

as almost to threaten their existence as individuals, and they increase, as if in behalf of the species, with a rapidity without precedent in circumstances of greater comfort. The aristocratic families of a country are continually running out; and it requires frequent creations to keep up the House of Lords; whereas our poorer people seem increasing in more than the arithmetical ratio. In Syke, though fully two-thirds of the population emigrated early in the latter half of the last century, a single generation had scarce passed ere the gap was completely filled; and miserable Ireland, as it existed ere the famine, would have been of itself sufficient, had the human family no other breeding-place, to people in a few ages the world. Here, too, in close neighborhood with the flower-covered meadows, were there miserable cottages that were swarming with children,—cottages in which, for nearly the half of every twelvemonth, the cereals were unknown as food, and whose over-toiled female inmates did all the domestic work, and more than half the work of the little fields outside.

How exquisitely the sun sets in a clear, calm, summer evening over the blue Hebrides! Within less than a mile of our barrack there rose a tall hill, whose bold summit commanded all the Western Isles, from Sleat in Skye, to the Butt of the Lewis. To the south lay the trap islands; to the north and west, the gneiss ones. They formed, however, seen from this hill, one great group, which, just as the sun had sunk, and sea and sky were so equally bathed in gold as to exhibit on the horizon no dividing line, seemed in their transparent purple,—darker or lighter according to the distance,—a group of lovely clouds, that, though moveless in the calm, the first light breeze might sweep away. Even the flat promontories of sandstone which, like outstretched arms, enclosed the outer reaches of the foreground,—promontories edged with low red cliffs, and covered with brown heath,—used to borrow at these times, from the soft yellow beam, a beauty not their own. Amid the inequalities of the gneiss region within,—a region more broken and precipitous, but of humbler altitude, than the great gneiss tract of the midland Highlands,—the chequered light