired effect in a gradual and progressive manner. But our situation is not such as to admit of this delay, and an effort must be made, to bring our state of defence speedily up to the standard which the emergency requires. The simple and effectual way to accomplish this is, after enrolling the Local Militia, and organizing them on the principles that have been stated, to call out the whole body, and put them at once on permanent duty for three months, or for a sufficient period to be fully disciplined.

To instruct at once so large a body of men, is certainly a task of considerable difficulty. The regular establishment of the Training Battalions was calculated for the progressive instruction of the young men between 18 and 19 only, and cannot be adequate to the immediate accomplishment of the same object with numbers so much larger. It is a question of great importance how this deficiency can be supplied, and officers provided for the commencement of this great establishment. The first resource that presents itself, is the employment of the volunteer officers, among whom there are many, who have rendered themselves fully masters of their duty, and are not inferior in point of skill to many professional men. As it must require some time before the young officers, who are to be drawn from among the cadets, can be fully instructed, it would be very desirable that a great proportion of the volunteer officers could be induced to accept of temporary appointments in the Local Militia. As an encouragement, the officers who thus agree to serve, though not within the age legally subject to military duty, should receive higher allowances, than the ordinary officers of the Local Militia, and such as to form an adequate indemnification for the time, which they sacrifice to the public service. There is a probability, that a great proportion, and the best of the volunteer officers, may be induced to afford their assistance. Men who have taken so much pains to obtain instruction in a duty, remote from their ordinary occupations, must be actuated by motives of zeal and patriot-ism, which will prompt them to continue their services in a case of equal urgency and importance. They may be the more readily expected

to acquiesce in this, as it is only a temporary sacrifice, and they may soon be relieved from attendance, when a sufficient number of the cadets are prepared for their duty.

If the volunteer officers in general can be induced to undertake the proposed service, we may expect from them every thing that zeal and assiduity can accomplish. But it will be of material importance, that along with them should be combined a considerable number of men of practical experience in real warfare. This may be obtained in part from the establishment of the Training Battalions, into which the Inspecting Field Officers of the volunteers should immediately be transferred. These officers are now employed in a manner little calculated to afford any important benefit; and their talents may certainly be rendered far more useful to the state than they now are.

An additional resource of great value may be found in the officers on half-pay, many of whom are both able and willing to afford the services required, and on all of whom the public has a right to call. These officers are dispersed in all parts of the country, so that they may in many instances perform the duty required with little personal inconvenience; without going to a great distance from their ordinary residence, or interrupting in a very detrimental manner the occupations in which they are engaged. To complete the arrangements for the first instruction of the Local Militia, officers of rank and ability ought to be appointed to superintend each of the proposed Districts. The operations, which are necessary for converting a body of 8 or 10,000 recruits into efficient soldiers, are of such magnitude and importance, that the ablest men in our army cannot be considered as ill employed in directing their execution. There will be no difficulty in finding proper persons for this charge. The number of generals on the staff, forms but a small pro-portion of the officers who have that rank, and who cannot, according to military etiquette, be employed in regimental duty. From this cause a number of excellent officers remain unemployed: if they were called upon to assist in the formation of the Local Militia, a great mass of abilities now lying dormant would be called into action - abilities adequate even to the stupendous task of creating in a few months an army of 400,000 men.

The exertions thus to be made, for rendering our state of defence adequate to the emergency, may be deemed a burdensome effort; but we have no alternative between making this exertion, and the danger of being attacked before we are prepared to meet the invaders - of being taken by surprise, now after we have had twelve years warning of the designs of the enemy! It is, however, to be observed, that no moment could have been

chosen, in which such an effort would have occasioned so little inconvenience as at present. The interruption of our communication with the Continent, has created a stagnation in our manufactures, and has thrown a number of people out of employment. In consequence of this diminution in the general demand for labour, it will occasion no interruption to our commercial concerns if the time of a large number of people should be occupied in the proposed military exercises.

This employment will, in fact, be a seasonable relief to our manufacturing labourers in a moment of difficulty. The advantage will not be confined to those who are immediately called upon and drawn out to be trained; it will operate in an indirect manner in favour of the whole body of manufacturing labourers, by withdrawing the competition of a large portion of the younger workmen, and throwing the employment that remains into the hands of those who are more advanced in life, and more generally burdened with families. This relief, indeed, will be only temporary, but it is only a temporary relief that is wanted. Our unemployed manufacturers will, in the course of time, find other employments for themselves, - employments perhaps still more advantageous to the country; but time is requisite for this transfer of their industry, and it is during the interval, that relief is important to soften the abruptness of the change. For the permanent consequences of the attack that our enemies are now making on our commerce, there is no reason for entertaining the slightest uneasiness. On the contrary, we have the strongest reason to believe that the experiment which our antagonist is now compelling us to make may be of essential service. It will prove beyond dispute, that Britain is independent of commerce, that our soil is the essential, the only sure foundation of our prosperity and our greatness. When the first pressure of individual distress is over, it will soon be discovered how small a part of the nation has suffered by the loss of our intercourse with the continent. When the glare of commercial prosperity no longer throws into the shade the vast amount of our internal resources, every one will perceive how inconsiderable a portion of our national wealth is derived from foreign countries, - how inferior is the importance of those commercial interests, which have long excited such a feverish anxiety, and to which our national policy has so often been made to bend. Such is the stable basis of our national strength, that, when altogether insulated, we may find the means of making greater exertions, than with all our external connections, we have ever yet made.

IV. Consequences of This Institution to the Security of the Kingdom

Trusting that the preceding observations will have sufficiently explained the arrangements that are proposed, I shall now proceed to examine the effect which the adoption of this plan may be expected to produce on the public security. I hope it may be assumed as proved, that, with adequate exertions, the plan may be brought to a considerable degree of maturity, even in the course of a few months. At all events, in a year or two there can be no difficulty in bringing the Local Militia to a respectable state of discipline; not indeed such as to put them on a level with regular and practised troops, but sufficient to render them a useful force, perhaps in point of efficiency nearly approaching to our present Militia. After this has been accomplished, the power of the kingdom to resist invasion must be incomparably augmented, and a short examination will suffice to show that Great Britain may then be looked upon as nearly invulnerable.

The true criterion of an effectual defensive system is, whether, independently of any advantage in the least degree precarious, we can be sufficiently strong to carry on a regular campaign on English ground, with a prospect of decided superiority. To try our arrangements by that test, let us imagine a French army to be established on English ground. I do not mean to undervalue either the difficulties of the passage, or those of the disembarkation, - far less to say that our commanders should neglect the opportunities which they may have, of attacking the enemy while entangled in the embarrassments of a landing; - but as every advantage of that kind is more or less precarious,¹⁷ we ought to consider, what our case would be, if the enemy had overcome or eluded every such obstacle. Let us suppose, then, that amidst the accidents, to which all naval affairs must be liable, the enemy have found an opportunity of eluding our fleet and landing 100,000 men on our coast. In order that the proposed arrangements may be put to the severest test, let it be supposed not only that the invaders have got over the embarrassments of the disembarkation, but that the arrival of a part of their flotilla on our beach has brought us the first intelligence of their movements.

The first object of the enemy will undoubtedly be to gain possession of London, and of our great arsenals in its vicinity: the first point of inquiry therefore, is what force our commanders can collect with sufficient promptitude for their defence. The regular troops stationed along the southern and south-eastern coast will of course be drawn

together, to obstruct as much as possible the progress of the enemy; but as there is no probability that they can be sufficiently numerous to risk a decisive action, they must retreat before the enemy till they are sufficiently re-inforced. It will depend on the individual ability of our commanders, how long they can retard the approach of the enemy to the metropolis, without exposing themselves to be drawn into a general engagement. In the mean time, however, the alarm will spread, and the Local Militia will be assembling from all quarters. At all events, those of the metropolis itself, of the country in its immediate vicinity, and of the counties through which the enemy must advance, may be brought into action, before the contending armies can arrive in the vicinity of London.

According to the calculations, which have already been referred to, the numbers of Local Militia who will thus be available in the course of three days after the alarm is given, will be at least 60,000;¹⁸ in two days more, further re-inforcements may arrive from all the country within sixty miles of London, and this number will be swelled to 85,000;¹⁹ in four days more, or in nine from the time the alarm is spread and that orders are dispatched from London, the Local Militia may be assembled from all the country within one hundred and twenty miles, to the amount of not less than 160,000²⁰ men; for some time longer every successive day will bring in a further re-inforcement of about 15,000 men.

So far therefore as numbers can ensure success we must sooner or later obtain a decisive superiority. But it may be alleged, that the forces thus assembled must be so inferior in point of discipline, that they cannot be relied on when opposed to the legions of Bonaparte, inured to warfare and flushed with success. After every arrangement that can be adopted, for training the Local Militia in the completest manner, it is still to be remembered that they are home troops, unaccustomed to the perils of real service. When troops of this description are brought for the first time to encounter the enemy, it is impossible to rely on their steadiness, with the same confidence as if it had been repeatedly proved in severe actions. The first engagement of a new regiment is an experiment, which will often have a glorious issue, but of which the success cannot beforehand be considered as certain. It is a known fact, that the great Frederick himself, in the first battle at which he was present, felt the infection of a panic, and fled from the field.²¹ It is no imputation, then, on the national character, if it be considered as a possible occurrence, that our inexperienced troops may at first exhibit some such lamentable proof of human weakness.

The management of an army chiefly composed of new troops, is indeed a delicate task; but the vast superiority of our numbers, will compensate for many disadvantages. The war of the French revolution has afforded one splendid instance, that such troops may obtain success against veterans; and in the judicious conduct of Pichegru we may find an apposite example of the best mode of turning to advantage the resources of our situation.²²

After Dumourier had retired, the Republican arms met with a continued series of disasters.²³ The French armies, consisting of innumerable hordes of new levies, repeatedly sustained disgraceful checks from very inferior numbers of the Austrian veterans. Pichegru saw the error of his predecessors: - when, with such troops as they had to command, they engaged in general actions, a panic in any part of the line soon spread to the whole, and rendered the greatest superiority of numbers unavailing. He therefore employed his ardent but inexperienced troops in a multitude of partial actions. Expecting that the first division would give way, another body was always ready to replace them; and these again were succeeded by another, and another. The first division had an opportunity of rallying behind their comrades, and were refreshed by an interval of repose; recollecting themselves, after the first impression of terror was over, they were eager to wipe off their disgrace, and again, perhaps, in their turn, were brought up to a second charge. The best troops were unable to with-stand such a continual succession of fresh assailants, and always gave way at last, exhausted by mere fatigue.

It would be impossible to devise a plan more admirably adapted than this system of Pichegru, for obtaining the greatest possible advantage from his superior numbers, and from the enthusiastic ardour with which his young soldiers were inspired; and at the same time for guarding against the dangerous consequences of that unsteadiness, to which all troops must be liable in their first essay. In our own case, if we profit by this illustrious example, there will be the less reason to apprehend a general panic in our armies, because our commanders will always have the means of supporting their inexperienced home troops by a powerful reserve of steady veterans, and thus retrieving the consequences of any partial misfortune.

Granting then that the Local Militia cannot be equal to practised soldiers, it does not follow that they may not be rendered of great service in the hands of a judicious commander. If, indeed, the liberties of England should hang on the issue of a battle fought entirely by untried soldiers, our fate would be in a state of awful hazard. Such, however, is not the plan here suggested; nor is the Local Militia to be looked upon in any other

light than as an accessory force, assisting the regulars, not vainly pretending to rival or to supersede them. A strong body of regular troops, inured to real action, must be the basis of our defence, the firm phalanx around which all our reinforcements of domestic forces must rally, and on which, on every occasion of decisive consequence, our commanders must place their ultimate dependence.

Such being the case, no one will be disposed to deny that every exertion ought to be made, for increasing as much as possible the numbers of regular and experienced troops in that army, which, in case of invasion, is destined first to meet the enemy. In this respect the proposed establishment of Local Militia will have a collateral effect of great value, as it will enable our Government to concentrate in the most important stations the troops on whose steadiness the greatest reliance may be placed.

On the necessity of concentrating our forces as much as possible, there is but one opinion among men of the highest military reputation. The campaigns on the Continent have taught a tremendous lesson on this subject. The disgraces of the Austrian arms are chiefly traced to a pertinacious adherence to the idea of guarding equally the whole of a long line of defence; while the French, by the opposite system of bringing their whole force to bear upon the point of chief importance, have gained the most splendid successes.

