THE BACKGROUND AND MOTIVES OF SCOTTISH EMIGRATION
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE PERIOD 1815-1861,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EMIGRANT CORRESPONDENCE

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‘The Emigrants’
SUMMARY

In Part I the Scottish background to emigration is investigated and suggestions are made concerning motives for leaving Scotland to emigrate to the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Lowlands and the Highlands are considered separately because of the pronounced cultural and economic differences between the two areas.

In the Lowlands the Agricultural, Industrial and Social Revolutions all played a part in severing old roots and producing a climate of restlessness which made many people receptive to the "pulls" of emigration. The emigration was predominantly economic and urban, but many of the "urban" emigrants had but recently migrated from the rural areas to the industrial centres. The emigrants who went to the United States were not, by and large, destitute.

In the Highlands the Social and Agricultural Revolutions played the strongest part in displacing the population, with the latter assuming the particularly virulent form of the Clearances. With or without the Clearances, however, it is reasonably certain that the overpopulation of the Highlands would have resulted in a mass exodus during the nineteenth century. Almost all of the Highlanders who emigrated during this period went to Canada or Australia, but it is probable that many subsequently drifted down into the United States from Canada.

Among the "vehicles" for the "pull" factors, the emigrant letters probably exerted the greatest influence; coming as they did from relatives or friends, they would be more readily believed than newspapers or emigrant manuals. In Part II the emigrant letters are analysed in an attempt to discover the strengths of the various enticements which America held out to prospective emigrants. On the basis of this assessment, land seems to have been the main attraction although job opportunities were also important. American social equality and democracy were probably not important factors in drawing over emigrants from Scotland, but they were an added attraction and generally appreciated.
Religious and educational facilities in the United States were apparently at least good enough not to be a drawback (as they were in many of the colonies) and towards the end of the period the American educational system may well have been superior to the Scottish.

The letters indicate that many "urban" emigrants bought farms in America, but this is not surprising in view of the fact that many had but recently migrated to the Scottish towns prior to emigrating. The letters also show that many of the Scottish farmers bought uncleared land on the farming frontier and participated actively in the "settlement" process of the country—some even going so far as to participate in the Yankee business of land speculation. Finally, the strength of the "pulls" expressed in the letters—whether from successful emigrants or failures—is shown by many instances of individuals and families following in the tracks of letter-writing emigrants and settling down near them.
Preface

Mark Twain is reputed to have said, "I don't give a damn for a man that can spell a word only one way." One of my problems has, in fact, been that I was taught to spell words and construct sentences in one way and then, over a period of five years, was expected to learn another—a task which I am convinced is more difficult than mastering a totally foreign language. The result has been that I now can no longer tell which is which. Although I have made a determined effort to spell and write in English, I can only hope that I may be forgiven for the occasional lapse into American and for a few commas on the wrong side of quotation marks.

In order to avoid confusion, I should also admit at this stage that I have taken liberties with some of the terms commonly used throughout the thesis: I have used "America" and "American" to mean "the United States" and "from/of the United States" respectively; Canada is always referred to as Canada or, occasionally, "British North America"; whereas, "North America" is used to mean Canada and the United States together. The term "first half of the nineteenth century" has generally been used to mean the period under review, i.e. 1815-1861.

The nature of my thesis has made me dependent on a wide variety of people and organisations for my source material. Those who have, over the past five years, given freely of their time and effort on my behalf are far too numerous for me to name individually. At the risk, however, of offending some who deserve mentioning, I would like to give special thanks to those who have contributed most.

My greatest debt is to my two supervisors. Professor George A. Shepperson, apart from being instrumental in my return to Edinburgh, has guided me patiently through
a labyrinth of false-starts and wrong turnings and his countless suggestions and acute knowledge of bibliography have given my thesis what little shape it has. Professor Gordon Donaldson first introduced me (more years ago than I now care to remember) to Scottish History and it was the interest he stimulated that led me to attempt this study of Scottish emigration. Throughout the past five years he has made determined efforts to keep me on the straight and narrow path of historical accuracy and, if my feet have strayed widely, it is in spite of his efforts. Most of all I am obliged to him for his encouragement to see the human side of history and to write, insofar as I am able, in my own style.

I am also obliged to Dr. William Ferguson of the Scottish History Department for constructive criticism of several of the chapters in Part I and for many valuable suggestions and leads. To Dr. Charlotte Erickson of the London School of Economics I owe a rather peculiar debt: her criticism instilled in me a fear which was, I am convinced, solely responsible for my finishing the thesis at all. She also directed me to several of the letters in the present collection and her suggestions and bibliography were of inestimable value for the chapters devoted to emigrant correspondence.

I am grateful to Dr. Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, Dr. Tom Barron and Mr. Keith Hampson of the Department of History for many valuable comments and suggestions.

I would like to thank my father for casting an economist's eye on Chapters I, II and III of Part II and for his continual encouragement and, in spite of all odds, faith in me, and my mother for inspiring the illustrations.

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I would like to thank all of the people with whom I have corresponded over the past five years, but in particular I must single out a few: Mr. Peter Jamieson of Lerwick, Shetland, for his many suggestions and kind encouragement during a rather discouraging period of my study; Professor W. Turrentine Jackson of the University of California; Professor S.G. Checkland of the Department of Economic History at the University of Glasgow; Dr. Philip Taylor of the University of Hull; Dr. William Kerr of the University of St. Andrews; and Professor David Macmillan of the University of Sydney.

Without the kindness of the people who answered my pleas and sent copies or, in many cases, original manuscripts, of emigrant letters in their possession this thesis would not have been feasible. The complete list of their names is in the Bibliography, but I would like to give special thanks to the following who have gone to considerable trouble on my behalf and, in many cases, invited me into their homes with an open hospitality which I shall never forget: Mr. Thomas Bryson, Holehouse Farm, Denny; Miss Mary A. Aitken, Dalry; Miss Elizabeth Macdaird, Kilmarnock; Mrs. T. Fraser, Kirkcaldy; Mr. W.T. Stirling, Paisley; Mr. Peter Shepherd, Broughty Ferry; Mrs. Elizabeth Rutherford, Lochwinnoch; Miss J.M. Henderson, Dumfries; and Mrs. Madeline D. Leishman, Edinburgh.

I am obliged to all of the State Historical Societies, Museums and Libraries which helped me in my search for emigrant letters, especially: the Collection of Regional History and University Archives, Cornell University, for their donation of copies of the Pollock letters; the Oberlin College Library for donating a copy of the Charles Livingstone letter; and the State Historical Society of Nevada for donating a copy of the Sandy Bowers letter. The following were also helpful far beyond the call of duty: Mrs. Frank L. Owlsley, Tennessee State Library Archives, Nashville; Miss Josephine Harper, Manuscripts
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I would like to thank all of the newspapers which published, free of charge, my request for information about emigrant letters and in particular the editors of the following papers who were kind enough to write, and often to send copies of their papers, to me: The Observer; The Scotsman; Arbroath Herald; West Lothian Courier; Banffshire Advertiser; Galloway News; Clydebank Press; Cumnock Chronicle; Fife Herald and Journal; Dalketh Advertiser; North Star; Ross-shire Journal; Dufftown News; Dumfries and Galloway Standard; Dundee Evening Telegraph and Post; Dundee Weekly News; Edinburgh Evening News and Dispatch; Edinburgh Weekly; Northern Scot, and Moray and Nairn Express; Forres, Elgin, and Nairn Gazette; Strath- spey and Badenoch Herald; Glasgow Daily Record; Glasgow Evening Citizen; Glasgow Evening Times; Glasgow Sunday Post; Fife News; Kinross-shire Advertiser; St. Andrews Citizen; Gourock Times; Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette; Inverness Courier; Fife Free Press; Shetland Times; Oban Times and West Highland Times; Buchan Observer; Rutherglen Reformer; Stirling Observer; Wigtownshire Free Press & Galloway Advertiser; and John-o'-Groat Journal.

The Edinburgh University Volleyball, Athletic and Spartans' Clubs have enabled me to concentrate the more on my studies by providing intermittent (some would say frequent) relaxation, as have the nineteenth-century ambiance and innumerable cups of tea in J. & R. Glen's,
Highland Bagpipe Makers, of the Lawnmarket; and Mr. Hugh MacGregor has widened my appreciation of Scottish history and taught me all I know of the piob-mhor (and if that is very little, it is through no fault of his).

