

WEEPING IN THE ISLES.



"Màthair a' caoinnadh a' clonme"  
A mother weeping for her children.

EDINBURGH:  
ALEXANDER C. MOODIE, 17 SOUTH BRIDGE.

WEEPING IN THE ISLES,

OR THE

DEATH OF THREE OF THE GIRLS WHO WERE TAKEN

FROM THE ISLE OF SKYE TO ENGLAND IN MAY, 1852;

AND A

CONSOLING ADDRESS TO BEREAVED PARENTS,

WITH

A STATEMENT OF REMARKABLE FACTS RESPECTING

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SKYE GIRLS TO ENGLAND,

AND THEIR RETURN HOME;

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED

REMARKS ON THE INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER OF THE

HIGHLAND PEOPLE.

BY THE REV. JOHN FORBES,

MINISTER OF SLEAT, ISLE OF SKYE.

"Me have ye bereaved of my children."—GEN. xlii. 36.

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## WEEPING IN THE ISLES, &c.

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The Parents of the Deceased Girls — How all the Parents were induced to send their Daughters from Home — Their intense anxiety and distress after hearing of the unhappiness of their Children in England — The Death of the two good Sisters, Marian and Catherine Robertson, and of Mary Nicolson — The exertions made by the Parents and others to take home the surviving Girls — Reflections on the Uncertainty and Shortness of Life.

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MARIAN ROBERTSON, who died at Marple in October last, was eighteen years of age. Both her parents are still living. Her father, Ewen Robertson, is a small tenant, paying about £4 of rent for a lot of land in the district of Tarskveg, on the west side of the parish of Sleat, in the Island of Skye, and on the margin of *Loch-Eisort*, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. Beyond this loch lie the *Culen Hills*, whose towering summits rise with majestic sublimity towards the clouds, and terminate in the azure expanse above. Such is their Alpine grandeur, that it thrills the mind of the contemplative tourist with that pleasing awe which the sublime architecture of nature is apt to produce. In the same direction are two other celebrated places, the *Spar Cave* and *Coir-Visg*, which attract crowds of visitors from different parts of the world in the summer season.

Ewen Robertson had two sons and six daughters, of whom one son and two daughters, Marian and Catherine, have been removed to the world of spirits. They are honest, decent, and industrious people, and of a pious disposition. The father, a weaver to trade, for many years, while employment failed him at home, used to repair to the south country for work, and laboured hard at such work as he was able to get, for the support of his young family.

He has been an affectionate and dutiful parent, always endeavouring, in the midst of great difficulties, to train up his children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Like many other Highland people in sober circumstances, he values learning very highly, and has given a fair education to his children. He has done every thing for the benefit of his family that was possible for a man in his situation to do. He is, besides, a man "of good report" among his neighbours, and descended from a race of Sleaf people, who have always supported an unblemished character.

It was in the beginning of last summer, that Ewen and his quiet industrious wife were prevailed upon, by encouraging promises, to send two of their dear children, Marian and Catherine, to England. They believed that this was a good opening for their daughters, and anticipated that they would derive much benefit from the course of training which had been promised by the persons to whom the girls were intrusted. These parents, as well as the parents of the other Skye girls who had been sent to Marple, thought themselves very fortunate at first in getting such an opening for their children; they regarded it as a great favour, and were thankful for it. The expressed promise of getting their children sent back to them at any time, removed at once any doubt or misgiving which may have risen in their minds respecting the treatment which their inexperienced children might receive in a distant country. They rightly said, "As this offer is made, it may be a gracious opening for our children in the good providence of God; we shall therefore let them go; and should we find at any time that they are not happy at Marple, all that we have to do, is to call them home immediately." It cannot be supposed that any good parents, and especially parents so affectionate and so dutiful to their offspring as the Highlanders generally are known to be, would consent to part with their young children upon any other condition, than that of being assured that they would be restored to them as soon as both parents and child wished it.

In the beginning of November last, the most melancholy of all intelligence reached the anxious ears of Ewen Robertson and his family. Their dear Marian is dead. The painful task of communicating this saddening event was left to her mourning sister, who was at the time in very bad health, pining away with grief. None of their employers at Marple ever condescended, so far as we know, to put a pen to paper to inform the solicitous parents of Marian that she was sick, or that she died, no more than if she had been a bought slave torn away from the embraces of her weeping parents on the coast of Africa. The surviving sister, in the midst of her unutterable distress, contrived to write to her distant parents that Marian is no more. The poor girl, it is said, was assisted in discharging this painful duty by one of the other girls employed in the factory. From the sister's letter we quote the following short and touching sentences—"I am not well," she says; "but I hope and trust in God I soon shall be better. Marian is dead, I am sorry to tell you; but I hope she is better off than any one in this world. I should like to see you very much, dear father. Marian died October the 21st." Speaking of the other Skye girls, she says, "they are all very sorry about Marian." After this she expresses her wish to come home. "Please, dear father," says the sorrowful child, "to send me some money to take myself back." The contents of her letter, and the following hopeful stanza with which she concludes it, show that she was a child of heavenly hope, and mindful, even in her trying hour, of administering the balm of consolation to her own soul, and of tendering the same to her afflicted parents—

"When I look up to yonder sky,  
So bright, so blue, so very high,  
I think of One I cannot see,  
But One who sees and cares for me."

Thus the melancholy news abruptly fell from an artless pen upon the ears of the parents, already spirit-worn and overwhelmed with anxiety about the welfare of their

children. What must have been the feelings of a pious faithful father, of a fond tender-hearted mother, and of the other sympathizing friends, after hearing this truth so unexpectedly and so suddenly told, without any soothing counsellor to prepare the mind to hear it. Were these distressing tidings calculated to inspire the parents of the Skye girls with confidence either in their exporters or in their employers, who, dreadful to be told, had never troubled themselves to notify to the bereaved parents a fact so very sad—who had not written one condoling word to soften a bereavement so severe—who had not even sent a sympathetic sentiment through any other channel? The other child was sick. Doubts, already started in the minds of the parents for the safety of their children, now arose to agony: bereaved, distressed, and grieved, they mourn over their irreparable loss. A heartrending cry runs through the humble dwelling of Ewen Robertson. Father, mother, and children, with tears rolling down their cheeks, raise the piercing cry of lamentation, "Our dear Marian is dead! We shall see her no more!" "Would to God," cries the sorrowful mother, "that I was near my darling child, to support her aching head on her dying bed, and to close her eyes in death. Oh me! what would I not give for one sight of my darling child before the hour of her death!" "My dear wife, answers the pious father, "it is the will of God; let us all trust in Him; the Lord gave us this child, and He had a right to take her to Himself when he pleased. It is our duty as Christians to be resigned, to pray for grace to enable us to bear this sore stroke." "Oh, my sweet Marian," says the mother, "you have left me for ever! *A bhrònag ghaolach, cha-n fhaic mise gu-bràth thu!*—*O beloved one, I shall never see thee!* Oh that I was near you at your dying hour! Was there any one at your bedside to direct your soul to the Saviour? Was there any one there to administer the balm of peace and consolation to your parting spirit? Was there any one there to remind you, in the beloved language of your heart,

that Jesus died to save sinners? Oh, was my beloved child directed to offer her soul to Christ in the dedicating language of Stephen, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'"

"Was there no tear, no pitying sigh;  
No prayer to lift her thoughts on high?"

"Solemn thoughts," replied the father; "enough to keep us in mind that we must all leave this world. Let us all make good use of the day of grace, that we may all be ready to depart when He calls us. Come, let us keep close to the Friend of sinners, that we may all be ready to depart in hope, even to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. Let us all kneel down at His feet, crying, Lord, help us, and heal this wound. He has helped us up to this hour, and has promised that He will never leave nor forsake any one that trusts in Him. We should now draw consolation from His gracious promise, and hope to meet our dear Marian in that holy place where there is neither sorrow nor sighing."

"But, father, what is to be done to get home my sister Catherine?" says the only son. "She is very sick, and I am afraid she is broken-hearted; for any thing we know she may be dead to-day!"

Here a melancholy silence pervaded the family, all weeping, and drying up the tears which were gushing from their eyes during the previous conversation. Then the affectionate mother broke the silence, and said—

"Oh, Sandie, there is no time to be lost. You must go to England, and take home Catherine. You will go by the steam-boat, as you have been often in the south at work already, you can easily find out the way, I hope; and you can speak English."

"The parents of the other girls wish to get their children home also," said Sandie; "and it will be better if they come all at the same time."

"But they may not be ready to send for them immediately," said the mother. "I hear they have not money to

pay their passage home, and it may take some time before they can collect as much. The collection of rents was only a few days since, and people gave all their money to the factor."

"Should we sell the cow to pay the passage," said the father, "you must go by the steam-boat on Tuesday next. Marian is not, and if we lose Catherine, this will take down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. We shall do our best to get as much money as will pay the passage; but I hope the gentlemen at Marple will give some help to pay the steam-boat." Here comes Widow M'Kinnon, the mother of one of the other Skye girls who were sent to Marple.

"Alas! alas!" says the widow, "this is a sad blow to you, Ewen. I never thought this would be the end of it. I hear you are going to bring Catherine home, Sandie. When are you to be away?"

"My father and mother think I must go on Tuesday by the steam-boat."

"You must take my child home along with you; and poor Miles intends to send money by you to take home his daughter at the same time. I would rather travel the world with my child upon my back, and provide for her as God may enable me, than leave her any longer in such a place. This is very trying on us all. Lord help us!" Here the poor widow burst into tears.

Pursuant to these resolutions, arrangements were speedily made for despatching honest Sandie: a *vade mecum* of home-made bread was provided for him; his articles of clothing were neatly prepared for the journey; and with a commission from his parents, and from the parents of other two girls, to take them home, he started for Marple, taking a certificate from the parish minister, and another letter to strengthen his hands from the friend of the Highlanders, the Rev. Dr. M'Leod of Glasgow. Alexander Robertson at length arrives at Marple, demands his sorrowing sister and the two other girls whom he was authorized to bring home; and after listening to loud complaints from the

masters of these young creatures for asking them back, they were at last permitted to depart with Sandie.

Let us now see how these poor and broken-hearted females were sent home by the wealthy English manufacturers. Truly humanity would fain draw a veil over this part of our tale. Stripped of their best clothes, the poor creatures were sent away in old tattered frocks and clumsy old shoes, without a bawbee to pay their way, in an inclement season of the year, to the distant Isle of Skye—a distance of several hundred miles on a stormy sea. Thus were three young females sent out from an English factory, where they had wrought extremely hard; and according to their own declaration, suffered repeatedly from blows for several months before. Is this the fruit of the liberal and fascinating promises made to the honest and unsuspecting parents, when they were prevailed upon to part with those so dear to them—promises which, being believed by the people, made them not only willing to send their children, but grateful for the offer? Was it because these promises were not written, that the exporters of the Skye girls feel them to be in no wise binding? We can scarcely allow ourselves to believe that any English gentleman would willingly consent to be a party in so nefarious a transaction. Surely the feelings of humanity are not come to so low an ebb among Englishmen, as to pass over this breach of promise in contemptuous silence? Are the manufacturers at Marple utterly void of that charity which "suffereth long, and is kind?" Is it because the sufferers are poor, that they scorned for so long to make a single reply to the repeated applications of the parents, and finally returned the poor girls, who had for months been working ten hours a day for them, without one penny to help to support their bodies, or pay their passage to the north? Perhaps the manufacturers at Marple, like others unacquainted with the honourable spirit of our beloved countrymen, thought that the Highland people are so barbarous a race, or sunk so deep in the miseries of this life, that any kind of treatment

is good enough for themselves and their children. We know that unbecoming and undeserved epithets of reproach are sometimes applied to the industrious natives of our mountain land by some transitory and Quixotic visitors from the south, who know not the real character of the Highlanders. If some of our dear countrymen have in recent times been destined to endure severe privations under the dealings of Providence — if they have been reduced to a state of destitution by circumstances over which they had no control — and we grieve to say, that many of them have been “hard sufferers” — yet we rejoice to declare, that even in the midst of their severest privations, they have uniformly maintained the untarnished character of a loyal, peaceable, and industrious people. They love their God, their sovereign, and their country; they are grateful to their benefactors; and fond of that precious liberty which forbids every man to detain his fellow creature as a bond-slave.

The conduct of the parents of the Skye girls merits the highest commendation. They have shown that they were actuated by a binding principle. They felt the sacred obligations of parents moving them to the performance of parental duty. The incessant anxiety which they felt for their unhappy children, and the persevering exertions which they made to recover them, will not leave a shadow of doubt upon the mind of any right-thinking man, that the innocent people were directed by a conscientious sense of duty to their children; and their fidelity in this view of the case, even should they have been too hasty or mistaken in other respects, reflects the highest honour and credit not only upon the parents themselves, but upon the country to which they belong. It cannot be justly said, that these children had sent reports of their unhappy condition at Marple, to which their parents should have paid no attention. They were bound, by the obligations of parental affection and of duty, to listen to the complaints of their children. They were bound to afford them the reasonable relief which they asked so urgently. Even a refractory

schoolboy, who may have been sent to a boarding school against his will, moves the hearts of his parents to remove him, after he has complained to them of harsh treatment at the hands of his master. Look at the state of Jacob himself, enlightened, encouraged, and supported as he was by an uncommon measure of the Divine favour. See how uneasy, how troubled and distracted he became for his absent children; so much so, that he gave up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin as in great danger. He distrusts even his eldest son Reuben, when he tried to convince him that his son was safe; but this did not satisfy the sorrowful patriarch. He was still afraid for his beloved children; intense anxiety was pressing heavily upon his affectionate heart — a heart which could no longer keep its sorrow silent under so severe a pressure. “Me,” exclaims the pious Jacob, “have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me” (Gen. xlii. 36). But all these things were eventually for him; for God was at that very time working for his good. At the time Jacob uttered these expressions of sorrow for his children, he was the object of God’s peculiar regard. Did God reprove the pious patriarch for feeling so keenly for his children? Was the Most High displeased with this good man for breaking out into such a strain of sorrowful despair, for those beloved ones so dear to his affectionate heart? Not at all. The case of Jacob is recorded by Divine wisdom, to be a eulogium upon his excellent character as a parent, and a monument of parental affection — to instruct mankind, that the overwhelming anxiety so often felt and expressed by loving parents for their children, especially when they are absent, is not only natural in itself, but deserving the tenderest sympathy and approbation of all men. The solicitous affection of parents for their children forms the principal bond and cement of society, and ought in all cases, even in its most exuberant and incorrigible forms, to be kindly, patiently, and gently treated. Let us therefore hear no more said

against the parents of the Skye girls for loving their dear children so very strongly. Let no one be so unnatural, so unjust, so unkind and cold-hearted, as to upbraid or calumniate, or accuse these Jacobs and these Rachels, because their loving hearts yearned upon their children. Let no man accuse any of these innocent and dutiful people because they did what every good parent would do in such a case. They heard repeatedly that their children were miserable—that they cried—that they wept—that they were terrified—and that one of them died. After such distressing tidings had reached their watching ears, was it folly or ignorance to call them home? Not at all.

Imagine what must have been the feelings of these young terror-smitten females, when they saw their dear companion Marian stretched on the bed of languishing and sickness, and that she died. They declare that she took to her bed after a sore beating which she got, and never rose again. These were appalling sights to the poor creatures. They trembled for their lives; they became paralyzed with the fear of death. As often as they were able, they consulted how they might escape from their confinement, to them as severe as Egyptian bondage. They met together in private corners, in the open air, or by the side of a dike, and mourned over the loss of their dear departed Marian. Like the daughters of Judah of old among the willows of Babylon, they wept and cried, and there was none to comfort them—there was none to soothe or cheer up their drooping hearts. To come home it was impossible; they had no money to pay their way; they were strangers in the land; they did not know the east from the west, or the north from the south. Still, the longing to be emancipated was daily increasing, daily growing more intense. "Home, sweet home," they cried together. They spoke together in the familiar and expressive language of their native hills. It was well known at Marple that the Skye girls were not happy there. Their overseers knew that they wished to leave: and how did

these taskmasters treat them? Did they try, by gentle and winning measures, to act like parents to the young and timid strangers? When they saw them, like young birds unaccustomed to the confining cage, dashing their heads against the wires to get out, and their hearts melting away with grief, what did they do to win their affections, and reconcile them to their tasks? One day, when the young girls were together, and weeping, one of their taskmasters comes suddenly upon them, and tells them that they must not think of getting home; that is impossible, says this person; if you attempt it, you "will get your heads cut off." (The girls declare this. (See Declaration III.) Can any thing be more barbarous, more terrific, than this cruel threatening, uttered against young, tender-hearted and helpless females, without a native or kind friend to whom they could go for advice? When Sandie Robertson was in the act of departing with the three girls whom he was commissioned to remove in November (one of whom, Mary McKinnon, remained in Greenock, to accompany her widowed father, an emigrant from Skye, to Australia), the cry raised by the six who remained in the factory was heartrending. Poor things! They cried, "Oh, Sandie, will you leave us here? We will all be dead: they will kill us now." These six girls have since been taken home by their friends.

Marian Robertson was a promising young girl, beloved by all who knew her. All her neighbours at Tarskveg were very fond of her; and old and young speak of her as a good girl. She had the benefit of being brought up under the teaching and example of Christian parents, by whom she was early directed to "remember her Creator." She had also the benefit of being taught to read the Word of Eternal Life in her native language. When, in the month of February, 1852, we went to examine the Society School at Tarskveg, there we found Marian at the head of the Bible class. She could read English and Gaelic fluently, and translate into the Gaelic language the passages which she read in English. She being the best scholar in

the class, carried home the first prize awarded for proficiency. We were well pleased with the answers which she returned to the questions put to the class, on the love of God to the children of men, as it is exhibited in the scheme of salvation brought to light by the Gospel. Both she and her sister are highly commended by their teacher. He has frequently told us that they were very diligent, attentive, and teachable pupils, and distinguished for good behaviour. He has furnished us with the following certification of their progress in school—“*Tarskveg School, 5th February, 1853, I certify, that Marian Robertson and her sister Catherine, attended my school regularly, and could read English and Gaelic fluently, as well as write a fair hand (Mary M'Kinnon was also one of my pupils, and could read), before they went to England, in May, 1852.*”—(Signed) “MURDOCH M'PHERSON.”