In spite of this experience, we see a great proportion of our regular troops spread out along the whole extent of our coast, in places where it is very improbable that the enemy should think of making their principal attempt at invasion; and where, if they should effect a descent, it could scarcely be more than a petty diversion, or a marauding expedition. By attempting thus to guard every point, the main army on which our national existence depends, must be weakened. It would surely be more proper, to collect the whole of our best troops towards the most important scene of action, and to devolve upon our less experienced domestic force the task of guarding the remoter parts of the kingdom: - those where there is less probability of a descent being seriously attempted, and those where, a temporary success on the part of the enemy would be less likely to have consequences fatal to our independence.

The errors to which I advert, are perhaps chiefly to be ascribed to the mistaken anxiety and importunity of the inhabitants near the sea-coast, who can never imagine the country to be safe, when they see their own particular neighbourhood destitute of troops. While the regular army affords the only protection to which they can trust, that

anxiety ought not perhaps to excite surprise. If, however, an effective Local Militia were established, a defensive force would every where be in readiness, sufficient to remove all ground of anxiety. According to the proposed arrangement, every district will possess within itself the means of repelling a predatory attack. The places which, by their wealth, are most likely to allure the enemy, will be capable of turning out a considerable body of men at once. There is no part of the coast of England, where a battalion of Local Militia might not be assembled in the space of five or six hours after the appearance of an enemy; and 5000 men within forty-eight hours. No great apprehension, then, need be entertained of the consequences of any marauding expedition.

If, on the other hand, the enemy should try to make a diversion in the distant parts of the kingdom, he could not succeed in drawing away our army from the scene of the main attack, since the Local Militia would be able, with little assistance, to meet any force that could be sent for this purpose. One of the most likely places perhaps for an attempt of this nature, would be the Frith of Forth. It would probably be a more difficult task for the enemy to reach that station with 12,000 or 15,000 men, than the coast of Essex with 100,000. In three or four days, however, 20,000 men might be collected at Edinburgh from the south of the Forth, and 12,000 more at Stirling or Queensferry from the north.²⁴

Trusting therefore the Local Militia for the ordinary defence of the coast, the regular troops should be reserved for stations of paramount national importance. In the south, Portsmouth and Plymouth must not be left exposed, and some troops must remain in garrison at each of these places. It is evident, however, that before the enemy can undertake a regular siege, opportunities must occur for throwing into these fortresses ample reinforcements of the Local Militia; and it cannot therefore be necessary to keep large regular garrisons there permanently. On the northern coasts two or three places may be pointed out, as military positions of peculiar importance. In these also a small regular force ought perhaps to be left, to serve as rallying points for the assemblage of the Local Militia.

There are but few stations, for which the Local Militia will not alone be a sufficient defence; and when our regular forces are thus relieved from so great a proportion of the demands which are now made on their services, it is not, perhaps, too much to expect, that the army collected to oppose the main invasion may thereby be nearly doubled. - The immense value of such a reinforcement can require no comment.

In the event of the French effecting a landing in England, it is easy to foresee that all their operations will be marked by an excess of boldness. When, by the very act of embarkation, the existence of their army has been placed on the hazard of the die, we cannot expect that in their subsequent operations they will be deterred by very nice calculations of risk. On the Continent, and in situations where no peculiar disadvantage would have attended a more cautious mode of proceeding, we have seen the French generals throw themselves into perils the most extreme, for the purpose of rendering their successes splendid and decisive. If, on the Continent, they have adopted this system from choice, in England they must follow it from necessity. - Landing in the manner which has been supposed, they can have no assurance of any reinforcement or supply from their own country, and cannot even subsist, except by the fruits of their victories. Success, rapid and decisive success, is necessary to their very existence. An absolute defeat could scarcely be more pernicious to them than the consequences of delay. If, on the other hand, they can bring on a general action, we have reason to apprehend, from the daring and decisive character of their tactics, that a victory on their part will be followed by consequences of no trifling amount. If, in this first action, the flower of our regular army, the main dependence of our defence, should be cut off, it is impossible to disguise the extreme difficulty of the task which would remain, of retrieving our affairs with our domestic forces alone, how-ever well organized.

It appears then, that our commanders, if they engage in a general and decisive action, without the most pressing necessity, must be considered as staking the existence of the empire on the precarious issue of a single day: and it is scarcely possible that there can be an absolute necessity for incurring this hazard. When our army is pressed by the enemy, the necessity of an immediate action may be eluded by a retreat. If, by giving up some miles of ground, the moment of action be protracted for a day, it is no small gain; for in the mean time, our army has approached to their reinforcements, and these reinforcements have accomplished another day's march. Every day that is thus gained will bring into action an addition of 15,000 or 20,000 Local Militia, while the enemy will be drawn so much further away from any magazines, which he may have formed on the coast.

We have seen that in the course of 10 or 12 days, 160 or 200,000 Local Militia may be brought into action. Of these it may be necessary to throw some into garrisons: but 15 or 20,000 men will probably be amply sufficient for every purpose of this kind. The rest added to our regular forces will form a body too numerous to act together with advantage in one

army. After reinforcing the main body, to as great an amount as our generals can desire, numbers will still remain. These may be formed into subsidiary armies to act on the flank and rear of the enemy, to harass his detachments, to prevent his collecting provisions, and to intercept the communication with his magazines. Every step by which he advances must increase these difficulties; and before he has been a fortnight on English ground, he will find himself surrounded by numbers at least double of his own; he will be hemmed in on every side by armies of respectable force, and unable to collect provisions except from the spot which he immediately occupies. If in these circumstances he advance against the main body of our army, and our commandeers persist in eluding a general action by retreating before him, to what purpose is it that he gains a few miles of exhausted country on one side, while our forces still close in upon him on the other, and prevent his spreading himself over a sufficient extent of ground to afford subsistence? In the course of these operations a large portion of fertile territory must be laid waste; but it does not seem to admit of a doubt, that sooner or later the enemy may be reduced by absolute famine.

The only circumstance which seems to throw a doubt, upon the efficacy of this plan of operations, is the vicinity of London to the probable scene of action. If the enemy can advance with sufficient rapidity; and if before his provisions are exhausted, he can press our army so close, that no further retreat is left, without exposing the capital, we have no alternative but to abandon it, or to risk an action. If our army be not then so strong, as to render their success nearly certain, we have to recollect that however important the protection of London may be, London is not the kingdom of England. It is better that the capital should be for a few days in possession of the enemy, than that the army, on which the safety of the whole empire depends, should be broken by defeat.²⁵ - If the great body of our regular forces be kept in a concentrated position, we may reasonably hope that, with the assistance of the Local Militia immediately on the spot, they may be able to cover the metropolis from insult. But in any event, we can have no reason, under the proposed system, to entertain doubts as to the final discomfiture of the enemy, and the preservation of the liberties of England.

V. Local Militia Compared with the Volunteer System, and General Array

The reasonings which have here been urged, may seem to contradict an assertion made in the outset of these observations, that the nature of our country is adverse to "those plans of protracted warfare, which might be followed with effect by an inferior army, in an extensive country full of forests, mountains, and morasses." But the cases sup-posed are widely different; plans which could be of no avail to an inferior army, will be of certain efficacy when we can bring against the enemy an immense superiority of numbers. For that superiority we must be indebted to our domestic force. It is utterly impracticable for this kingdom to keep up a regular army, capable of maintaining a contest with the myriads which the despot of the Continent may bring against us.

It seems therefore to require no argument to prove, that unless the resources of our domestic force be effectually called into action, our independence cannot be maintained. The only question is, whether the organization which has been here suggested is the best: or whether some other plan may be entitled to a preference. In this view the Volunteer system calls for our attention, as standing in some measure in competition with the proposal of a Local Militia.²⁶

The Volunteer system has the advantage of being already established, - an argument which, in the eyes of some, may perhaps outweigh all others; but to those who are capable of reflection, this must appear a very inadequate consideration, to recommend a system, which is subject to essential disadvantages. The decline which has taken place in the numbers and discipline of the Volunteers is not to be considered as an accidental circumstance: it has arisen from the very nature of the institution. A system, the efficiency of which rests so entirely on individual exertion, cannot be permanent and steady in its effects.

At the period when the Volunteer establishment was formed, the loyalty and patriotic spirit of the people had been roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. The obvious danger of the country called forth unprecedented exertions of spontaneous zeal; but as the exigency became less apparent, these exertions naturally relaxed. Such vehement efforts of enthusiasm could not be of long continuance: the public mind had been on the stretch, and naturally sunk back into a state of languor.

Though it had been possible to keep up that spirit in its full vigour, much would still have been wanting, to render the Volunteers thoroughly

efficient as a military force. Men of education, sensible of the importance of the object for which they are associated, may be induced to pay that zealous attention, which will enable them to acquire a considerable proficiency in military evolutions. But for the common mass of the people something more is requisite to impress those habits of ready and implicit obedience, to acquire which is one of the most important and most difficult lessons that a soldier has to learn.

The privilege of every individual to quit his corps at pleasure, is an insuperable obstacle to the acquisition of military habits. The slender tenure upon which the officers hold their authority, compels them to humour every caprice of the men under their command: and precludes the possibility of enforcing discipline, with that steadiness without which it is in vain to expect that we can form good soldiers.

The effect of these circumstances has been aggravated by the desultory nature of the exercises which have been prescribed. The greatest part of the time, which the Volunteers devote to this purpose, is spent in drilling on detached days or half-days. Among the most intelligent Volunteer officers, however, there is but one opinion as to the trifling utility of these daily drills, and the incomparably superior importance of a period of permanent duty. - Few corps of Volunteers, however, find it convenient to assemble for a long time at once. Scanty as the period to which they are limited may appear, it is with difficulty that the men can be drawn from their homes for a continued absence even of 15 or 20 days. Nor is this surprising, when we consider how great a proportion of the Volunteers are heads of families, and men who have to superintend agricultural, commercial or manufacturing concerns more or less extensive.

At the time of the original formation of the Volunteer establishment, many incidental motives contributed to induce men of the middle classes of society²⁷ to enter very generally into these corps, while the lower orders have been in a great measure deterred by the expense, which frequently attends this service. It is evident that the time of such men as those who are now enrolled, must be of incomparably greater value, than that of a set of young men taken indiscriminately from all classes. A young journeyman, or farm-servant, might certainly be spared from his occupation and his home, with infinitely less inconvenience than his master.

This circumstance deserves consideration in another view. If it be difficult for the Volunteers to assemble for long periods of exercise, it must also be a matter of great and perhaps insuperable difficulty to bring together a large body of Volunteers for real service, or to keep them

embodied for a great length of time. The operations of the enemy may, however, render it indispensable to require this sacrifice from the persons who compose our defensive force. Previously to the grand attack, we may be harassed by frequent false alarms. The Volunteers may thus be fatigued by long continued preparations; and if their absence from home be long protracted, the interruption to their domestic concerns will be of intolerable inconvenience: nor is it easy to judge, how far these circumstances may affect the efficiency of this branch of our force.

While the Volunteer system thus involves so great an interruption to the affairs of individuals, it throws the perils of warfare in an undue proportion upon fathers of families, and the fatigues of military duty on men, who in many cases are not the most capable of sustaining them. On the other hand, the young men, of whom it is proposed to form the Local Militia, are physically the best calculated for the service required. They may be rendered good soldiers with a much smaller sacrifice of time and labour than men of a more advanced time of life. They are of that age, at which new habits are acquired with facility, and at which the fatigues of real service will occasion the least personal suffering. The Volunteer corps include undoubtedly a great number of able and active young men; but they also contain many, whose habits are too much fixed to sustain without inconvenience the hardships, which they may be called upon to endure. In a corps of this mixed description, the less active men will be an impediment to the rest: and it is therefore a material advantage in the Local Militia, that the whole are alike in the prime of youth and vigour.

It is impossible to expect by any modification of the Volunteer corps, to give them as effectual a training as that which has been proposed for the Local Militia. Permanent duty, and that for a considerable period of time without interruption, is indispensably necessary to the acquisition of military habits. The sacrifice which this would require from men established in life, and engaged in business, is too great to be proposed, while to a young man of 18 the inconvenience must be comparatively trifling. - If the present establishment of Volunteers be continued, their exercises cannot perhaps be extended much beyond what they now perform. But can any long argument be necessary to point out the difference between a training of two or three weeks, and one of three months; between strict discipline enforced by martial law, and a precarious command over men who may quit their corps at pleasure; between exercises limited to one or two battalions, and those which may include an encampment of 20 or 30,000 men? When such is the difference between the means of instruction afforded to the Volunteers and the Local Militia,

can we imagine that no difference will be found in the result?