Thanks, finally, to my wife... for hot meals when I was hungry, encouragement when I was depressed, faith when I was lost and help when I was desperate.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction** 1

**PART I: THE BACKGROUND AND MOTIVES OF SCOTTISH EMIGRATION 1815-1861**

Chapter I: Lowland Background 2
   A: The Rural Lowlands 4
   B: The Industrial Centres 12
   C: The New Industries 17

Chapter II: Emigration 20
   A: Attitudes to Emigration 25
   B: Causes of Emigration (Push)
      1. The Rural Exodus 34
      2. Urban Unrest 39
      3. The Irish Problem 49
      4. Church and State 54
      5. Escape 62

Chapter III: The Highlands 65
   A: Background to the Clearances
      1. The Old Social Order 66
      2. Early Highland Emigration 77
   B: The Highland Clearances 78
      1. The Reasons 80
      2. Effect of the Clearances on Emigration 84
   C: Action and Reaction
      1. Reaction 88
      2. Government Action 93
   D: Other Causes of Emigration 95
   E: Conclusions 102

Chapter IV: The Lure of America (Pull) 106

**PART II: ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS OF EMIGRANT CORRESPONDENCE** 115

Introduction to Part II 117
   A: The Sources 118
   B: The Value of Emigrant Correspondence 126
   C: The Purpose of this Research 129
   D: The Typical Emigrant Letter 132

Chapter I: The Voyage 138
   A: The Departure 139
   B: Conditions on Board 143
   C: Food 146
   D: False Starts 149
   E: Shipwreck 152
   F: Sea-sickness 155
   G: Epidemics 157
   H: Death at Sea 161
   I: The Sabbath 162
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part II, Chapter I</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Hard Ships and Hardships</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K: Mutiny</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L: The Captain</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Staving off Boredom</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N: Land</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter II: Through Emigrant Eyes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Cities and Towns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. New York and the East Coast</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Go West, Young Man...</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: The Land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Beauty of the Land</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Richness of the Land</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. &quot;Farming here...&quot;</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lairds and Bonnet Lairds</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Fruits of Labour</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Progress</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter III: Land of the Labouring Man</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Work for All</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Hard Work</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Jacks of All Trades</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Dreams of Riches</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Land for Labouring Women?</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Independence</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: The Letters</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter IV: Freedom</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: &quot;Endless taxes...&quot;</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Equality</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Politics</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Laws</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Inequality</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Freedom</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter V: Mind and Soul (I)—Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Education in Scotland</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Education in the United States (I)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. British Opinions</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The American Approach</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Education in the United States (II)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Self-Help</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Schools on the Frontier</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Conclusions</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter VI: Mind and Soul (II)—Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Scottish Background</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: The United States</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: The American Presbyterian Church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Emigrant Reactions</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Conclusions</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Part II, Chapter VII: Success and Failure

A: Success
   1. Farmers
   2. Mechanics, Merchants and Labourers
   3. The Professions
   4. The Followers

B: Failure
   1. John Barleycorn
   2. Speculation
   3. Climate
   4. Misfortune
   5. Great Expectations
   6. Shiftlessness
   7. Toryism

C: Caution

D: Re-emigration

Conclusion

APPENDICES

A: Typical "Reverse" Letter
   B: Problems with Statistics
   C: Business Cycles
   D: Emigration Figures
   E: The Evictions
   F: Statement of Col. Gordon's Evictees
   G: Extracts from a Writ of Removal
   H: The Search for Ancestors
   I: Petition of the Kirkman Finlay Emigration Society
   J: "A Song or poetry to A friend"

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   A. Manuscript
   B. From The Scotsman

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   I. Printed Primary Sources
   II. Newspapers and Magazines
   III. U.S. Agricultural Census
   IV. Parliamentary Papers
   V. New Statistical Account
   VI. Secondary Sources
   VII. Articles
   VIII. Pamphlets
   IX. Unpublished Theses
   X. Novels and Poetry

MAPS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>&quot;The Emigrants&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>&quot;Emigrants&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Thomas Chalmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Thomas Johnstone, Sr. (father of the emigrant Thomas Johnstone and author of the Ms. Diary quoted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>&quot;Interior of a Cottage in the Isle of Skye&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>&quot;A Skye Cottage&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>&quot;Emigration from the Isle of Skye:—The 'Hercules' in the Harbour...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>&quot;Skye Peasant with the Caschroom&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ms. letter from Alexander Allison, Middleton, Logan County, Aug. 4, 1843, &quot;Dear Uncle&quot;... (4 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>&quot;The Embarkation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>&quot;The Departure&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>&quot;The Roll-Call&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>&quot;Dancing between Decks&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>&quot;Hints to Emigrants&quot; (from The Scotsman, Sept. 3, 1851)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>&quot;Log House in the Forests of Georgia&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Wisconsin Farmstead I (the first stage: log cabin and fences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Ms. letter from John Rutherford, Verona, Dec. 1, 1848, &quot;Dear Brother&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Wisconsin Farmstead II (the second stage: frame house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Wisconsin Farmstead III (third stage: prosperity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Holeshouse Farm, Denny, Stirling-shire c. 1860 (the figure with the horse in the foreground in Thomas Johnstone's brother, John; and in the background is their father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>&quot;Declaration of Intention to Become a Citizen of the United States&quot;—John Proud, June 3, 1850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. George Lockerbie: a native of Dumfries who emigrated in 1809 to Philadelphia, moving after some years to Lexington, Kentucky and finally settling in Indianapolis where he became the city's first Assessor.

23. Ms. letter from Mary Robertson, Millhill, Ayrshire, May 15, 1849, "Dear Robert"

24. Ms. letter from James Matheson, Lansingburgh, June 20, 1815, "Dear Brother"

25. Ms. letter from Andrew Robertson, Dalgarven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843, "Dear Brother"

26. Henry Arnott (date unknown, but subsequent to his return to Scotland)

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Mr. Thomas Bryson, Holehouse Farm, Denny, Stirlingshire, for No. 4; and for No. 20.

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MAPS (in the back, behind the Bibliography)

1. Scotland (from Sir John Sinclair's Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, 1826)

2. The United States of America (showing places where some of the emigrants settled)


4. New York State

5. Illinois

6. Wisconsin

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the text and footnotes:

PP: Parliamentary Papers

NSA: New Statistical Account

SHJR: Scottish Historical Review

W&MQ: William and Mary Quarterly

BAAS: British Association for American Studies
Introduction

It is the object of this dissertation to analyse some of the causes of Scottish emigration as reflected in the letters written by Scottish emigrants in the United States to their friends and families in Scotland. The thesis is divided into two parts. Part One sketches in the Scottish background and outlines some of the salient social and economic causes of emigration. Part Two concentrates on the emigrant correspondence and attempts to assess by analysis the importance of various factors which figured prominently in the crucial decision of whether or not to emigrate. The importance of the emigrant letters, both as a "pull" contributing to the emigration-decision and as historical source material, is discussed and the implications of the facts revealed about the writers are considered.

The year 1815 is a convenient starting point for several reasons: it marked the end of hostilities with both France and the United States and the beginning of the first wave of "modern emigration"; it ended a period of great prosperity for farmers and inaugurated a golden age for industrialists. The American Civil War forms an equally convenient breaking-off point: after the War, many of the factors influencing emigration were to change and organised agencies would come over from the United States to attract emigrants; steamships would become the most common transportation, ensuring better conditions, shorter voyages and regular departures—emigration would become less an adventure and more a business; in Scotland the cotton trade would collapse as the supply of cotton from the American South was cut off and iron and steel would come to the fore, developing skills which American manufacturers were keen to import; and in the United States new economic independence would begin to change the shape of the "Atlantic Community".

The emphasis throughout is on the causes and motivations of emigration. No attempt has been made to write a complete history of Scottish emigration in the first half of the nineteenth century.
Part I

THE BACKGROUND AND MOTIVES OF SCOTTISH EMIGRATION 1815-1861
Chapter I: Lowland Background

It is becoming increasingly easy to forget that Scotland was, until recently, two distinct countries. The terms "Highland" and "Lowland" do not simply denote geographical differences; in the hilly lands north-west of the broad strath formed by the Forth-Clyde valley the hearts, too, were "Highland". The areas differed as widely in language, social behaviour, economy, heritage and "race" as they did in climate and topography.

The English-speaking culture of the Angles, Anglo-Normans and Scandinavians stretched from England to the foot-hills of Perthshire and thence followed the broad coastal plain north-east to Aberdeen, wound around to the south side of the Moray Firth, squeezed narrowly around the east coast of Ross and Cromarty and finally widened to include most of Caithness. Farther north, the Orkneys and Shetland had physical characteristics of both Highlands and Lowlands, but were definitely Lowland in culture.

