

tories have ever, since the Ice Age, been the haunts of wild animals, and they remain so, not, as some crude theorists contend, because the lordly proprietors of the ground have so determined, but because they are fit neither for crops of corn nor herds of sheep. We hear much in these days of the shame and folly of allowing Highland landlords to keep such wide tracts as game preserves, which might be turned to account in raising food for the people. But the experience of many centuries has shown that these regions are best left in their wild condition. It is a false political economy to attempt to become the master instead of the servant of nature. She has marked out the tracts that can be reclaimed, but has set her seal as indelibly on those that must be left to herself, where her grandeur and her beauty are to remain sacred from the invasions of agriculture or of industry. Man cannot plant crops where she has appointed that they will never grow; nor can he pasture flocks of sheep where she has decreed that only the fox, the wild-cat, and the eagle shall find a home.

It is the lowlands that have mainly contributed to the material prosperity of the country. In these more fertile regions have lain the chief elements of progress. The broad valleys and plains, eroded by the rivers and strewn with the soil carried down from higher grounds, have determined the sites of our principal towns, and the distribution of the great centres and belts of population. Our agricultural progress is the story of lowland farming. Our industrial progress is the story of the exploration of lowland coal-fields and iron-mines. Our commercial progress is the story of the deepening of lowland rivers, the construction of lowland harbours, and the building of the network of lowland railways.

(4.) The influence of the scenery of the country on the