Those who have considered with attention, the probable consequences of the landing of a French army in England, and the nature of the campaign which may be expected to ensue, must be sensible of the infinite importance of having our domestic forces fully prepared for immediate action, and as perfect in their duty as they can be rendered by previous instruction. The dangers which are to be apprehended from panic among inexperienced troops have already been adverted to, and it is evident that when soldiers are imperfectly instructed in their duty, the probability of their being seized with a panic must be doubly great; for then, in addition to the agitation of a new and untried danger, they have the embarrassment and indecision of conscious ignorance. Every step by which troops advance in military knowledge is thus of importance.

The imperfections of the Volunteer system are now every day more generally felt; and few perhaps will be disposed seriously to recommend that system as our permanent and only dependence for internal defence. Objections may indeed be felt against any great and immediate change on an institution already established. But if we examine minutely the actual state of the Volunteer corps, it will, I am afraid, appear that they are at this moment far from adequate to the task which may be required of them, and that we have no time to lose in organizing our domestic force on a more effectual principle.

Among the Volunteers some corps may be found in a high state of discipline, and fit perhaps to act along with troops of the line. These however are but a small proportion of the whole establishment: a much greater number are only half-disciplined. In many cases their deficiency might be remedied by a short period of the severe discipline of an actual campaign. But when the enemy have effected their landing, it will not be the time for our domestic forces to learn their duty: if in the critical moment they are not ready - fully ready to act their part in the general defence - their services will be of little or no avail. All the time, the labour, and the expense which is sacrificed to give a partial and imperfect instruction will prove to be thrown away: and the nation may deplore when it is too late, the fatal error of resting its defence on a species of force, to which the necessary means of improvement have been denied.

There are some perhaps who are convinced of the unavoidable defects of the Volunteer system, who are yet unwilling to propose a great alteration on the establishment, lest it should offend a numerous and meritorious body of men. This, however, is an imaginary and groundless

apprehension. There may be individuals, who have entered among the Volunteers for the mere purpose of obtaining exemption from ballots, or similar privileges, and who may be reluctant to lose these advantages. But the great body of the Volunteers, the men who four or five years ago came forward with so much zeal at the call of their country, can have no wish to continue their laborious exertions any longer than they are necessary. From patriotic motives, they undertook a severe task, in a season of great public alarm; and, from feelings of honour, they have thought themselves bound not to with-draw, while Government continued to demand their services. But the performance is a personal burden, from which it is most natural that they should wish, and most proper that they ought to be relieved. When they see every purpose of their institution answered, in a permanent and effectual manner, can they have any reluctance in yielding to their successors, the burdensome post which they have so long and so honourably maintained?

Individuals there may be, who have so deeply imbibed the spirit of military ardour, as to have a wish still to bear a part personally in the defence of their country. That wish may be gratified: there is no necessity for refusing the proffered services of any part of the Volunteers, though, on general principles, the large establishment, now maintained, is no longer considered as necessary. Every Volunteer corps, which is willing to continue its gratuitous services, ought to be thank-fully accepted; they may be left in possession of their arms, &c. and rewarded by suitable honorary distinctions. No exemption however from the Local Militia can be admitted, on the ground of service in a Volunteer corps: nor should any further expense be incurred to the public treasury, on account of a force which is no longer requisite for the public service.

An exception must perhaps be allowed for the yeomanry cavalry. These corps are extremely well adapted for maintaining the internal tranquillity of the country; and for this purpose they are, in some respects, preferable even to regular troops. They are composed of men who have a stake in the country, and are personally interested in the preservation of good order: no doubt can be entertained of their sincere desire to cooperate effectually for the suppression of any disturbance. From their local information, they are better able to check such attempts in their infancy, and are more likely to distinguish with propriety, between the guilty and the innocent, than a body of strangers might be, when irritated by the resistance of a mob. For these reasons, some expense may with propriety be incurred for keeping up an establishment of yeomanry. The pecuniary allowances, however, ought not to be such as to induce any, but men of

respectable condition, to enter into these corps; and, with persons of that description, honorary distinctions may probably be found a more efficacious encouragement.

Among the plans, which have been suggested for the defence of the kingdom, is that of a general array to include the whole male population of mature age. Upon this system it is to be observed, that by a complete and effectual training, applied to an adequate body of men, the safety of the kingdom will be better secured, than by extending an imperfect and superficial instruction over a greater number. A general array will therefore be of little use, unless military instruction be fully imparted; and to extend this over the whole people would impose on the country a burden much greater than the urgency of our present situation requires. The proposed number of Local Militia appears to be adequate to repel any invasion, which is at present within the bounds of probability. An army of 100,000 men is certainly a small part of the military establishment of France; but while the naval superiority of Great Britain is maintained, an invasion must be an enterprise of the greatest hazard, and the force embarked in it can only be such as our enemies are content to sacrifice for the chance of a signal success. The loss of 100,000 men would not affect the power of Bonaparte, but he would not choose to risk an army of much greater amount. The difficulty of eluding our maritime superiority, must also be incomparably greater, when it is necessary to embark a force of extreme magnitude, instead of a moderate number.

If indeed the French had obtained an ascendancy at sea, and could land their armies at pleasure on any part of our coast, a more numerous defensive force would undoubtedly be necessary; nor could an arm be spared, that is capable of wielding a weapon in the common defence. Happily, however, there is little probability that such a crisis can soon arise. If in future times this kingdom should be placed in circumstances of such extreme difficulty, increased exertions will be necessary; but for these the institution of a Local Militia will have prepared the way.

In the course of another generation, our whole male population will have gone through a course of military discipline, at a period of life the best suited to receive durable impressions. Military habits being early fixed may by a small exertion be kept up through life. All our people will thus be prepared to assist in the defence of the country, and without any extraordinary effort, we may obtain the benefit of a general array. We may trust that the spirit of the nation will rise in proportion to the emergency; and that when an extreme effort is necessary, all will cheerfully submit to

the sacrifices which may be required for rendering their services effectual.

The benefit to be derived from the military instruction of the youth, is thus by no means confined to the immediate period, in which they are liable to duty as Local Militia: nor is this an advantage which will only arise after a long interval of time. In the course of a few years a numerous body of young and active men will have passed through the Local Militia, and will be capable of contributing their aid in cases of emergency. Every successive year will add to the number of our defenders.

From these considerations it is evident, that a material advantage will arise from selecting the youngest men to be trained, rather than taking an equal number of miscellaneous ages. - If, instead of training the young men of eighteen, an equal number of men be taken annually by a promiscuous ballot, as for the present militia, from the whole mass of the people between eighteen and forty-five, a considerable proportion of those who are instructed, will very soon be past the age of military service, and the instruction given to them, can be of no use except during the immediate period of the duty imposed. Assuming, therefore, that a certain number of men must be trained, regimented, and kept in constant readiness for immediate military service, there is in every point of view an advantage to the public in selecting the youngest men.

The other classes are less fit for the duty which may be required; and it would be a needless burden on the country to include them also in the arrangements for military instruction. There may be an advantage, however, in a more general enrolment of the male population, not with a view to any services strictly military, but to obtain with more certainty and effect their assistance for objects of a subsidiary nature.

There are many services in which men, totally uninstructed in military evolutions, may facilitate the operations of our army, and throw obstructions in the way of the enemy. In cutting up roads, breaking down bridges, driving off cattle and horses, destroying provender, and any other articles that may be useful to the enemy, in assisting our soldiers to construct entrenchments and field fortifications, in transporting every thing requisite for the use of our army, and in an infinite variety of other operations, the assistance of the mere peasantry may be of essential value.²⁸

There is no reason to doubt, that our people would be ready voluntarily to render every service of this kind; but these spontaneous services will not be sufficiently prompt to be of real use. It must be ever borne in mind, that

if the enemy land in England, a very short period must decide the contest. In a fortnight, or three weeks, after they set foot on English ground, they must be our prisoners or our masters. No aid, therefore, can be of any value, that is not given with instantaneous readiness; and that promptitude cannot possibly be expected without previous arrangement and organization.

This subject seems of late to have been little attended to, though in the early periods of the present war it had attracted the attention of Government. Many judicious regulations were then adopted, but have since been allowed to drop: though subsequent events ought rather to have called for redoubled vigilance, and for the adoption of those improved arrangements, which experience might naturally have suggested.

It has been very judiciously remarked,²⁹ that, in the peculiar state of society which prevails in England, we have no class of men corresponding to the peasantry of some of the less commercial countries on the Continent, - men, who, from the variety of their occupations, and their habits of life, are capable of acting as irregular troops, almost without instruction or direction.³⁰ Our people are all so much confined, each to his own particular employment, that they cannot be capable of judging for themselves with respect to any military object. They must be superintended and directed in every operation; and their services, of whatever nature, will be of little use, unless, through various gradations of authority regularly organized, the whole mass can receive its impulse from Government.

This object may perhaps be attained without much difficulty, by a general enrolment of the whole effective male population in their respective districts. The individuals must be classed according to their age and personal qualifications; and from among those of superior condition a sufficient number of persons must be appointed to act as officers, with a gradation of command so arranged, that, through the medium of the Lieutenancy of the different counties, the whole may receive the orders of Government with rapidity, and be employed in any operation in which they may be deemed most useful. Without any very burdensome sacrifice of time, every individual might learn who is the officer to whose orders he is to attend; and the people in general might be impressed with some ideas of regularity and obedience to command, sufficient to prevent confusion in the moment of alarm.

VI. Defence of Ireland / Militia Establishment

The considerations already urged, may be sufficient to show, that the safety of this kingdom is in our own hands. Our situation may require more or less of exertion, on the part of the people; but means are in our power for defeating the most formidable invasion, and providing amply for the security of Great Britain. A difficult question, however, yet remains: - How is Ireland to be put into a state of defence equally complete?³¹

However widely our political champions may differ, with respect to the causes of the present unsatisfactory state of Ireland, or the means of removing the existing discontents, there is but one opinion, as to the actual prevalence of a lawless and disaffected spirit among a very great proportion of the people. Under these circumstances, any institution similar to the proposed Local Militia, would be liable to insuperable objections. Are the Irish, then, to be exempted from the burden of that service to which the corresponding classes in England are subject; and shall they not be required to contribute in some other way to the general defence of the state?³²

It has been stated, on very high authority,³³ that the Irish Catholics are averse to enter into the regular army; that in proportion to their number, fewer recruits come from among them than from the rest of our population; and that, if they were to enlist with the same readiness as other classes of people, an addition of 100,000 men might be made to our disposable force. It is a subject highly deserving of a careful and impartial investigation, what are the real causes of so extraordinary a disinclination. That it does not arise merely from the state of the laws respecting the Catholic religion, we have a decisive proof, in the circumstance, that no such disinclination is to be observed in the Highlands of Scotland. There are, in that part of the kingdom, some districts inhabited entirely by Catholics, yet the people of these have never shown less inclination to a military life than the rest of the Highlanders. In the course of the late war, a regiment of Fencibles, chiefly composed of Catholics, was raised in a district of no great extent.³⁴

To whatever cause this aversion of the Irish Catholics may be owing, and whatever remedies may be applied to remove it in future, it is not likely that these can have an instantaneous efficacy; and measures of gradual operation, however wise, are not sufficient for our present emergency. A circumstance of this kind, arising unquestionably from some error on the part of Government, cannot be considered as an

argument for the use of compulsion. It is, however, sufficient to prove, that if the people of Ireland be exempted from the compulsory service required in England, we are not likely to receive any compensation, in the increase of our regular force by voluntary enlistment, since already, it appears, they do not bear their full share in the common defence.

From the internal state of Ireland, it is impossible to obtain from the people that service which is imposed on the other parts of the kingdom.³⁵ Can it therefore be deemed improper, if this exemption be counter-balanced by a corresponding demand of compulsory service, in a different form, but for the same general purpose of the defence of the country? On these grounds I will venture to suggest a measure, which is perhaps as little open to essential objections, as the circumstance of so difficult a case will admit.

I would propose, then, that in place of the establishment of a Local Militia, similar to that of England, a levy should be made of a body of Fencibles,³⁶ to serve for three years only, in any part of the United Kingdom; that this levy should be made by ballot, among the men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; that any person within that age, on previous payment of a fine of 10 £c2., should be exempted for the next three years from standing the chance of the ballot, but that no person balloted should be admitted to serve by substitute. In the appointment of officers to these regiments, attention should be paid to give the chief command of each to persons of popular character and local influence, in the district where the regiment is raised. A chaplain of the established church should be appointed to each regiment; but, in case one third of the men be of any communion of dissenters, a clergyman of their own persuasion also should attend them, at the expense of Government.³⁷ In the Roman Catholic districts, a proportion of the officers should always be of that persuasion.

