

throng."\* The poet travels on into the heart of the beautiful Lake District. At the village of Grange, near Borrodale, he finds a contrast to the bustle of the fair at Brough. He is entertained by a young farmer and his mother with milk and thin oaten cakes, and "butter that Sisera would have jumped at, though not in a lordly dish." The farmer was a noted man of the district. He was "himself the man that last year plundered the eagle's airy: all the dale are up in arms on such an occasion, for they lose abundance of lambs yearly." The bold dalesman "was let down from the cliff on ropes to the shelf of rock on which the eagle's nest was built, the people above shouting and hollowing to fright the old birds, which flew screaming round, but did not dare to attack him." The eagles are gone, never to return. Every season, says Miss Martineau, there is a rumour of an eagle having visited some point or another; "but, on the whole, we find the preponderance of belief is against there being any eagle's nest amongst the mountains of Westmorland or Cumberland." †

Poetry has made the Lake District her home; and amidst the glorious mountains, the lakes and the tarns, will Poetry every abide. The gifted writer who has added another celebrated name to the illustrious who have delighted here to dwell, has said of a mountainous district, "it is the only kind of territory in which utility must necessarily be subordinated to beauty. . . . Man may come and live, if he likes, and if he can; but it must be in some humble corner, by permission, as it were, and not through conflict with the genius of the place. Nature and beauty here rule and occupy: man and his desires are subordinate, and scarcely discernible." ‡ It was thus, on the slopes of the mountains, or in vales inaccessible, that the Dalesmen, deriving their name from the word *deyler*, which means to distribute, occupied their little crofts as tenants of their ecclesiastical or military lord. These were the predecessors of the "statesmen," or "estatesmen," who still survive, though in diminished numbers, struggling with their small skill against the march of agricultural science and the extension of farm holdings. Even nature herself cannot resist this progress. The Kentmere Tarn, by whose shallow waters Bernard Gilpin might have meditated three centuries ago, has been drained in our own day. Wherever corn can be made to spring, the reed and the rush no longer flourish. The social condition of the population is as rapidly changing. The shepherd will still go upon the hills, "into the heart of many thousand mists." His dog will still bring down the flock from heights untrodden by man—that faithful ser-

\* "Journal."

† "The Land we Live in," vol. ii. p. 235.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

vant, of whom it has been said, "without the shepherd's dog, the mountainous land in England would not be worth sixpence." The occasional Pedlar will still carry his pack to the cottage door. But the whole district has been brought into communication with the outer world; and its inner life has undergone a very marked change. "Book farming" is no longer held up to ridicule.\* Turnips were first grown as a field-crop in the vale of Bassenthwaite, in 1793. Oats are still half the grain crop; but the food of the people is wondrously altered since the time when a wheaten loaf could not be bought in Carlisle, and "it was only a rich family that used a peck of wheat in the course of a year, and that was used at Christmas." † Hemp and flax were grown in small patches for domestic use, the females spinning the flax, and the males plating the hemp into cordage, for leather for harness was not used till the end of the last century. "Wonderful Robert Walker," the good curate of Seathwaite, spun the wool out of which the cloth was woven which his wife made up into apparel for themselves and their eight children. But Yorkshire and Lancashire manufactures have banished such thrift. Wordsworth records how the change from hand-labour to machinery intruded itself into Seathwaite: "At a small distance from the parsonage has been erected a mill for spinning yarn. It is a mean and disagreeable object, though not unimportant to the spectator, as calling to mind the momentous changes wrought by such inventions in the frame of society." The spinning wheel went out when drills came in. "About the year 1795, the ancestor of the present Mr. Dixon, of Rucroft or Ruckcroft, in the parish of Ainstable, procured a barrow-drill for sowing his patch of turnips with; and so highly was it esteemed as a saving of labour by himself and his neighbours, that it was lent all round the country, and worked day and night during the season." ‡ The one-horse cart gradually drove out the pack-horse, which the farmer employed to carry his grain to the mill or to the market. Looking from Little Langdale, "a horse road is discerned sloping up the brown side of Wrynose, opposite. This track was once the only traffic-road from Kendal to Whitehaven; and it was traversed by pack-horses." § Not only are the usages of the Lake District changed, but the inhabitants are, in the more beautiful regions, changed from poor cultivators into luxurious gentry; the miserable farm steadings have given place to splendid villas. Gray shows

\* "Journal of Royal Agricultural Society," vol. xiii. p. 225.