The predominantly Celtic stock (there was also a sprinkling of Viking "blood") occupied the rest of the country north and west of the Lowlands: the forbidding mountainous centre of Scotland, the wind-swept West Coast, and the rocky islands south to Kintyre.

The invisible frontier—which modern journalists would no doubt have dubbed "The Tartan Curtain"—separating Highland from Lowland was seldom crossed with peaceful intent prior to 1750. Gaelic was the common language of the people in the Highlands until well into the nineteenth century (it is still spoken in remote areas such as the Outer Hebrides) and it is perhaps not surprising that the inhabitants of the two "countries" which comprised Scotland remained largely ignorant of each other's conditions and ways of life.

Religion, too, played a part in maintaining the separation. The post-Reformation Lowlands were almost
exclusively Presbyterian while in the Highlands, to use Cunningham's splendid phrase, "Popery still lingered in its ancient haunts."\(^1\) Although the faith had dwindled after the Reformation, zealous missionary efforts in the late seventeenth century established the Roman Catholic Church in parts of the Outer Isles, the West Mainland, the Highlands of Aberdeenshire and Banffshire (as well as a portion of Dumfriesshire).\(^2\) Likewise Episcopalianism, linked as it was with the nobility, the gentry and the Church of England, maintained a disproportionate importance\(^3\) and remained especially strong in Angus, Kincardineshire, Aberdeenshire and parts of the West Highlands. This is not to deny that most Highlanders, especially following the "revivals" of the first half of the nineteenth century, were staunch Presbyterians, but the Catholics and Episcopalians were a "foreign" element which may well have added to the Lowlanders' distrust.

The Industrial Revolution, the Agricultural Revolution and what may, for want of a better term, be called the Social Revolution all operated with varying effect in the two areas and the course of emigration was correspondingly different. The background to emigration from the Highlands and Lowlands are, therefore, considered separately.

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\(^1\) Cunningham, John, The Church History of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1882, 2 vols., I, 417.

\(^2\) Larkin, Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland; through Perthsire, Argyleshire, and Inverness-shire, in September and October, 1818: with some account of the Caledonian Canal, London, 1819, pp. 315-16.

A. The Rural Lowlands

The old race of tenants have all disappeared, and but few even of their descendants are now to be found in the parish.\textsuperscript{1}

...there is scarcely one man in fifty who, if he survives the age of manhood, is buried with his fathers.\textsuperscript{2}

In the year 1700 there were little more than one million people in Scotland, the vast majority of whom lived in rural areas and existed mainly by means of subsistence agriculture. In the traditional system of husbandry which then predominated, farmer and servant lived as one "family", sharing the same work and food, dressing alike, and reading the same books (mostly religious tracts). It was a paternal system in which the labourers were, in a sense, family retainers who lived and worked in one area, perhaps for one master, all of their lives and who were looked after in their youth and old age.

The Agricultural Revolution in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth was to effect drastic changes in this traditional peasant society. The population, which had reached one and a half million by the turn of the century, more than doubled in the next fifty years and the difference in distribution was equally remarkable. In 1755 only four towns in Scotland counted more than 10,000 souls and half of the population lived north of the Tay, but by 1820 there were thirteen "cities", accounting for one quarter of the country's total population, and a growing concentration in the central belt was already distinct. Three-quarters of the people were still living in predominantly rural areas, but their way of life was greatly altered from a century before. The new agrarian society was sharply divided into capitalist farmers and landless labourers toiling to feed the

\textsuperscript{1}NSA, Parish of Wandell and Lammingtontoune, Lanarkshire, VI, 8224.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., Parish of Kelso, Roxburghshire, III, 323.
growing industrial towns; the old cohesiveness was gone and many of the old families were migrating to the industrial centres or emigrating to other lands.

The Agricultural Revolution had causes far more complex than the simple introduction of new machinery. Farming itself was changing from a way of life to a business and for many rural Scots it was a cruel change. Physically the alterations were manifested in four basic ways: 1) enclosure; 2) enlargement; 3) conversion of arable land to pasture; and 4) "improvements".

The practice of enclosure, like so many of the other improvements, was originally borrowed from England although the term in Scotland never included the secondary meaning of "legal subdivision of land held in common" which it had south of the Border. Landowners in Scotland began to promote the enclosure of their property early in the eighteenth century, often setting the example by enclosing their own farms and encouraging their tenants, sometimes financially, to do the same. By and large they met with little concerted opposition, the main exception being the so-called Levellers Revolt which disrupted the summer of 1724 in Dumfriesshire and Galloway—"the last instance of a major organised protest against rural change before the middle decades of the nineteenth century." Although enclosure was expensive and some tenants had to give up their farms under pressure from "improving" landlords, the process often resulted in increased tillage and there was room for the displaced tenant to work as a labourer—if he was not too proud. Enclosure was seldom a direct reason for a decrease in population. Sinclair even noted that many

1 For England Arthur Redford listed five reasons for changes in agricultural population based on census notes. He included "allotments" which might be compared to the sub-letting practiced in the Highlands. Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850, Manchester, 1926, p. 65 ff.


tenants were so eager to have their land enclosed that they would pay the interest on any money put up by their proprietors.¹

Other "improvements" mentioned by Sinclair include draining, embankments, irrigation and flooding; some improvements, like bonedust manure and tile drainage, required delimitation of the property and thus encouraged enclosure.² In the arable centre of the Scottish Lowlands the improvements were enthusiastically adopted and added to; so much so, indeed, that "Lothian husbandry" became a by-word for successful agriculture in nineteenth-century England.

The new breed of business-minded farmers soon discovered that one man, using up-to-date methods and implements, could make a better profit and pay a higher rent for a piece of land than could several old-fashioned tenants. By the late eighteenth century "runrig" tenure—land divided into strips with each owner having several separated pieces to ensure fair distribution of the best land—had largely disappeared from the Lowlands, but forms of "fixed" runrig and rundale—where some of the strips were consolidated—still survived and it was on these holdings that "consolidation" made some of its severest inroads. Former runrig tenants found themselves, virtually overnight, without land or security of any sort, hired men dependent on weather and farmer for their livelihood. There was also some displacement due to the creation of sheep-walks in the Lowlands, but it was at a considerably earlier date than the more celebrated Highland Clearances and affected far fewer people.³

The improvements often brought with them a temporary increase in employment, but it was usually only

²Grant, op. cit., p. 106.
³As, for example, in the 1760s and 1770s in the Southwest; see Edward Cowan, "Conflict in Rural Society: the social effects of the agricultural revolution in Dumfries and Galloway", unpublished undergraduate dissertation, Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh, 1966.
temporary. The "Enumeration Abstract" published by Parliament in 1843 listed 75 parishes which gave enlargement and consolidation as a reason for population decline\(^1\) and the New Statistical Account gave many others, e.g. Hobbirk in Roxburghshire,\(^2\) Libberton and Quothquan in Lanarkshire,\(^3\) Airth in Stirlingshire,\(^4\) and Newburn, Dunbog, Kilmany and Moonzie in Fife.\(^5\) Cessation of improvements was also commonly cited as a reason for lack of employment and migration.

It was also not uncommon to attribute population decrease to "introduction of machinery for bodily and manual labour" and, certainly, the Agricultural Revolution would not have been possible without the new machines and implements which made it feasible for a few men to do the work of many. Here, especially, the Scots improved on the improvements, contributing three important devices—Small's lighter and more efficient plough (1763), Andrew Meikle's power-driven threshing machine (1786) and Patrick Bell's horse-drawn reaper (1826). New methods of fertilisation and scientific crop rotation combined to help the Scottish farmer to produce well over half as much again as he had in the middle of the eighteenth century; some observers claimed it was more than double the amount formerly produced.\(^6\)

Allied to the problems faced by agricultural labourers after 1815, was what might be termed a Social Revolution in rural areas. It was, perhaps, not quite as drastic in the Lowlands as in the Highlands where the whole social order had begun to crumble in the first half of the eighteenth century, but nevertheless it contributed greatly to the equivocal position in which the landless labourer found himself. The new businessmen/farmers felt, for various reasons, the need to dress better,

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\(^{1}\) PP, XXII, 1843, pt. II, pp. 2-76.
\(^{2}\) III, 213.
\(^{3}\) VI, 44.
\(^{4}\) VIII, 283-84.
\(^{5}\) IX, 125, 212-13, 544-45, 793.
\(^{6}\) Robertson, George, Rural Recollections, Irvine, 1829, p. 383.
live better and spend more money; in a word, they were attempting to climb the social ladder.\(^1\) For this they needed money and, as the social gulf between them and their servants gaped ever wider, they found it increasingly easy to demand more efficiency and higher rents. Improvements required large stocks of capital and many small farmers were squeezed out; the lands which their families had tilled for generations were put up for roup and often went to absentee owners south of the Border. The Scottish landowners themselves, as they became increasingly enmeshed in the English-dominated high society, gradually withdrew from the countryside and lost direct contact with, if not interest in, their old family retainers. The over-all effect was that more and more "farmers" became simple wage-earners with fewer ties to bind them, when thoughts turned to emigration, to their homeland.

