

lander's evening meal, and during the first twenty of these, the use of the potatoe—unknown in the Highlands a century before—greatly increased. I have been told by my maternal grandfather, that about the year 1740, when he was a boy of about eight or nine years of age, the head gardener at Balnagown Castle used, in his occasional visits to Cromarty, to bring him in his pocket, as great rarities, some three or four potatoes; and that it was not until some fifteen or twenty years after this time that he saw potatoes reared in fields in any part of the Northern Highlands. But, once fairly employed as food, every season saw a greater breadth of them laid down. In the North-Western Highlands, in especial, the use of these roots increased from the year 1801 to the year 1846 nearly a hundredfold, and came at length to form, as in Ireland, not merely the staple, but in some localities, almost the only food of the people; and when destroyed by disease in the latter year, famine immediately ensued in both Ireland and the Highlands. A writer in the *Witness*, whose letter had the effect of bringing that respectable paper under the eye of Mr. Punch, represented the Irish famine as a direct judgment on the Maynooth Endowment; while another writer, a member of the Peace Association,—whose letter did not find its way into the *Witness*, though it reached the editor,—challenged the decision on the ground that the Scotch Highlanders, who were greatly opposed to Maynooth, suffered from the infliction nearly as much as the Irish themselves, and that the offence punished must have been surely some one of which both Highlanders and Irish had been guilty in common. *He*, however, had found out, he said, what the crime visited actually was. Both the Irish and Highland famines were judgments upon the people for their great homicidal efficiency as soldiers in the wars of the empire, an efficiency which, as he truly remarked, was almost equally characteristic of both nations. For my own part, I have been unable hitherto to see the steps which conduct to such profound conclusions; and am content simply to hold, that the superintending Providence who communicated to man a calculating, foreseeing nature, does occasionally get angry with