We have told that Marian died at Marple, under circumstances which have grieved her affectionate parents in an immense degree. The death of a child is a grieving stroke under any circumstances; but when the bereaved parent has any reason to reflect upon circumstances which may have tended to shorten the life of his child, the grief felt in such a case is tremendous. It is now our painful task to record the death of Marian's sister, Catherine. Poor Catherine expired in her father's house on the 19th of February last. She was, as we stated before, taken home from Marple by her kind brother. She came not as she went away, healthy, fresh, and strong. She came exhausted and broken-hearted, with her third finger shattered and shrivelled up. We visited the lovely girl in her father's house, on the 27th of January. There she was, worn down to a mere skeleton, lying on a small couch at the fireside. She had not strength sufficient to raise her aching head. Her mother lifted her up, and supported her while we were addressing a few words of spiritual consolation to her soul. She complained of severe pain in her side. We were at the time accompanied by a few

respectable parishioners, who, after concluding a diet of week-day preaching in the schoolhouse of Tarskveg, went with us to “the house of mourning.” The careworn mother told us, in a feeble tone of voice, that the fire had not been extinguished in the house since poor Catherine returned from England. We saw at once that the girl was sinking fast, and that she had but a very short lease of this life. She took death to herself, and said, before we visited her, that she did not expect to live long. Her thoughts were at this time raised above the fleeting objects of sense, and directed to the Saviour, in whose “presence there is fulness of joy,” and at whose “right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

The removal of these two children so suddenly into the world of spirits is a great trial to their mourning parents. The father and mother, and other relatives of these two departed girls, have indeed got a large cup of the bitter waters of this life to drink. They have been a people of sorrow. They have been made acquainted with grief. They have lost two dear daughters. Their sad bereavement is now doubled. An overwhelming flood of grief has day after day deluged their hearts. They have sent two promising daughters to the land of forgetfulness, and are now left to mourn over their irreparable loss.

But our sorrowful and doleful tale is not yet ended. We have to record the death of another of the Skye girls who were taken to Marple in May last. Mary Nicolson, the daughter of Angus Nicolson, a tenant paying about £4 of rent at Drimfern, in the parish of Sleat, died in her father's house on the 11th of February last, a few weeks after her return home from the factory at Marple. Her parents are honest, decent, and industrious people. They have five children. Angus Nicolson is one of those industrious Skyemen who have frequently repaired to the south country in quest of employment. For several years he travelled far from his native home, and laboured diligently in a distant country, to make provision, by his honest industry, for the support

of his family. He is now mourning over the loss of a dear daughter, who had been induced to leave her father's roof, with the hope of bettering her condition. The parents of Mary Nicolson shared in the same painful anxiety and distress which had been for several months harrowing the feelings of the other parents and friends of the Skye girls. Poor Mary herself declared, fifteen days before she died, that she was very unhappy at Marple. She was therefore removed from that place; but it was to die before the eyes of her affectionate parents.

Three of the eleven blooming maidens who were taken from our country in May last are now in their graves. What a melancholy reflection! When we contemplate the circumstances under which these innocent females were snatched away—circumstances so unexpected, so grieving and so disappointing, we must at once say, that nothing could have been more torturing to the tender feelings of their parents, than the sudden bereavement which they are destined to endure. Various considerations contribute their weight to deepen the wound which this bereavement has inflicted upon the tender heart; but blessed be God, who hath assured us, that the ointment of Divine grace will heal all the wounds which the sorrows of this transitory life can inflict upon the heart that takes refuge under the blood of Jesus.

We have now given a concise narrative of the adventure of the Skye girls. It was about this time last year, in the beginning of May, that their buoyant hearts were lifted up with big hopes of reaping lasting benefits from leaving the abodes of their affectionate parents. With their hearts glowing with the vital ardour of youth, they promised themselves much pleasure, happiness, and profit, from the situation to which they were removed. Little did they then expect, that three of their number were to be removed to another state of existence in so short a time. Who could then tell that these three young healthy girls were to be launched upon the boundless ocean of eternity before

the lapse of ten months after their hopeful departure from their native homes? Death comes like a thief at midnight, and robs us of the living. The sprightly maid lives to-day; to-morrow she dies. The once blooming face is now painted with ghastly paleness—the once bright and sparkling eyes are now shut, fixed, and motionless—the vivacious body, once clothed with the charms of life, is now invested with the cold, earthy garb of death—every personal grace and beauty is now buried in the dust.

“Tha nise gach àgh 'bha 'cosnadh dhuit gràidh,  
Air tionndadh gu gràin gach neach  
Marbhaig air an uaigh a chreach thu de'n bhuaidh  
'Bha ceangail' ri snuadh do dhreach.”

What is our life? “It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.” And we know not what a day may bring forth. The brevity and uncertainty of human life are daily reiterated in our ears. Let old and young take warning, and prepare for that life which never ends. The present life is fast gliding away. The strongest, the most healthy among us, may die to-morrow. The young, the vigorous, and the lively man and woman, may be mouldering in the dust of the silent tomb before the end of this year. How solemn, how important, how instructive is the lesson which the case of these three young girls teach us! The blossoming flower of the field spreads out its shining foliage under the invigorating rays of the summer sun, but is rapidly withered and obliterated under the cold blasts of winter; so these blooming maidens have vanished from our view. The chilling blast of death has cut them down in the flower of their age. Their innocent faces smile no longer upon the kindly look or encouraging accent of a friend. They lie low in the “narrow house,” tenanted the dark and dreary mansion of the silent tomb, there waiting the universal sound of the resurrection-trumpet, which will suddenly awaken them from the sleep of death. O, let both “young men and

maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is excellent!" Come ye all to Jesus, and dedicate yourselves by lively faith to that blessed One, who is able, and willing, and rejoicing to save your precious souls from the misery of sin. O, come quickly to the Saviour of believing men, and cast yourselves upon his infinite love and mercy, and you shall have a happy life, a happy death, and a glorious resurrection!

We have heard that it has been hinted, if not openly declared, by one or two individuals concerned in the case of the Island girls, that Ewen Robertson's daughters have died of consumption, and that this disease has been hereditary in their family. We are credibly informed, that none of the girls has died of such a disease. Two of the elders of the parish of Sleat, worthy men, who have resided in the parish from their infancy, and who have been intimately acquainted with the parents and relatives of the deceased girls, have told us, that there is not the slightest ground for saying, that they inherited any consumptive disease, either from their father or mother's side.



A CONSOLING ADDRESS

TO

BEREAVED PARENTS.

BEREAVED parent! you are now cast into the regions of sorrow, and you mourn over the loss of your dear child. Your heart is stung with grief, and your eyes are flooded with tears. You cry out from the depth of your affliction, and say, "O my dear child! What would I not give to have you now living by my side?" Afflicted parent! think not that it is to increase your sorrow that we thus return the echoes of your bleeding heart. Not at all. Our object is to convince you that your sorrow is shared in by others; for who that knows your case does not feel for you? Refuse not therefore to be comforted. You have the warm sympathy and tender condolence of all your friends and neighbours, and the distant stranger who hears of your loss sympathizes with you. If the warm expressions of fellow-feeling do not abate your sorrow, your troubled heart should be calmed and refreshed, while the soothing words of unaffected kindness fall copiously upon your ears. Let us remind you of the loveliness, the hopeful smiles, the attachment, and other excellencies of that dear son or daughter whose charming eyes are now closed in death, and whose body is stretched in the cavern of the silent tomb. But where is the soul? Where, but in heaven, if it was dedicated by faith to Jesus. O what a blessed source of consolation, to believe that the soul of that departed dear child is at this moment standing and rejoicing before the throne of God in heaven, while you are mourning

here, and the tide of your sorrow flowing! The storm of this affliction heaves up your painful heart, and you are tossed to and fro upon the flood. Every earthly object has now lost its charm to you. There is no peace, no pleasure, no comfort, no cheering power, in any thing; even your surviving children and other friends have now no place within your heart. The whole tide of your affections incessantly flow after that beloved child, who has been snatched from your warm embrace by the cold, unsparing hand of death. O cruel, merciless tyrant! How many a parent he has made childless! How many a child he has made fatherless and motherless! Prepare ye to meet him, that you may obtain the victory over him. Human nature shrinks from death; but Christian nature, even in the depth of its agonies, can exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ." Behold the victory of the true Christian. It is a victory that annihilates death. "Be still, and know that I am God."

2. But, bereaved parent, your thoughts are still full of your departed child. His lovely countenance—his pleasing look—his affectionate smile—his sweet voice—his firm confidence in you—his filial attachment—his many acts of love and obedience—his suffering on the bed of death—his preparation for death—his struggles at the last hour—his altered features in the winding-sheet—and the last look of his pale countenance in the coffin—rush in, in close succession, upon the regions of your heart, and these mournful thoughts overwhelm you with a heavy load of sorrow, so that you are ready to say, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." But this is not all. The dear image of your child ever rises up before you, and clings to your own soul. Even death cannot separate him from your heart. His empty seat at your table—the bed on which he lay—the clothes which he wore—the instruments which he handled—the places which he trod—the acts which he did—and the pleasing words which

fell from his lips—bring him back to you, and renew your sorrow. But O, parent, these are illusive visions! Your child is not in them. These are present, pale, empty shadows. "The substance is in the future." Still, you go on mourning, and your "voice of bitter weeping" and lamentation is heard through your dwelling. But refuse not to be comforted, because your child is not. He is not here, but he is in yonder world, into which you cannot see, until the veil is removed. Hear now the voice of the Comforter—a healing voice, that drops like the dew upon the tender herb. It is the voice of Him who sitteth upon the flood, and stills the raging billows of the troubled heart. "Be still," He says, "and know that I am God." "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord." O bereaved parent, drink in the precious words of the Lord! They are full of power, love, and sympathy—full of the balm of consolation. Sink not, therefore, under this load, but rise and lay hold upon "the Rock of Salvation," and say, Be still, O painful sorrow! thou disturber of my peace, and let me know Him, whom to know is life. Be still, ye troubles of this earth, that afflict the sinful children of men, and let my soul shake off this load of grief, and rise upon the wings of faith to that sympathizing Saviour who wept so tenderly over the tomb of Lazarus, and whose spirit banishes sorrow, sin, and fear, from every heart that loves Him. Be still, O fretful and desponding soul! Why should you murmur before the Lord? Why should you yield to one desponding thought? Why should your faith falter or flag for a moment? Only believe in the delightful promises of the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Accept the riches of His grace, His loving-kindness and tender mercies, and you shall be abundantly comforted and supported, and able to endure with calmness all the losses and crosses of this mortal life, as so many salutary warnings from your gracious God. Be still, therefore, and let your faith exclaim, The Lord giveth and taketh

away; blessed be His holy name. Such is the submissive language of an affectionate parent, who was bereaved of all his beloved children at once. How exceedingly severe was the stroke which this holy man received from the hand of affliction. All his effects, all his servants, and all his dear children, were swept away at once. Death stript him of every earthly comfort. But see how this bereaved man bears the consuming stroke! How he submits to the sovereign will of God! He acknowledges the hand of God both in his past prosperity and present bereavement. Like saints in the furnace of affliction, he glorifies God, and sinneth not. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," says Job.

3. But perhaps you may feel your bereavement peculiarly aggravated, by rashly thinking that your child has come to a premature death. You say that circumstances which you grieve to mention have brought your child to an untimely grave. You lament your loss the more, and feel the pangs of sorrow more bitterly, because your child has ended his earthly life in a distant country, or in a place where you were not able to attend him on his death-bed, to soften the pains of sickness by parental care, or accompany his body to the grave. Accusing reflections like these may rise in your heart, and you are ready to exclaim, "Would to God that I had never allowed my beloved child to leave his parental home. I trusted him to other hands, under whose guardianship I hoped he might live many days, and return again to his father's home, and cheer us all with the joy of his presence; but, alas! he will never return! He is cut off by a disastrous stroke from the land of the living." In this way you may be disposed to blame some secondary cause for having bereaved you of this son or daughter. You may be inclined to think that the death of your child was an accident, occasioned by an ill-directed course of human agency. This is not a point for you to dwell upon now. Harbour not such a torturing thought within your breast. Banish it from the regions of

your heart immediately, and believe that your child has died according to the all-wise counsel of God. He has removed your child from your embrace for your spiritual good, and you will one day see that "all is well." God has willingly and determinately given up His own dear Son to death, to confer the greatest of all blessings upon you and upon all mankind; and He permitted the free agency of wicked men in the atrocious act of crucifying the Lord of glory. All events in life and death are wisely directed by God, and ordered for purposes infinitely wise, gracious, and good. The stubborn Jews were held guilty of crucifying the Son of God, and he hath poured down the vials of His wrath on their devoted heads for their wickedness. He will also judge and punish every agent who has been willingly instrumental in injuring or taking away the life of a fellow creature. God sees all things, knows all things, and will make all things work together for good to them that love Him. You are not, therefore, O bereaved parent, to murmur or repine under this trial, whatever may have been the afflicting cause or blameable accident under which your beloved child has been permitted to die. Remember that his death has been an act of God, and not of man; for we are not our own, but God's. He may therefore take away one or all of us when He pleases, and says to our grudging thoughts, "Be still, and know that I am God."

4. God uses various means to convince you and others of sin, and to instruct you in righteousness. By this bereavement he teaches you a solemn lesson. Be willing to learn. Take your own case. It is intended to be your monitor. And what does it proclaim? The causes of your present affliction. And what is the cause? It is sin. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Sin is the bitter source of all our woes, and death is the bitter fruit of sin. Had not man sinned, we had no death, no sorrow, no grief, no fear, no disease; and we had seen no child snatched

from a tender mother's arms. It was a beautiful saying of one of the men of ancient times, upon the tidings of his son's death, when he exclaimed, "I knew that I begat a mortal." Every instance of death is a renewal of the penalty, "for the wages of sin is death." Behold the ravages which sin has committed upon its infatuated victims. What sorrow and pain—what shame and fear—what misery and woe—what crime and confusion—it has accumulated upon mankind; and the earth itself is groaning under the weight of guilt. How many are at this very hour sighing and suffering on earth from the malignant effects of sin; but Oh! how many are suffering in everlasting despair in the flames of that place of torment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched! Alas! alas! "how is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!" What has bereaved you of your beloved child, or has made "breach upon breach" in your family? It is sin. What has made the fatherless child, the orphan, and the widow? It is sin. How abominable must sin be in the sight of God, when he hath fixed so severe a penalty to it. But this is only the *first* death, or the separation of the soul from the body—a warning type of the *second* death, or the separation of both soul and body from the joys of heaven for ever—the dreadful judgment which falleth upon wicked and impenitent sinners after the first death. Contemplate, therefore, the evil of sin. Review and survey it in its origin, in its effects, and in its baleful consequences. Remember you are a sinner in the sight of God; for "all have sinned." "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer before the Lord?" says an afflicted saint. Oh bereaved parent! have you seriously thought of the vileness of sin? Have you been convinced of sin by the Spirit of the Lord? Have you not only seen your own sinfulness, but felt it, known it, and abhorred it? Do you now purpose in your heart, through the aid of the grace of God, to improve your present trial, as a chastening measure from your heavenly Father? God is daily

multiplying fatherless children and childless parents. And why? To show his abhorrence of sin. But "He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men." He delights not in the death of the sinner, or in the disquietude of the saint. "Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion, according to the multitude of His mercies." Come, then, O sinner, "repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Listen to the voice that inspires the joyful hope of salvation. "Be still, and know that I am God," your Saviour. Come, then, flee to the atoning blood of Jesus, "which cleanseth from all sin." This is your only remedy. Say, then—

"'Tis good for me to wear the yoke,  
For pride is apt to rise and swell;  
'Tis good to bear my Father's stroke,  
That I may learn his statutes well."

5. When God strikes with the rod of affliction, He himself heals the wound. Every stroke which He gives is a healing stroke. And this afflicting stroke is designed by Him to destroy the power of sin in your soul. "Bless the Lord," therefore, "O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." If this has been your experience, you know in whom you have believed; and you will not hesitate to say, from your inmost heart, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." But perhaps you have not yet risen so high in the scale of vital godliness. You may be still halting, and hovering, and doubting, in the dark and dismal vale of sin. Your profession may be still an empty sound. Are you one of those miserable creatures who are careless, and utterly unmindful of their duty to God—who wander away daily from the path of life—whose thoughts and affections are wedded to the pursuits of this world—and whose ears are deafened to the voice of God, by the rattling noise and the allurements of Mammon? Do you belong to that unhappy people who are still "joined to their idols," and who are utter strangers to that joy, peace,

and consolation which God sends to His beloved people, through the preaching of the everlasting Gospel? Have you, or have you not, been a regular and patient attendant on the means of grace, "desiring the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby?" or have you allowed paltry reasons to absent you, on the Lord's Day, from the house of God? Has your seat in the church not been seen empty Sabbath after Sabbath by your minister and pious neighbours? But your place in the office, in the shop, in the field, at the market, at the dissolute festivity, or among giddy companies of the world, is seldom or never without your presence there. What now is your honest answer to these deviations of the soul from the path of spiritual duty? Alas! you say, I must own that I have sinned in all these ways. Then you have been a froward and disobedient child, and you now stand in need of salutary correction. And God has therefore visited you in this way, not to consume you, but to reclaim you—not to cast you down, but to raise you up—not to drive you to the dark and dreary regions of despair, but gently to lead you forward to the sunshine of a bright and glorious hope. God has seen too much of the foolishness of sin bound up in your wayward heart, and for that reason has touched you with the rod of correction. Remember, therefore, the design of this stroke, which you feel so heavy and so sore, is to drive your vanities far from you, and so bring you back to God; for He knows better than you that you have need of His interference—that your soul cannot prosper without His counsel to guide you, His Spirit to enlighten you, and His grace to refresh and support you. Often has He invited you, but you refused. Often has the messenger of love knocked at the door of your hard heart, but you refused to open. Here, then, is the messenger of affliction come at last. Will that excite and quicken you to come to yourself—to arise and go to your Father? When Absalom wished to see Joab, he sent a messenger again and again to him; but he refused to come. Go therefore, says

Absalom to his servants, and set Joab's field of barley "on fire" (2 Sam. xiv. 29), and that will make him come to see the king. And it did so. "Then Joab arose and came to Absalom, unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?" Not to hurt you, says Absalom, but because I wished to see you, and could not have got you to come in any other way. In like manner, when the sinner is roving away from God, and holding a deaf ear to the urgent calls which are given him by the daily messages of grace, "Go," says God, "to some fiery trial; go and consume such an idol; break down such an enjoyment, and he will soon be with me—soon on his knees at a throne of grace, saying, 'Lord be merciful to me a sinner.' 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.' Penitent believer, 'be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid.'"