The situation of the officers must be rendered more advantageous, than in the fencible regiments raised in the late war, in order to encourage persons of a proper description to enter into this service. This may be done, either by an assurance of half-pay, or more effectually, perhaps, by affording to the officers of these regiments, some advantageous opportunity of entering into the regular army. Thus, for example, to each of these Fencible Regiments, may be attached a second battalion, recruited for general service, on the same permanent establishment as the rest of the army. Into this battalion, any of the balloted men may be allowed to volunteer; and, in case of a certain proportion of men entering in this way for general service, a corresponding number of officers with permanent rank, should be appointed from among those of the first battalion.

The fines levied for exemption from the ballot, should be applied in aid of a fund, for the relief of the families of balloted men who are married, or the parents of those who are dependent on their children for support.³⁸ If the fines should not prove sufficient for the purpose, the deficiency must be made up by the county in which the men are raised; the support which is given by law to the families of militiamen, must, on every principle of justice, be extended to men of any compulsory levy. In addition to this, a bounty should be paid by Government, fully proportioned to that given for voluntary enlistment, regard being had to the duration of the engagement. Means may, perhaps, be found of bestowing this bounty in a more useful manner to the recruit, than by a sum in hand; but the essential principle to be attended to, is, that the recruit who is compelled to serve should be as liberally rewarded, all circumstances considered, as if he had enlisted voluntarily into a regiment of the line. Any attempt to economize at the expense of men who are forced away from their homes to serve their country would be truly despicable. If a difference is made, the balance should be cast in favour of the man who is taken for compulsory service, to compensate, in some degree, for that interference with his personal liberty, which, however mitigated, cannot be totally freed from the character of harshness.

If, however, the demand of compulsory service be accompanied by every attention to the feelings of the men, which can tend to obviate their prejudices against a military life, the odium of the ballot will be very much removed. Under the modifications proposed, a large body of men might be raised, with far less dissatisfaction to the people, than under the form of ballot now established for the militia; and, at the same time, such a levy would interfere in a much smaller degree with the recruiting of the regular army.

To what extent this levy of Fencibles should be carried, is a point of some difficulty. Considering it as a substitute for a Local Militia, it ought to be of such amount, as to afford, if possible, the same degree of security to the empire, yet without pressing harder on the people. These, however, are two conditions not easily reconcileable.

Were the circumstances of Ireland such as to admit the establishment of a Local Militia, on the same principles as that of England, it would amount to 160,000 or 170,000 men. If these were all well affected, it would require a very large levy of Fencibles to afford as powerful a defence. A permanent force of 50,000 or 60,000 men, could scarcely appear more than an adequate compensation; but a compulsory levy, to this amount, would be a much greater burden on the people. If, in an establishment of 160,000 Local Militia, we add together the number of weeks which each individual must annually devote to military exercises,

they would not amount all together to more of their time than equivalent to the service of about 14,000 men for the whole year. If the levy of Fencibles, in Ireland, be carried further than this, it must be considered as a greater demand upon the people than is made on the corresponding classes in England.

On the other hand, there is a greater disproportion in Ireland, than in other parts of the kingdom, between the population, and the opportunity of industrious employment to which the people have access; and, on this account, it will occasion less inconvenience, if a larger proportion of men be taken for the public service, than in a country where the demand for labour is so great as in England. To this consideration, we must add the urgent necessity of putting the defence of Ireland on a secure foundation, not only in justice to those who are interested in the property of that kingdom, but with a view to the general safety of the empire. If, on these grounds, the levy of Fencibles in Ireland be extended to 30,000 or 40,000 men, it will not, perhaps, be a greater drain than its population can afford, without material inconvenience.

These Fencibles, being a contribution for the immediate local defence of the country, must be considered as peculiarly belonging to the places where they are levied. There are very evident reasons, however, which dictate the removal of these regiments into other parts of the kingdom. But this ought only to be an interchange; and for every regiment of Fencibles thus withdrawn from Ireland, another regiment, composed of natives of England or Scotland, should take their place. By the proposed levy, a nett addition would thus be made of 30,000 or 40,000 men to the number of troops already stationed in Ireland, a force which would establish a degree of security to which that part of the kingdom has long been a stranger.

The protection thus afforded to the property of Ireland, is too apparent to need any comment. It may not, perhaps, so readily occur, that the proposed arrangements would be materially conducive to the interests of those against whom these precautions may appear to be directed - the lower orders and the great body of the Catholics.

The harshness with which the lower orders in Ireland are too frequently treated by their immediate superiors, can never be effectually checked, till the government is rendered stronger than it has hitherto been - strong enough to maintain its own authority, independently of the aid of any party. It is with great injustice, that the English Government has been accused of encouraging a system of proscription and rigour in Ireland. On the contrary, the Cabinet has, for a long time back, shown a disposition to mild and conciliatory measures; and, if our Ministers have erred, in not following out these principles with sufficient steadiness and system, the

failure is to be ascribed to the deep-rooted prejudices of persons to whom they felt a necessity of yielding. They could not shut their eyes on the dangerous situation of Ireland, arising from the extensive prevalence of a refractory spirit, not to be repressed, except by the strong hand of power; they were not in possession of a military force, adequate to the maintenance of tranquillity; and no choice was left but to have recourse to the aid of those among the inhabitants, most immediately interested in the preservation of order. In this way a powerful force was obtained to assist in repressing disturbance; but it was composed of men too much under the influence of ancient prejudices, and too much goaded by the irritating circumstances of their situation, to act on all occasions with coolness and moderation; nor was it an easy task to curb the violence of men, on whose assistance the preservation of the country appeared to depend. Such is the mutual rancour of the different classes of people in Ireland, that, while Government are under the necessity of compromising their principles, and of propping up their authority by the aid of a party, they never can maintain a steady system of impartial justice and moderation. By the establishment of a large military force, sufficient both to repel invasion, and to overawe the disaffected, Government will be freed from the trammels in which they have hitherto been entangled, and will be left at liberty to pursue the obvious policy of imposing a restraint on the violence of all parties in that distracted country.³⁹

The effectual protection of such a force, as that which has been proposed, will relieve the Protestants in Ireland from a harassing state of insecurity; the feverish jealousy, which attends their present situation, will be diminished; and they will then have less difficulty in opening their eyes, to the perfect safety with which the political claims of the Catholics may be admitted.

We may expect, too, that the mutual rancour of the different parties in Ireland, would in time wear away, if the country were maintained in a state of continued tranquillity. Every successive disturbance serves to revive the spirit of animosity, by the repetition of mutual injuries. Much good may indeed be expected, with the aid of time, from the abolition of odious and unnecessary exclusions; but all will not avail to restore harmony, without the aid of a firm and efficient government; - a government capable of repressing violence, wherever it may be found; of maintaining tranquillity by the strong hand of power; and of maintaining it with moderation and impartial justice to all.

It has been observed, that there are evident political reasons for removing into England the Fencible Regiments raised in Ireland, and replacing them by other troops. The same reasons would apply to the Irish militia; and if an interchange of stations could be effected between these and an equivalent number of the English militia, it cannot be denied that an important benefit would be gained to the public service: that many regiments would be rendered far more efficient, than they can be in their present situation. According to the actual constitution of the militia, however, this interchange cannot legally be made; and objections have been stated against any alteration, chiefly on the ground of personal inconvenience.

In a review of our permanent means of defence, it cannot be deemed improper to enter into some discussion of the reasons, which have led to the establishment of a species of force so extremely limited in its service, that it is not only confined to home duty, but cannot be applied even to the defence of that part of the kingdom, which is generally acknowledged to be the most vulnerable.

The militia regiments of our present establishment are not less expensive to the public than regular troops. They appear, indeed, rather less burdensome to the Treasury; but if to the charges which appear in the public accounts, we add those incurred by the different counties, their establishment will be found fully as expensive as the regiments of the line. The money paid for substitutes must also be taken into account: it is a part of the expense of the militia establishment, as much as the recruiting bounties form a part of the expenses of the army. The burden of paying for substitutes is a real addition to the taxes which the people have to pay - a tax, too, most unequal and oppressive; laid on without any regard to the ability of those on whom it is levied.

While the militia regiments are thus equally expensive to the nation, it is evident that they cannot be so useful as an equal number of regulars. They cannot be sent on foreign expeditions, which may occasionally be of great importance, with a view to our own immediate defence. They cannot be sent into that part of the united kingdom where their services may be of most value. Even in the case of an invasion of England, they cannot be equivalent to regulars; from the want of experience in real action, they must be exposed to much of the unsteadiness of new levies. The officers, too, can have, in general, only a theoretical knowledge of their duty. They have no opportunity of acquiring any experience of real service in their own regiments; nor can it be expected that men of professional experience will accept of situations, in which no length of service can obtain any permanent

advantage or prospect of promotion. Thus, with an equal, or, perhaps, a heavier burden on the finances of the country, we have a force very inferior in utility.

If any thing could place in a stronger light the disadvantage of the militia establishment, it would be the comparison between the expense of these regiments and that of the proposed Local Militia. If the period employed in the first training of the Local Militia be sufficient for the complete formation of soldiers, and if the subsequent exercises be sufficient to prevent these habits from being forgotten, daily parades will not make them better soldiers for actual duty. The expense, however, of one of our present militia regiments, is scarcely different from that of a regiment of the line, or about 30 £c2. per man, while the Local Militia will scarcely cost 4 £c2. per man. - The whole establishment for 400,000 men has been calculated to amount to about 1,600,000 £c2.,⁴⁰ maintain above 50,000 men on our present militia establishment. He must be a bold disputant who will venture to maintain, either that the militia are as useful to the state as an equal number of disposable troops, or that one man of our present militia can be as useful as seven or eight of the proposed establishment would be.

What, then, can be the inducement to persist in keeping up an establishment that is liable to such objections? The difficulty of raising a sufficient number of men for the army may have had some weight; but it has been proved, with the evidence of demonstration, that the facility afforded by the militia ballot is merely apparent, and that the deficiency of recruits for the line is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to the effects of the ballot, as the high premiums offered for substitutes attract those who are disposed to enlist, and prevent them from accepting of the bounty offered in the regular recruiting service. The militia is thus composed, for the greater part, of the very men who, but for this institution, would have entered into the army; and if we had no such establishment as the militia, our regular forces might be exactly so much the more numerous.

In opposition to these strong objections, there is little to be stated, except an old prejudice in favour of the militia, and those magical words, "the constitutional force of the country." The militia, however, has deviated so entirely from the original spirit of its institution, that nothing now remains of those qualities, which at first recommended it to so high a degree of popularity.

The militia originated in a jealousy of the standing army. It is needless now to enter into any discussion how far that was well founded. The fact is, an idea did prevail, that the standing army might be made an instrument to establish the arbitrary power of the Crown; and it was supposed, that

this danger might be counteracted by training the people at large to arms.⁴¹ It was intended that the militia should train, in rotation, the whole, or at least a large proportion of the people; for this purpose, the service of each individual was limited to three years, at the end of which period he was to retire, and to be replaced by another. The officers also were intended to be all men of landed property, naturally connected with those whom it was their duty to command.

Such was the militia in theory. One error in practice has subverted the whole of this speculation, - the admission of service by substitute. Substitution was not the prevailing custom for some years after the first institution of the militia. The establishment was formed in the course of Lord Chatham's war, not very long before peace was concluded.⁴² In the commencement, the country gentlemen were eager to support and to take a share in a service, which they had warmly recommended. Men of the highest rank were willing to accept of commissions even as subalterns; and this popularity naturally had its effect among the lower orders. The tenantry did not wish to avoid a service, in which they saw their superiors engage with so much zeal. This spirit continued during the remainder of the war, which terminated before the zest of novelty had worn off. During the peace, the service of the militia being confined to a single month in each year, was not a severe burden. But, in the course of the American war, an important change took place.⁴³

The number of our regular army was then by no means adequate to the demands upon their services, nor did the Government find it easy to obtain from Parliament an establishment suitable to the public exigencies. They were, therefore, constrained to employ the militia as a substitute for regulars, and were desirous of rendering them as good soldiers as possible. It was supposed to be conducive to their discipline, to keep them at a distance from their own counties; and many of these regiments were continued for years in stations the most remote from their native residence. The inconvenience arising from this practice, led many individuals to avail themselves of the privilege of serving by substitute. The officers also found the sacrifice required of them to be greater than they could submit to, without a total disregard of their private affairs. The opulent country gentlemen, of course, withdrew by degrees from their situations as officers, and none remained but a few men whose public spirit or military ardour prevailed over motives of a personal nature.