Young farm labourers found themselves under some pressure to move around in search of high wages, but there was little hope of their ever making enough money to buy or even rent a farm of their own\(^2\) and they would be competing, after 1815, with the demobilised army and, increasingly, with bands of Highlanders looking for summer employment and "armies" of hungry Irish immigrants. In some areas, notably the "capitalistic" Lothians, a preference was shown for unmarried labourers who could be herded into "bothies"—shed-like dwellings for farm labourers housing from four to twenty-four (or even more) men. The "bothies" were infamous for their poor living conditions; Cobbett was one of the many social reformers who described and attacked them\(^3\) and the ministers who wrote the New Statistical Account were not slow in pointing to their corrupting effect on morals. Young married labourers were more expensive to house and they often found good jobs hard to come by.

\(^1\)for a full discussion, see Smout, op. cit., pp. 285-291; and Saunders, J., Scottish Democracy, 1815-1840, Edinburgh, 1950, pp. 45 ff.

\(^2\)Saunders, op. cit., p. 55.

Quite apart from the difficulty experienced by rural workers in finding good jobs, the state of agriculture furnished problems a-plenty with its fluctuations in the first half of the nineteenth century. During the Napoleonic Wars British farming boomed and many farmers over-extended themselves by ploughing their profits back into their farms. When the Wars ended in 1815, prices fell abruptly by as much as 50%, currency depreciated and banks began to refuse credit. The Scottish Lowlands suffered less than many other parts of Britain, but many small farmers crumpled under the burden. Rents had been raised during the Wars and the fall in prices forced the sale of many farms; there was mass unemployment and a good deal of suffering, especially among those living at subsistence level. Although the skilled agricultural labourers were to a certain extent cushioned from the full disasters of 1816 by measure of their pay being partly in kind, the unskilled labourers were paid almost entirely in coin and were thus caught by the full force of the depreciation.

To add to the farmers' troubles, the climate from 1811 to 1816 had been very cold, yielding poor harvests, and 1816 was one of the worst years of the century: "There has never been a season like the present in some respects—having neither spring, nor summer, nor harvest." There was great suffering in Scotland during the years 1816 and 1817; near-starvation was common and deaths from hunger and malnutrition not unknown. The effects were somewhat mitigated by the New Corn Laws of 1815 which began to take effect in late 1816, but it was several years before the farmers could pause to take a breath.

Worse was yet to come: 1825 was a bad year and

the thirties were almost as "hungry" in many areas as the more notorious forties, with the potato crops staging dress rehearsals for their disastrous failures in 1845, '46, '47 and '48. To the farmers, struggling to keep their heads above water as wave after wave of "bad" years rolled over them, the Corn Laws must have seemed a breakwater which protected them from a flood of cheap American grain. In 1846 the breakwater was removed and at the same time the potatoes turned to black manure.

We are sorry to hear of the failure of the crops in Britain although it has been a benefit to Illinois farmers. Many of the merchants here have made fortunes this fall, by the rise of grain.1

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody, as Scottish emigrants in Illinois smugly pointed out to their relatives back home.

The Old Statistical Account, compiled towards the end of the eighteenth century by the parish ministers, records in stately, measured prose the stable, deep-rooted society of rural eighteenth-century Scotland. True, the worldly ministers who held up wetted fingers to the breeze felt the winds of change blowing from the south, but for the most part the entries were imbued with a quiet complacency about the present and a calm confidence in the future. Four or five decades later the ministers who wrote the New Statistical Account painted a grimmer picture of a hectic, uprooted and confused society. Great changes had been wrought in the space of one or two generations or, as it was often phrased, "within the recollection of the present incumbent." The ministers still wrote urbane, learned monographs about their parishes. They were proud of the progress that had been made, but they were no longer complacent; nor could they stifle their regret for the way of life that was past, or entirely hide their growing unease about the future. The Agricultural Revolution was bloodless—unless a way of life can bleed.

1Ms. letter, Marion Munger, Chicago, Illinois, Jan. 27, 1846 to Alexander Wark, Bathgate.
Alexander Kidd, D.D., was the parish minister of Moonzie in Fife. His parish was almost entirely under the plough and in the past few decades trenching, manuring, draining and enclosing had changed the people as well as the face of the land. His entry in the New Statistical Account is typical and sums up some of the regret felt by so many:

The population of the parish was formerly much greater than it is at present. Different causes appear to have operated in producing this decrease. About fifty or sixty years ago, the farms in this country were generally of small extent, and much more numerous than at present. Ample employment and maintenance were thus afforded to many families, and the population of the country parishes [was?] great. But the farms are now generally of large extent and few in number, and though laboured much more skilfully and perfectly than formerly, the number of cultivators is much diminished. It was also the practice of the farmers in these times to lease out to each of their cottars, and to those who had houses on the farm, two or three acres of land at a moderate rent, and to give it the requisite cultivation. They also allowed them to keep cows, and provided them with grass in the summer and straw in the winter, for maintenance. These privileges were highly valued by the people, and contributed much to their comfort and advantage. From the produce of their land and dairy, they had abundance of plain food for the maintenance of themselves and families; and in seasons of sickness, when unable for their daily labour, they could subsist for a time on their own means without being forced to apply for public aid. But this practice has been discontinued, and none even of the farm-servants enjoy the advantage of a cow except the Foreman. In consequence of this change, the people of the country who were tradesmen, seeing that they enjoyed none of the comforts of the country, left the habitations of their fathers, and established themselves in the towns from which their employment was principally derived.1

Scottish husbandry may well have become the "envy of Europe", but a price had to be paid and America was to reap a rich harvest of rootless, insecure farmers.

1NSA, IX, 793.
B. The Industrial Centres

...a massacre of human life beside which the casualties of the medieval battlefields and plagues were as farthing dips to the noon-day sun.

--Thomas Johnston referring to the effects of urban living and working conditions in the opening decades of the nineteenth century.1

The industrialisation of the Scottish Lowlands can be traced back to the last two decades of the seventeenth century, but it was not until the Union of 1707 with England that the results began to be apparent. By the terms of the Union, trade restrictions were removed and within fifty years Glasgow had become the most important tobacco port in Britain, receiving most of the American tobacco destined for both Britain and Europe.2 Exports were needed to exchange for tobacco and the linen trade was first off the mark, soon becoming the most important industry in Scotland: by 1800 twelve times as much linen was being produced as in 1728. But the patterns of economy were altered by the American War of Independence (1776-83) which freed the United States from the necessity of using Glasgow as a "middleman" for their tobacco trade. The young cotton industry shouldered its way brashly to the fore and maintained dominance of Scottish industry for three-quarters of a century until the American Civil War (1861-65) cut off supplies of raw cotton. Linen, though out-run in the first half of the century, had staying power and came back to the front after its rival had faded into virtual obscurity; though it had operated in the shadow of the cotton trade, production had continued during the French Wars and large-scale factories using power processes were established in Aberdeen, Dundee and elsewhere with some firms branching

into allied manufactures such as jute and linoleum. The prosperity of jute and flax shot up during the Civil War with great benefit especially to Dundee\(^1\) and linen continued to flourish as an industry up to the twentieth century.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars marked the close of the period of great agricultural prosperity, but it proved only the beginning for industry. Suddenly there were more than enough hands for the hungry factories: some 400,000 men were demobilised from the British armed forces, the population was growing rapidly, redundant farm labourers were migrating in droves to the urban centres and the Irish were beginning their invasion in earnest. Industry expanded at an astonishing rate and the national wealth increased both absolutely and in comparison with England's.\(^2\) It is true that Scotland was often harder hit by the depressions which alternated with the booms between 1813 and 1830 (partly due to the lack of "official" poor laws and partly because of the "Highland problem") and it has also been observed that the standard of living fell drastically during the '30s and '40s (to the extent, even, of being compared with that of Ireland); unemployment, however, was never as severe in 1839, 1842 and 1848 in Scotland as it was in England.\(^3\)

The Irish made a significant contribution to the labour force. It has been estimated that one out of ten (9.67 to be exact) of Glasgow's population in 1819 was Irish, one out of five (5.69) in 1831 and one out of four in 1840.\(^4\) And this influx coincided with a growth in the native population which has never been equalled before or since. It also coincided, as has been noted, with a redistribution and concentration of the people in the urban centres.