II. 1. "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." Here the inspired prophet beautifully introduces the lamentable calamities of Israel under the affecting figure of a tender-hearted mother weeping for her children. The inhabitants of Ramah grieved for their children that were carried away into captivity (1 Sam. xxx. 6); and such a cry of lamentation was raised as (to speak poetically) might even have started Rachel from her grave to mourn for them. The grieving parents refused to be comforted because their children were not—that is, they were not with them, but in other hands, and never likely to be restored to them. A similar cry of lamentation—of bitter weeping and mourning—was heard in Bethlehem: almost every family there was bathed in tears when the cruel tyrant Herod had slain all the young children of that country, after the birth of our blessed Saviour, with a view of destroying Jesus among them; and so great was the sorrow of the tender parents, that they also "refused to be comforted" (Matth. ii. 18), because their

children were not in the land of the living. Your sorrow for your children must be great, indeed, if you are so far mistaken as to think that they are not, or that they have perished for ever; but to refuse to be comforted in any case, under the gracious overtures of the Gospel, is most sinful. Blessed be God there is no occasion of grief—not even in that which sin itself occasions—that can justify any man or woman in refusing to be comforted. It is the precious privilege of every Christian parent that has lost a child or children, to hope and believe that these dear *young ones* have only taken the start of the parent, and gone home before him; for the Saviour invited little children to come to Him, and He blessed them. It is not said that the parents who lost their children at Ramah and at Bethlehem continued always to refuse to be comforted. There is reason to think that they only refused to be comforted while they were under excessive pangs of grief, or while they were frantic with that feeling; and that ultimately, after the excessive tide of their grief had ebbed, many of them—if not all—received the balm of comfort and consolation.

2. And now, tender-hearted parent, it has been our sincere desire to address you as a minister of Christ ought to address a Christian hearer—not in the cold, formal, and artificial language of logic and philosophy, but in the warm, plain, and effusive language of the heart. It has been our desire to reach the heart; for what is our preaching, if it does not reach the heart, and move it forward to the God of love? Our Highland people here often say, that they “like a sermon that will reach their hearts”—“*Is toigh leinn searmon a ruigeas ar cridhe*”—and we think they are right. Permit us therefore to address a few words of consolation to your heart, O grieving parent, to bear you up under your present load. Be still, and meditate upon the loving-kindness of that lovely Saviour in whom every bereaved parent may find a “Friend that sticketh closer than” a child, than a husband, than a wife, than a father or mother, brother or sister. Give your heart to Him who “wept” for

Lazarus, and pitied the sorrowful widow of Nain. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.” And although He does not restore your child as He restored her son to that widow, when she, with a heart half broken with grief, was accompanying his body to the grave, He sends you the pledges of His love and sympathy. He sends you consolation and comfort which no one else can give. He sends you balm from heaven—the healing medicine which His infinite love has prepared to heal all the wounds of your sick and grieving heart. Receive ye, therefore, the delicious cup of heavenly peace and comfort from the hand of your once crucified but now exalted and glorified Redeemer. Are you a real, not a nominal believer in Jesus? “I hope I am.” Then listen to His voice in these melodious expressions of peace, and accept the richest offer that was ever tendered to any of the denizens of earth. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither be afraid.” Come, therefore, to the Giver of the sublimest peace, and turn in to Him, and refuse not “to be comforted.” O bereaved parent, is your heart wounded? “It is.” Arise, therefore, and leap into the bosom of your loving Saviour, for He says “Come.” O sweet and glorious word “Come!” This is the familiar call of a parent and of a child—an invitation to the heart and the arms of the King. O! if at last such a word shall close our earthly pilgrimage, what matters it that we have passed through hedges of thorns, gloomy paths, barren deserts, and red seas of trouble. “Come, ye blessed of my Father.” O rich—O blessed invitation! The blessed Jesus says still, “Come unto me, weary and heavy-laden heart, and ye shall find rest” in me, peace in me, joy in me, the strongest consolation in me, cure for all your wounds and diseases in me, and in none else. “Come,” then, the Saviour cries, “though your sins be as scarlet,” “Come,” “though they be red like crimson,” “Come,” “my blood shall wash them all away.”

Though they be black as hell, and hard as the nether mill-stone, "Come," they shall be "made white as snow," and "soft as wool." "Come," then, "for the Lord God hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto you"—to bind up your broken sides—to set you free from sorrow—to pour "the oil of joy upon" you—to "comfort all that mourn." O, beloved parent! you are afflicted, and I have allowed you to be so, that I might draw you closer to myself, says the Saviour of sinners. Affliction is one of the blessed instruments which I employ to remind you that "you are not your own," that "you are bought with a price," and that price is "my blood shed for you," in my tremendous sufferings for you upon Calvary. There "I was poured out like water, and all my bones were out of joint; my heart was like wax; it was melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength was dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue did cleave to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death; for dogs have encompassed me, the assembly of wicked men have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm xxii. 14-16). "And remember ye, that those whom I love I chasten, and scourge every son whom I receive; and although now no chastening seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

3. Such is the gracious invitation which our holy Redeemer tenders to the sinful children of men. Hush, then, these disquieting thoughts. Calm that troubled spirit, that you may hear the voice of the Comforter, for that voice can be effectually heard only in the silence of submission to the will of God. Be ye therefore resigned to His holy will. Do not say, My sorrow is inconsolable; this is the foolish language of fretful unbelief. You say your heart is stung with the arrows of affliction, and you feel the poignancy of the sting; but who is able to pull out the sting, and to calm these distressing thoughts which toss your heart to and fro, like the dove upon the unabated flood? It is the grace of

God. "My grace is sufficient for you." "Be still," therefore, "and know that I am God." Flee from this death which afflicts the children of men, and lift up your weeping eyes from the grave of your departed child to the cross of Christ. Say, like a resigned Christian, who was suddenly plunged into the furnace of affliction by a bereaving stroke from the hand of death, "I have had an irreparable loss, and no man can feel this loss more sensibly than myself; but the cross of a dying Jesus is my support. I fly from one death for refuge to another." To the cross hasten you, O bereaved parent, and kneeling at the foot thereof, "behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," who taketh away your sins, if you love Him. Gather in your wandering thoughts, and fix them upon the glory of the cross, and exclaim, in the confiding language of the great Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let these troubled and conflicting thoughts of yours no longer cling to an object which cannot assuage the flood of sorrow which seems to drown your swinging heart. Let your thoughts dwell upon the healing wonders of the cross. Look upward, and behold Immanuel suspended and nailed upon the cross, there "wounded" for your transgressions, "bruised" for your iniquities. Behold how He loves you, how He smiles upon you from the cross. Let the eye of faith expand its vision in your clouded soul, and survey the wonders of redeeming love—see the sweetest, the richest, and the most enduring consolation streaming from the cross of Jesus—

"So from the Saviour on the cross  
A healing virtue flows;  
Who looks to Him with lively faith,  
Is sav'd from endless woes."

Come, then, beloved parent, and feed upon the bread of life, and be refreshed with the water of salvation. Be abundantly satisfied out of the fulness that is in Jesus. This fulness will sustain your soul through time and eternity;

this fulness will secure direction in perplexity, comfort in affliction, hope in the hour of death, and the crown of immortality at last. Out of this fulness you will receive all the weapons which you need to conquer sorrow, grief, and the terror of death. Here is the sword of the Spirit, which will vanquish every foe.

4. Holy David, the King of Israel, had sorrow and grief like yourself. He was a man of tears like you. "My tears," says he, "have been my meat day and night." He had also sorrow and sighing, and was under the pressure of many severe afflictions; but he did not allow himself to sink under the load. He did not refuse "to be comforted." Hear the voice of his unshaken confidence in God—a voice that rebukes, corrects, and silences the complaints of sense—a voice that directs the soul to hold a free, and full, and sweet communion with its God. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God." And again, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." See, now, where David casts anchor, and how he safely and hopefully rides upon the storm. O how fortifying to the soul is the power of vital godliness—an impregnable citadel which no enemy can enter! "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is and of that which is to come." It is the very life and soul of the true Christian. It is the grand *catholicon* of his afflictions, the *panacea* of all his diseases, the comfort and refreshment of his mourning spirit. Outward professions are but the shell, vital godliness in the soul is the kernel. Beloved parent, you have lost a dear child; and so did David, the godly sovereign of Israel; and by this bereavement he was plunged into the vortex of grief. His grief proceeded from three afflicting sources—reflection upon his sin, penitence for his sin, and bereavement for his sin—a triple measure of affliction. But the case was abundantly sanctified to David. "While the child was yet alive," says

he, "I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live" (2 Sam. xii. 22). "While there is life there is hope." David besought God for the child while there was life. He prayed for his child. Prayer is proper at all times, but most seasonable, most refreshing, and most consoling in the time of trouble. "Is any man afflicted? Let him pray." David's child is now dead, and David's heart is now resigned to the will of God. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." This is the prayer of his heart, and the bond of his life. Some parents sit down disconsolate in the chamber of grief after the death of a child, and neglect their own bodies; but David arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and changed his apparel. Some hide themselves in the gloom of solitude from the eyes of their fellow-men, and absent themselves from the sanctuary; but David came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped. He hastened to the fountain of life to wash away the sorrow and tears of death, and to prepare his own soul for the eternal world. O bereaved parent, follow the example of King David. Why should you continue in grief? Reason and religion forbid it. Why should an excess of sorrow so lacerate your heart? Why should you allow your body to be exhausted or wasted with such wailings and unavailing cries as will drink up your spirit and work death? Hear and reverse the voice of Him who hath in wisdom bereaved you—"Be still, and know that I am God." Cast away the sackcloth of sorrow, of grief, and of mourning, and rise from the dust and exclaim, in the confidence of a lively faith, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Now that my child is dead, wherefore should I fast and weep? Can I bring him back again? No indeed. "There is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; but man lieth down and riseth not." This proves the folly of your grief. It is vanity. "All is vanity and vexation of spirit," says the Preacher; and it is death that impresses this character upon all the fleeting objects of time

It absolutely converts all that is temporal into nihility. These heavens shall pass away with a great noise. These elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth, and the things that are therein, shall be burnt up (2 Peter iii. 10), but the soul—your soul and the soul of your lamented dear child—shall live secure, and retain their entire existence even in the universal desolation—

“Unhurt amidst the war of elements,  
The wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.”

5. But, bereaved parent, you may still refuse to be fully comforted; you are still in tears. O permit us to direct your heart to tears of the right kind! Learn now the great spiritual lesson which will one day turn all the tears and sorrows of this life into everlasting joy. The holy Psalmist tells us in the 126th Psalm, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” To sow in tears here means neither more nor less than that true repentance which uniformly accompanies a saving faith in the Lord Jesus. It is that “godly sorrow” for sin which “worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.” It cannot be “the sorrow of the world,” which “worketh death.” Sorrow for sin is very common among men, but sorrow for sin is not of itself real repentance. It is only a concomitant part of it. Many a one has groaned under sin; many a one has grieved, shed tears, smote upon his breast, and manifested every visible sign of a “godly sorrow,” who has never experimentally felt what it is truly to repent; but there never has been a real penitent without being at the same time deeply grieved for his sinfulness and guilt. There is therefore no vital repentance in the most “copious tears,” however promising they may appear, if they are not attended by “an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ,” if they do not flow from a clear view of what Christ hath suffered and done to destroy the power of sin, or what the power of sin has done to take away the life of Christ. Such tears are like the vanishing

dew-drops of the morning, which for a few hours glitter like so many sparkling gems, but suddenly disappear as soon as the sun rises and sheds his cheering beams of light over the fields. Alas! where is the man that has been called to deal with the oft-accusing consciences of his fellow-men, that does not know how little confidence is, in many cases, to be placed in the “bitterest tears?” Has he not seen the most abandoned profligate, and the careless sinner, trembling under the fear of death, weep for their sins as if nothing upon earth could ever tempt them to commit sin any more; and yet before their eyes had been dried from tears, these returned to their former sins, “like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire?” But we rejoice to proclaim, that there are tears which the true penitent alone can shed. These are saving tears—tears which melt the whole heart into love to the Saviour—tears which proceed from the exercise of faith in the sublime declarations of the Gospel, which opens up to us the tremendous sufferings which our blessed Saviour endured upon the cross for our sins. Such were the penitential tears that showered from the eyes of Peter when he “went out and wept bitterly.” Such were the tears that gushed from the eyes of the woman who “washed the feet of Jesus with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.” Such were the tears that have been shed by the faithful in every age, all of which God, as the Psalmist informs us, hath put into his bottle.

6. See, therefore, my dear friend, whether your tears be of the right kind. Beware lest they be like the ephemeral dew-drops of the morning. Study whether they spring from a clear heart-penetrating and hope-inspiring view of this marvellous truth, that “even Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.” This is the grand and precious question for you to consider now, while the day of grace remains. Tears you may have shed in abundance. You may have wept at the dreadful consequences of sin both here and hereafter. You may have wept in thinking of the disgrace

which your folly may have entailed upon your character in the sight of men; and tears of sentimental sorrow may have issued from your heart in reading or in hearing a description of the agonizing sufferings of Jesus in the garden or on Calvary. All this is possible; but it is not sufficient. Your soul may be still without one spark of vital repentance. There is but one unerring way of clearly testing the vitality of your repentance, and it consists in this—Have you, or have you not, been led to grieve above all in contemplating, that Jesus, your blessed Saviour, hath been wounded for *your* transgressions, and bruised for *your* iniquities? Or do you feel that your sins had a large share in occasioning the agonies and death which Jesus endured upon the cross? Inquire, in a proper spirit, whether your repentance be grounded upon this overwhelming truth; and if, on reviewing your past and present life, you ascertain that such is indeed the thought which affects your heart with grief above every other thought, then, but not till then, will you know for certain, whether your tears are of the right kind.

7. But let us now consider for a little what are the fruits, and how blessed are the fruits which grow and ripen from tears of the right kind. "They that sow in tears," says the man according to God's own heart, "shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing." This is perfectly true, my dear friend. Take God's word for it. He says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Even in this world itself, the precious effects of such a sorrow as we have been describing will be largely experienced. So the Word of Jehovah tells us. "Not in vain, ye mourners in Zion, shall the voice of your weeping be heard by God." The broken and contrite heart has ever been the object of God's peculiar regard. Such a heart He hath never despised, and He never shall. A cloud of darkness may be sometimes hovering around your sorrowful heart, O penitent believer;

but the sun shall be made to rise through the watery cloud, and light shall arise and dispel the darkness, and the portion of your soul shall be the blessing of peace; for Christ is ever nigh to the mourning believer, revealing himself in mercy, and spreading the balm of consolation upon his soul, and making the eyes that were once heavy with tears, to brighten with a glad and joyful hope, when the soul exclaims before the Lord, "Whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

8. Sow ye, therefore, my dear friend, in tears, that shall make you reap with joy. Mourn over your sins as one that "mourneth for an only son." Be in bitterness for your iniquities, as one that is "in bitterness for his first born." Weep for Jesus, who wept, and bled, and died for you. You have tears to shed on the death of a child, a relative, or a friend. You have tears to shed when an unexpected calamity has fallen upon yourself, or upon one who is dear and near to you. You have tears to shed when you have been reduced from circumstances of plenty and ease, to poverty and distress. You have tears to shed over the bed of languishing and sickness; and you have tears to shed on the "recital of a tale of woe." O, have you no tears at all to shed for your own sins, which caused the Saviour to die—those sins which wounded and bruised His holy body upon the tree, and made Him exclaim, amidst the agonies of an ignominious death, "My God! my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" How deplorable it is, that so many of the children of men are so little affected by that chief consideration which ought to affect them most! "Unto us belong shame and confusion of face," for the coldness, the deadness, the indifference and unconcern, with which we have too often viewed the agonizing sufferings which Christ has endured on our account. Awaken, therefore, O reader, and arise; put on the beautiful garment of vital repentance. Sow to yourself in righteousness and you shall reap in mercy. "Break up your fallow ground,"

for now is the time to seek the Lord, till He come and "rain righteousness upon you." Sow in the tears of a godly sorrow, and be sure you shall reap in joy. O believer in Jesus, contemplate, and never cease to contemplate, that pure happiness which God hath provided for you. There is a day coming, when all the obscuring scales of sin shall fall from your eyes, and you shall be surrounded with the resplendent glory of the Most High. Then your faith shall open into vision, and your hope into full fruition. Your present joy in believing is but a slight foretaste of the joys of heaven. In the presence of God "there is fulness of joy," and at His right hand there are pleasures not for a season only, but for evermore. Here you may be sowing in tears, there you shall be reaping in joy; and your companions shall be myriads of immortal beings like yourself, assembled around the throne, striking their golden harps, and singing with extacy the song of Moses and the Lamb. There will be no folly there; no vanity, no profanity, no bereavement, affliction, or trouble there. He whom John the divine beheld walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, shall ever be among that happy multitude—the Alpha and the Omega—the light, the life, and joy of all. "There shall be no death there, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things shall have passed away; and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes." May God accompany with His blessing what has been said. Amen!



STATEMENT OF FACTS  
AND  
DECLARATIONS BY THE SKYE GIRLS  
AND  
THEIR PARENTS, &c.