Another circumstance concurred to undermine the principles, upon which the institution of the militia was originally formed. The

commanders of these regiments having imbibed the idea of rendering their corps as perfect in discipline as possible, observed that the substitutes in general made more complete soldiers than the principals. The persons ready to enter into the militia as substitutes, naturally were those who had no strong tie to engage them to remain at home; and the same motives which led them at first to enter upon a military life, induced them to continue in it as a permanent profession. Men of this description were ready to re-enter at the termination of their first engagement. Remaining permanently in the regiment, they acquired more perfectly the habits of soldiers, and, from the first, perhaps, were more ready to adopt the character and spirit of the military profession, than men who looked to a speedy return to their former avocations. Thus many officers, with whom the appearance of their regiments on parade was a subject of emulation, were disposed to encourage the practice of serving by substitute.

From these causes the militia regiments came, even in the course of the American war, to be composed principally of substitutes. 44 In the course of the wars in which we have been lately engaged, the same plan has been followed; and when the period of service in the militia was progressively extended to the whole duration of the war, the objections against serving in person became much aggravated, and naturally led to the state of things which we now see, - that no individual, who can possibly gather together a sufficient sum of money to purchase his exemption, will serve in person. The substitutes evidently must be men of the same description, as those who enter into the regulars by voluntary enlistment. Thus the original intention of the militia act, to establish a rotation among the privates, and to train in succession a number of men from the mass of the people, is absolutely at an end. Nor are the officers any longer composed of country gentlemen of considerable property, as in the theoretical view of the militia. Excepting the Colonels, and a few others of the highest rank, the officers of the militia, in general, are but little connected by property with the counties to which the regiments belong. With the great mass of the landed property of the kingdom, the officers of the militia are certainly less connected than those of the line, directly or indirectly, are. Whether, therefore, we look to the officers or to the private men, we have no reason to believe that the militia can participate more in the principles and sentiments of the people than the regular army. The single difference, that the officers are not appointed directly by the Crown, is certainly a very slight foundation on which to build the idea, that the militia can be used as a balance against the regular army.

After what has been said, it must appear quite superfluous to enter into any discussion concerning this idea, of setting up one part of the military force of the nation as a balance against another, or to expose the contradictions and the labyrinth of impracticability in which the whole system is involved. The original idea of the militia, whether well or ill managed, is now completely lost. The present militia has no resemblance whatsoever to the species of force which it was intended to form; and we only repeat words to which no ideas are affixed, when we persist in calling the militia the Constitutional force of the country.

When we take an impartial view of the militia, we see regiments of a very fine appearance, as perfect in their duty, perhaps, as can be expected of those who have never seen service. The question, how ever, is not, whether these are good regiments, but, whether they might not be more useful, if they were on the same establishment as the rest of the army? The militia establishment would appear to have been contrived with singular ingenuity, so as to lose all peculiar advantages both of a regular army and of a militia. A real militia should be composed of the mass of the people, of those who have a direct interest in the defence of the country; every man fighting by the side of a neighbour or a friend, all united under their natural superiors, and commanded in the field by the same men, whom they have been accustomed to respect in the ordinary intercourse of civil life. Such a force may be expected naturally to possess a degree of patriotic spirit, which cannot easily be infused into the ordinary description of recruits; and if inferior to any army of professional soldiers in regular discipline, and technical dexterity, the disadvantage may be in some measure counterbalanced by a superior degree of enthusiasm for the cause in which they are engaged. Of these advantages our present militia is not, and cannot be possessed; while, on the other hand, the inconveniences, which are inseparable from a permanent military force, are not in them compensated by the means of attaining to the highest degree of professional excellence. The men are as little accustomed to the sight of an enemy as any of the mass of the people. The officers have had no opportunity of exercising their judgement on occasions of real service, and they are deprived of that spirit of emulation which would be excited, if they might aspire to the highest honours of the profession. Without any advantage to counterbalance the inconveniences of an army, the militia are excluded from all but the parade of a military life. Can it admit of a doubt, that these regiments would become more effective, if their establishment were so altered as to assimilate them to the regiments of the line, and if the same prospects of promotion could be opened to their officers?

On these grounds it seems to be evident that the militia, as at present constituted, ought not to be kept up as a separate establishment, and that our whole permanent force ought, as far as possible, to be on the footing of regular troops. If the militia regiments were not now embodied, there would be no motive for the formation of such a description of force. When the regular service is rendered so advantageous to the soldier as it now is, there can be no doubt that a sufficient number of men may be obtained by voluntary enlistment, for all the foreign duty which our national interests can require; and the Local Militia may be considered as superseding the necessity of any other demand of compulsory service for home defence. If, therefore, we had to begin, as on the breaking out of a new war, no inconvenience would arise, if the militia of our present establishment were never again to be called out. In our present circumstances, however, we cannot dispense with the immediate services of the regiments now embodied. Our only choice, therefore, lies between keeping up these regiments, such as they are, or attempting to render them more useful to the public service, by assimilating them, in some degree, to the troops of the line.

Those principles of good faith, which it is the pride of this country to maintain inviolate, form a bar against any alteration on the present constitution of the militia, except with the consent of the individuals engaged in these regiments; but it does not seem impossible that this consent may be obtained, without any extravagant sacrifice on the part of the public.

The pernicious consequences to the discipline of the militia regiments, which have arisen from allowing individual soldiers to volunteer from the militia into the line, ought to discourage any renewal of that expedient; but if the militia could be induced to volunteer by whole regiments for general service, or, at least, for more extensive service, it would be a great gain to the public. If the constitutional prohibition were removed, if His Majesty were empowered to accept of their extended services, it does not seem improbable that the consent, both of the officers and men, might be obtained, by an offer of bounty to the men, accompanied by a grant of permanent rank in the army to the officers. It might be too much to propose, that they should enjoy the full advantages of the rank corresponding to that which they hold in the Militia; but an arrangement of this nature would admit of a great variety of modifications, among which some plan may probably be found to reconcile the interest of the militia officers with the public advantage.

VII. Conclusion

From all the arrangements which have been proposed, it is sufficiently apparent that a great accession will be obtained to the national strength, and an immediate relief from the dangers which now press upon us. This, however, is but a small part of the considerations which recommend these measures; for it is only through the establishment of an effectual system of national defence that we can bring the hostilities in which we are now engaged, to a satisfactory termination; or, indeed, that we can hope in future to enjoy the blessings of peace. If, without any better organization of our defensive force, than that which now subsists, we should be induced to conclude what some people call a Peace, the hand that signs the instrument, will seal the doom of our national independence.

We may be well assured that our antagonist will not reduce his military establishment: there will be no relaxation in his naval preparations: an interval of peace will only enable him to carry them on with increased activity. What, on the other hand, would be the necessary effect of peace upon the naval and military establishment of this country? The reduction of the militia might perhaps be compensated by an immediate and ostensible addition to our regular army. But except on the principles which have here been urged, we can have no compensation for the loss of the Volunteer force. Under any semblance of peace, that establishment must immediately fall to pieces. It is impossible to suppose that any thing short of the immediate prospect of impending invasion, can induce this great body of men to neglect their private concerns, and to make a spontaneous sacrifice of their time to the public service, - can animate their exertions, or keep alive that zeal without which they cannot be an efficient military force.

Thus a peace, however hollow and insecure, must reduce our defensive force to the regular army alone; and no one will venture to assert that this kingdom could maintain a regular army sufficient by itself, to resist the immense numbers of the enemy. What then is to be our situation, if the empty show of pacification should disband our Volunteers, without any effectual means having been adopted to replace them by a more permanent establishment? Disarmed in presence of an enemy who is armed at all points, we may submit to a superior power, but peace we cannot have; unless that is to be called a peace, with which Austria and Russia have been honoured, or that of which Spain is now reaping the fruits. By the establishment of a numerous and well organized Local Militia, we may secure the permanence of an effective domestic force: our means of

resisting invasion will then be liable to no fluctuation, - our enemy can never find us unprepared. The training of the youth to arms will go on with a regular and steady progress, in peace as well as in war: every year will improve the discipline and the efficiency of our internal defensive force, - every year will add to the numbers of those who are prepared to assist in the defence of their country. Whatever addition the enemy can make during peace to his naval power and to his means of attack, we shall be able fully to keep pace with him in the improvement of our means of defence on shore. Should the war be renewed, whether sooner or later, we shall not have lost in our relative strength during the interval: nor shall we return to the contest under circumstances of comparative disadvantage. Thus, and thus only, can we conclude peace with undiminished security, and with any prospect of permanence. Thus, and thus only, can we obtain its blessings with-out the sacrifice of national honour.

If it be imagined, that the proposed establishment would be too great a burden on the finances of the country, I may boldly aver, that by no other method can the same degree of protection be afforded with so small an expense. Many plans have, of late years, been suggested for the increase of the regular army; and, in all the discussions to which they have given rise, no one ever called in question the advantage of adding to our military force, though such an increase must undoubtedly have led to an increased national expenditure. The failure of so many successive schemes for raising men seems to indicate, that we are not far from the utmost limit of the numbers, which our population can afford for regular military service. If, however, means could be pointed out of making an addition of 50,000 or 100,000 men to our regular army, who is there that would object to it on the ground of expense? Since it is impracticable to obtain an adequate regular force, the deficiency must be supplied by measures of a different description; and if these be effectual for their purpose, the expense cannot be a valid objection, any more than it would be against the increase of our regular army. If at present, with an annual expenditure of more than 40 millions, our national independence is not secure, and if by an addition of 6 or 800,000 £c2. annually, it can be placed beyond the reach of hazard, what part of our expenses can we have less reason to regret?

By the formation of a Local Militia, the Volunteer establishment will be rendered superfluous, and this will make a great deduction from the expense to be incurred. That of the Volunteers, at present, is not much less than a million; and to bring it even within these bounds, it has been necessary to reduce their allowances, and to limit their opportunities of

exercise to a degree quite inconsistent with the acquisition of military habits. If real services are to be looked for from the Volunteers, it will be necessary, at least, to replace their establishment upon its original scale, and to incur a corresponding expenditure. In the first three years, the Volunteer establishment was reckoned to have cost the public five millions; while the Local Militia, at its regular and permanent establishment, would cost little more than 1,600,000 £c2.^o5 annually. Thus, there would be no great difference between the annual burden of our domestic force on either plan of organization; but, in the result, there would be this immense difference, that in the one case we should have a force which can only remain in vigour during a short period of universal zeal and national enthusiasm; and in the other, we should have a permanent system of defence, liable to no fluctuation, continually improving in its efficacy.

To the regular annual expense of the Local Militia, we have indeed to add the extraordinary charges of the first year, amounting, in all probability, to nearly three millions, - a large sum undoubtedly, yet not greater than we have paid in subsidies to continental powers, for the expenses of a single campaign. But, on what occasion could we entertain an expectation, that, from the co-operation of a continental power, we should derive any benefit to be compared to that, of placing the security of England now and for ever beyond the reach of all foreign attack? When we look at the cheerless prospect of unceasing dangers, which our present situation exhibits, and compare to this the perfect security within our reach, may we not consider the pecuniary burden, which must attend the first establishment of an effectual system of national defence, as the premium which we have to pay for a new charter of our national privileges? Let us reflect on all the blessings which this country now enjoys, and all which a French tyrant would annihilate, and then think whether it be a dear purchase, when for three millions we secure the independence of the Crown, and the liberties of England.

That the plan which has been here laid down would interfere, in some degree, with the industrious pursuits of the country, and that inconvenience would arise in the course of its execution to many of those who fall within the range of its operation, or to those connected with them, are points which it is needless to deny. The farmer may be deprived of the labour of his servant: the merchant or the manufacturer may be put to inconvenience by the absence of a clerk, a journeyman, or an apprentice. If there be any persons who think these of sufficient importance to be stated as grounds of objection against the measure, I would only wish to ask, whether these inconveniences

outweigh the horrors of French conquest? To any man, who can lay much stress on such topics, it is, perhaps, in vain to talk of the consequences which a deficiency of preparation would produce to the country at large: if, however, he think little of the loss of the constitution and liberties of England, let him at least recollect, that if this country follows the fate of Holland, the case will come home to his own pecuniary interest.

Those who may not see absolute and unqualified personal ruin in the pillage and the confiscations of a conquest, or in the general subversion of public and private credit, must expect to pay contributions more rigorous and oppressive than the richest cities of the Continent have had to submit to. It is stated, by persons who have ample opportunities of information, that the repeated contributions levied by the French in Holland, have drained off fully two-thirds of the capital which every merchant was possessed of under the government of the House of Orange. We have no reason to suppose that less rigour will be used towards the citizens of London than of Amsterdam. On the contrary, the commercial prosperity of England has been so long an object of envy and jealousy to the French, that our merchants must expect to feel a double weight of vengeance and rapacity. In addition to this, the French appear to entertain such extravagant and exaggerated ideas of the wealth of England, that, after our moneyed men are reduced to absolute beggary, it will still be believed that they have concealed treasures, to obtain the disclosure of which, personal violence, and, perhaps, torture, may be deemed a proper expedient.