\(^1\)Carrie, David C., Dundee and the American Civil War, 1861-65, Abertay Historical Society Publication, No. 1, 1953.
There was, in fact, quite a remarkable amount of movement among the traditionally rooted-to-the-soil Scottish "peasantry". The Parliamentary "Abstract shewing the Country of Birth of the Persons enumerated in" the various counties of Scotland\(^1\) pulled several surprises from the statistical hat. As might be expected, there were heavy concentrations of Irishmen in Lanarkshire (55,915), Renfrewshire (20,417), Ayrshire (12,035), Midlothian (7,100) and in Angus (6,474) and of Englishmen in Midlothian (Edinburgh) and Lanarkshire (Glasgow). This may partly explain why in many of the Lowland counties one quarter to one half of the population were born outside of the county—e.g. Dunbartonshire 48.5%, Selkirkshire 41.8%, Lanarkshire 39.6%, Renfrewshire 38.4%, Midlothian 37%, Linlithgowshire (West Lothian) 36%, Peeblesshire 35.4%, Clackmannanshire 32.9% and Stirlingshire 30.8%—but it does not explain the high percentage born in other Scottish counties.

In Dunbartonshire approximately 40% of the Scottish population in 1841 had been born in other counties; in Selkirkshire the percentage was also 40 and in Midlothian, West Lothian and Clackmannanshire 32%, 31% and 31% respectively were "extra-county". This compares startlingly with some of the Highland counties: in Argyll only 8% were from other counties, in Inverness-shire 10%, in Caithness 7% (although, to be scrupulously fair, in some it was slightly higher, e.g. Banffshire with 15%). Some of the Lowland counties were exceptions to the general rule, as for example Ayrshire and Wigtownshire with only 11% and 9% respectively, but by and large the figures show considerable evidence of movement. The writers of the *New Statistical Account* were often moved to lament this change in the old traditional "home body" values: "...and the children of those whom no worldly motive could have torn from their native hills and valleys,
\(^{1}\)PP, 1843, XXII, pt. II, pp. 16-17.
now, without a tear, nay, with a sort of exultation, leave the land of their fathers."¹ "...there is scarcely one man in fifty who, if he survives the age of manhood, is buried with his fathers."² "The old race of tenants have all disappeared, and but few even of their descendants are now to be found in the parish."³

...man is, of all luggage, the most difficult to be transported, and...such is his attachment to the place of his birth, and where he has spent his early years, that he will cling to naked rocks, and pestilential swamps, to a land of storms and tempests. This attachment, however, appears to be losing strength with many."⁴

It was especially the parishes containing large cities that "benefitted": the population of Aberdeenshire increased from 135,075 in 1811 to 192,387 in 1841; during the same period Midlothian increased from 148,607 to 225,454, Angus from 107,264 to 170,520, Lanarkshire from 191,752 to 426,972 and Renfrewshire from 92,596 to 155,072.

The industrial expansion was creating a massive new class of "industrial wage-earners" and they were being packed together in the urban slums far from the old ethical and moral restraints of their native parishes. They and their children were deprived of fresh air, vegetables and, all too often, education while the inadequate housing⁵ of the cities was a breeding ground for innumerable diseases. Robert Cowan, the Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Police at the University of Glasgow, provided in 1858 some sobering statistics concerning that city's health conditions. The death rate in Glasgow (1822-36) averaged between 1 in 44 and 1 in 33 and during cholera years the figure dropped to a terrible 1 in 21⁶ with one half of the deaths being

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¹ Parish of Linton in Roxburghshire, III, 58.
² Parish of Kelso in Roxburghshire, III, 323.
³ Parish of Wendell and Lamintoune in Lanarkshire, VI, 844.
⁴ Parish of Hutton and Corrie, Dumfiesshire, IV, 552.
⁵ In the decade 1831-41 the population of Glasgow rose by 33,031 while the houses increased by 3551. Johnston, op. cit., p. 291.
among children under the age of five;\(^1\) by 1850 the percentage of children's deaths had risen above the 50 mark, comparing poorly with cities like Paris (32.3%) which also had bad reputations.\(^2\) Cowan pinpointed the causes of the appalling death-rate in Glasgow:

The rapid increase in the amount of the labouring population, without any corresponding amount of accommodation being provided for them; the density and still increasing density of that population; the state of the districts which it inhabits; the fluctuations of trade and of the prices of provisions, and the lamentable "strikes" in consequence of combination among the workmen, by which the means of subsistence have been suddenly withdrawn from large masses; the recklessness and addiction to the use of ardent spirits, at once the cause and the effect of destitution; the prevalence of epidemic diseases both among the adult and infantile portion of the community, have been the chief causes of the great mortality in the city of Glasgow.\(^3\)

Epidemics of cholera continued to sweep through the crowded tenements of the industrial centres in the 1830s, '40s and '50s with increasing virulence. Johnston was not being melodramatic when he referred to the "massacre of human life" in Scottish industrial cities.

Apart from the living conditions, the agricultural labourer who migrated to the city would also be faced with comparatively poor working conditions. The actual surroundings were usually unpleasant (to put it mildly) and often the work was dangerous because of ignorance of or contempt for safety precautions. The hours were terribly long—up to fourteen hours a day was not uncommon\(^4\)—and factory work demanded a new discipline; farm labourers were used to long hours, but they were not used to the pace being dictated by a machine, nor had rural life prepared them for the mind-boggling monotony of the factories. The migrant would also be

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\(^1\) Cowan, Vital Statistics, op. cit., p. 10.
\(^4\) see, for example, the petition presented to the House in 1826 by Lord Archibald Hamilton from the weavers of Glasgow and Lanark wherein they claimed to be working 14 to 16 hours a day for 4s.6d. a week. Hansard, XVI, 2nd series, 1826-27, Dec. 5, 1826, Columns 227-230.
competing, in most jobs, with six- and seven-year old boys who had been born and bred for that type of work and whose malleable minds and fingers would be preferred by the factory owners.

C. The New Industries

So the weavin' is a trade that never can fail
Sae lang's we need ae cloot tae haud anither hale,
Sae let us a' be merry ower a bicker o' guid ale,
An' drink tae the health o' the weavers.

If it wasna for the weavers what wad they do?
They wadna hae claiith made oot o' oor woo',
They wadna hae a coat neither black nor blue,
Gin it wasna for the wark o' the weavers.

—"The Wark o' the Weavers"
by David Shaw

In the first half of the nineteenth century textiles were clearly the dominant manufacture in Scotland. Sinclair estimated in the early 1820s that nine out of ten workers in "manufacturing industries" were employed in textiles—about 60% in cotton, 30% in linen and 10% in woolens. He allowed a bare 5% for the iron manufactures. Cotton was the chief concern, especially in the industrial West and the weavers were, in the early days of the Industrial Revolution, among the most affluent of the new manufacturing classes. By the 1830s they had run the gamut of distress, unemployment and destitution and were emigrating in droves. Not all of the blame for this can be laid at the door of mechanisation, though the powerloom must accept a large share.

Cartwright made the first powerloom in 1784 and the improvements of Robert Millar, a Glaswegian, made its use practical in 1798. The powerlooms began to appear soon after 1800 but they were accepted slowly at first; in 1820 handlooms still outnumbered powerlooms by a ratio of 25 to 1 (50,000 to 2000). By 1830, however, there were 10,000 powerlooms and the handloom weavers were being edged out of business. The answer for some

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2Sinclair, op. cit., p. 321.
was to specialise in fine goods which powerlooms could not weave, like, for example, the famous Paisley shawls, but many of the weavers (if not most) lacked the necessary skill.

Basically the problem faced by the weaving industry in the '30s was oversupply of labour; it was a problem that had been with them at least since 1812 when various societies had federated in an attempt to establish a 7-year apprenticeship and reasonable wages. Finding themselves ignored by their employers, the Scottish weavers from Aberdeen to Carlisle came out on strike for nine weeks. The results were highly unsatisfactory: the Glasgow Committee was arrested and the nascent union was extinguished. For the weavers it was the beginning of the end. In spite of the writing on the wall and the all too evident distress of the '30s, immigrants and migrants continued to flock to the handlooms until well into the '40s. Smout suggested four reasons for this lemming-like rush to destruction: 1) unlike many of the trades, there were no apprenticeship requirements; 2) there was no trade union to prevent dilution; 3) the weaving of plain cotton was easy to learn; and 4) the immigrant could keep his family around him.\(^1\)

Although "destruction" is perhaps a strong word to use in this context, it is not entirely inappropriate; as early as 1826-27 Renfrewshire handloom weavers received £22,000 in relief from the London Relief Commission with the average number of families assisted weekly being 2030. Emigration of handloom weavers probably reached a peak in the late '20s\(^2\) but it continued almost unabated into the '60s, with conditions in the '40s being more difficult than ever before\(^3\) combined with bad harvests. The weavers who adapted at an early age to the use of the powerloom were, however, reasonably well-off and the

\(^1\)Smout, op. cit., p. 429.
\(^3\)Donaldson, Scots Overseas, op. cit., p. 85.
spinners who mastered the "mule" along with the skilled hecklers, carders and printers became the aristocrats of labour.

