

acts of a foreign conqueror. William, in order to indulge his tastes as a huntsman, depopulated the country, and barred out the human foot from an extent, says Hume, of more than thirty miles. It is to this act of despotism, and its consequences, that the master poet of the times of Queen Anne refers in his exquisite description :—

“ The land appeared in ages past
A dreary desert and a gloomy waste,
To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
And kings more furious and severe than they,
Who claimed the skies, dispeopled air and floods,—
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods.”

The pleasures of the chase are necessarily jealous and unsocial. The shepherd can carry on his useful profession without quarrel with the chance traveller; the agriculturist in an open country has merely to fence against the encroachments of the vagrant foot the patches actually under cultivation at the time; whereas it is the tendency of the huntsman possessed of the necessary power, to “empty” the “wilds and woods” of their human inhabitants. The traveller he regards as a rival or an enemy: he looks upon him as come to lessen his sport, either by sharing in it or by disturbing it; and so, when he can, he reigns, according to the poet, a “lonely lord,” and the country spreads out around him, as in the days of the Conqueror, “a dreary desert and a gloomy waste.” And into this state of savage nature and jealous appropriation,—characteristic, in the sister kingdom, of the times of the Conquest,—many districts in the Highlands of Scotland are fast passing. The great sheep-farms were permitted, in the first instance, to swallow up the old agricultural holdings; and now the let shootings and game-parks are fast swallowing up the great sheep-farms. The ancient inhabitants were cleared off, in the first process, to make way for the sheep; and now the people of Scotland generally are to