Trifling, indeed, must be the greatest inconvenience that can possibly be apprehended from the operation of these defensive measures, in comparison of the evils which they are calculated to avert. The only question, then, which a reasonable man can admit is, Whether any other plan can be devised to give us the same degree of security with less inconvenience, and to avoid the objections which may be made to a Local Militia, without being less efficacious? The force, however, against which we have to contend, is not to be resisted, without the combined exertions of a very great proportion of our people; and when such efforts are required, it is impossible to suppose, that the ordinary business of the country must not suffer some interruption. It will not be easy, consistently with the effectual attainment of the object, to give less interruption than by the plan which has been laid down; for the young men, on whom it imposes the burden of military service, are, of all classes of people, those who can best be spared from their ordinary occupations.

In the arrangement of the details of the measure, it must certainly be an object of attention to mitigate, as far as possible, those inconveniences which cannot be entirely removed. Regulations must be adopted to obviate personal wrong, from the interference with the rights of masters over their apprentices, and other similar relations. In all indentures already executed, it would seem equitable, that the period in which the labour of the apprentice is withdrawn from the master, should be made up at the end of the engagement: on the other hand, the corporation laws, which require specific periods of apprenticeship, to entitle a young man to particular privileges, should be so modified, that the time legally employed by an apprentice in military duties, should be reckoned, as if no interruption had been given to his industrious pursuits.

The various regulations which may be adopted, in order to alleviate, as far as possible, the personal inconvenience arising from the proposed measures, would lead to a minuteness of discussion, into which it does not appear necessary now to enter. I shall only further observe, that if, with this view, any species of substitution should be admitted, any exemption in favour of the higher ranks of society, or any which can be purchased by pecuniary sacrifices, the whole principles and foundation of the plan would be subverted. That all should share alike in the burden of defending their country, is a fundamental principle, not only of justice, but of policy. To lay the burden of compulsory service upon the poor, and not upon the rich, would be contrary to the spirit of that constitution which it is our ambition to preserve. If such a line of policy should be adopted, and if, under the impressions to which it might naturally lead, the mass of the people should contribute the service required of them with reluctance and discontent, the consequences might be most fatal. How would the national character be degraded! how would the loyal spirit of the country be undermined, if, in the defence of our liberties, those who are the most deeply interested, should manifest a disposition to throw every burden on their less fortunate neighbours!

The preservation of that Government, under which this country has attained a degree of happiness scarcely paralleled in history, can-not be a matter of indifference even to the poorest man in the realm. But, assuredly, the man of superior condition has a stronger interest in the preservation of that order of things, upon which his greatness depends. In the subjugation of the country, and in the subversion of property which must accompany it, the severest fall awaits those whose situation is now the most elevated. It is, therefore, incumbent on the rich and powerful of every class, and chiefly on the landed aristocracy, to set an example of zeal and of

patriotism, and to be foremost in submitting, with alacrity, to the personal sacrifices and toils, which the exigency of the crisis demands.

By those, indeed, from whom these sacrifices are most immediately required, it is scarcely to be apprehended, that they will be at all considered as a toil or a hardship. - Though no exemption can be admitted from those exercises which are requisite for the attainment of military knowledge, yet, as the youth of superior condition are not mixed indiscriminately in the general mass, it may be hoped that nothing will be found in the plan, peculiarly grating to the feelings of the higher orders; and surely it cannot be imagined, that military exercises will of themselves be a severe burden on the youth of an active and high-spirited nation. Such indeed are the animation and the interesting variety of the occupations of a military life, that by young men, in general, they are more frequently considered as an amusement; and the exercises of the Local Militia will probably be looked upon by most of those on whom they are imposed, as an interval of recreation amidst the drudgery of duller pursuits.

There is more probability of objection on the part of some parents, who suffer lesser considerations to press with undue influence on their minds, and who may object to the military duty required of their sons, lest it should, in some measure, derange the plans of life which they have laid down for them. I trust that there is little cause for the apprehension: but were even greater sacrifices to be demanded, let them view with attention the awful alternative; let them recollect the miser-able and degraded condition in which, but a few years since, we saw the proud nobility of France begging for bread; let them recollect, that this is the fate which every man of property in Britain must expect from the success of our rancorous foe; let them reflect how thankfully a parent, in these circumstances, would redeem his lost condition, upon much severer terms than the sacrifice of a few months to be spent by his son in military education.

Appendix

[A]

In the first of the subjoined Tables, the Population of every County in Great Britain is set down (in the first column), according to the returns made to Parliament in the year 1801. From these numbers the second and fourth columns are calculated, according to data derived from Dr. Price's Tables;⁴⁶ the second column containing the proportion of males between

the ages of 19 and 26, and the fourth those between 18 and 19. The third column is in the proportions of two-thirds of the second, and the fifth in the same proportion to the fourth. If, there-fore, the hypothesis laid down in page 24, prove correct, the third column may be set down as the estimated number of effective Local Militia in each County, and the fifth as the number of young men who are annually to be trained. - The sixth column shows the number of those who will be embodied in the Training Battalion at one time, being according to the suggestion in page 28, in the proportion of three-tenths of those who are to be trained in the course of the year.

In the construction of this Table, all fractions have been thrown away, so that the totals of the different columns do not correspond with each other minutely, in the proportions that have been stated. - It is also to be observed that the total numbers fall short of the result, which would be obtained, if the same proportions were applied to the population of the kingdom at large. In the general enumeration, the Army, Navy, and Seamen in Registered Shipping, are not included in any County; and hence the aggregate Population of all the different Counties falls short of that of the whole Kingdom by about one twenty-third part. - It is needless to enter into minute corrections with a view of rectifying these discrepancies; since an approximation to the truth is all that can be expected from data that are in so great a degree hypothetical. These Calculations, however, have been submitted to the revision of men of the first eminence in this line of science, and have appeared to them likely to give results not very wide of the truth, and the best that can be obtained without other documents than are now attainable.

In the second Table, the estimated numbers of effective Local Militia in each County, and of those embodied in the Training Battalions, are extracted from the first Table, and the Counties are classed into Military Districts, as nearly equal in Population as circumstances will admit, and such that each will afford a Training Battalion of a convenient number.

The object of the third Table, is to show how soon, in case of invasion, the quotas of the different Counties and Districts may be brought to act against the enemy; and what numbers of Local Militia may be collected at London within any given number of days after the alarm is given.

TABLE I.

Counties.	Col. 1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	Total Popula- tion.	Males of the Age of 19 to 26.		Males of the Age of 18 to 19.		Train- ing
		Total.	Effect- ive	Total.	Effect- ive	
Bedford	63,393	3,476	2,316	514	342	102
Berks	109,215	5,990	3,998	885	590	77
Buckingham	107,444	5,892	3,928	871	580	174
Cambridge	89,346	4,899	3,266	724	482	144
Chester	191,751	10,517	7,010	1,555	1,036	309
Cornwall	188,269	10,325	6,882	1,526	1,016	303
Cumberland	117,230	6,429	4,286	950	632	189
Derby	161,142	8,838	5,898	1,306	870	261
Devon	343,001	18,813	12,542	2,781	1,854	555
Dorset	115,319	6,324	4,216	935	622	186
Durham	160,361	8,795	5,862	1,300	866	258
Essex	226,437	12,449	8,278	1,836	1,224	366
Gloucester	250,809	13,756	9,170	2,031	1,356	405
Hereford	89,191	4,891	3,260	723	482	144
Hertford	97,577	5,351	3,566	791	526	156
Huntingdon	37,568	2,059	1,372	304	202	60
Kent	307,624	16,873	11,248	2,494	1,662	493
Lancaster	672,731	36,898	4,598	5,455	3,636	1,089
Leicester	130,081	7,134	4,756	1,054	702	210
Lincoln	208,557	11,439	7,626	1,691	1,126	336
Middlesex	818,129	44,873	29,914	6,635	4,422	1,326
Monmouth	45,582	2,499	1,666	369	246	72
Norfolk	273,371	14,994	9,996	2,217	1,478	441
Northampton	131,757	7,226	4,816	1,068	712	213
Northumberland	157,101	8,616	5,744	1,274	848	252
Nottingham	140,350	7,698	5,132	1,138	758	225
Oxford	109,620	6,012	4,008	889	592	177
Rutland	16,356	896	596	132	88	24
Salop	167,639	9,194	6,128	1,359	906	270
Somerset	273,750	15,014	10,008	2,220	1,492	447
Southampton	219,656	12,047	8,030	1,781	1,186	354
Stafford	239,153	13,116	8,744	1,939	1,292	387
Suffolk	210,431	11,541	7,694	1,706	1,136	339
Surry	269,043	14,756	9,836	2,181	1,454	435
Sussex	159,311	8,737	5,824	1,292	860	258
Warwick	208,190	11,418	7,612	1,688	1,124	336
Westmorland	41,617	2,281	1,520	337	224	66
Wilts	185,107	10,132	6,754	1,501	1,000	300
Worcester	139,335	7,642	5,094	1,129	752	225
York East Riding	139,433	7,647	5,093	1,130	752	225
Ditto North ditto	155,506	8,529	5,686	1,261	840	252
Ditto West ditto	563,953	30,932	20,620	4,573	3,048	912
Total of England	8,331,434	456,918	304,598	67,548	45,016	13,458

Anglesey	33,806	1,853	1,234	274	182	54
Brecon	31,633	1,734	1,156	256	170	51
Cardigan	42,956	2,355	1,570	348	232	69
Caermarthen	67,317	3,692	2,460	545	362	108
Carnarvon	41,521	2,276	1,516	336	224	66
Denbigh	60,352	3,310	2,206	489	326	96
Flint	39,622	2,172	1,448	321	214	63
Glamorgan	71,525	3,922	2,614	580	386	114
Merioneth	29,506	1,617	1,078	239	158	45
Montgomery	47,978	2,631	1,754	389	258	75
Pembroke	56,280	3,086	2,056	456	304	90
Radnor	19,050	1,043	694	154	102	30
Total of Wales	541,546	29,691	19,786	4,387	2,918	861
Aberdeen	123,082	6,750	4,500	998	664	198
Argyle	71,859	3,940	2,626	582	388	114
Ayr	84,306	4,623	3,082	683	454	135
Banff	35,807	1,963	1,308	290	192	57
Berwick	30,621	1,679	1,118	248	164	48
Bute	11,791	646	430	95	62	18
Caithness	22,609	1,240	826	183	122	36
Clackmannan	10,858	594	396	88	58	15
Cromarty	3,052	167	110	24	16	3
Dumbarton	20,710	1,135	756	167	110	33
Dumfries	54,597	2,994	1,996	442	294	87
Edinburgh	122,954	6,743	4,494	997	664	198
Elgin	26,705	1,464	976	216	144	42
Fife	93,743	5,141	3,426	760	506	150
Forfar	99,127	5,436	3,624	803	534	159
Haddington	29,986	1,644	1,096	243	162	48
Inverness	74,292	4,074	2,716	602	400	120
Kincardine	26,349	1,444	962	213	142	42
Kinross	6,725	368	244	54	36	9
Kirkcudbright	29,211	1,601	1,066	236	156	45
Lanark	146,699	8,046	5,364	1,188	792	237
Linlithgow	17,844	977	650	144	96	27
Nairn	8,257	452	300	66	44	12
Orkney & Shetland	46,824	2,567	1,710	379	252	75
Peebles	8,735	478	318	70	46	12
Perth	126,366	6,930	4,620	1,024	682	204
Renfrew	78,056	,281	2,854	33	422	126
ROSS	52,291	2,867	1,910	424	282	84
Roxburgh	33,682	1,847	1,230	273	182	54
Selkirk	5,070	277	184	41	26	6
Stirling	50,825	2,786	1,856	412	274	81
Sutherland	23,117	1,267	844	187	124	36
Wigtoun	22,918	1,256	836	185	122	36
Scotland	1,599,068	87,677	58,428	12,950	8,612	2,547
England	8,331,434	456,918	304,598	67,548	45,016	13,458
Wales	541,546	29,691	19,786	4,387	2,918	861
	10,472,048	574,486	382,812	84,885	56,546 1	6,866

TABLE II.