ELEVEN young girls, varying from fourteen to eighteen years of age, four from the parish of Strath, and seven from the parish of Sleat, in the Island of Skye, were, with the consent of their parents, taken away to England in May, 1852, and placed in the factory of Messrs. W. and C. Walmsley, at Marple, near Manchester. It appears that there were three parties engaged in exporting these girls, namely—Messrs. W. and C. Walmsley; one Mr. Donald Ross at Glasgow; and Mr. Francis H. M'Kenzie, at Broadford, a village in Skye. We are not aware that Messrs. W. and C. Walmsley were formerly known to the people of Skye, or that they put themselves in communication with any of the recognized authorities of the country before or after taking the girls into their service; and when one of the girls, Marian Robertson, died in their service, they never informed the parents that she was dying or dead. (See *Declaration I.*) Their silence in this case increased the intense anxiety which had been growing on the minds of the parents for two months before, during which time they had written three times, through the minister of Sleat, to Messrs. W. and C. Walmsley, who had not the civility to answer their applications; till they told them at last, that it was their intention to petition the Home Secretary for redress. After this, there came a

letter from a Mr. Ross at Glasgow, to the minister of Sleat, the contents of which do not reflect great credit on the feelings of the writer. He says, "You may therefore inform the parents, that the girls will be delivered up to them at Marple when they choose to call for them, and no further notice will be taken of their *silly paper kites!*" Who this Mr. Donald Ross is, we did not well know at the time. We never heard of him, except in the story of the "Highland Hen." The third party is Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, who has, some time ago, come to Broadford, and occupies a house there.

It has been said, that the idea of taking these girls to England, was suggested to the Messrs. Walmsley, by the reports of the destitution in Skye which had reached them in England. That the pressure of destitution has been severely felt by many people in Skye, there can be no doubt; and we are extremely thankful to every individual who has had the kindness to contribute a penny to relieve the destitute in our land; and our prayer is, that God may abundantly reward him for his kindness to our suffering people. If Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley were led by motives of benevolence to relieve the country, by taking away some of our daughters to work in their factory, is it not a thousand pities that they and their agents have not, from first to last, acted in such a manner as would at once satisfy the parents, and the country at large, that their design in taking away the girls was truly benevolent? Had they done this—had they condescended to answer the parents' first or second letter, and spoken frankly and kindly to them, as Christian men ought to do, this affair might have ended in a more satisfactory way. The parents would have been glad to have left their children at Marple, provided they had been satisfied, by persons in whom they had confidence, that their daughters were kindly treated. But these gentlemen had not the civility, courtesy, or generous feeling, to say one consoling word to allay the fears of the dutiful and solicitous parents, so that their unaccountable

silence was daily increasing the anxiety and distress of the honest people, and awakening feelings of astonishment, if not of suspicion, both in the Isles and on the mainland.

We having been, from feelings of compassion towards the distressed parents, led to write letters for them to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, now furnish the following important statement of all our correspondence in the case of the Skye girls—

"On the 23d of August last, Ewen Robertson and his wife, Miles M'Kinnon, and Widow Flora M'Kinnon, residing in Tarskeg, in this parish, called upon me at the manse here, and told me that they had had accounts from their daughters at Marple, who had been taken away in the beginning of last summer, to be educated by godly people in the south, in useful branches of knowledge, such as *reading, writing, sewing, and knitting*. That they were sent to the south by "Frank M'Kenzie" at Broadford, whom I had not previously known personally or otherwise, who promised to restore the girls at any time, at the expense of the parties who received them. All that I knew of the transaction prior to this time, was simply hearing at Oban, in the county of Argyle, when I was returning from Edinburgh in June, that eleven girls from Skye were sent to England; and the respectable person who gave me the information, did not seem to approve of sending young girls from home under the charge of any agent, who has not a recognized *locus standi* before the public. The parents said, that they came to get my advice as to the best way of getting back their children, stating at the same time, that the parents of the girls from Strath were equally anxious to get their children brought home. I stated to them at once, that I was very unwilling to interfere in the matter, and advised them to apply to the party to whom they had intrusted their children, and not to me; that I would be very sorry to do any thing which might offend parties, who may have been actuated by benevolent motives

in taking their children to the south. To this the parents answered, that they had applied to Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, and that he refused to restore the girls. Then, said I, your best plan is to apply to the persons who have charge of them at present. After saying this, one of them—I do not recollect which—handed to me a slip of paper with the following address written upon it, 'W. & C. Walmsley, Esq., Marple, near Stockport, *via* Manchester,' saying, that is the 'direction' of the people who have our children. Then, said I, you had better communicate your wishes to these gentlemen; but let me assure you, I do not wish to have any thing further to do with the matter. The parents having, after hearing this, got greatly excited, began to weep very bitterly for their absent children, and urgently besought me to write on their behalf to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, saying, that they requested their daughters to be sent back without delay. With considerable hesitation, I promised to communicate their request to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, and accordingly wrote next day, the 24th of August. I have not kept an exact copy of my first letter, which was couched in civil and respectful terms, simply giving the names of the parents who requested me to write, and stating their wishes to these gentlemen, who did not return any answer either to me or the parents.

"On the 7th of September, I received a letter from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, this cottager at Broadford, in which he says—'On Saturday I received a letter from Messrs. Walmsley of Marple, in which they enclose a letter written to them by you on the 24th ult., making a peremptory demand on them to return immediately four young females from Sleat, now in their employ. These girls, and seven others who accompanied them, volunteered to go with the consent of their parents, after I submitted to them the conditions on which they were wanted, and which were approved by them and other friends of their own whom they consulted; and had you condescended to consult the *Frank M'Kenzie* at Broadford, under whose direction you

say they were sent south, he could have furnished you or any other taking an interest in the girls with the same information, and probably more, and that of a different sort to that given you by the parents, who seem to base their complaints entirely on representations made by the girls.' I must confess, that I was a little surprised to receive such a dictatorial letter as this from a person whom I had never seen to my knowledge. Does Mr. Frank M'Kenzie think that I, as a minister of the Gospel, should not have done an act of kindness to poor people in distress without consulting him?

"When the parents called again, and they called very frequently, I told them all that Mr. M'Kenzie said in his letter to me, and advised them not to be rash in demanding the girls. But his explanation did not satisfy them; they said, that they must hear from the employers of the girls themselves. And who can blame them for that? I again, at their very urgent solicitations, wrote a second time on their behalf to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley. Subjoined is a copy of my second letter—

"THE MANSE OF SLEAT, BROADFORD, SKYE, 17th Sept., 1852."

"SIRS—I beg to state, that I have received a communication from Mr. Francis H. M'Kenzie at Broadford, intimating, that you had returned to him my letter of the 24th August, which I had written to you at the urgent request of the parents of the girls from this parish, who are in your employment. The parents had repeatedly called upon me to hear your reply to my letter of the 24th August; and in the absence of a reply from yourselves, I have told them what Mr. M'Kenzie says in his letter to me, that you offer to defray the expense of any suitable person whom they may choose to send to see how their daughters are treated; and that he has a letter from one of the girls from the parish of Strath to her father, to this effect, 'that they are all well and comfortable.' And I have reasoned with them as far as my information enabled

me to go; but it appears that the only satisfaction which the parents of the girls from this parish require, is to have their daughters returned to them; and I am directed by them to acquaint you, that they insist upon their being returned without farther delay. Enclosed I beg to send you the letters which have been addressed to me by the parents of these girls, requesting me to write for their return. I shall feel obliged if you will have the goodness to return the parents' letters to me.

"I have only to say from myself, that it is very painful to me to witness the agitated state of these parents when they speak to me respecting their absent children. I respect their affectionate feelings towards their children; and being parishioners of mine, I feel it incumbent on me to do every thing in my power to remove their uneasiness. I trust, therefore, you will be pleased to give them the satisfaction which they so urgently solicit. I have the honour to be, Sirs, your obedient servant.

(Signed) "JOHN FORBES."

"Messrs W. & C. Walmsley."

There was no reply to the foregoing letter, nor were the parents' letters sent back by Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley. The following is a copy of my third letter to these gentlemen, written at the pressing request of the parents, who were by this time getting much more alarmed for their absent children —

"THE MANSE OF SLEAT, 13th October, 1852."

"GENTLEMEN—I beg to state my regret that you have not been pleased to favour me with a reply to my letter of the 17th ult., soliciting an answer to the request of the parents residing in this parish whose daughters are under your charge. I am directed by these people to acquaint you, that unless their daughters are sent back to them, or a satisfactory reason given for detaining them, within a fortnight of this date, it is their intention to petition the

Secretary of State for the Home Department for his assistance in this matter. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant.

(Signed) "JOHN FORBES."  
"Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley."

This third letter brought the following reply from Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley —

"REVEREND SIR— We have forwarded yours of the 13th inst. to Mr. Ross, and beg to refer you to him as the only party we know in this matter. Your obedient servant.

(Signed) "W. & C. WALMSLEY."  
"Marple, October 20, 1852."

Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley declare in their letter, that "the only party" whom they "know in this matter" is Mr. Ross. How can this be said, seeing that these gentlemen returned my first letter to Mr. F. M'Kenzie at Broadford? At the time I received Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley's letter, I did not know for certain what Mr. Ross was meant by them, or where to find him; and yet I am referred to him by these gentlemen without giving me his address. In a few days however I received a letter from this Mr. Ross, who turns out to be Mr. Donald Ross at Glasgow, in which he says, "You may inform the parents, that the girls will be delivered up to them at Marple when they choose to send for them, or when they send a person duly authorized to receive them; and no further notice can be taken of their *silly paper kites*, nor yet of your inflated threat of petitioning the Home Secretary."

Subjoined is a copy of my reply to the characteristic letter written to me by Mr. Donald Ross —

"MR. DONALD ROSS.

"THE MANSE OF SLEAT, 4th November, 1852."

"SIR—I beg to state, that I was prevented by absence from home from acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 23d ult. before this date, and that I shall communicate

its contents to the parents of the girls. I am, your obedient servant.  
(Signed) "JOHN FORBES."

The foregoing statement is a correct account of my correspondence in the affair of the Skye girls in England, from which it is manifest, that I had only acted as the medium of correspondence between the parents of four of the girls from this parish and the parties under whose charge they had been placed. A Highland minister is always expected by his parishioners to write for them in important matters, and I am not unfrequently applied to by people who cannot write well, for my assistance in this way.

"JOHN FORBES,  
Minister of Sleat."

Miles M'Kinnon, a widower, and father of one of the Sleat girls, was preparing to go to Australia; and being desirous of taking his daughter along with him, and the emigrant ship being daily expected, the parent was very uneasy, fearing that he would be obliged to go away without his child. Then Alexander Macdonald, Esq., Tormore, the Convener of the Emigration Committee for Sleat, along with others, advised Mr. Fraser, the Inspector of the Poor for the parish of Sleat, to write without delay for the girl. This was accordingly done by Mr. Fraser. Subjoined is a copy of his letter—

"SLEAT, SEYE, October 16, 1852."

"MESSRS. W. & C. WALMSLEY, Marple, near Stockport.

"GENTLEMEN—There is a young girl, named Mary M'Kinnon, whose family are about going out to Australia from this parish. Her father is poor, and unable to pay her passage hither. Would you be so good as advance her what will pay her passage from your place to this *via* Liverpool, and I will remit you the amount when you let me know it? Please send her here with all despatch, so that she may not be too late for her passage. I remain,  
your obedient servant. (Signed) "D. FRASER,  
Inspector of Poor."

This girl was not sent home at the Inspector's request by Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, nor did they, consistently with my knowledge, write him, assigning any reason for detaining her. Some time after this, Ewen Robertson heard from his daughter Catherine that she herself was poorly, and that her sister Marian was dead. After receiving this melancholy intelligence, he made all possible haste to send for his surviving child, and despatched his son Alexander, in the month of November, with a commission from himself, from Miles M'Kinnon, and Widow M'Kinnon, to receive their three daughters from the Messrs. Walmsley at Marple, who allowed the girls to return to Skye at the expense of their parents. Alexander Robertson, when he reached Glasgow, called upon the Reverend Dr. M'Leod, to get his assistance in recovering the girls. The worthy Doctor kindly furnished him with the following letter to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley—

"GLASGOW, 16th November, 1852."

"GENTLEMEN—The bearer came all the way from the remote island of Skye to take charge of some poor girls from that island, who went to your works in the beginning of last summer. Their parents and friends are most anxious to get them back, and have sent the bearer, a brother of Catherine Robertson, to take charge of them, and bring them back. Some of the parents and friends are about to emigrate to Australia, and they wish these young women along with them. I do earnestly hope, that you will grant them liberty to return home, and that you will direct the bearer, a poor Highlander, as to the best way of getting them to Liverpool, and from thence to Glasgow. I am, Gentlemen, with great respect, your obedient servant.

(Signed) "NORMAN M'LEOD,  
Minister of St. Columba Church,  
Glasgow, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen in Scotland."

It is proper to mention, that only one of the girls, Mary M'Kinnon, was at this time sent for to join her friends for Australia. We are glad to see that Dr. M'Leod has, with his wonted attention to his countrymen, so promptly written in behalf of the parents of the Skye girls.

The remaining Skye girls who were sent to Marple in May 1852, were taken home by their friends in the beginning of January last, except one, who has been employed as a domestic servant; and that one has since come home, in consequence of bad health.

PAMPHLET—There has been some time ago circulated in Skye a pamphlet, dated Glasgow, 16th December, 1852, and signed "DONALD ROSS." It contains a series of letters, vindicating the character of Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley and their establishment, with a tissue of abuse, a tirade of the lowest personal invective and most vulgar language against individuals in Skye, who had simply written a few respectful letters at the request of the parents of the girls to Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley. That part of the pamphlet which is the miserable offspring of the author, we pass over as a *turpe dictu*. Such a piece of railing is sure to receive its due reward. We regret to find, that any person claiming the distinction of a friend to the poor and the oppressed, should manifest so little in his writings to us of that meek and lowly spirit which rightly moves the mind to acts of benevolence. This epistolary pamphlet reminds us at once of the laborious efforts so frequently made by the mountebanks of the south to recommend their quack medicines to credulous people. We shall, however, treat these letters with the respect which is due to them, and leave their doctrine to be weighed in the balance of public opinion.

The *first* letter in the poor pamphlet before us is by Mr. Donald Ross himself. He submits it as copy of the letter which he wrote to the minister of Sleat on the 23d October, 1852, from which it differs in several points.

For example, he says, in the copy which he published, "I am assured by parties who have seen the girls, one of them a minister, that the treatment which they have received was very good." In his letter to the minister of Sleat, the above sentence runs thus—"I am assured by parties who have occasionally seen the girls, that the treatment which they have received was very good." *Ab uno disce omnia*. Such is the candour and integrity of this wordy writer. Perhaps he thought the people of Skye are so obtuse, that they cannot detect egregious blunders, or so simple, that they will believe any thing, seeing he denominates their letters as "silly paper kites." We do not think that the honest parents of the girls have derived much comfort from his blustering letter.

"*Litir gun tuar, gun truas, gun iochd  
Ri pàrantaibh gaolach a'caoinadh an slìochd.*"

Since we are here reviewing this "busy" gentleman's conduct in the case of the Skye girls, we may give the following instance of the correctness and truthfulness of his statements with respect to the wants of the Highlanders, leaving the reader to judge, from his mendicant cry about the Highland emigrants on H.M.S. "Hercules," how far his reports are to be trusted.

The following is an extract of a letter from Mr. Chant to Sir John M'Neill, dated Birkenhead Emigration Depôt, January 31, 1853—

"My attention has been directed to a paragraph in the *Witness*, headed 'The Highland Emigrants,' which contains the following statement—'Mr. Donald Ross says it was most providential the vessel was put back to Rothesay by the storm, as the emigrants were in a miserable state from want of clothing, and that a large number of females had not a stitch but what they had on their persons on going on board.'

“Perhaps the best and most satisfactory answer that could be given to this statement, would be to publish the inventory of clothing supplied to each family by the Highland and Island Emigration Society, attested by the gentlemen by whom it was distributed, viz., Captain Macdonald of Rodil, in Harris; Mr. Sheriff Shaw of Lochmaddy, North Uist; and Mr. Donald M'Kenzie, Procurator-Fiscal, Portree, Island of Skye. But as such a lengthened statement would occupy more space than the columns of the *Witness* could afford, I think that the editor should, in justice to the Emigration Commissioners and the Society, be requested to publish the following facts, in contradiction to the assertion made by Mr. Ross—

“The amount of aid for outfits granted by the Highland and Island Emigration Society to the emigrants by the Hercules exceeded £1000. Some families obtained assistance for clothing to the extent of about £30. *Every person*, whether child or adult, had, when they went on board, *two complete suits of exterior clothing, and six changes of linen and stockings*, besides sheets, towels, soap, and new bedding. The beds and bedding were supplied by the Commissioners. The average amount of aid for outfit granted by the Society was 30s. per head. Long experience has proved, that the outfit mentioned above is sufficient for the Australian voyage, as the emigrants are provided with every convenience for washing twice a-week; and a supply of soap is shipped in addition to the stock taken on board by the emigrants. A double supply was put on board the Hercules.”

What is the reason that this Mr. Donald Ross never settles the dispute between himself and his neighbours on the subject of Highland destitution? We have no wish to obstruct him or any other man in his efforts to provide for the needy; we would rather encourage and assist any judicious and trustworthy person that openly and honestly exerts himself in behalf of the poor. But to prosper in this business, a man ought to give to the public an indubita-

ble account of every penny of public money which he receives and distributes. What, then, shall we say to the following instructive extracts from a Glasgow journal?

“Mr. DONALD ROSS AT HIS OLD ‘DESTITUTION’ BUSINESS—It appears, that Mr. Donald Ross, the celebrated Hebridean philanthropist, is still pursuing a profitable traffic in famine, and driving a flourishing business in charity, by levying extensive contributions in the south, for the management and dispensation of which he appears to be responsible to nobody except to Mr. Donald Ross himself. A copy of the *London Record* is now before us, in which there is a long advertisement, headed, ‘A Voice from the North—Destitution in the Hebrides,’ and giving a statement of benevolent contributions, amounting in the aggregate to upwards of £100, received since the first of January last, intrusted, so far as we can see, to the sole irresponsible agency of this individual, who figured for some time in the public prints as the ‘Hebridean Society.’ The contributions are acknowledged as a matter of course, and extracts are published from several letters, to show that quantities of meal, &c., have really been distributed to objects of distress in the Hebrides. But where is the guarantee given to the public, that the trust is faithfully administered, or that at least one-half of the funds may not be intercepted in their course to defray the expenses of the agency. Nobody in Glasgow is fool enough to think or believe that Mr. Donald Ross labours in such an agency for nothing. He has never yet explained the notorious affair of the starving family in Skye, whom he professed to have relieved out of his own pocket, while it was clearly proved, that they were never in the famishing state which he represented, and that when they received a certain amount of relief, it was from the parochial or public funds, and not from any private source whatever. It was shown that Mr. Ross continued to advertise, and to solicit the public for contributions, as the ‘Hebridean Society,’ or something of that kind, when no such society existed,

except in the benevolent imagination, or rather, we should say, in the benevolent person of the agent, Mr. Donald Ross himself. And yet this curious specimen of Christian integrity and charity still continues to levy his benevolent black-mail in the south. Why do none of his advertisements appear in the Scotch papers? We are sure there is abundance of quacks, who flourish from week to week in the columns of the Glasgow press, and we have no doubt that room would be found to accommodate Mr. Ross among them.