Although the handloom weavers and other groups of displaced tradesmen suffered from the effects of the Industrial Revolution, the country as a whole benefited greatly. The economy was vitalised, especially following the adoption of Neilson's "hot-blast" technique of smelting (developed in 1828 and applied in the early '30s) by the iron industry. In the first decade after 1828 iron production in Scotland increased by 500% and the next three decades saw even greater expansion.1 The widespread adoption of this technique by the Scots gave them an advantage in the manufacture of pig-iron, a product essential to the burgeoning industries both at home and abroad, and by the late 1840s Scotland was accounting for nine-tenths of the British pig-iron export with 60% of its iron going to the United States.2 The cheap iron promoted a "second stage" of the Industrial Revolution and helped to span the country with a network of railway lines which in turn made coal fuel cheaper, enabling the linen and cotton mills to expand more readily. Soon the Clyde would turn its attention to the building of iron ships in earnest.

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1 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 293.
Emigrants
Chapter II: Emigration

Immigration is by definition a gesture of faith in social mobility. It is the expression in action of a positive belief in the possibility of a better life. —John F. Kennedy

It would be misleading to represent Scottish emigration as more than a part of the overall movement of the population within Scotland; emigration was an offshoot, as it were, of the migration which was primarily from rural to urban environment. Emigration was often the second or third "stage" of such migration: a farm labourer who became redundant or a former tenant who could no longer find a farm to rent might seek his fortune first in the nearest likely village; subsequently, perhaps following some years of depression, he might move to an industrial centre and from there, if his adjustment were too difficult or his disillusion too great, he might move on across the Atlantic in search of a country where he could once again take up farming. It should also be remembered that the greatest "emigration" was probably south to England.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the number of emigrants leaving in a given year never totalled as much as one per cent of the population, but it was nonetheless a significant movement involving thousands of people every year. Between 1816 and 1822, for example, the average annual emigration was around .5% of the population which, though unimpressive at first glance, swells when reckoned over a decade to a more respectable figure. And the movement affected not only those who left the country, but also those who stayed behind. In many cases emigration was beneficial, leaving more jobs, land and food for those not strong enough to brave the Atlantic, but in some ways emigration was detrimental: more often than not, it was the young, the male and the skilful who sought their fortunes overseas while the

1A Nation of Immigrants, London, 1964, p. 68.
old, the infirm and the unskilled were left as a drain on the pockets of charity.

The bulk of the early emigration from Scotland to the United States was rural in character, though there were notable exceptions in the tobacco dealers, merchants, doctors and educators who made their marks (and often their fortunes) in the American Colonies. There were Scottish (mainly Highland) settlements established at Cape Fear, North Carolina, the Mohawk and Upper Hudson valleys, New York, and the Attamaha valley in Georgia; Scottish emigration for the period 1763-1775 has been estimated at 25,000.¹

During the Wars with France emigration was light and from 1812 to 1815 the war with America shut off even the small trickle of people who still wanted to go. The Treaty of Ghent, signed in late 1814 (too late for General Packenham and the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders² who were decimated by Jackson's sharpshooters on the 8th of January, 1815, at New Orleans), opened the way to the "modern period" of emigration. The Commerce from Greenock docked at Charleston, South Carolina, on the 9th of May, 1815, spearheading an invasion which would land almost 50,000 Scottish emigrants in the next forty-five years.

The "modern emigration" was distinguished by two factors: it was largely urban and largely economic, with comparatively few Scots leaving their homeland for political or religious reasons after 1815.³ The importance of economics in the study of modern emigration was demonstrated by Jerome⁴ and Thomas⁵ with respect to the effect of business cycles on the volume of emigration: The number of immigrants arriving in America would decline during periods of economic depression in the United

²James Matheson wrote from America to his brother in Dornoch, Sutherland, "I had a letter from John McIntosh 93. Regt. dated at New Orleans...and I am sorry to understand by it that he lost his right leg in the unfortunate battle of the 8th. Jany...James Mackay was slightly wounded." Ms. letter, Lansingburgh, June 20, 1815.
³See Part II, Chapters IV and VI.
⁵Thomas, Brinley, Migration and Economic Growth, Cambridge, 1954.
States—such as those following the "panics" of 1819, 1837 and 1857—and would increase as news of American prosperity reached Europe. Generally speaking, Thomas showed that in Britain emigration and capital export tended to be high when investment and income levels were low while in the United States high rates of immigration coincided with high investment and income levels. Basically the "push" factors were shown to be most important. A spectacular demonstration of the "pull" factor occurred in the years immediately after the discovery of gold in California in 1848. Periods of depression in Scotland would naturally turn thoughts to emigration; however, periods of prosperity at home could also be sources of emigration, for as A.W. Brøgger pointed out with reference to an earlier tide of emigration: "In a time of prosperity the hope of gain in new and unknown spheres becomes one of the greatest forces in human nature, irrespective of whether such hope is well grounded."¹ Many Scots who had watched their neighbours or kinsmen go under during the last depression would become motivated by a fear of distress as well as a hope of advancement. The business cycles, therefore, were important and must be kept in mind, but it should also be noted that they were probably not as important before 1861 as in later years.² Land was always available in the United States and emigrants who left Scotland between 1815 and 1861 were often more concerned with cheap land than job opportunities.

For the sake of convenience, study of the causes of emigration is often divided into the two basic categories mentioned in the preceding paragraph: "push"—the forces compelling or encouraging the emigrant's removal from his homeland—and "pull"—the forces attracting him to another land. There are, however, aspects of the problem which refuse to be so neatly compartmented.

²Jones, Maldwyn Allen, American Immigration, University of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 100.
Marcus Lee Hansen, the Grand Old Man of emigration studies, summarised the influences on emigration in three parts: freedom to move, desire to move and means to move. In nineteenth-century Scotland the freedom to move—achieved by the breakdown of the old close communities—was considerable and the desire to move was fed periodically by economic, political, social and psychological motives; the means to move, however, were rudimentary in 1815 and it was not until the advent of steam ships around the middle of the century that transportation across the Atlantic caught up with the demand created by the first two factors. The development of the means to move is obviously of utmost importance, not only to the emigrant, but to the historian. It will be dealt with in greater detail later (Part II, Chapter I) but at this stage it is relevant to raise a few important points.

During the Napoleonic Wars the continental blockade had caused Britain to rely on the United States and, especially following 1812, Canada for timber. In 1815 there had been little or no emigration from Britain for two decades or more and the shipping companies were unprepared to meet the growing demands for passenger-space to North America. The timber ships supplied part of the remedy, for they often returned empty or only half-full to Canada and with few alterations the between decks could be made into cramped living quarters with crude wooden bunks; for the most part they were not fit for human habitation, but they were good enough for the emigrants. Passengers were very much a sideline and the conditions of their quarters reflected this cavalier attitude on the part of the ship-owners. Sometimes the captains of the timber ships could be persuaded to drop off passengers at New York, but many emigrants were taken willy-nilly to Canada and thence drifted down to the States. Alternatively they could ship aboard the cotton

ships returning empty from the mills of Glasgow to the South (usually Charleston, South Carolina or New Orleans, Louisiana). This practice of taking passengers as a sideline, albeit an increasingly profitable sideline, continued at least until 1851.¹

Conditions were changing, however, and many shipowners, seeing which way the wind was blowing, established regular passenger services. As early as 1815 the Black Ball Line was instituted with a scheduled service of four 500-ton ships and by 1832 regular packets left Liverpool on the 1st, 8th, 16th and 24th of each month,² though it was not until the advent of the steamship that such schedules could be rigidly maintained. Meanwhile, the poorest emigrants continued to sail to America in the "black holds" of the timber ships and worse.