Counties	Districts	Effective Local Militia	Training Battalions
Kent	1	11,248	498
Sussex	2	5,824	258
Surry	3	9,836	435
Middlesex, 3 Districts	4-6	29,914	1,326
Essex	7	8,278	366
Suffolk	8	7,694	339
Norfolk	9	9,990	441
Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford	10	6,951	306
Hertford, Buckingham	11	7,494	330
Oxford, Berks	12	8,006	354
Southampton	13	8,030	354
Wilts, Dorset	14	10,970	486
Devon	15	12,542	555
Cornwall	16	6,882	303
Somerset	17	10,008	447
Gloucester	18	9,170	405
Worcester, Monmouth, Hereford	19	10,020	441
Salop	20	6,128	270
Warwick	21	7,612	336
Stafford	22	8,744	387
Leicester, Rutland, Northampton	23	10,168	447
Lincoln	24	7,626	336
Nottingham, Derby	25	11,030	486
Chester	26	7,010	309
York West Riding, 2 Districts	27 -28	20,620	912
York East Ditto, York North Ditto	29	10,784	477
Lancaster, 2 Districts	30-31	24,598	1,089
Cumberland, Westmorland	*32	5,806	255
Northumberland, Durham	33	11,606	510

		304,598	13,458
Anglesey, Carnarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Montgomery,			
Merioneth, Radnor	34	9,930	429
Pembroke, Caermarthen, Cardigan, Glamorgan, Brecon	35	9,934	432
Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk, Peebles, Haddington, Edinburgh, Linlithgow	36	9,090	393
Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Wigtoun, Ayr	37	6,980	303
Lanark, Renfrew	38	8,218	363
Argyle, Bute, Dumbarton, Stirling	39	5,663	246
Inverness, Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney	40	8,116	354
Nairn, Elgin, Bamff, Aberdeen, Kincardine	41	8,046	351
Forfar, Perth, Fife, Kinross, Clackmanan	42	12,310	537

*N.B. A part of Lancashire might be conveniently added to this District.

TABLE III.

The subjoined Table gives a view of the numbers of Local Militia which may be brought into action, within a given time after the appearance of the enemy. On the first alarm, each Battalion is supposed to assemble at its own rendezvous, and, on receiving orders from London, to march separately, by the most direct route, to the place where they are appointed to join the Army. Reckoning from the time that orders are dispatched by Government, the first day may be allowed for the conveyance of these orders, and for the different Corps to assemble and prepare for their march. - Those from the distant counties are then supposed to march at the rate of 15 miles per day towards London. - All the Corps which assemble at posts within 30 miles of London, may therefore be reckoned to arrive at the general rendezvous within three days; - those which are at more than 30, but less than 45 miles, on the fourth day; and so on. - The counties of Kent and Essex being those through which the enemy must advance, their Militia will join the Army near the coast, and may be reckoned, along with those of London itself, as ready almost from the first, or at least before the enemy can possibly reach the capital. - The total number of Local Militia from each county is taken at the same as in Table II, throwing away fractions less than 100; and these totals are divided into different Columns, according to the proportion of population residing within each distance from London.

TABLE III.

Distance beyond London	Less than 30 Miles	From 30 to 45 Miles	From 45 to 60 Miles	From 60 to 90 Miles	From 90 to 120 Miles	From 120 to 150 Miles
Supposed to join	Within 3 Days	4th Day	5th Day	6th & 7th Days	8th & 9th Days	10th & 11th Days
Kent	11,200					
Essex	8,200					
Middlesex	29,900					
Surry	9,000	800				
Hertfordshire	2,800	700				
Bedfordshire		1,100	1,200			
Buckinghamshire	1,000	1,700	1,200			
Berkshire	600	1,200	1,500	700		
Oxfordshire		600	1,400	2,000		
Hampshire		800	2,400	4,000		
Sussex		2,200	3,000	600		
Northamptonshire				4,800		
Huntingdonshire			400	900		
Cambridgeshire		300	1,400	1,500		
Suffolk			600	5,000	2,000	
Norfolk				1,000	8,000	1,000
Rutlandshire					600	
Leicestershire						4,700
Warwickshire				2,300	5,300	
Gloucestershire				1,000	7,500	600
Wiltshire				3,300	3,400	
Dorsetshire					3,400	800
Somersetshire					4,000	5,000
Worcestershire					4,000	1,000
Monmouthshire						1,200
Herefordshire					3,200	
Shropshire						2,000
Staffordshire					400	7,400
Derbyshire					500	3,500
Nottinghamshire					500	4,600
Lincolnshire					2,800	2,800

Numbers capable of assembling within						
3 Days	62,700	9,400	13,100	27,100	50,300	29,900
	9,400					
4 Days	72,100					
	13,100					
5 Days	85,200					
	27,100					
7 Days	112,300					
	50,300					
9 Days	162,600					
	29,900					
11 Days	192,500					

[B]

According to the arrangement proposed, there will be in the whole kingdom 42 Training Battalions, to each of which will be required, a Lieutenant-Colonel, a Major, an Adjutant, and a Quarter-Master. These Battalions will consist of about 300 Companies; to each a Captain, a Lieutenant, and 4 Serjeants. Allowing to all these permanent pay, at the same rate as to Officers in corps for limited service, the whole Establishment will amount to about 153,000£.

The young men entering annually into the Local Militia will amount to nearly 60,000, whose Arms and Accoutrements will cost SOs. per man: Clothing and Necessaries will also be required to the amount

of 3£ 10s. per man. Part of this clothing must be renewed at the end of 3 years; but, allowing for casualties, there will be only about 58,000 for whom this second clothing must be provided, at the rate of 44s. per man. - These two sets of clothing are supposed to be sufficient for the whole regular period of each man's service.

During the time that the Local Militia are on duty, either as Training Battalions, or in the General Assemblage, the men are supposed to receive pay, at the rate of 1s. per day. With respect to the Officers of the Local Battalions, it is to be observed, that the Commandants of Battalions are the only individuals who make a spontaneous sacrifice of their time and trouble by their attendance. All the Captains and Subalterns are persons subject to the same compulsory duty as the common men. There is therefore no call for allowing to them a higher rate of pay, than may be requisite for defraying the extra expenses to which their situation of officers will subject them. For this purpose, it may be deemed sufficient to allow them pay at the same rate as Lieutenants in the Militia and Fencibles. Supposing a Captain and two Subalterns to each Company, the whole amount of their pay for the three weeks of the General Assemblage will be about 20£ per Company. The Colonels of the Local Battalions will be subject to a number of extra expenses, for which a liberal indemnification ought to be allowed, and perhaps 30£ for each General Assemblage will not be too much for this purpose. Supposing a Local Battalion to consist of 10 Companies, these allowances will amount to 230£; to which if we add 20£ for the extra pay of Non-commissioned Officers, over and above their ordinary pay as privates, there will be a charge of 250£ for each of about 600 Local Battalions.

Independently of the ordinary pay and allowances, some expense must be incurred by the encampment of large bodies of men in the General Assemblage. - This may, in some respects, be diminished, if the same encampment be occupied in succession by different bodies of men. As the Militia of each County will remain only three weeks encamped, the same preparations may perhaps be made to serve for 4 different Brigades in succession, without extending the periods of the encampments to an inconvenient season. - It will be sufficient therefore to provide camp equipage as for 100,000 men. The tear and wear of this equipage must be allowed for, as well as a number of incidental expenses attending the encampments. It is not easy to estimate these with precision, but it does not seem probable that they can amount to more than 200,000£ annually. Adding together these several articles of expense, the amount will stand as follows:

Officers for the Training Battalions	153,000
Arms and Accoutrements for 60,000 men, at 2£ 10s.	150,000
Clothing, &c. for ditto, at 3£ 10s.	210,000
Second Clothing for 58,000 men, at 2£ 4s.	127,600
Training 60,000 men, each 84 days, at 1s.	252,000
General Assemblage, 400,000 men, 21 days, at 1s.	420,000
Officers for 600 Local Battalions, at 250£ each	150,000
Expense of Encampments, &c.	200,000
	<u>£ 1,662,600</u>

[C]

It cannot be doubted that in the course of the disembarkation, and of the First days after the enemy may have made good their landing, they must be involved in many embarrassing situations, and will often be in a predicament when they might be attacked with advantage. There is no certainty, however, that our forces can be ready to profit by these circumstances; and if we rest much of our defence upon that contingency, it may involve us in the greatest dangers.

It is a supposition destitute of all probability, that our army should be ready encamped exactly at the place at which the enemy make their landing. We have so extensive a coast exposed to invasion, that our army cannot be collected at any one point, without leaving others unprotected. When we hear of the flotilla being in readiness on the shores of Holland, or of Flanders, we have no means of judging whether the destination of the enemy may be for Yarmouth or for Deal. Even when their forces are actually embarked, they may be carried (and in many cases with nearly equal facility) to a number of different points, either north or south of the Thames. If, then, our commanders determine to concentrate their forces, and to keep a respectable army together, they cannot choose any position on the coast, without leaving many others where the enemy may land without opposition. If, on the other hand, they attempt to guard every part of the coast, their forces must be drawn out along so extensive a line, that they must necessarily be very weak at each particular point. At no one station could we have a sufficient body of troops to resist the invading army. All the natural obstacles which the situation can afford, will not

enable a few regiments effectually to resist a powerful army. The enemy may be expected to use every exertion to bring a large force to act together in one combined attack; and bearing down the feeble detachments which they meet at the shore, they may attack our forces in detail, and gain important advantages before our scattered troops can be drawn together into one army.

In these circumstances, it may certainly admit of a doubt, whether it would not be more prudent to quit the coast altogether, and to occupy some central position, where a respectable army may remain constantly assembled, and ready to meet the enemy in whatever quarter their attack may be made. An intermediate plan may be suggested, and seems, in fact, to meet the ideas of Government, that the great body of our forces should not be stationed exactly at the coast, but in a second line, at some distance back. Their positions will thus extend along a narrower circle, and they may be more easily drawn together into one army, than if they were stationed immediately on the shore. If their communications can be well maintained, this plan is not, perhaps, objectionable. It certainly has the advantage of enabling our commanders, with a part of their force, to meet the enemy more speedily after their landing, than if our whole army were in one camp, at a greater distance back. Even on this plan, however, our troops must be stationed at such a distance from the shore, that an invading army, arriving unexpectedly, may probably establish themselves before a sufficient force can be brought down to give them effectual opposition.

It is not, perhaps, impossible, that an inferior number of our troops may annoy the enemy, to a considerable degree, before they make good their landing; perhaps too, a fortunate concurrence of accidents may enable a judicious commander to gain decisive advantages, while the enemy are involved in the embarrassments of a disembarkation. If we could obtain sufficiently accurate information as to the movements of the enemy, this might not be improbable; but if all the chances of the contrary be considered, we ought perhaps to look upon such an event as one of those contingencies, for which we may possibly be indebted to the good management or the good fortune of our commanders, rather than as an event which we may expect with certainty, and upon which we may safely rest our defence.

A

LETTER

A. Muir ADDRESSED TO *Blackenzie*

JOHN CARTWRIGHT, ESQ.

CHAIRMAN OF THE
COMMITTEE AT THE CROWN AND ANCHOR;

ON THE SUBJECT OF

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

BY THE
EARL OF SELKIRK.

James (son)

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE, HUNTER, PARK & HUNTER, LONDON;
AND A. CONSTABLE & CO. EDINBURGH.

1809.

The following pamphlet was published in April 1809 by Constable, Hunter, Park & Hunter, London, and A. Constable & Co., Edinburgh. It was reprinted that same year. The text here as that of the second edition, which Selkirk noted “differs from the Original only by the transposition of two paragraphs, and a few aeral corrections.” Another “second edition” was published in Manchester in 1816.

A Letter to John Cartwright

.....April 25, 1809.

Sir,

The letter, in which you proposed to me to act as a Steward at the approaching meeting of the Friends of Parliamentary Reform, ought to have received an earlier answer: but I have not found it easy to command sufficient leisure to reply to it, in the manner which appeared to me due, both to the respectability of your character, and to the sentiments of esteem, which I know to have been entertained towards you by my father and brother. - Sensible that in many important points there is a coincidence of opinion between us, while at the same time I feel it impossible to accede to your proposal, I wish to state at some length, the motives which influence me in that determination.¹

To Parliamentary Reform my father and brother were, as you well know, zealous friends; and all my own early prepossessions were in favour of such a measure. - I saw with abhorrence the ascendancy, which unprincipled and worthless characters often acquired through the influence of corruption.² I lamented the public advantages so often sacrificed to the interest of individuals. I was struck with the glaring manner, in which the practice of our Constitution appeared to deviate from its theory: and I flattered myself that if the representation of the people were put on a proper footing, these abuses would be eradicated; - that if the representation were equalized, the right of suffrage extended, the duration

of Parliaments shortened, bribery could scarcely be applied with effect; - that the influence of corruption being thus removed, the real friends of the country would obtain the preference naturally due to worth and talents; and that, the House of Commons being so composed, every abuse would speedily be checked or thoroughly reformed.