"We believe there is a Trade Protection Society in Glasgow. What we want is a society to warn and protect the public against the machinations and devices of quacks and other similar impostors. We do not positively say that Mr. Donald Ross is an impostor, but we say it looks very suspicious, that he does not advertise in Scotland—that he was convicted of assuming, in his own person, the character of a Philanthropic Society—and that while he acknowledges, from time to time, the receipt of a considerable amount of money, he never adopts a satisfactory method of making it clear and manifest to the public, that the whole of the money which he so receives has been faithfully and properly administered." — *The Reformers' Gazette*, 9th April, 1853.

The *second* letter in the pamphlet is dated Broadford, Skye, 22d November, 1852, and is from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, residing at Broadford, who had gone to Marple to see how the Skye girls were treated there. He states, that he inspected the premises of the Messrs. Walmsley's establishment, and gives a particular account of all that he had seen. He saw the girls going "to shift, wash, comb, and brush their hair," &c.; but we confess, that we cannot understand how the girls could "shift their hair." In his opinion they all appeared to be well pleased; and he does not say that any of them expressed a wish to return to Skye. It is certain, however, that the parents of four of the Sleat girls had repeatedly asked Mr. M'Kenzie to take

back their daughters before his departure to Marple; and if he had promised to restore them at any time—and they declare that he did—it is obvious that he was bound to do so at once. In describing the condition of the Skye girls at Marple, he does not mention that one of them died there. Was Mr. M'Kenzie on this occasion replenishing his exhausted purse by catering contributions in the south? We wish him every success in his acts of benevolence to the poor and destitute; but we demand fair-play. Persons who desire to promote the prosperity of this country, cannot wink at incorrect reports of the state of matters here, which are said to have been transmitted to the south. It appears from printed letters before us, that Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie has been sending away to the south very alarming accounts of the state of matters in Skye; and we are entitled to inquire whether these accounts are strictly true. In a letter from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, dated the 9th of March, 1852, we find him reporting on the state of the locality in which he lives as follows—"On Sunday last," says he, "the shore in this neighbourhood was crowded with poor creatures, picking up shell-fish. They had no other food. . . . But you will startle when I say, that there were more on the shore gathering shell-fish than were at church hearing sermon (?) They must watch the tide, otherwise they will have to wait." In another letter from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, dated 16th March, 1852, he says—"Many depend on what they gather of shell-fish, and even this they can only get at spring-tides, and only in abundance once a fortnight. You may fancy their great need, when I tell you, that I am within the mark when I say, that again on Sunday last there were scores—yes, hundreds—collecting shell-fish between Strolamus and this bay, and that during the hours of *dévine service* (?) Can you ask a stronger proof of the famished state of the poor than this?" No, indeed, Mr. M'Kenzie; your report of the state of your district is extremely affecting. We know, that not a few of the poor people at Broadford, as well as in other parts of the country, have suffered much

for want of food and clothing for many years, and especially since the late destitution from the failure of the potatoes commenced, and we have felt much for the sufferings of the people; we have also done, and are still most ready to do, every thing in our power to relieve the wants of the poor around us; but when we find that reports so defamatory and so prejudicial to the moral and religious character of our people are sent abroad—when we hear of such fearful desecration of the holy Sabbath Day by the people of this country, as is reported by Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie in his letters to the south, we are bound to inquire into the matter, that we may ascertain whether this report of the desecration of the Sabbath is a fact. The public are entitled to be fully informed on this point. Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie asserts, that "there were scores—yes, hundreds," he says, "collecting shell-fish between Strolamus and this bay (the bay of Broadford) during the hours of divine service," and that this happened on two successive Sabbaths (?). From this statement, there could not have been fewer than two hundred people; for he says "hundreds," engaged in profaning the sanctity of the Sabbath in one day; and still more aggravating, "during the hours of divine service." Indeed the statement is so broad, as to lead one to infer from it, that there may have been a thousand, or more than a thousand, of the people of Skye publicly breaking the Sabbath at once. Alas! alas! if this was true—if these people are such notorious Sabbath-breakers, need we wonder that they have been afflicted with destitution? for the wrath of God is sure to fall on those that profane His holy day. Now we call on Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie to give to the public the names of a few hundreds, a few scores, a few decades, or a few fives of those unfortunate crowds of poor people whom he reports to have been collecting shell-fish on Sunday in the neighbourhood of Broadford. The public is clearly entitled to this satisfaction from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie. Let him therefore settle this affair as soon as possible, that the doubts started in many places may be removed.

The following letters and declarations have been sent to us by some of Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie's neighbours at Broadford, respecting the gathering of shell-fish on Sunday and other transactions. These, like most of our other documents, came unsolicited—

"STRATH, 21st February, 1853."

"REV. JOHN FORBES, Sleat.

"REV. SIR—Understanding that you have had your attention called to some late transactions in this part of the island, we beg leave to trouble you with a few lines. We have seen published extracts from letters of Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie at Broadford (said letters bearing date of 9th and 16th March, 1852), stating, that on the Sundays preceding these dates, "crowds of people," and on one occasion "hundreds of people, were gathering shell-fish." We live, and have long lived, within view of the part of the shore referred to, and never saw people collecting shell-fish on Sunday, nor do we know any who ever saw such a thing. Mr. M'Kenzie states, that it was during the time of "divine service" the people so acted, and that they were necessitated to do it at that time, as they had to watch the tide, or otherwise want. But it is plain, that the tides of two successive Sundays could not thus necessitate them to the hours of divine worship, and that if such was the suitable time on one Sunday, it could not be the suitable time on the Sunday succeeding. We have no hesitation in saying, that these two statements in Mr. M'Kenzie's letters are not believed by us, nor do we know any one who believes them.

"We are, Reverend Sir, your obedient servants.

(Signed) "DONALD MACDONALD."

"ALEX. NICOLSON."

We have received the following letter from the Rev. Mr. M'Kinnon, the kind minister of Strath—

"KILBRIDE, 4th May, 1853."

"MY DEAR SIR—In reply to your letter of the 27th ult., I have only to say, that I have no reason to believe that

any of my parishioners has ever been collecting shell-fish on the Lord's Day at Broadford, or any where else, and such a case has never come under my own observation; nor has it been reported to me by any other person that such a breach of the Sabbath had been committed. I enclose letters from Mr. M'Kinnon of Corry, Mr. Niel M'Leod, innkeeper at Strolamus, and others, that I think should satisfy the public as to the incorrectness of Mr. Francis M'Kenzie's report to his friends in the south regarding the desecration of the Lord's Day in this parish, and that during the time of divine worship. I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully.  
(Signed) "JHO. M'KINNON."

"To the Rev. JOHN FORBES, Minister of Sleat."

Letter from A. K. M'Kinnon, Esq., Corry, in the parish of Strath, to the Rev. Mr. M'Kinnon, minister of Strath—

"CORRY, 25th February, 1853."

"MY DEAR SIR—In answer to your question, whether I ever saw any of your parishioners engaged in collecting shell-fish on a Sabbath Day, I can have no hesitation in saying that I never did; and I believe I may with equal confidence assert that no one else ever did. The strand or beach on which the principal supply of shell-fish in this parish is found, is just at my door, and within sight of my windows; and no person can come there when I am at home without my seeing them. I was at home on Sunday the 7th of March last, and attended church, and had there been any one picking up shell-fish that day on the strand at Broadford, I could not have failed to have seen them, either in going to or coming from the church. On Sunday, the 14th of March last, there was no *spring* tide, and as it is only on such occasions that shell-fish can be procured, no one *could* have been so employed on that day. I remain, my dear Sir, yours sincerely.

(Signed) "A. K. M'KINNON."

"REV. JOHN M'KINNON, Strath."

Letter from Mr. Niel M'Leod, innkeeper at Strolamus, in the parish of Strath, to the Rev. Mr. M'Kinnon, the minister of said parish—

"STROLAMUS, 2d May, 1853."

"REV. SIR—I understand that there is a report, that on two Sundays last year, people were seen in scores and hundreds gathering shell-fish on the shore here, and along from this toward Broadford. I have resided here for fifteen years, and was here at the times referred to, and I can solemnly assure you, that I never in my life saw people gathering shell-fish on the Lord's Day. You know also, that I live not only close to the shore, but also in the immediate neighbourhood, and in sight of one of the best oyster beds on this shore. I am, Reverend Sir, yours most truly.

(Signed) "NIEL MACLEOD."

"REV. JOHN M'KINNON, Strath."

"We, whose names are subscribed, have lived for more than forty years within view of the shore between Strolamus and Broadford, and hereby solemnly declare, that we never saw persons gathering shell-fish on the Sabbath Day, and that if such an occurrence had taken place, it is incredible that it should not have come under our notice directly or indirectly.

(Signed) "ALEX. NICOLSON, Elder."

"DONALD FAICHNEY,  
Schoolmaster of Strath."

"LACHLAN M'INNES,  
Miller of Strath."

"STRATH, 11th April, 1853."

Mr. Davidson, officer of the fishery at Broadford, and others, make a declaration to the same effect.

It appears also, that this same Mr. Francis M'Kenzie has been carrying on a trade in shoes at Broadford, and whether he has made the shoes himself, bought them for sale, or got them for gratuitous distribution among the poor people at Broadford, we are not positively sure. One thing

is certain however, that shoes were sold by him, and that there has been some *grumbling* about them in the parish of Strath. But let us open up the case of the shoes. In a letter dated 26th January, 1852, from Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie, describing the poverty of the people of Broadford, to a certain agent in the south, he says—"I recommend some pairs of coarse shoes for them, as they have none, and as for buying them, it is out of the question—they have not earned a sixpence for many months." Were the shoes bought after all? We submit the following declarations from some of the purchasers—

"At Broadford, the 11th day of April, 1853. I, Peggy Robertson, wife of Donald MacInnes, residing at Harripool, hereby solemnly declare, That about Martinmas, 1851 years, I bought from Francis M'Kenzie, at Broadford, a pair of shoes, for which I paid him the price of two shillings and sixpence sterling. I never knew of a pair of shoes being given away for nothing, except to a boy called John MacInnes; and when he came to be out of the favour of Francis M'Kenzie, the said Francis M'Kenzie demanded the price, and got it from the boy's mother. The above is my solemn declaration. (Signed) "PEGGY ROBERTSON."

"I, Peter Nicolson, residing at Broadford, do on this 11th day of April, 1853 years, emit the following solemn declaration. Mary Robertson, who is now my wife, about a month before Martinmas, 1851 years, bought from Francis M'Kenzie, Broadford, two pairs of shoes, at *two shillings and sixpence* a pair. When she got the shoes, she paid only one shilling and sixpence for each pair; the balance of the price was kept off her when she was lifting from Francis M'Kenzie the price of knitting which she had done for him. Francis M'Kenzie brought to myself three pairs of shoes, one pair he came and took away, one pair I sold to Duncan Matheson the policeman, and the other to John Macrae, sheriff officer. The money drawn

for which two pairs was placed by me to the credit of an account due to me by Francis M'Kenzie as goods furnished by him to me on said account. That the whole is true, as declared to me by my wife, and as having been known to me at the time; and in respect of the latter part of the statement, depending on my own testimony, is what I am willing to swear when called on properly to do so.

(Signed) "PETER NICOLSON."

Mr. R. Macdonald, ground officer at Broadford, writes on the subject of the shoes as follows—"About the month of December, 1851, I bought two pairs of shoes from Mr. Francis H. M'Kenzie, Broadford. One pair of women's shoes, for which I paid two shillings and sixpence, and a pair of men's shoes, for which I paid three shillings and eightpence."

Now, we find no fault with Mr. F. H. M'Kenzie for selling the shoes, if he can clearly show that the shoes which he has sold were intended for sale. Indeed we are happy to hear that the people of Broadford, whom he represents to have been so extremely poor and famished, as to be necessitated to *gather shell-fish on Sabbath* for food, were able to purchase shoes. But if these shoes were sent to be given to the poor "without money and without price," then, is not the act of selling them impeachable? What has become of the money? The selling of the *shoes*, the report of gathering the *shell-fish* by "*hundreds*" of people on the Sabbath Day, and the *promises* declared to have been made to the Skye girls by Messrs. Ross, M'Kenzie, & Co., are notorious questions in Skye, and in other places, and these questions are now sent to Mr. F. M'Kenzie's door, and there they lie, crying loudly for a clear, direct, and satisfactory answer. Let him therefore send forth to the public a true answer. No quibbling, no railing, no slandering, no foul side wind, but the fair and refreshing breeze of truth. "*Veritas est magna et prevalebit*"—*Is mòr an fhirinn agus bheir i buaidh*. Let him send forth an

unmistakeable reply, and so get out of this curious affair, if he can, with clean hands. Let each of these reporters and exporters, and their coadjutors take heed, that neither the wild sallies of a licentious tongue, nor the anathematizing ebullitions of hot partizanship, will settle these questions, nor satisfy the public. We demand facts, supported by evidence which cannot be doubted. The trumpet is now sounded, and certain parties are called upon to listen to the sound—to answer the questioning and examining voice which is heard throughout the length and breadth of the land, by giving a public account of their stewardship.

It appears from the declarations made by some of the girls, that this same Mr. Francis H. M'Kenzie advised, in one of his letters to Marple, to detain the Skye girls there, "and that he would keep matters right in Skye." O admired island of Skye! Is a mendicant epistolist now become thy governor-general?

The *third* letter in the pamphlet, dated 8th December, 1852, is by the Rev. Alexander Munro, Presbyterian minister at Manchester. The rev. gentleman gives a favourable report of what he had seen at Marple when he visited that place for the first time in his life, to see how the Skye girls were treated. He says—"In consequence of certain representations made in a Scottish newspaper, as well as in letters from ministers and others chiefly in Skye, expressing an excited solicitude on the part of the parents, and not only reflecting on the conduct of those who had been instrumental in removing them hither, but also animadverting severely on their treatment and condition at Marple, I was induced to repair to the place, in order to ascertain, so far as personal inspection and inquiry could go, the real state of things. I had never previously been there, and had no acquaintance whatever with the Messrs. Walmsley." Mr. Munro was quite a stranger to the Messrs. Walmsley, it appears, and likewise to the discipline of their establishment; but he found it in a fine order when he was there. But is it not possible, that after

all, the Skye girls might have been previously suffering from hard labour and harsh treatment, of which Mr. Munro, a stranger, could have known as little as one of the inhabitants of St. Kilda? These girls complained that they were harshly treated, and for that reason alone they implored their parents to remove them from Marple. Shall we, or shall we not, believe the declarations made by the girls themselves? We call on Mr. Munro to produce the letters from ministers in Skye, which are "reflecting on the conduct of those who had been instrumental in removing" the girls to Marple, or "animadverting severely on their treatment and condition" at Marple. Since he has publicly accused ministers in Skye of severe reflections and animadversions on other parties, he should have published the grounds on which he rests the accusation; but he has not given a single extract from a letter by a minister or other individual in Skye. Is Mr. Munro the minister whom Mr. Donald Ross introduces in his second and enlarged edition of his letter of the 23d October to the minister of Sleat? Let it be observed, that Mr. Munro, according to the date of his letter, paid his first and only visit to Marple on the 8th of December, several days after the first edition of Mr. D. Ross's letter was written to Sleat.

The *fourth* letter, dated Marple Bridge, 6th December, 1852, is by Mr. James Hibbert, who, along with the Rev. Mr. Dickson, "visited the children at Marple, and found them in a very healthy condition, and their food and raiment far superior to that of the generality of people." We know that there is a facility in giving general reports of a favourable cast of factories and other public places, such as bridewells and nunneries, by flying visitors, while some of their recesses may be "habitations of cruelty."

The *fifth* letter, dated Marple, Nov. 22, 1852, is by Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, in which they state, that Alexander Robertson had with their consent taken away three of the girls, and that he said, "if he had known how kindly the girls were treated, he would not have come from Skye for

them, had they been his own children." But Alexander Robertson declares, that he never said these words or any other words to the same effect to any person. Subjoined is a copy of his declaration —

"TARSKVEG, in the parish of SLEAT, 13th January, 1853."

"I went to Marple in November last, to take home my sister Catherine, Mary M'Kinnon, and Anne M'Kinnon, who were sent there by Frank M'Kenzie in May last, with written authority from their parents in my hands. Mr. William Walmsley led me to the doctor, who said to me that my sister Marian died of fever. After that, one of the servants in Messrs. Walmsley's cooking-house told me that my sister was putting out blood, and that she had no fever. I told Mr. W. Walmsley Mary M'Kinnon was to go to Australia along with her father in a few days, and none of the other girls was going to Australia. When he agreed to let the girls away, I asked him to allow something for their travelling expenses, and he refused to give any thing. He took from them their new frocks and shoes, and sent them away with old dirty frocks and old shoes, but his mother kindly gave a black frock and bonnet to my sister. I never said to Mr. W. Walmsley, or any other person, that 'if I had known how kindly the girls were treated, I would not have come from Skye for them, had they been my own children.' I never said this, for the girls complained to me, as soon as I arrived, that they were not kindly treated. The above is a true statement.

(Signed) "ALEX. ROBERTSON."