Passage on a timber ship might cost as little as twenty shillings plus provisions; steerage passage from Glasgow, Greenock and Liverpool ranged from £3.10 to £5 up through the '50s with the average being about £4. Second-class accommodation was generally £1-£3 more while cabin class might cost anywhere from £12 to 40 guineas.³ This was at a time when a skilled weaver's wage fell from £1 (1810-16) to 9s.6d. (1838) per week;⁴ when agricultural labourers were earning £5 to £14 per annum;⁵ and when most of the Highland crofters and cottars were unable to raise such sums.⁶

¹PP, "Report from the Select Committee on the Passenger's Act", 1851, XIX, pp. 65, 424.
³Ibid., pp. 50-51.
⁶PP, 1851, XXVI, p. xxv (McNeill's Report).
A. Attitudes to Emigration: Politico-Philosophical Concepts

Besides the importation of corn, there is another resource which can be invoked by a nation whose increasing numbers press hard, not against their capital, but against the productive capacity of their land: I mean Emigration, especially in the form of Colonization.

--John Stuart Mill

If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion.

--G.B. Shaw

Throughout most of the nineteenth century the British Government's official attitude to emigration wavered from disapproval to uncertain approval and back to disapproval. The Government policy towards aid to and encouragement of emigration was sometimes heavily influenced by the economic philosophers of the day and any understanding of a particular "climate of opinion" must encompass the prevalent economic concepts. Men like Ricardo, Wakefield and Mill influenced not only the Government, but, indirectly, the emigrants as well.

Generally speaking, there was considerable wariness about accepting the "depopulation" of Britain as a desirable development. The traditional approach to population had always been that a nation's power was founded on its people and therefore the larger the population, the stronger the nation. By such reasoning emigration was a disgrace to the country and should be severely curtailed by the Government.

This anti-emigration philosophy prevailed in the second half of the seventeenth century and throughout most of the eighteenth century as well. Malthus delivered what should have been a mortal blow with the publication in 1798 of his Essay on Population, but remnants of the old philosophy clung tenaciously in the minds of British statesmen during the nineteenth century, cropping up

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time and again in newspaper articles and Parliamentary speeches. "We lament to see so many of our countrymen forced by dire necessity to leave their native country." 

"Such a sweeping emigration of the ablest of our workers must soon be seriously felt." It was easy to see the exodus of thousands every year as a drain on the national manpower while neglecting to see the masses of poor who were living in squalor and unemployment. The Government never seemed to shake loose from the nagging fear of an "epidemic emigration" which would leave the country depopulated and feeble. Emigration was to remain one of the exceptions to the general rule of "laissez-faire".

Early in the nineteenth century David Ricardo brought the old anti-emigration philosophy up to date and expressed it in economic terms:

If no more labour than before be required to bring either cloth or gold to market, they will not vary in relative value, but if more labour be required to bring corn and shoes to market, will not corn and shoes rise in value relatively to cloth, and money made of gold? Thus he maintained that the "real" wages in Britain were dependent on the capital-to-labour ratio. This was not opposed to emigration per se, but it was extended to mean that if more capital were exported than labour, real wages in Britain would fall and consequently the whole process of colonisation would lead to a worsening of conditions among the working classes in Britain.

Many of his arguments were later used by opponents of Government-sponsored emigration:

Emigration to any considerable extent at the public cost, although it may for a time palliate the evils of a redundant population, as it reaches not the source of the evil, will never extirpate the causes in which the evil originates; while, if it be carried on to an extent sufficient to effect a temporary improvement

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1 quoted from the Glasgow Chronicle in The Scotsman, March 3, 1830.
2 The Scotsman, July 21, 1830.
in a country impoverished by a super-abundant population, it would require an outlay of national capital which must materially affect the sources of reproduction, and thus materially diminish the means of employing the labouring population of the empire at large.¹

But colonisation and emigration were not without their defenders—and able defenders they were. The Earl of Selkirk defended emigration ably in theory and suited his actions to his words by leading an ill-starred group of Highland settlers to the Red River in Canada. Almost three decades later, in 1832, Thomas Chalmers of Edinburgh both condemned and supported emigration. First and foremost, he reckoned that emigration at best could only be a partial solution to the Malthusian nightmare of overpopulation. In order for emigration to be effective, as such, over one half of a million people would have to be transported annually and at that rate the colonies themselves would eventually be exhausted.

Now here is the evil of every partial, and at the same time, ostensible relief, against the effects of a mischief that is brought on by the general recklessness of the population. It adds to the recklessness and so may aggravate the pressure on the one hand, more than it alleviates that pressure upon the other.²

He was worried that, if emigration were to be made freely available to all and sundry, the feeling of safety thus engendered would result in an unprecedented upsurge of population. Thus for the case of emigration in general, he grudgingly admitted the harmlessness of "spontaneous" emigration, but vigourously condemned indiscriminate Government sponsorship on the grounds that it "would but enhance the evil it was devised to remedy".³

However, in the right hands, emigration could be beneficial according to Chalmers. "Emigration, though futile and ineffective of itself, may still, as subsidiary to other schemes, be worthy of all the attention of government."⁴ He suggested that Government-sponsored emigration

¹ quoted from the Globe in The Scotsman, Sept. 9, 1840.
³ Ibid., p. 384.
⁴ Ibid., p. 389.
should become both alternative and substitute to the liberal doling out of parish poor rates. Those capable of earning their own living would no longer be eligible for poor rates; they would be offered the alternative of emigration. This would serve to reduce the surplus population, for "emigration, coupled with the abolition of all right or claim to parish relief at home, would operate, and that instantly, as a check to those juvenile marriages which are now so frequent in England." Thomas Chalmers, then, was guardedly in favour of spontaneous emigration and wholeheartedly in favour of discriminating Government sponsorship.

One year after Thomas Chalmers' essay on emigration first appeared, Edward Gibbon Wakefield published *The Art of Colonization* in which he outlined three positive advantages of colonisation: 1) it established a vastly increased market for the produce of Britain; 2) it was a "safety valve" for over-populated parts of the Mother Country; 3) it promoted foreign investment. He favoured a Government-sponsored system of emigration using Crown lands to finance the operation and, though he was talking specifically about "colonies", he was not using "colony" in its most common sense:

A colony therefore is a country wholly or partially unoccupied, which receives emigrants from a distance; and it is a colony of the country from which the emigrants proceed, which is therefore called the mother-country. Thus Australia was a colony but India was not. Somewhat surprisingly he considered the United States to be a colony of Great Britain:

To my view, the United States of America, formed by emigration from this country, and still receiving a large annual increase of people by emigration from this country, are still colonies of England.

Another defender of emigration and a strong supporter of Wakefield was John Stuart Mill, an economic philosopher

\[2\] A View of the *Art of Colonization*, Oxford, 1914, p. 16.
whose theories gained wide acceptance by the middle of the nineteenth century. He saw the need for emigration on a large scale and expressed it in economic terms:

When the growth of numbers outstrip the progress of improvement, and a country is driven to obtain the means of subsistence on terms more and more unfavourable, by the inability of its land to meet additional demands except on more onerous conditions; there are two expedients by which it may hope to mitigate that disagreeable necessity, though no change should take place in the habits of the people with respect to their rate of increase. One of these expedients is the importation of food from abroad. The other is emigration.¹

He spoke in terms of "a great national measure of colonization" and strongly refuted the "leakage of capital" theories of Ricardo and Say who had maintained that a disproportionate leakage of capital to the colonies would lower "real" wages at home. Mill doubted that an equal proportion of capital and population would needs be used to effect a useful emigration. But even allowing that one tenth of each were to leave the country he assured his readers that such would be the benefit of reduced pressure at home that wages and profits would still increase.

He favoured Wakefield’s plan for using Crown land to pay for the emigration and foresaw the need for a system of "indenture" to keep labourers from taking up land as soon as they arrived. The social rank associated with land-owning in the old country coupled with the cheapness and availability of land in the colonies induced almost every emigrant to buy as much land as he could as soon as possible.

...if each labourer becomes too soon an occupier and cultivator of land, there is a loss of productive power, and a great retardation of the progress of the colony in wealth and civilization.²

This problem could be at least partially solved by

²Ibid., p. 965.
binding each emigrant to work a certain number of years "on hire" as Wakefield had suggested.

Mill was enthusiastically in favour of Government sponsorship of emigration. His feelings were summed up in the last chapter of his book:

There is hence the strongest obligation on the government of a country like our own, with a crowded population, and unoccupied continents under its command, to build, as it were, and keep open, in concert with the colonial governments, a bridge from the mother country to those continents by establishing the self supporting system of colonization on such a scale, that as great an amount of emigration as the colonies can at the time accommodate may at all times be able to take place without cost to the emigrants themselves.¹

The image of a bridge between the over-populated shores of Britain and the under-populated shores of the colonies proved a popular one and reappeared frequently in debates on emigration.