† Eden. "History of the Poor," vol. i. p. 564.

‡ "Journal of Royal Agricultural Society," vol. xiii. p. 241.

§ "Land we Live in," vol. ii. p. 254.

us what Grasmere was, ninety years ago: "A white village, with the parish church rising in the midst of it; hanging inclosures, corn fields, and meadows green as an emerald, with their trees, hedges, and cattle; fill up the whole space from the edge of the water . . . . Not a single red tile, no flaring gentleman's house or garden walls, break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its neatest and most becoming attire."

"We entered Scotland," says Smollett, "by a frightful muir of sixteen miles, which promises very little for the interior parts of the kingdom. . . . That part of Scotland contiguous to Berwick, nature seems to have intended as a barrier between two hostile nations." In a few hours he sees a plain "covered with as fine wheat as ever I saw in the most fertile parts of South Britain."\* This fertility was exceptional. The agriculture of Scotland—even in the Lothians, now models of farming excellence—was in the rudest and almost barbarous state, when George III. came to the throne. East Lothian claims the honour of having led the march of improvement. But in the middle of the last century there was not a single mile of continuous hard road in the district. Grain was carried to market on horseback. The whole county of Haddington, long after the middle of that century, was open field. The tenantry frequently resided together in a cluster of mean houses called a town. Green crops were unknown, and the thistles among the corn were carefully gathered to feed the husbandry horses. The implements were of the rudest kind—"better fitted to raise laughter than to raise mould," according to lord Kaimes, an agricultural improver. The married ploughman was paid, as now, in the produce of the farm; but he received a far less proportion of oats than at the present time, and he had no potatoes in his patch of garden. The only occupation that flourished was that of smuggling.† Such was the agricultural state of the southern shores of the Frith of Forth. The pastoral district of the Lammermuir hills had no improved breeds of sheep till the beginning of the present century.

The beautiful country watered by the Tweed and the Teviot was for the greater part uninclosed seventy years ago. Roxburghshire exhibited the dominion of the plough in irregular and detached patches; the intermediate portions being devoted to grazing cattle, which were put under the charge of a herd, to prevent them trespassing upon the scanty divisions set apart for corn.‡ The

\* "Humphrey Clinker."

† "New Statistical Account of Scotland," Haddington, p. 375.

‡ "Journal of Royal Agricultural Society," vol. i. p. 105.

produce of wheat was only in the proportion of one-twelfth to that of oats and barley. The great novelist has described Liddesdale as exhibiting "no inclosures, no roads, almost no tillage—a laird which a patriarch would have chosen to feed his flocks and herds." He has perhaps somewhat exaggerated the abundance of "Charlie's Hope"—the noble cowhouse and its milch-cows, the feeding-house with ten bullocks of the most approved breeds, the stable with two good teams of horses—the appropriate wealth of so worthy a yeoman as "Dandie Dinmont."\* Selkirkshire has been rendered familiar to us by "The Ettrick Shepherd," as regards some aspects of its pastoral life. We see his flock, as he was driving them home, suddenly frightened, scampering over the hills, following by his dog "Sirrah." A dark night is passed in fruitless search, Hogg and his man wandering over the steeps and dells from midnight till the rising sun. At length, at the bottom of a deep ravine, the faithful colley and his charge are found, not a lamb missing. This is the life which knows little change from one century to another; but time yet brings changes. Hogg laments that the black-faced "ewie wi' the crooked horn" had been banished from her native hills. Soberer records inform us, that the sheep which once covered the Ettrick wastes produced a crop of wool of the coarsest kind, little adapted for manufacture.† The introduction of the Cheviot breed was one of the marks of progress. The management of sheep flocks in Eskdalemuir, the mountain region of Dumfriesshire, attests the innovations of a century. Smollett observes of the sheep which he saw upon the hills, that "their fleeces are much damaged by the tar with which they are smeared, to preserve them from the rot in winter, during which they run wild night and day, and thousands are lost under huge wreaths of snow."‡ It is a pity the farmers cannot contrive some means to shelter this useful animal from the inclemencies of a rigorous climate.‡ When snow storms of any long continuance came, it was the practice of the farmers of Eskdalemuir to fly with their sheep to Annandale. It was the same in the neighbouring mountain district, when every part of Nithsdale, Annandale, and the lower part of Eskdale, were filled with them. The pastures of the valleys to which the sheep fled are now subdivided and inclosed. Better provision is made upon the hills for food and for shelter, and the sheep continue around their own farms.§

The agriculture of Ayrshire, at the accession of George III.,

\* "Guy Mannering."