All the letters published in the pamphlet before us amount to six, of which four are addressed to Mr. Donald Ross, vindicating the conduct of Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley towards the Skye girls, one in favour of the parents by Dr. M'Leod, and another stormy one by Mr. D. Ross to the minister of Sleat. We shall give only one specimen of the style, taste, and veracity of this tottering pamphleteer,

and sacrifice the rest to *Harpocrates*. Is it not the fact, says the writer of this pamphlet, "that this editor" (the clever and independent editor of a Glasgow newspaper, to whom the public is greatly indebted for his efforts to expose and put down impostors) or a "notorious speculator in twaddle and slander," as he is called in a preceding clause by the same foaming writer—"at first darkly hinted, that the girls were sent to England for immoral purposes, and that from England they were likely to be conveyed to France, to be disposed of there? Failing to make an impression in this way, did he not assail with slander every one who took a Christian part in their removal; and then did he not charge Messrs. Walmsley with cruelty towards the Skye girls, asserting, that they were kept working like slaves—for what (says this Agitator) are all factory girls but slaves? that they suffered severely from hard treatment; that they were starved; and that one of them died—pined away (he says) under the severe ordeal; and that another lost her finger from the same cause; and a great deal more of palpable untruths." O writer, have a care what you say. Is it a palpable untruth, that Marian Robertson died and was buried at Marple, and that her sister's finger was made useless there? Is it a palpable untruth, that the sister came home broken-hearted, and was unable to leave her bed till she died in a few weeks after her return to Skye? These are melancholy facts, and not "untruths" or "slander." The following extract from the same Journal contains observations made by its public-spirited editor, who is here accused of "palpable untruths" by the author of the pamphlet, after the return of some of the girls to Skye. It appears that the information was communicated to the editor by the person who had charge of the girls when he was returning with them to Skye—

"We have been informed, that three of these unfortunate creatures have been taken back to their homes. Our readers may recollect that the girls were sent to the

factory of Messrs. Walmsley & Co., at Marple, near Stockport. The agents, in removing them from Skye, were our friend Mr. Donald Ross, and another individual of the name of Francis M'Kenzie at Broadford, in that island. The girls were ostensibly taken away to receive a good education, to be taught sewing, knitting, &c., and otherwise to learn the refinements of civilized life. They were to be kindly treated, and were to be restored to their parents whenever the latter desired it. These were the express conditions and promises on which the parents of the girls were induced to part with them. Now let us ask how have these promises been fulfilled? The girls—averaging, as we have stated, from fourteen to eighteen years of age—were no sooner taken to Marple, than they were employed in a factory from morning to night. They were kept working like slaves—for what are the factory girls but *white* slaves?—and how they could find time for receiving the elements of education, is more than we can easily comprehend. The person who was sent to take them back to their parents, states that he found them suffering severely from hard treatment, and that in respect of food and other matters they could not have been worse off in a prison. One of them had actually pined and died under the severe ordeal; another had lost one of her fingers. 'It is above my power to tell you,' says the person who was sent to remove them, 'how bad their case is.' Let us venture to hint, that if we had not directed the attention of the public to the matter when the girls were deported from Skye, their case might have been at this moment still worse than it is. The individual above-mentioned took three of them away—the Sleat girls, we presume—so that there are seven still remaining, and one dead. He desired the Messrs. Walmsley to send them all home, but they refused to do so: They declined also to pay one penny for the passage home of the three, and even demanded back the clothes with which the girls had been furnished." — *Reformers' Gazette*, 11th Dec., 1853.

There has been a loud complaint raised, that letters from the parents and relatives of the girls, from ministers and other individuals in Skye, had been sent to their employers at Marple, and that these letters were of a "reflecting" and "animadverting" nature, and "some of them the most senseless and unreasonable." We ask who sent these letters? Where are these letters? Why have none of these letters, not even an extract from one of them, been published in the newspapers, or among the congeries of got-up letters which have been published in the rambling pamphlet by Mr. Donald Ross? Had this been done, the people of Skye would have less reason to complain, and it would have enabled the public to judge whether the people of Skye, or the defenders of the Marple affair, had written the most "animadverting" letters in the case of the Skye girls. The following is an extract from a Glasgow Journal, calling public attention to the unkind and rude manner in which the feelings of the honest and decent parents have been treated, after seeing it to be their duty to take home their dear children from Marple—

"MR. DONALD ROSS AND THE SKYE GIRLS—It was in May last that we called the attention of the public to the sudden appearance, in Glasgow, of eleven poor girls from Skye, under the special protection of that distinguished Hebridean philanthropist, Mr. Donald Ross. We learned, on inquiry, that the girls were *en route* to England, where they were about to be initiated in all the mysteries of Manchester civilization. We called for some explanation on this subject. The girls were all young—from fourteen to eighteen years of age—and their emigration to England occurred at a time when a very disreputable traffic was known to exist between certain parties in England and others in France, leading to the degradation and ruin of hundreds of unfortunate victims like the Skye girls. We were therefore justified in calling for an explanation, and although Mr. Donald Ross, had turned

a deaf ear to some very curious revelations affecting himself, which had previously appeared in our columns, he kindly vouchsafed a reply on this subject. He stated, that with the consent of their parents and guardians, the girls were proceeding to the mills of Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley of Marple, and that the benevolent character of the Messrs. Walmsley was guaranteed for the kindness of the treatment which the girls would receive in their employment.

"We were so far satisfied with Mr. Ross's reply, that we did not pursue our inquiries any farther at the time. We thought we had discharged a public duty by calling attention to the subject. From that time we have heard no more of the girls till the other day, when the fact came to our knowledge, that their parents have been anxiously endeavouring to get them sent back. It appears that these poor people were induced to part with their daughters by promises, that they were to be taught to read, and trained to habits of industry, under a careful and kindly treatment; and further, by the promise, that *whenever they wished, their children would be safely restored to them.*

"Now we have learned, that the parents have for some time been very anxious to have their daughters restored to them. This we can affirm of the parents of the Sleat girls at least. We know not what may be their motive for wishing them so earnestly back. That is their own business — not ours; but according to the terms of the promise or condition on which they parted with their children, they ought to be restored to them immediately. And yet we learn, that they have made repeated application with that object in vain. Twice, at their urgent request, the parish minister of Sleat wrote to the Messrs. Walmsley, explaining the distracted condition of the parents, and desiring them to send back the girls without delay. No answer was received to either of the reverend gentleman's applications. He wrote a third time, declaring, that unless the girls were sent back within a given specified time, or a satisfactory reason given for detaining them, redress

must be sought from another quarter. This at length produced a reply from the Messrs. Walmsley, simply stating, however, that they had enclosed the letter to Mr. Ross, who was the only party 'they knew in this matter.' And soon afterwards a letter was received by the minister of Sleat from 'Mr. Donald Ross, Glasgow,' in which, among other things, he said — 'You may therefore inform the parents, that the girls will be delivered up to them at Marple whenever they choose to call for them, or when they send a person duly authorized to receive them; and no further notice can be taken of their silly paper kites.'

"Mr. Ross's Hebridean benevolence is very conspicuous in this concluding remark. It is very polite and considerate, indeed, to request the parents, living in Skye, to call for their children at Marple. Just let them step over, says Mr. Ross, and take their children from England whenever it suits their convenience. He grants them, indeed, an alternative. They may, if they please, send a person 'duly authorized to receive them;' and with this, Mr. Donald Ross, the Hebridean philanthropist, declines to take further notice of their 'silly paper kites.' We think he might carry his philanthropy just a little farther. Why not send them a little money to help to defray the expenses of the 'duly authorized agent,' and likewise the travelling expenses of the girls back to Skye? He once relieved, out of his own resources, a family in that island reduced to their last hen. The melancholy feast on poor 'chucky' touched his benevolent soul with commiseration — the death of the hen overpowered him as much as the distress of the starving family; and yet the agitated state of the poor people in Skye, who are now imploring the restoration of their children, and the earnest solicitations made with that object in view, are treated by Mr. Donald Ross with contempt, and characterized by him as 'silly paper kites.'

"Mr. Ross's story of the hen was very much of a kite. The family, unfortunate people, never knew of their starvation. They were never aware of having been

relieved by Mr. Ross. It turned out, we recollect, that the story was a grand sentimental fable, and that even the very hen was a myth. So much for a practical joke in the way of sending up paper kites, when a Hebridean philanthropist is travelling in Skye, and therefore *in nubibus*. Mr. Donald Ross is on *terra firma* again. He is at home in Glasgow; the girls are at Marple; their parents are out of harm's way in Skye; hence the cavalierly language about 'paper kites.' It is just what we expected from Mr. Donald Ross; but we confess that we think the Messrs. Walmsley might have been a little more prompt and courteous in attending to the earnest applications of the parents, respectfully made through their parish minister. The feelings of poor but respectable parents, even in the *ultima Thule* of Skye, are not to be trifled with in this manner; and if it was benevolence, humanity, &c., that prompted the transaction at first, why not conclude the bargain, and comply with the requisition of the unhappy parents in the same amicable spirit?"—*Reformers' Gazette*, November, 1852.

The following extract from the same Journal, is another review of the proceedings of the exporters of the Skye girls, from which it appears that the apprehensions entertained by some persons respecting the transmission of the Skye girls to the vicinity of Manchester, are not without a striking parallel of recent occurrence. Thirty-seven young females belonging to Leeds were decoyed away to a distant country, under promises of high wages and good treatment by some mischievous traders. But lo! and behold! they were obliged to return home, sadly disappointed, like our Skye girls—

"THE EXPORTERS OF THE SKYE GIRLS AND A PARALLEL CASE—We published, a couple of weeks ago, a letter from Mr. Donald Ross, which gave a most benevolent aspect to the case of the Skye girls. But how did it happen that

the Messrs. Walmsley never condescended to inform the parents of the girl who died at Marple of their sad bereavement? And if this duty was delegated to Mr. Donald Ross, why was it altogether neglected? Even the poor people in Skye may be supposed to have the natural feelings of parents, and yet Mr. Ross treated their remonstrances on this and other subjects as 'silly paper kites.' Mr. Ross's philanthropy, we must take leave to tell him, is not beyond suspicion; and no reply has ever been given to that extraordinary charge, so publicly made and reiterated, about the pretended relief given from his own pocket to a family who were said to be reduced to the last point of starvation. We never hear any thing of that case in Mr. Ross's epistles. His Hebridean philanthropy must be taken for granted. Who authorized him to raise contributions for the destitution in Skye? It is only lately that he has been engaged in doing so, and probably people have been silly enough to intrust him with extensive contributions for that benevolent purpose. A man who receives such contributions—who advertises for them—who sets himself up as a philanthropist—should be a recognized agent. Where are Mr. Donald Ross's credentials? What public account has he given of the money and other contributions which he has been recently collecting? We are not aware that any guaranteed account has appeared. The whole affair is involved in a cloud of mystery, and we would recommend the benevolent public not to intrust their contributions to every advertising adventurer who sets himself up as a philanthropist, unless at least that individual shall have given unequivocal proofs that he is animated only by the pure and disinterested motives to which he lays public claim.

"We repeat, that the public cannot be too careful and circumspect in such matters. It appears that the personage associated with Mr. Ross in the affair of the Skye girls is a Mr. Francis M'Kenzie of Broadford, in that

island. This individual acted as local agent, to induce the parents to send their girls to the south, promising the greatest advantages by that step, and also to restore the girls at any time at the expense of the parties by whom they were taken away. Now who is this Mr. Francis M'Kenzie? He is at present a temporary resident at Broadford; but what has been his previous history? This is a point on which the public are entitled to be fully informed, when he takes it upon him, as we understand that he has done, to levy contributions, like his friend Mr. Donald Ross, for the destitution in Skye. We have heard that he was first an unsuccessful merchant in Dingwall; that he then kept a lodging-house in the south; that he then tried his fortune in America, and equally failed there. We shall not presume to say how he has managed his own business in different parts of the world. He is now however in Broadford, living nobody knows exactly how, and is doing his best, it appears, to manage the business of other people, whether for his own advantage, or from motives of pure benevolence, it does not become us to say. We shall say, however, that some people seem to make a capital business—indeed a regular paying concern—out of the destitution in Skye. They grow fat on starvation. They thrive on the 'last hens' of the Hebridean sufferers. They drive a roaring trade in distress—clamour for contributions from all quarters—and every thing comes alike to them and disappears—stockings, shoes, blankets, worn-out wardrobes, and oatmeal. These gentlemen thrive amid penury—whether on sea-ware and mussels, or on old shoes and oatmeal, we cannot tell. It is certain that this Mr. Francis M'Kenzie, the resident *alter et idem* Donald Ross of the Isles, has been sending alarming reports of the 'destitution in Skye;' for these words possess a stereotyped charm to certain parties in the south, who have been sending Mr. Francis M'Kenzie in return, money, food, clothes, &c., to be distributed among the destitute. Now, it is *reported*, that the shoes

and other articles have been retailed to the people about Broadford at a pretty high figure. Are we wrong in presuming to say, that the country would be glad to see Mr. Francis M'Kenzie giving an account of his stewardship? The old shoes have been turned into gold—what has become of the cash? It is no longer a question of shoes, but a simple question in proportion of pounds, shillings, and pence. The question is not so much, how do the poor people of Skye subsist, as how do other people subsist? Perhaps, indeed, the destitution is universal, and nobody should grudge the cook a share of her own broth. But still we are entitled to know whether or not the cook appropriates the lion's share of the dinner; and some little statement of particulars, looking to all the antecedents of the case, would, to say the least, be satisfactory to the public.

"But to that public also we take the liberty to say, distribute your charity and alms by the hands of persons of established standing and respectability in the country, and not by the hands of persons who have no more weight in the estimation of the judicious than, as Mr. Donald Ross would say, 'paper kites.' Communicate, for instance, with the minister of the parish, with the minister of the Free Church, with the schoolmaster, or with some other persons whose very office and position may be a guarantee for their character.

"The following letter, lately received by the Mayor of Southampton, from Mr. Featherstonehaugh, the British Consul at Havre, will show that the press and the public, and more especially parents, even in such remote places as Skye, cannot be too much on their guard against the decoying of girls, under any pretence whatever, from under the shelter or cognizance of the paternal roof. Perhaps it is well, after all—well for the parents and the girls too—that we drew the public attention so promptly to that very plausible case in which our present remarks have originated. No one knows in what degrading and

infamous traffic the system thus commenced might have resulted. The following is the letter referred to, revealing an atrocity and a warning—

‘BRITISH CONSULATE, HAVRE, Dec. 22, 1852.’

‘SIR—Three young girls, named Margaret Flanagan, aged seventeen years, Mary Hosey, aged sixteen years, and Bridget Haley, aged fourteen years, have been forwarded to me by the vice consul at Rouen, to be sent to their homes at Leeds. From the statements made to me, and which are confirmed by the affidavits of Margaret Flanagan and Bridget Haley, they were decoyed away from Leeds, without the consent of their parents, about the 24th of November last, part under promises of high wages and excellent treatment, by two agents of the La Foudre Flax Mill, near Rouen. They have been altogether deceived and ill-treated; and the case being a very grave one, comprehending thirty-seven girls in all, of which number several are now on their way to this place, I shall send copies of the affidavits to her Majesty’s government and the Mayor of Leeds, and endeavour to put a stop to so infamous a practice. The names of the agents are Smith and Grathwaite, and I hope to be able to have them punished. I have directed these poor girls to present themselves to you on their arrival at Southampton, and now ask your benevolent aid to forward them by rail to Leeds. I understand that they are very respectable girls, and have been exemplary in their conduct, so that I must hope they will reach home happily. I shall give them a little money for their subsistence, so that you will only have to provide their travelling expenses.’—*Reformers’ Gazette*, Jan. 8, 1853.

DECLARATIONS, &c.\*

We are now come to the deciding point of our statement—a point which clearly indicates, that these innocent people have been disappointed, and that the poor girls had reason to complain.

I. Declaration by THREE PARENTS in the Parish of Sleat.

“TARSEVEG, SLEAT, 13th Jan., 1853.”

“We, the undersigned parents of three girls who were sent from the parish of Sleat to Marple, by Frank M’Kenzie at Broadford, in May last, hereby declare, That the said Frank M’Kenzie promised us and our children, that they were to be taught reading, writing, sewing, and knitting, with four hours of labour in the factory each day; that he promised to send them back to us at any time free of expenses; that we and our children were very happy to get such an opening; but seeing that these promises were not fulfilled, and that our children became miserable at Marple, we became very uneasy, and could not think of forcing them to remain in a place where they complained of being ill-used; that we repeatedly applied to Frank M’Kenzie, requesting him to restore our daughters, as he promised, and he refused to do that for us; that we then wrote three times to the Messrs. Walmsley, through the parish minister, and that they never answered any of our letters, till we said that we must apply to the Home Secretary for redress if they did not send back the girls; and that not one of us ever heard from Messrs. W. & C. Walmsley, or from any of their agents, that Marian Robertson was sick, or that she died.

(Signed) “EWEN ROBERTSON.”

“CATHERINE ROBERTSON.”

“FLORA M’KINNON, widow.”

“Alex. Macdonald, witness.”

\* It is proper to mention, that most of the declarations by the parents and girls were made before a Justice of the Peace.

II. Declaration by CATHERINE ROBERTSON in Sleat.

"TARSEVEG, 26th January, 1853."

"I, Catherine Robertson, declare, That, with the consent of my parents, I engaged with Francis M'Kenzie at Broadford to go to Marple. He promised that a woman was to accompany me and others to that place; that when there, I was to work four hours every day, and during the rest of the day was to be in school learning reading, writing, knitting, and sewing; that I was to receive three shillings every week; and that I was to be sent home at the expense of my employers whenever I and my parents might desire it. He explained to me and others, that these terms were so favourable, because the factory belonged to a very religious lady, who wished to employ her means in doing good to the poor, and that the Messrs. Walmsley were managers for that lady. I went along with others from Skye in May last. Francis M'Kenzie sent neither man nor woman to take charge of us. While we remained in the steam-boat of Glasgow, Mr. Donald Ross came to us and took charge of us, as having come to him from Francis M'Kenzie. He gave us lodging, and food, and some clothing, and took us to Manchester, from which he sent us forward to Marple, saying that he would follow us thither; but this he did not do. While there, I went to work at six o'clock in the morning, and left off each evening at six o'clock. When at work, I was frequently and severely struck. This was done with a thing that was like a stick,\* but was not a stick; it also resembled leather, but was not leather. A stroke of it caused very great pain. As, though I understand a good deal of English, but cannot speak it much, I could not defend myself by telling that girls near me were putting their waste among mine, and I suffered much on this account. After we succeeded in getting intelligence sent home of our unhappiness, and it was known at Marple

\* This instrument is supposed to have been made of *gutta serena*.

that we had done so, I and the rest were punished much more severely. My sister Marian was violently struck on both sides of her head, and cried out that she was done for. She was immediately taken unwell, and from that day grew worse, and at last died. She was quite well up to the day she was struck on the head, but was never well after it. I heard a letter read which came from Francis M'Kenzie, asking our masters to detain us at Marple, and saying that he would keep things right in Skye. When I came away, all my best clothes were taken from me, but Mrs. Walmsley gave me a bonnet and a frock. The masters refused to give any money to help me home; and during all the time I was in the factory, I received only 11d. in all. I reached home in great weakness, and do not expect to recover, or to live many weeks. The above is a true statement. (Signed) "CATHERINE ROBERTSON."

