

one-and-twenty years hence, is a better prospect than any poor Highland crofter or cottar can rationally entertain; and we would much prefer seeing some twenty thousand of our brave countrymen enrolled in the army, as at once its best soldiers and best Protestants, than lost for ever to the country in a colony that in a few years hence may exist as one of the States of the great North American republic.—*September 20, 1851.*

THE SCOTCH POOR-LAW.*

WE have never yet been able to see any foundation for the assertion of Paley, that “the poor have the same *right* to that portion of a man’s property which the *laws* assign to them, that the man himself has to the remainder.” *Right* cannot be created by law where right did not exist before; and in the poor-laws, as now administered in England, we have a striking illustration of the fact. No law can give to one man a *right* to take another man, guilty of no crime save poverty, and in debt to no one, and shut him up in prison. Poverty

* A poor-law edict indeed “become inevitable for Scotland!” but, alas for its consequences! One who was session-clerk for fourteen years in a parish as large as three or four of the smaller English counties, tells me that in all those years, the proprietors, four in number, gave just one five pounds in all to assist the poor. Now they give about five hundred a-year, while the people are taxed to the amount of other five hundred. This would be little matter, if the condition of the poor were improved; but it is unmistakeably and undeniably a hundred times worse. Nothing like the thousand pounds named finds its way into *their* pockets: collectors, inspectors, law-expenses, &c., swallow up a great part of it. But, worse than all, the kindly charities of the poor towards the poor are quite frozen up. Formerly paupers were assisted with a little milk, potatoes, and fish: now the industrious poor, irritated by the poor-law tax, will contribute nothing towards the support of their poorer neigh-