† "New Statistical Account," Selkirkshire, p. 76.

‡ "Humphrey Clinker."

§ "New Statistical Account," vol. iv. Dumfriesshire, p. 410.

was in a rude condition; the arable farms very small, the tenants without capital, the tenure encumbered with services to the landlord. In the parish of Mauchline was the farm of Mosgiel, upon which Burns spent nine years of a life of rural industry. In the neighbouring parish of Tarbolton his father dwelt, on the farm of Lochlee. "The Cotter's Saturday Night" is descriptive of the simple household of the humble cultivator. The Cotter, says Gilbert Burns, was "an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion, and exhortations. He lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue, and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses." The supper that "crowns their simple board" is

"The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food,"

The mother, "wi' her needle and her sheers,"

"Cars auld claes look amaisht as weel's the new."

Burns prays that Scotia's "hardy sons of rustic toil" may long be preserved "from luxury's contagion." Smollett describes the peasantry as "on a poor footing all over the kingdom;" and there was then no great distinction between the occupier of a small farm and his "elder bairns, at service out among the farmers roun'." But Smollett says of this peasantry, "they look better, and are better clothed, than those of the same rank in Burgundy, and many other places of France and Italy; nay, I will venture to say they are better fed, notwithstanding the boasted wine of these foreign countries." They seldom or never taste flesh meat, he adds, nor any kind of strong liquor, except twopenny, at times of uncommon festivity. He describes the breakfast of oat-meal, or peas-meal, eaten with milk; the pottage for dinner composed of kale, leeks and barley; the supper of sowens or flummery of oat-meal. "Some of them have potatoes; and you find parsnips in every peasant's garden. They are clothed with a coarse kind of russet of their own making, which is both decent and warm. They dwell in poor huts, built of loose stones and turf, without any mortar, having a fireplace or hearth in the middle, generally made of an old mill-stone, and a hole at top to let out the smoke. These people, however, are content, and wonderfully sagacious. All of them read the Bible." Out of this poor but acute stock came the poet

"who walked in glory and in joy,  
Following his plough along the mountain-side."

To judge from his own verse, he must have been as energetic in his labour as "his auld mare, Maggie":

"Aft thee and I, in aught hours gaun,  
In guid March weather,  
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',  
For days thegither."

Sax rood! This is one-half more than was ploughed by the Suffolk "punches." We fear that the unprofitable land of Mosgiel had merely surface ploughing with the rude implement of poor Burns's time, as different from the Suffolk plough as the soil was different upon which the punches worked. The fields about Mauchline "are of a light sandy, or mixed kind."\*

The changes of Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire during eighty years are more remarkable in manufactures than in agriculture. Great have been the alterations in the industry of towns such as Glasgow and Paisley. But here, as throughout all Scotland, morasses have been drained, lochs have been made to bear corn, the domain of unproductive nature has been compelled to supply the necessities of man. There is a charming paper by John Wilson, entitled "Our Parish," in which the eloquent writer exhibits, in no placid mood, the ruthless invader of poetical wastes. A great part of our Parish, the Moor, was "ever so many miles long, and ever so many miles broad, and nobody thought of guessing how many miles round. But some twenty years ago it was absolutely measured to a rood by a land-louper of a land-surveyor,—distributed, drained, inclosed, utterly ruined for ever. No, not for ever. Nature laughs to scorn Acts of Parliament, and we predict that in a quarter of a century she will resume her management of that moor. We rejoice to hear that she is already beginning to take lots of it into her own hands. Wheat has no business there, and should keep to the carses." The prophecy has no doubt failed. The dogma upon which it is built is 'obsolete—"Agriculture, like education, has its bounds."†

The North Western parts of Scotland are noticed by Smollett as "by no means fertile in corn. The ground is naturally barren and moorish. The peasants are poorly lodged, meagre in their looks, mean in their apparel, and remarkably dirty." The soil in the district around Stirling is described by him as "poorly cultivated, and almost altogether uninclosed." But on the margin of the

\* "New Statistical Account."