"John Young, witness."

"Alex. Macdonald, Stonfield, witness."

III. Declaration by THREE OF THE GIRLS from the Parish of Sleat.

"SLEAT, 27th January, 1853."

"We, Ann M'Kinnon, residing at Tarskeveg, Christina Nicolson, and Mary Nicolson, both residing at Drimfern, unite in giving the following declaration—That Ann M'Kinnon is fifteen years of age, Christina Nicolson seventeen years, and Mary Nicolson fifteen years. We engaged with Francis M'Kenzie at Broadford to go to Marple in England. He engaged that we were to be employed four hours at work every day, and that during the rest of the day we were to be taught reading, writing, knitting, and sewing; that we were to receive three shillings a-week, with which we might do what we pleased; that a woman from Strath, in this island, was to go with us, and to take us to Marple; and that whenever we or our parents pleased, we were to be sent home at the expense of our employers. We were

also informed by Francis M'Kenzie, that the reason why the terms he offered were so good, was, that the factory at Marple belonged to a very religious lady, who wished to spend her means in doing good to the poor. Not one of these terms was complied with. In May last we left Skye, but found neither man nor woman to take charge of us; but after a while, Mr. Ross came to us, while we remained in the steam-boat at Glasgow, who procured for us lodgings and some clothing; and the Rev. Mr. M'Dougal gave a Bible, in English, and a Gaelic Testament, to each of us. Mr. Ross went with us to Manchester, and then sent us on to Marple, saying that he would follow us; but he never did so; and we were told that he sent word that he was unwell. At Marple we were put into the factory of the Messrs. Walmsley. We regularly commenced work at six in the morning, and left off at six in the evening. We never received a lesson from the schoolmaster. The person called the schoolmaster only came to us every Monday evening, when he himself read to us out of a book; and it was only on the Monday evening that even this was done. We were very frequently and very severely beaten with an instrument made of a substance which we had never seen before, but which caused great pain, and touched us to the quick. After it was known that intelligence had been sent to Skye, we were much more severely treated; and once, on a Sabbath, when we were all sitting together by a dike side, Mr. William Walmsley came to us, and seeing us in distress and very sad, he warned us not to be thinking of getting home, for that he would get our heads cut off if we attempted it. On other occasions we were much terrified by the threats made both to ourselves and others. On one occasion, a girl who did not belong to Skye had said, that on account of a severe thrashing she had got, she would rather cut her throat than remain as she was. We were all dreadfully terrified next day, when at dinner, by seeing one who had a charge in the work pretending to cut her throat for her, by drawing the back of a knife across it.

One of our number, Ann M'Kinnon, was frequently and severely punished for what she was not guilty of, the girl who wrought next her laying the waste she made along with that which Ann made, who had not English enough to explain this, and had to suffer for it. Ann also saw Marian Robertson struck on both sides of her head, and heard her call out in Gaelic that she was done for now, and knows that from that time she continued unwell till the time of her death, ever after the thrashing being unable to stand properly, and being very weak and unwell. When we came away, all but our worst clothes were taken from us, and we obtained no money to take us home. During the whole time we were at Marple, we received only as follows — Ann M'Kinnon, 11½d.; Christina Nicolson, 7½d.; Mary Nicolson, 15d. We frequently wrote to our parents to take us away, but these letters were kept back, and did not reach our homes. Two of us, namely, Christina and Mary, were detained at Marple till our parents, who had applied for us, were obliged to leave us behind while they themselves proceeded to Australia. Though we do not speak English (at home), yet we have learned in Skye to read and understand it; and we understood a letter which we heard read from Francis M'Kenzie, urging the Messrs. Walmsley to detain us, and that he would keep matters right in Skye. The above is a true declaration.

(Signed)

"ANN M'KINNON."

"CHRISTINA NICOLSON."

"MARY NICOLSON."

"John Young, witness."

"Donald Nicolson, witness."

#### IV. Declaration by JOHN MUNRO, in the Parish of Strath.

"At Broadford, Isle of Skye, the 19th day of February, 1853. I, John Munro, tenant in Harripool, parish of Strath, hereby solemnly declare, and if called upon, am willing to make oath, That I was present with Francis M'Kenzie

and the girls who were going to England as engaged by him; and that I was so present on the evening before they went away. That the said Francis M'Kenzie promised they would receive pocket money while at work where they were going; and that should they not like the place, they would be sent back at the charge of their employers; that I do not recollect any specified time being mentioned in reference to their being sent back; and that they would also be educated. I also solemnly declare, I am willing to make oath, That Francis M'Kenzie said these things in my presence, on account of some of the girls beginning to hesitate about going, and that he said these things to induce them to go. This was in May last.

(Signed) "JOHN MUNRO."

V. *Declaration by JOHN MACRAE and DONALD MACDONALD, in the Parish of Strath.*

"We, the undersigned, hereby make the following solemn declaration, which we are willing and ready to verify on oath, when properly called to do so. We declare, That we were present when Francis M'Kenzie, in May, 1852, engaged some girls from this neighbourhood to go to Marple; and are certain that he, Francis M'Kenzie, promised that they would be sent home at the expense of their employers, whenever they showed a wish to return home.

(Signed) "JOHN MACRAE."

"DONALD MACDONALD."

VI. *Declaration by CATRINA MUNRO, in the Parish of Strath.*

"At Strath, Isle of Skye, the 21st day of February, 1853. I, Catrina Munro, hereby solemnly declare, That I was, in the month of May last, engaged by Francis M'Kenzie at Broadford to go to Marple in England, where I was to be employed in a factory; that I was to work from six in

the morning till mid-day, and during the rest of the day was to be in school; that I was to receive six shillings a-week of wages, in addition to being kept by my employers; that a person was to accompany us from Skye to Marple; and that our employers would send us home whenever we liked. No person was sent with us from Skye, but Mr. Ross of Glasgow went from thence with us to Manchester, and sent us on to Marple. When at Marple, we wrought from six o'clock in the morning till six in the evening. I never got a lesson while there; I received in all 1s. 6d. while at Marple; and when I came away, was allowed to bring with me only the clothes I had taken there with me. While at Marple, I was twice punished by being struck with something like a stick, but I do not know the name of it, and it hit very sore. I saw Marian Robertson struck on both sides of her head, and she never was well after that, and I understand she was so struck for having written home to Skye. The Skye girls were not the only ones discontented, as at one time four English girls ran away.

(Signed) "CATRINA MUNRO."

"John Young, witness."

"Alexander Munro, witness."

VII. *Declaration by ISABELLA MACDONALD, in the Parish of Strath.*

"At Kilbride, Isle of Skye, the 11th day of April, 1853. I, Isabella Macdonald, daughter of Donald Macdonald, residing at Sculamas, in the parish of Strath, hereby solemnly declare, That in May last I was engaged by Francis M'Kenzie at Broadford to go to England. I was to work four hours a-day in a factory, and during the rest of the day I was to get education. Before I was engaged, my father saw a letter which Francis M'Kenzie had received from some gentleman, but whether from Mr. Ross or Mr. Walmesley, I do not know, promising, that besides our boarding and clothing, we were also to receive pocket

money. Though it was promised us, that a woman should take us from Skye to Marple, yet no one went with us; and though Mr. Ross took us from Glasgow to Manchester, we were only sent forward from thence to Marple, Mr. Ross having promised to see us at six o'clock that night at Marple, which he failed to do, nor did I ever see him after that. I attended school every Monday night while I was at Marple, but never read a lesson, nor wrote any. I received in all about one shilling; but when I came away, the few articles which I bought, and the pence which still remained, were taken from me. I was struck over the hands two or three times, but do not know whether it was with leather or something not unlike it. If the truth had been told me, and I had known that it was merely to work in a mill, and get neither education nor wages, I would never have gone, nor been allowed to go. It had also been promised, that I was to get home whenever I and my father should wish it, and that I would be sent home at the expense of my employers; but when my return home was desired, I was told that my father must pay the expense.

(Signed) "ISABELLA MACDONALD."

"Godfrey B. M'Kinnon, *witness*."

"Malcolm Fraser, *witness*."

VIII. *Declaration by SARAH MACRAE, in the Parish of Strath.*

"At Broadford, the 7th day of April, 1853. I, Sarah Macrae, solemnly declare, That in May last I was engaged by Francis M'Kenzie to go to England. I was to receive 2s. 6d. a-week of wages for my work. I was also to be educated, and to be as well kept as I would be with my parents. I was also to be sent home whenever I pleased, and this was to be at the expense of my employers. I continued at Marple till the 30th of March last, having been employed in the house of my employers till the last fortnight, which was spent by me in the factory to which I was

at that time sent. I went into the factory by advice of the doctor. I wrote to my father to take me home, for I had become very unwell. When my father applied to Mr. Ross at Glasgow, that gentleman gave a letter, and I was sent home. I was sent to Glasgow, when coming home, at the expense of my masters; and in Glasgow, and coming from thence home, my expenses were paid by Mr. Ross. I went to a kind of school every Monday night when I had a book, but never read any, nor wrote any. I and the other Highland girls were only required to look at our books. I received as wages not 2s. 6d., but only 1s. a-week, and with the money I thus got I bought clothes. When I came away, part of the clothes I had thus bought was taken from me, and also all I had got from Mrs. Walmsley. If I had known how I was to be when at Marple, I would on no account have gone. It was the promises made to me by Francis M'Kenzie which induced me to go.

(Signed) "SARAH MACRAE."

"Donald Faichney, *witness*."

"Alexr. Nicolson, *witness*."

Sarah Macrae is the last of the Skye girls that has returned from Marple, she having been employed as a domestic servant, and finding her situation more agreeable, remained at Marple after the other girls had been taken home to Skye. There is no account in her declaration of such hard usage as the other girls give in their declarations. She was sent home, and her expenses paid, as soon as her return was demanded; but why did she not receive her stipulated wages? Why was part of the clothes, bought by herself, taken from her, after having wrought so long as a servant in Mr. Walmsley's house?

The exporters of these innocent females seem to have, in some measure, come to their senses now. Sarah Macrae, the last of the Skye girls in England, is sent home at once, and her travelling expenses paid by them. Why did they not treat the other girls in the same way? Had

they been more pliable, and done this when they were first requested to send back the females, whom they had induced by captivating promises to leave their native homes, it is probable that their traffic would not be so much injured by such a straightforward course, as it may be by the tortuous course which they have so foolishly adopted.

It has been published by the exporters of the Skye girls, that Mr. James M'Queen, the pious Baptist clergyman at Broadford, was concerned in the business of sending these girls to Marple. We submit the following letter, which we have received from Mr. Young, the intelligent and learned tutor at Kilbride, as a sufficient settler of this point —

“ KILBRIDE, 1st April, 1863 ”

“ REVEREND AND DEAR SIR—In reference to a statement that has been publicly made, that Mr. James M'Queen at Broadford was concerned in sending the Skye girls to England, it is not necessary to have any declaration formally made by him. His word is of equal value; and both to myself and Mr. Faichney, parish teacher of Strath, he most distinctly stated, that he had no hand, directly or indirectly, in the affair. This you may with all safety use as a contradiction to said report. I am, Reverend and dear Sir, yours very truly.

(Signed) “ JOHN YOUNG.”

“ REV. JOHN FORBES, Minister of Glen.”

Having submitted the foregoing true statement of all the facts that have come to our knowledge of the case of the Skye girls, whose adventure to England we have briefly delineated, we believe that our fair and ingenuous statement will be regarded by every honest and impartial man not only as a triumphant refutation of all the charges that have been published against the people of Skye, but also as a successful exposure of a strange transaction. The case, which we have, from a sense of duty to our country,

been compelled to take up, and on which the concurrent opinion of the country corresponds with our own, turns chiefly upon this point, namely, “ Send back the girls.” Did the exporters of these girls, or did they not, promise to send them back? Both parents and children solemnly declare that they did. The exporters were in that case clearly bound to fulfil this important part of the contract as soon as they were asked to do so. Had they kindly and quietly restored the poor creatures to their affectionate parents as soon as their return was demanded, the affair would have likely ended in the silent disappointment of the parents and children; but since these exporters had so long refused to comply with the reasonable wishes of the innocent people who had intrusted their children to them, and chosen to interfere with the names of individuals who had not the remotest desire to molest them, they must see that they themselves are the aggressors, and that they have, by their own act, not only exposed themselves to the censure of the country, but to be publicly criticised. These exporters must have been very short-sighted indeed, if they had not anticipated that the guardians of this Christian country could not, and would not, wink or connive at such “ crooked policy” as is exhibited in the case of our island girls, and in the report sent abroad of desecrating the holy Sabbath, by gathering shell-fish on the sea-shore in Skye. The poor spider spins his filmy web out of his own bowels, and is not unfrequently caught in the snare which he lays for other insects; and there are some men in this world, who, like the spider, seem to make a trade of spinning out reports and stories from their own distorted brains, which, when brought to the test, flee away like the chaff before the wind. In some cases there is as little substantial merit in refuting the reports of a “ busy body,” as there is in catching or crushing a spider entangled in his own cobweb.

We have been led to submit the extraordinary case of the Skye girls to the public, not to gratify any party feeling, or to favour any sectarian purpose — acts too

common among some people at the present day — but to vindicate the character of our beloved countrymen; and in our humble attempt to do this, we have in every point proceeded upon the broad and independent basis of truth and rectitude; and while we stand armed with the righteous panoply of truth, we shall not fear the shafts of ridicule, falsehood, or calumny.

“ For evil tongues have but their day,  
And slander's arrows glide away;  
When truth and courage are our shield,  
Why should we fear? for such things yield.”

It has been apprehended by the inhabitants of this country, under good reasons, that if the representations which have been blazed abroad respecting the conduct of the friends of the Skye girls who were taken to England, were allowed to remain before the public without any counter statement of the real state of matters, that a lasting stigma might be fastened upon the character of the Skye people by their quondam benefactors in other parts of the kingdom. And now that this vexatious case has been fairly opened up, and divested of the cloud of mystery in which it lay so long enveloped, we have no doubt that our country will be redeemed from prejudice and unfavourable opinions, which might otherwise be readily entertained against it.

The present critical position of our populous country, when we are obliged to draw upon the sympathy and benevolence of our beneficent brethren at a distance, to assist us in promoting the welfare of our numerous countrymen, is not the time to allow them to be unjustly characterized and traduced as the most unreasonable, ungrateful, and senseless race of people in the world. We have therefore felt ourselves the more imperatively called upon to raise our voice in behalf of our countrymen, in order to protect their interest, as far as it lies in our power, from being damaged by the curious reports which have been published respecting the conduct of the Skye people in the case of the Skye girls. But we are taught by the lessons

of experience, that in endeavouring to discharge this duty faithfully and dauntlessly, we may incur the hot displeasure of some men. There may be individuals whose ears will tingle under the statement which we have furnished; and the only weapon which such individuals can employ against us is an “ abusive tongue.” To these we say, that we are indeed extremely sorry for any person who has sunk so low as to abandon himself to the odious work of a railing and calumniating tongue; and we tell him at the same time, that we are fully prepared to bear all the reproaches which any designing man may fabricate against us for faithfully and fearlessly discharging our duty to our country. If the world have called our Master Beelzebub, what may we not expect to be called? We are here to do our duty, and in the name of the Lord we shall endeavour to do it. If any man chooses to malign us for endeavouring to protect the character of our countrymen, be it known unto that man, that his malignant accusations will never deter us in the least from discharging our duty, or make us relax our efforts, one iota, in behalf of any poor man who may ask our assistance.

“ Is beag aig duine dileas, fìor, béum a' chridhe chroìd,  
Oir cuiridh frinn Dé, am béumadaìr 'na thosd.”

Let no man regard our statement as a design to dissuade the benevolent and the affluent from contributing of their means to relieve the wants of our poor countrymen. We have always advocated a judicious distribution of relief among the poor and indigent, and we shall continue to do so; but we shall never encourage any sort of gratuitous relief, which is calculated to destroy or even diminish the industrious habits of our people, or to foster indolence or idleness among them. The more help which we give in a judicious way to the poor the better; but we must be extremely careful how we distribute our charities among them. Our own rule in giving relief to poor people—a duty which we have been often called upon to perform—has uniformly

been, to administer relief in such a way as will enable the recipient to provide more by means of his own exertions. We have often seen "lifts" given in this way attended with very good results. If this mode of administering relief to working people is not pursued, the danger is, that we may, by the act of relieving some persons, be sowing the seeds of further destitution rather than eradicating the evil, or we may be perpetuating the distress which we wish to remove. Poor persons, especially those who have been for some time living upon the gratuities of others, are too apt to think that "begging" is the best trade in the world, because they have not been properly trained to habits of profitable and honourable industry. And this evil is not a little increased in some places by the conduct of "busy-bodies," whose personal interest it may be to be constantly sounding the tocsin of destitution at a distance, while they have a prospect of obtaining money, to be distributed through their own hands; and whether more or less of the money, food, and clothing which have been intrusted to them has stuck to their own hands, must be best known to their own hearts. At all events, contributors of relief to the poor and destitute cannot be too discriminative as to whom they delegate the charge of distributing their bounty.

In dismissing this subject for the present, we have only to observe, that the exporters and employers of the Skye girls may urge, in defence of their conduct, that these innocent females were ignorant, lazy, and useless; but this is not a satisfactory defence at all. If these parties found the girls an unprofitable speculation, why did they not return them at once, or rather, why did they not send them back, after repeated applications had been made to them for their return, both by their parents and others, or explain their reason for detaining them? The absence of any explanation or kind communication from the employers of the girls, either to their parents, or to any of the constituted authorities in Skye, has given urgent reasons for complaining to the inhabitants of this country.