Such, Sir, were the views upon which I was led to approve the proposal of a great and radical change in the constitution of the House of Commons. I believe, that through a similar train of reasoning, my father and brother had been led, as well as many other men of distinguished worth, to the same opinions. Of the correctness of this practical conclusion, I have since seen reason to doubt - not that my feelings of abhorrence and contempt for corruption and venality have undergone any change - in these sentiments I do not fall short of those honoured relatives with whose opinions you were well acquainted: But I have had an opportunity, which they never had, of seeing the practical application of those principles from which we expected consequences so beneficial. With grief and mortification I perceived that no such advantages had resulted, as from theory I had been led to anticipate.

I allude to the observations which I had occasion to make in the United States of America, where a system of representation is established, approaching as nearly as perhaps is practicable, to the theoretical perfection at which you aim; and where that system is combined with a general diffusion of property, of itself calculated to check in a great degree the force of corruption.³ A very short acquaintance with the legislative proceedings of America may afford conviction, that universal suffrage and frequency of election prove no bar to the misconduct of representatives; and that a political adventurer, raised to power by popular favour, is fully as likely to abuse that power, as is the purchaser of a rotten borough.

There is no ground for the idea, that in that country public affairs are managed with a higher regard to the public welfare, than in our own. The Parliament of England with all its corruptions, cannot be accused of proceedings approaching, in disgrace, to the infamous and bare-faced jobs, which have been transacted in many of the legislatures of America. It is evident to the most careless observation, that the state of public morals is there worse than in England - that political integrity is less respected - that corrupt motives have not the same degree of check from feelings of honour, as they have among Englishmen. To sum up all, there is no room for comparison between the two countries in that great test of a good government, the administration of justice.

When I consider that a country thus deficient in the most essential points of practical good government, has a Constitution framed upon the very principles, to which the advocates of Parliamentary Reform look, as the foundation of every prospect of amendment in our own, I cannot avoid the conclusion that these principles are fallacious. The reasonings which have occurred to me, as to the source of the fallacy, would lead me into too great length; but I think the observations to which I have already referred, sufficiently justify the opinion that Parliamentary Reform in England would not have the effects which its more sincere and zealous friends anticipate.

Fully as I am impressed with the opinion that Parliamentary Reform is not the road to any practical public benefit, I am very far from thinking that there is nothing which requires reform in our government. I am well convinced, that there are many corruptions of most pernicious tendency, which may and ought to be eradicated. But we have to consider, how that object is to be effected, without endangering benefits of still greater importance. The advocates of a radical and entire Reform, have not perhaps fairly considered the extreme difficulty of guarding every avenue to abuse, and how often the measures which are taken for repressing it in one quarter, serve only to open for it some new channel still more pernicious. - We have a government in which, with all its corruptions, there is much essentially good: though particular cases of hardships may undoubtedly be quoted, yet it would not be easy to find, either in the past or present state of the world, a parallel to the great mass of public happiness, which has grown up in England, under those institutions of which we complain. - The protection which our government affords to the personal liberty of the subject, the purity of the distribution of justice, and the security in which every man may enjoy the fruit of his industry, are surpassed in no country in the world: - hardly can we find one that bears the least comparison to our own. Let the value of that which we possess be fairly appreciated; and then let us consider coolly, whether the blemishes of our government are of such magnitude, as to warrant the application of remedies, which, if they do not cure, may kill.

I shall not repeat the hacknied topics to which the French Revolution has given occasion; but I must entreat your attention to one view, which deserves the serious consideration of every genuine friend of liberty, as illustrating the hazard of grasping too hastily at political perfection. It is well known, that on the meeting of the Etats Generaux at Versailles, in the year 1789, the King offered the important concession, that no taxes should for the future be levied, without

the authority of that body, constituted according to its ancient form in Three Chambers. - There is no reason to doubt, that if this had been acceded to, the periodical meeting of the Etats Generaux would have been fully secured - that the arbitrary proceedings of the old Government could not have been renewed, and that by the same steps, through which of old the Commons of England rose into consequence, the Tiers Etat might have laid the foundation of a gradual improvement in the government of France. This slow progress, however, did not suit the ideas of the ardent friends of liberty. To obtain an immediate and complete regeneration, they insisted on the union of the three chambers. They obtained their object; but not till they had taught the mob to despise their old habits of obedience to established authority. From this fatal source, we have seen a train of consequences to arise, ending in the wreck of every vestige of freedom, and the establishment of a ferocious despotism! Among all the genuine patriots, whose well-meaning, though mistaken zeal, contributed to the first excesses of popular enthusiasm in France, can we believe, that any one, if now surviving, would not look back with regret to the system of liberty, however imperfect, which France would have enjoyed under the old constitution of the Etats Generaux? - would they not lament the improvidence, which led them to despise every reform, short of complete regeneration; and in pursuit of a phantom of ideal perfection, to throw away the substantial good which was in their hands?

Though I do not suppose that the English Reformers would imitate the mad fury of the French Revolutionists, their principles have the same tendency, and their efforts may have in a great measure the same effect. Popular ferment is a two-edged weapon, which most frequently inflicts the wound where it was not aimed. Often has it ruined the cause of liberty, and seldom contributed to improve the condition of mankind! Before we risk the infinite mischief, which may be dreaded from the use of such an engine, let us weigh well the value of the object. Setting aside the chance of failing in the contest, - (a contest which might leave the constitution impaired by changes of an opposite character,) let us consider the most favourable case. On the supposition that Parliamentary Reform were peaceably accomplished, what prospect would it afford, of an amelioration in our condition.

The disfranchisement of the rotten boroughs, and the substitution of a different set of electors in their place, would certainly occasion some change in the composition of the House of Commons; but it is not very clear, that this would introduce an additional portion of virtuous principle. The friends of Reform do not sufficiently advert to the necessary tendency

of elections purely democratical, to throw power into the hands of men, whose only merit consists in being masters of stage effect, and the tricks of popular delusion. Mr. Wilkes⁴ is not the only favourite representative, who professing in public an absolute deference to the sense of his constituents, has boasted in private, that he had full command of their nonsense.

From the history of all free governments, it appears that the defect, to which I now allude, on the one hand, and the undue influence of wealth on the other, form a Scylla and Charybdis; between which, the wisest legislators have found it no easy task to steer. In our government, chance has blended together these opposite vices, in such a manner as to correct each other's violence, and produce a com-pound, far indeed from perfect, but less noxious than if either of these principles had an unqualified predominance.

A large portion of influence is now in the hands of certain individuals, men of wealth and family-connections; while on the other hand, many of our elections are assuredly popular enough. The proportion is such, that men in power cannot venture to despise public opinion: at the same time, the House of Commons is not so entirely dependent on popular favour, that a momentary ferment can over-rule their deliberations, in the fatal manner which has often been experienced in more democratical governments. - This branch of the legislature is seldom, perhaps, entirely free of men who may deserve the title of demagogues. A few of that description, however, cannot gain a dangerous ascendancy in an assembly so constituted: - they may even be useful, and without being virtuous themselves, may form a check to the opposite vices of a different portion of the House. But though occasional benefit may be experienced from the efforts of such men, we ought not to forget the danger which would arise, if there were no counterpoise to their influence.

In America, we may see a legislature untainted by any mixture of boroughmongers: but what is the result? Are their legislators and magistrates always upright and wise men? Are their proceedings uniformly pure? Are they never led astray by popular violence and delusion? - On these points, let me refer you to one of the ablest and most zealous advocates of Reform. Ask Mr. Cobbett, whether, in the popular elections of America, the preference is more generally given to the man of solid judgment and tried integrity, or to the artful knave, who, free from the restraints of truth and honour, can exert all his dexterity in the arts of deception.⁵ If direct bribery be less frequent than in England, that advantage is fully counterbalanced by the greater influence of the blind and impetuous passions of the vulgar; an influence even more pernicious

than the ascendancy of wealth, and the practical effect of which fully verifies the observation of Burke, that, if courts be the scene of cabals, the people are the natural prey of mountebanks, and impostors.

Look, Sir, at the forcible and too accurate picture which is drawn by Peter Porcupine; and you will see what sort of men the most genuine popular elections may raise to pre-eminence.⁶ Those who are so fond of repeating that one ministry is no better than another, should recollect that a demagogue in power may be still worse. History does not abound in examples of men, who, after rising into power by flattering the passions of the multitude, have employed that power for the good of their country.

We are told, however, that a Reform in Parliament is a necessary preliminary to the redress of other grievances. The facts which I have already stated, may suffice to prove, that this notion is not only unfounded, but the very reverse of the truth: and I consider it as a delusion peculiarly unfortunate at the present moment. The attention of the country has of late been roused, to a multitude of abuses, in the management of the public money, and in the distribution of public employments. - No candid mind can entertain a doubt of the importance of checking, and as far as possible eradicating such abuses. They have a direct tendency to waste the national resources, to aggravate the burdens of the people, and to damp their patriotic exertions, by exciting a general belief, that the nation is oppressed to serve the sinister purposes of individuals.

The measures which are necessary for removing these evils, may not be agreeable to those who profit by their continuance; and objections are urged, as objections always will be urged, against any innovation by which the interest of many individuals is to be affected. But Reforms of this description do not necessarily involve any consequences dangerous to the country: on the contrary, the most serious perils are to be apprehended from neglecting them. To every just measure of oeconomical Reform, I am therefore a decided friend: but the constitution, as it now exists, has sufficient means for the correction of all these abuses; and if the attention of the public be not diverted from that great object, the management of the Revenue may and will be reformed.

The efforts hitherto made for that object, have had little success, because they have obtained from the public at large, but a feeble support. The importance of the object has not been sufficiently appreciated; but the nation is now alive to it. If a steady and persevering support be given to those who exert themselves in Parliament for the attainment of

oeconomical Reform, the friends of that principle will multiply every day; and sooner or later, the ministry will find it impossible to hold out against the public voice.

To defeat this great object, I know of no means more effectual than to divert the attention of the public from this solid interest, by connecting it with the plan of a Constitutional change in the elections of the House of Commons. A struggle for Parliamentary Reform would come at the present moment most seasonably to the aid of the Antijacobin hypocrites, who are trembling for their ill-gotten gains. They would hail it as a most convenient bubble to amuse the public, and would rejoice that, while the attention of the country was diverted from their malversations, their cause would again be linked with that of social order, and obtain the support of all, who are not prepared to try the portentous experiment, of throwing down the established land-marks of the constitution.

I would entreat the advocates of Parliamentary Reform, to reflect how many men there are who, though prepared to support every substantial oeconomical Reform, would tremble at the idea of Constitutional changes, to which they can see no termination. If the notions of a radical and entire change are pursued with violence, moderate men will again be forced to believe, that there is no alternative between measures of a Revolutionary tendency, and a resistance to every reformation whatever. Many sincere friends of oeconomical Reform, may thus be driven to a co-operation with men, who have no principle but to support every established abuse. - Anxiously do I hope, that those who wish honestly to pursue the good of the country, may not again be forced to make their option between Jacobin and Antijacobin. I am no Alarmist; but as I firmly believe, that amidst violent changes, there is more probability of making our government worse than better, I deprecate the discussion to which you wish me to lend my name, as calculated to divide the friends of substantial reformation, and to defeat every valuable, safe, and attainable improvement in the management of our public affairs.

References

¹ John Cartwright (1740-1824) began agitating for parliamentary reform in 1780, publishing a number of pamphlets on the subject. In 1809 he attempted to revive his movement through the meeting herein noted. See F. D. Cartwright, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright*, (London, 1826).

² Both Dunbar and Lord Daer were members of Cartwright's Society for Constitutional Information, founded in 1780.

³ In his tour of the United States in 1803-1804, recorded in Patrick C. T. White, ed., *Lord Selkirk's Diary*.

⁴ John Wilkes (1727-1797) was a notorious rake whose criticisms of the government in the North Briton in 1762 led to burning of No. 45 of the paper by the common hangman as a seditious libel. He was expelled from parliament, was imprisoned, and although several times re-elected was not seated until 1774. Most of the ruling elite regarded him as a dissolute demagogue. See Louis Kronenberger, *The Extraordinary Mr. Wilkes-His Life and Times* (New York, 1974).

⁵ William Cobbett, whereas "Peter Porcupine" he had attacked extreme republicanism and demagoguery. He returned to England in 1800 and supported political reform without disavowing his American views. See James Sambrook, *William Cobbett* (London, Boston, 1973).

⁶ Porcupine's Political Censor was published in Philadelphia 1796-1797. Selkirk here undoubtedly refers to Cobbett's *The Life and Adventures of Peter Porcupine* (Glasgow, 1798).