† "Recreations of Christopher North," vol. ii. p. 233.

Clyde, from Glasgow to Dunbarton, "groves and meadows and corn fields interspersed," delight his eye. The banks of Loch Lomond "display a sweet variety of woodland, corn field, and pasture." His own "Leven Water" was "pastoral and delightful" then, as it still remains. He goes to Inverary. In Argyleshire he sees "hardly any signs of cultivation, or even of population;" but "a margin of plain ground, spread along the sea-side, is well inhabited, and improved by the arts of husbandry." Of this vast Highland district it is now computed that more than three hundred thousand acres are cultivated. But eighty years ago, to speak of the cultivation of the Highlands would be to describe a region in which agriculture was despised; where the mountaineers chiefly confided in the spontaneous bounty of nature, which gave them fish in the streams, and fowl in the heather, and rare patches of pasture for a few black cattle. Smollett says that "the granaries of Scotland are the banks of the Tweed, the counties of East and Mid Lothian, the Carse of Gowrie, and some tracts in Aberdeenshire and Moray." The Carse of Gowrie maintains its ancient reputation as "the garden of Scotland." But other parts of Perthshire have witnessed great changes. The graziers of the lowland districts no longer quit their little farms to drive their cattle to shealings on the hills to graze during the summer, the men fishing and hunting whilst the women tend the cows and spin.\* The Highlanders no longer come down to the cattle markets at Crieff, and take unceremonious possession of the fire-sides and beds of the country people.† The tenantry of certain districts are no longer compelled, as one of the modes of feudal slavery, to grind their corn at the lord's mill, and shoe their horses at the lord's forge. The whole system of cultivation in parts of Perthshire may be taken as a fair sample of the mode in which the cultivation of a large portion of Scotland was proceeding long after the middle of the last century. The farms lay in what was termed "runrig," consisting of "infield," upon which all the manure was laid, and "outfield," occasionally cropped, and then consigned to common pasture, if any feed could be got off it. There was no wheat, or artificial grass, or potatoes, or winter turnips. There were no separate farms; the cultivators lived in hamlets, upon the ancient principle of mutual protection. Tully Veolan exhibits a lively picture of such a hamlet:—the garden where the gigantic kale was encircled by groves of nettles; the common field where the joint labour of the villagers cultivated alternate ridges and patches of rye, oats, barley, and peas; the miserable wigwam behind some

\* "New Statistical Account," vol. x. Perth, p. 556. † *Ibid.*, p. 270.

favoured cottage, where the wealthy might perhaps shelter a starved cow or sorely-galled horse: the stack of turf on one side the door, and the family dunghill on the other.\* In such a village, hand-labour did more than the plough; but when that cumbrous instrument was used, it barely scratched the soil, without turning it over. Sledges were employed instead of carts. It is unnecessary to point out the contrast of a period half a century later; especially in the more remote districts of the North of Scotland, in which the country has been made accessible by roads, water communication, and railways, and its cultivation has no longer to struggle with other impediments than those of soil and climate. The climate itself has been ameliorated by judicious planting. Johnson was abused for dwelling on the bareness of the country, Fife in particular, through which he passed in his "Journey." Boswell, in defending him, says, "let any traveller observe how many trees, which deserve the name, he can see from Berwick to Aberdeen."† There is now scarcely a parish in Fifeshire, described in the "New Statistical Account," in which there is not mention of extensive plantations which, "instead of presenting to the eye a naked and barren landscape, enliven with verdure our higher grounds."‡ At Inverary there are noble trees, planted in 1746 by Archibald, duke of Argyle; the plantations were extended in 1771; but within the last quarter of a century plantation has gone on at the rate of half a million of oak and fir trees in five years.† In an interesting paper upon Moray it is truly said, with reference to cultivation, "The change which a single century has wrought in Northern Scotland can hardly be exaggerated."‡