R E M A R K S  
ON THE  
INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER  
OF THE  
HIGHLAND PEOPLE.

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It is a great pity that the industrial character of the Highlanders is so often misrepresented in the south, by persons who had little or no opportunity of witnessing or knowing instances of their toil and industry. Whatever is faulty or reprehensible in the character and habits of the Highland people, we are as willing to condemn and correct as any flying visitor from the south can be; and it is pleasing to observe, that through the kind attention and efforts of Highland proprietors and others, a great reformation has been effectuated within the last forty years in the agricultural and domestic economy of the Highlanders. No doubt much remains still to be done; but if the next forty years will equal the past forty in Highland improvements, the country will be greatly benefited. If some of our benefactors in the south, who may have been led by false reports to think that the Highlanders are not industrious, were here in the months of March and April, they might witness fine specimens of the great industry and exertions displayed by the laborious inhabitants of Skye in cultivating their crofts. They might see these sons of toil turning over fields of land with no other help than the local instrument called the *caschròm* or crooked spade. This is the island crofters' plough, and hard labour it is indeed to work it with only the hands and feet. Spade husbandry has been strongly commended to us by

the Royal Patriotic Society; here then it has been practised for many years. They might also see—while the men are toiling on their crofts with the *caschròm*—the women busy on the rugged shore in cold, stormy weather, cutting seaweeds, and carrying it in creels upon their backs over steep rocks and the roughest paths, to manure their croft-land. And as soon as these “pendicles” of land are tilled and sown, the men and many of the women set off to the south country, in quest of employment for their own support and the support of their families during the summer season; the produce of their lots being in most cases insufficient to maintain their families, should they have no rent to pay at all, and there is little local employment. The men might also be seen fishing on a tempestuous sea during the coldest days of the season. There are several poor persons in the Isles that cannot derive benefit from the general practice of labouring abroad. These are old, frail, or sickly persons, who have not strength to bear the toil of regular hard work from home. Also widows and widowers, having several young children depending upon them. These single-handed parents are prevented from going abroad to provide for themselves and their children, not having any person to take care of their helpless young ones in their absence. There are likewise not a few affectionate daughters, healthy and active, who are prevented from shifting for themselves and their parents, where good employment might be obtained, by their attachment to an old infirm father or mother, or both, who are unable to do any thing for themselves without the present help of the daughter. Persons labouring under these disadvantages are generally dependant upon temporary and precarious employment in their immediate neighbourhood; and it is such cases as these that we are most frequently called upon to relieve from starvation, especially during the summer season, when from inability to go to the south for work, or in the absence of local employment, the pressure of want is most severely felt by persons, who, if they were favourably situated,

would gain a comfortable livelihood by their industry. Many of these would disdain to descend so low as to solicit oleomonyary aid, if they had any other means of support. Indeed we find the people generally very reluctant to apply for such aid. It is absolute necessity that in most cases compels them to ask assistance in this way. They are so sensitive on this point, that it is by way of a loan that the most of them solicit temporary assistance, offering to work for it, or to pay it back as soon as they may be able to do so. Let us therefore endeavour to nourish among the people a spirit so essential to the advancement of industrious habits.

There is now before us a running pamphlet on “the Social Condition of the People of Skye, by a Commissioner of the Times, 1851.” The author of this pamphlet offers his opinions on the state of Skye in a smart and independent style, and seems to commiserate the sufferings of the people. He reports a number of distressing cases, furnishes some local statistics, and sharply criticises the systems of land management pursued in Skye. We agree with him in several points on which he touches. At the same time, we have no hesitation in stating, that if this transient visitor had been a resident for a few years in Skye, he might learn a lesson which would probably lead him to change some of the opinions which he has so boldly expressed, and to modify some of the statements which he has made respecting the state of the country. Doubtless there are cases of squalid poverty to be met with in Skye, but we doubt much whether any case of this kind can be found in any part of Skye without a parallel, or a worse one, in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, in the High Street of Glasgow, or in the dark areas of other large towns in the kingdom. It is impossible for strangers, however willing they may be to benefit the country, to furnish reports of the real state of matters in the Highlands, that can be trusted in all their details. Some Englishmen admire and praise the industry and activity of the Highlanders; others upbraid, and represent them as the

most indolent and useless race of people under the sun. We met an English tourist in one of the Skye steamers in autumn last, returning home with this impression upon his mind, calling our people lazy and useless creatures, because a Highlander, as we ascertained, refused to carry his portmanteau a distance of ten miles, when the honest man was very busy housing the corn on his croft from the rain.

The "Commissioner of the Times" seems to have founded his statements in a great measure upon a superficial view of the practices of the people, and upon cursory observations which he made in passing hurriedly through the country. He represents some of our Skye people as indolent and lazy. "Along the margin of the lake," says he, "there were many fishermen, some laying their nets for the night fishing, others lazily lounging over the gunwales of their fishing-boats, and some stretched at full length sunning themselves on the grass. Indolence and unskillfulness were the prominent features of these groups, and he must have little discernment indeed who does not see that a fisherman crofter is a miserable man." Had this sweeping writer lived a few years with us in Skye, he might see that "a fisherman crofter" is not always "a miserable man;" and if he passed by the same place at midnight, he might see the most of those "lounging" men out at sea plying their craft on the tops of the waves. Men who work hard at the fishing during the night, must rest themselves in some shape or other during the day. This, we think, accounts in a fair way for the indolence, idleness, and lounging which strangers from the south see among Highlanders who reside on the sea-coast. But after all, the inhabitants of Skye are not so indolent and so idle as this writer would lead people to suppose from the foregoing statement. He himself bears ample testimony to their industry in the following extract—"It is creditable," says he, "to the industry of the people of Skye, that their clothing is almost all manufactured by themselves. They shear the sheep, dress and spin the wool, weave the yarn

into cloth, dress the cloth, and dye it with native dyes, make and mend it. The fabric for the most part is coarse enough; but the clothing is warm, and the colours of the finer sorts are so well worked in, and so fresh and clear, that one wonders where in all the world these people get the chemistry for such dyes. The Highland stall which Mr. M'Dougall of Inverness now exhibits in the Great Exhibition, is a manifest proof of the ingenuity of the people of Skye." All right; but why does the same writer say that "indolence and unskillfulness were the prominent features of groups of these people?"

Speaking of "the practice in the east coast of Scotland," he says, that that is a *part* of the Highlands "where families in a similar condition, instead of remaining *all* at home, as *they do in the Isles*, hire themselves out for service." Now it is not at all true that *all* the families in the Isles remain at home. The fact is, that all the members of a family, able to work go far from home, to the south, east, and west, for employment, when they cannot get work at home. Not unfrequently three members of the same family are away during the greater part of the year, and some do not return for several years. So great is the number of the working people absent this year, that it is difficult at present to get servants for domestic and agricultural work in this parish, as also in other parts of Skye and on the mainland.

The same gentleman complains of the paucity of books and literature among the Skye people. "Of the English language," says he, "the women are every where ignorant." This is a gross misrepresentation, for there are in Skye many women, even among the peasantry, that can read and speak English fluently. "Of books," he adds, "they know little or nothing, for with the exception of a copy here and there of the Bible, some in Gaelic, and some in English, they have no literature." How is this rash and unguarded assertion balanced by what the same writer states on another page? He says, that he saw "groups of pedes-

trians wending their way to church from different points, all clean and trim. The building," he says, "is seated for 1000 people, and on this occasion it was well filled." Speaking of the men and women going to church, he adds — "all carrying in the hand a Bible rolled up in a white pocket handkerchief, presenting a fine sight." It appears from this last statement, that the people are not so illiterate, nor are Bibles so very scarce, as this gentleman thought, when he said that there was a copy of the Bible only "here and there," for every person or "all" carried a Bible to church.

The same writer seems to be vastly enraged against the Gaelic language. He is not the first from the south that has spoken contemptuously of our native language. It is no exaggeration to state, that there are in Skye a *hundred women* that can speak English, for *every visitor* coming from England that can speak Gaelic. Yet it is pleasing to observe, that we have met with several ladies and gentlemen of rank and education from England, and other parts of the south, who can speak Gaelic well.

The reason why some of these touring gentlemen show such strong hostility to our language, is patent. They cannot speak or understand it, *ergo* they would have it swept away; but this is impossible. They seem to allege that it is an obstacle in the way of social improvement, but they have not proved this to be the case. But say that it is desirable to exterminate the ancient language of Caledonia, so dear to the heart of every genuine Highlandman, and that English only should be spoken in every isle, glen, and valley of the north, what is the best way of supplanting the Gaelic? Teaching it carefully and accurately in the schools, for by doing so, access will be got to the minds of the natives for communicating substantial knowledge to them through the medium of the language which they understand. To show the importance of teaching the Gaelic language in the schools as a means of introducing English more generally, the best argument that can be employed in

support of the case, is the well-known fact, that in schools where the pupils are Gaelic-speaking children, the best Gaelic scholar is generally the best English scholar. We therefore submit, that those who desire the rapid introduction of English among the Highlanders, should take care to encourage the cultivation of the Gaelic language in the schools.

The same writer concludes his remarks by saying, among other things, and his remarks here are for the most part worthy of attention — "The destitution which prevails in the Highlands does not arise from any peculiarity on the part of the people. In other countries Highlanders exert themselves, and prosper. In other parts of our own land, they rise to situations of the greatest eminence. In former times they were most powerful, and even shook the British throne; and in so far as they are inactive now in their own country, their inactivity can be traced to the most obvious causes, which would have produced a similar result on any other people in the world. Neither does the present destitution arise from any peculiarity in the country; for, admitting that some parts of the Highlands are bleak and inhospitable, it is certain that large districts (and these in the very regions in which destitution abounds) possess an excellent soil and mild climate—land capable of producing abundant crops, surrounded by a sea swarming with fish. Those regions in ancient times sustained a great population. Similar districts on the continent of Europe, and under the management of 'peasant proprietors,' sustain a large and most comfortable population at this moment; and there is no comparison in many respects between the Western Highlands and some of those colonies of America to which it is proposed to banish the people. Neither is the cause of the mischief to be found in the failure of the crop for one year. That may have tended to bring the evil to a crisis; but the true springs of the mischief are more deeply seated. They are to be found partly in the system of management which has recently prevailed, and

partly in the state of ignorance in which the people have been kept. . . . Immense tracts of land have been recently laid out as deer-walks. Other immense tracts have been converted into sheep-walks. The poor Highlanders have been quietly driven down to the narrow margins of the sea-shore, where it is impossible for them to live. Land is peremptorily refused; even where it is given, leases are refused; and the Highlander, after improving his crop, has found it either taken from him, or his rent increased. How could he thrive under such a system? Instead of tracing the evil, however, to its proper and obvious cause, and giving back the lands to the people, a great outcry was raised about Highland laziness and improvidence."

The charge of indolence and inactivity which is not unfrequently brought against the Highland people, must have originated in ignorance of their real character, and from want of duly considering the disadvantages with which they have to contend. It is most unjust to utter such a charge against the Highlanders as a nation. Give a Highlander or an Islander scope and inducement, and he will bear comparison in point of industry and enterprising spirit with any other people in the world. The same opinion respecting the industrial character of the Highland people has often been stated by many men of superior judgment. The following extract from Dr. Walker's work, who has forty years ago furnished the world with "An Economical History of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland," richly merits to be quoted in proof of our argument. He says (p. 11. vol i.), "The proprietors and inhabitants of a higher rank are men of education, of a liberal mind, and fond of their country, from which it is to be regretted that they are too often necessarily abstracted. The lower ranks are composed of a sensible, virtuous, hardy, and laborious race of people. To call them laborious, is indeed contrary to an opinion frequently received; but it is only from a superficial view, that they are represented as unconquerably averse to industry and every kind of innovation. Beside

other good qualities, their laborious assiduity in various occupations is well known, wherever they happen to settle in the low country. No men were found superior to the Highlanders in digging the navigation between the Forth and the Clyde, where their work was by the piece, and which was profitable according to their degrees of exertions. Their persevering labour has also been conspicuous in the numerous colony settled on Blair-Drummond Moss. Nor is their spirit of industry in many cases less remarkable at home, especially in their field culture with the spade, which is the heaviest toil that any where occurs in the practice of husbandry. Their laborious and extensive cultivation of potatoes, their hardship and assiduity in the making of kelp, the success of the linen manufacture wherever it has been introduced, and the unrestrained progress of inoculation, abundantly show that the Highlanders are as candid in their judgment, are as ready to embrace, and can as vigorously pursue, any innovation that is advantageous or salutary, as any other people whatever. Unassisted exertions of industry are not to be expected from a people still in the pastoral stage of society; nor from unenlightened minds are we any where to expect the sudden discontinuance of old and inexpedient customs. But wherever the Highlanders are defective in industry, it will be found, upon fair inquiry, to be rather their misfortune than their fault, and owing to their want of knowledge and opportunity, rather than to any want of a spirit for labour. Their disposition to industry is greater than is usually imagined, and if judiciously directed, is capable of being highly advantageous both to themselves and to their country."—*An Economical History of the Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland* by JOHN WALKER, D.D., late Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh.

It is supposed by some people at a distance, such as allow themselves to be led and misled by the superficial or erroneous reports of persons who are but very slightly acquainted

with the real state of matters in the Highlands, or whose theories are unadapted to the state of the country, that the Highland proprietors, and other persons of rank and means, feel little or no interest in the prosperity of the labouring people — that their only aim is to banish them from their native land as soon as possible. We do not attempt to deny that there may have been cases of painful evictions in some parts of the Highlands, by which poor families were left without a house to shelter them; but we are happy to observe, that such cases are rare now-a-days, and it is to be hoped that few cases of this kind of cruel dealing will ever occur again. There seems to be a general desire among Highland proprietors, at the present day, to improve the social and moral condition of the people, and when sufficient remedy cannot be found at home, it is sought in facilitating emigration to other parts of the world; and although we cannot help regretting that so many of our countrymen are obliged to leave their native land, yet we are happy to hear so often of their success and prosperity in distant countries; and it is pleasing to observe, that many poor persons who have not yet been able, or who have not chosen to avail themselves of the advantages offered by emigration, some of whom will likely never leave their native country, are in many places objects of care and attention from those whom the Providence of God has placed above them in this world. It is therefore untrue, that the rural population of the Highlands are every where neglected by their superiors, and it is equally untrue that the working people are insensible of the favours conferred upon them. We have had many opportunities of hearing expressions of deep-rooted gratitude flowing from many of the working people in the Highlands, for benefits kindly bestowed upon them by their local benefactors, and we need not travel beyond the precincts of this parish for an example worthy of being put upon record. Upwards of three hundred heads of families, inhabitants of the parish of Sleat, in an address recently presented by

them to the Right Honourable Lady Macdonald, express their gratitude for favours bestowed upon them by that noble and benevolent lady in the following terms — “ We are not only privileged to witness the generous and judicious efforts which are made both by your Ladyship and by Lord Macdonald to promote the welfare of the numerous families that dwell upon your extensive estates, but to share largely in the benefits which result from these efforts. Such acts of pure benevolence and kindness richly merit and cordially receive our warmest gratitude. We are thankful for the valuable education which our children receive in the excellent female school which your Ladyship has planted among us; we are thankful for the benefits which we derive from the very useful “ Clothing Society ” which your beneficence has established in this place for our comfort; we are thankful for your Ladyship’s increasing kindness and attention to the poor. Above all, we rejoice to behold in your Ladyship the regular exercise of a Christian example, which is the brightest ornament in any human character; and we are thankful to know, that in the hands of your Ladyship and of your noble consort, one of the kindest of landlords, the stream of Christian beneficence of which the House of Armadale has, during many generations, been the abundant source, is still flowing onward.” The “ ARMADALE CLOTHING SOCIETY,” established and conducted by Lady Macdonald, last year distributed its benefits among upwards of three hundred people. Upwards of four hundred are enrolled this year; and we are happy to hear that one hundred and twenty persons from the neighbourhood of Broadford joined the other day. Our only object in mentioning these facts, is to show that the poorer people in Skye are not so ungrateful, or so sadly neglected, as some persons at a distance may be made to imagine.

It has long been a puzzling problem for the benefactors of the Highlands, how to raise the social condition of the numerous inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands and

how to place them beyond the reach of want, in the event of farther failures in the articles of food, upon which the people are chiefly dependent for subsistence. We humbly think, in common with many others, that the best auxiliary to the remedy already contemplated for relieving the Highlands, will be found in educating the people. Educate them, and if they cannot find employment at home, they will have the greatest facility of removing to other countries where there is a demand for their service. A Highlander or an Islander, it is well known, will not remain starving at home when he has the lamp of knowledge to guide him to the regions of plenty abroad.

We shall conclude our remarks by quoting the following excellent eulogium upon the character of the Highland people, from a speech lately made by His Grace the Duke of Argyll at a meeting of the Highland Society of London.\* The noble Duke "alluded to the strong local and hereditary attachments by which the Highlanders were characterized, and which, notwithstanding the lapse of time, was displayed in undiminished force in their love for their native land. In this respect Highlanders were perhaps of all races the most remarkable, and the more so, because their habits were not sedentary; for they were to be found in all parts of the world, from the snows of Canada to the palms of India, and under all climes and circumstances, displaying an energy and perseverance which gave the *lie to the accusations* of idleness sometimes brought against them. However distant they might be, and after long years had passed, they invariably returned, if they were fortunate enough to return at all, with all their early memories, and the associations which gather around the Highlands of Scotland, bringing on their tongue unmistakable marks of their origin, and coming back with accents which, to his thinking, were a great improvement to the 'Queen's English,' and breathing still of the heather and the burn. He never liked to see a

\* From the *Inverness Courier*, March 31, 1853.

Scotchman trying to conceal his origin by his tongue, a practice which reminded him of an anecdote related in the life of Lord Jeffrey, of whom it was said, that he had lost his broad Scotch, but only in finding his narrow English. After some remarks in defence of the Highland character from the charges of idleness and ignorance, and ascribing its effects to the want of education, the noble Duke, in conclusion, expressed a hope, now that so great a number of English flocked to the Highlands, that they would unite heart and soul in improving the moral and social condition of their population."

FINIS.