

nation of his country on the subject. Charity on a large scale, and directed on distant objects, soon exhausts itself. It is competent, if thoroughly roused, to grapple with the necessities of one famine, and to do a very little for a second ; but a third wearies it ; and, should famine become chronic, it leaves it to devastate unheeded, and ends where it is said to begin, by exerting itself at home. Nor do we see, man being the impulsive creature that he is, how his charity, if voluntary and at large, is to be made to act other than paroxysmally and at wide intervals. We must be content, we are afraid, to accept it as a fact, that, even should our poor Highlanders not have enough to eat for several years to come, there will be very little more money collected for them in England or elsewhere ; and that, however great the difficulty which attaches to the "state of the Highlands" problem, it is a difficulty with which our own country, and in especial the Highlands themselves, must be prepared to grapple, undiverted by any vain hopes of eleemosynary aid from without.

The difficulty is certainly very great, and it has been vastly enhanced by the late years of famine. We are old enough to remember the northern Highlands, rather more than thirty years ago, when there were whole districts of the interior, untouched by the clearing system, in possession of the aboriginal inhabitants. And if asked to sum up in one word the main difference between the circumstances of the Highlander in these and in later times, our one word would be, that most important of all vocables to the political economist,—*capital*. The Highlander was never wealthy : the inhabitants of a wild mountainous district, formed of the primary rocks, never are. But he possessed on the average his six, or eight, or ten head of cattle, and his small flock of sheep, and, when—as sometimes happened in the high-lying districts—the corn-crop turned out a failure, the sale of a few cattle or