The remarkable powers of observation possessed by Arthur Young are signally displayed in his "Tour in Ireland," made in the years 1776 to 1779. In 1779 lord North saw the necessity of yielding to the national spirit which Grattan had evoked, and he carried three Bills for the relief of the commerce of Ireland. The tillage and grazing of that country had been long impeded by prohibitory laws, which prevented the importation of black cattle to England, and which discountenanced the woollen manufacture, and consequently discouraged the breeding of sheep. The monopolizing spirit of jobbery went so far in 1759, that a Bill of the Irish Parliament for restricting the importation into Ireland of damaged flour was thrown out in England, at the instigation of a miller of Chichester. The natural fertility of Ireland, and her consequent

\* "Waverley." † "New Statistical Account," vol. vii. Argyleshire, p. 14.

‡ "Westminster Review," vol. xiii. p. 91. § *Ante*, vol. vi. p. 273.

advantages in carrying her agriculture to perfection, are shown by Arthur Young to be very great—a fertility superior to that of England, taking acre for acre. But the capital and skill that had made England what it was, even eighty years ago, were wanting in Ireland. Amongst the greatest evils were the “middlemen.” “The very idea,” says Young, “as well as the practice, of permitting a tenant to relet at a profit rent, seems confined to the distant and unimproved parts of every empire.”\* It had entirely gone out in the highly cultivated counties of England; in Scotland it had continued to be very common. The class of Irish middlemen has been familiarized to us by the admirable pictures of Maria Edgeworth. Young describes them as screwing up the rent to the uttermost farthing, and relentless in the collection of it—the hardest drinkers in Ireland—masters of packs of wretched hounds, with which they wasted their time and their money. But whether the tenantry of Ireland were miserable cottars, or “the largest graziers and cow-keepers in the world,” all were “the most errant slovens.” In the arable counties the capital employed upon a given amount of land would not be a third of that of an English farmer; hence “their manuring is trivial, their tackle and implements wretched, their teams weak, their profits small.” Wonderful as it may appear, the “barbarous custom” denounced by the statute of the 10th and 11th of Charles II., of ploughing, harrowing, drawing, and working with horses, by the tail, was not exploded at Castlebar and other places. In the mountainous tracts Arthur Young saw instances of greater industry than in any other part of Ireland; for the little occupiers, who could obtain leases of a mountain side, made exertions in improvement. The cottar system of labour resembled what had then recently prevailed in Scotland, and which was probably the same all over Europe before arts and commerce changed the face of it. “The recompense for labour is the means of living. In England these are dispensed in money, but in Ireland in land or commodities.” The shrewd agricultural observer weighs the comparative advantages for the poor family, of payment in land, to produce potatoes and milk, or of a money payment. He seems to decide for the plentiful supply of food, although the mud hovel of one room may blind the family with its smoke, and the clothing be so ragged that a stranger is impressed with the idea of universal poverty. “The sparingness with which our English labourer eats his bread and cheese is well known. Mark the Irishman’s potatoe-bowl placed on the floor, the whole family on their hams around it, devouring a quantity almost incredible; the beggar

\* Young—“Tour in Ireland,” vol. ii. p. 329.

seating himself to it with a hearty welcome, the pig taking his share as readily as the wife, the cocks, hens, turkeys, geese, the cur, the cat,—and all partaking of the same dish.”\* We now know what was the terrible end of this rude abundance of one species of food, produced upon small holdings, of which, in 1847, 500,000 acres maintained 300,000 families; whilst in England one labourer was employed to about fifteen acres of arable land. The abuse of the right of property in land, which went on for more than half a century, in allowing the landlords to consume the whole produce of the soil *minus* the potatoes,† resulted in that visitation which was regarded by the Society of Friends in Ireland as “a means permitted by an all-wise Providence to exhibit more strikingly the unsound state of our social condition.” Arthur Young did not anticipate the frightful climax of the almost exclusive potato cultivation. He saw a population under three millions. He could not anticipate what would be the result, when that population was more than doubled, without an adequate improvement in the cultivation of the land, and a more equal distribution of its produce amongst the great body of the miserable cultivators.

\* “Tour in Ireland,” vol. ii. p. 118.

† John Mill—“Political Economy,” vol. ii.