Large-scale emigration, as opposed to "sporadic" individual emigration, was too big a venture for anyone but the Government to handle. If capitalists in the colonies tried bringing over labour on their own, there was always the danger that the emigrants would decide that they could make a better living by taking up land; it was a venture that needed powerful controls. There was also the question of profits to deter capitalists, for, though there was widespread agreement that emigration would eventually more than pay for itself, it was a long-term operation and it might take many decades for the profits to start accumulating.

Apart from Selkirk and Chalmers, there were several other Scottish spokesmen for emigration, especially among the radicals. A Paisley solicitor named John Crawford advocated emigration in his Philosophy of Wealth published in 1837. A Chartist, Patrick Matthew, was noted primarily for his suggested constitutional changes, but his sphere of interest also included emigration schemes and another radical, Alexander Campbell, was for a time involved in organising the New Brunswick

¹Ibid., p. 974.
emigration society. One of the best-known supporters of the Chartists, the Scot Thomas Carlyle, was a strong advocate of emigration. In his Essay on Chartism he talked about the over-population of one part of the world and the under-population of another part which, as he imagined with dramatic anthropomorphism, called out: "Come and till me, come and reap me." In 1843 he advocated a Government-sponsored emigration scheme in Past and Present and did not shy from using the well-worn bridge metaphor as he spoke of "a free bridge for Emigrants ... every willing worker that proved superfluous finding a bridge ready for him".

The Scottish novelist John Galt was heavily involved in emigration schemes himself\(^1\) and wrote two letters to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine on the subject under the nom de plume of Bandana. He saw emigration as the "safety-valve of civilized society" and postulated that support by local funds was the means whereby communities could rid themselves of the perpetual drains on their charity. In areas where there were no local funds, viz. Ireland and the Highlands, he would have encouraged capitalists to provide the financial backing and outlined methods (varying from practical through idealistic to naive) for making this lucrative.\(^2\)

The image of the bridge spanning the continents was irresistible to many of the political and economic thinkers of the nineteenth century, but it held the danger of oversimplifying both the problem and the solution. Even Government support would not have supplied an easy answer and finding Government support was like hunting for a whisper in a high wind.

Some of the arguments for and against Government sponsorship were brought out in an attempt to pass a Bill for Government Aid to Emigration in the House of Commons on June 2, 1840. Mr. O'Brien moved,\(^3\)

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\(^{1}\)see Introduction to Part II.
That in Great Britain and Ireland the working classes are frequently exposed to extreme privation, from inability to procure employment. That in several of the British colonies the demand for labour is urgent and continuous, and its remuneration is comparatively ample, whilst the prosperity of these colonies is much retarded by its inadequate supply. That, under these circumstances, it is expedient that a free passage to those colonies which offer the greatest rewards to individuals should be provided by the State for such of the labouring classes as are disposed to emigrate thither.

He endorsed Wakefield and Mill's plan of selling Crown land to finance the venture. He was answered in part by Lord John Russell:

...an indiscriminate emigration, such as that now proposed, would greatly injure the emigration already going on, which was a safe and healthy one. Your emigrants on the indiscriminate system would be greatly disappointed at the state of things which they would find, and that disappointment would be turned on the mother country.

The motion was negatived.

In January of the same year there had been a meeting of "the proprietors and the gentlemen interested in the welfare of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland" in which the appalling conditions in the remote areas of Scotland were brought to light. Lord Macdonald moved

That petitions be presented to both Houses of Parliament, setting forth the state of the over-peopled districts referred to, and soliciting the aid of Government in immediately adopting and carrying on an extensive and systematic plan of emigration.

This and other similar petitions flowed through Parliament, making as little impression as water on a duck's back. Occasionally help was granted in a small way to a deserving group and in the early 1850s there was some carefully controlled, highly discriminating Government sponsorship of Highland emigration to Australia, but by and large the official policy, in spite of the persuasive talents of the theorists, was to let emigration chart its own course.

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1 in The Scotsman, Jan. 22, 1840.
2 Ibid., Jan. 22, 1840.
3 Ibid., Jan. 22, 1840.
4 See also Chapter III, "Government Action".
B. Causes of Emigration (Push)

Farewell, thou poor land of the coward and slave,
Where millions still fettered will be;
Where justice sits waiting by liberty's grave—
Farewell to thy bondage and thee!

Poor land, where the many in misery feel
O'er-tortured by toiling and care,
Where man to his brother forever must kneel—
Pale victim of fear and despair!

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And millions must toil that a few may be fed:
The many though starving must till;
Though thousands bewailing and dying for bread,
The idle still revel at will!

Farewell, then, poor land of the coward and slave,
I haste me where man dared be free;
Where freedom soon gave to thy despots a grave—
Farewell to thy bondage and thee!

"The Emigrant's Farewell"¹

The causes of emigration are myriad; it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that there were as many causes as there were emigrants—more, in fact, since each emigrant often had several reasons for going. In the interests of organisation it is necessary to categorise the causes to a certain extent into broad groupings, but it is also dangerous for it may easily be misleading. Pinpointing specific motives for every emigration is simply not possible; the complexities of human emotion defy neat classification and attempts to organise them will inevitably be artificial. The "causes" affected people in different ways and no cause can be looked at completely out of context: they all overlapped, shaded into one another, interacted, counteracted and, generally, formed a small part of a highly complex whole.

It is not within the scope of this dissertation to present that "whole". To do so would necessitate writing a complete social, economic, political and ecclesiastical history of Scotland. However, while some of the

¹The Chartist Circular (Scottish), March 21, 1840.
salient causes of emigration are being traced, their interlocking nature should be kept in mind. And pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps—some of the causes seem disproportionately important and only a constant rapport with the historical background can achieve anything like a proper perspective.

1. The Rural Exodus

It will be observed that there has been a continued diminution in the number of inhabitants in that rural portion of the parish. There can be no hesitation in ascribing this diminution, in great part, to the altered mode of letting farms, by which several are united under one tenant.¹

The factors which disrupted and changed the way of life in the rural Lowlands during the first half of the nineteenth century have been outlined in Chapter I. The Agricultural Revolution, as it is called, was a great cause of both migration and emigration and its effects were widespread. The greatest single factor in the displacement of a substantial portion of the rural population, both in the Lowlands and the Highlands, was almost certainly the enlargement and consolidation of farms. The New Statistical Account abounds in references to decreases in population attributed to the enlargement of farms, often significantly linked with emigration: "The decrease is partly owing to emigration, and partly to the enlargement of farms."² "The enlargement of farms has been the principle cause of the late decrease of population—conjoined with emigration to manufacturing towns, and even to foreign countries."³

Small farmers were in a decidedly precarious position and those who escaped to the United States were duly thankful: "we are not at the mercy of any averseous landlord that can turn us out on the shortest

¹NSA, XI, Kincardineshire, p. 135.
²NSA, IV, Dumfriesshire, p. 250.
³NSA, III, Roxburghshire, p. 213.
Men were displaced by more efficient machinery and young families who lost their farms when the rents rose might find that unmarried farm labourers were preferred:

The tenants...now employ unmarried servants more frequently than those that are married,—a system which too contributes to send into the villages a large proportion of the married agricultural labourers...\(^2\)

And improvements were too expensive for small farmers who had been hard hit by the depressions which followed 1815. Sinclair reckoned in his *Analysis* that on the West Coast where farms were small (20-80 Scotch acres),

> The expense of labour is now so great, and the rent of land so high, that the profits of a small farm (unless dairying is also carried on) are not sufficient, with even the utmost frugality, to maintain a family.\(^3\)

Young, married farmers who had been used to renting their own land were caught "between a rock and a hard place" and for some the only answer was to leave the countryside.

The redundancy of rural labour, though receiving a good deal of attention, was probably not severe and it was not coupled with the oppressing over-population found in Ireland and the Highlands. It did, however, help to create an unfavourable climate for the class of men who would have been, in days gone by, small farmers, under-tenants, "hinds" or landed labourers. That "climate" added to the "Social Revolution" (which separated them from the businessmen/farmers), absentee landlords and the psychological fear of over-population was enough to loosen the roots which had held them to the soil for generations beyond ken.

Crop failure was one of the reasons for distress in the countryside. The climate destroyed crops from

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1^Ms. letter, Robert Pollock, Cambridge, Wisconsin, April 16, 1858 to his niece (probably in Ayr).
2NSA, XI, Kincardineshire, p. 135.
1811 to 1816 and in 1825 and, worst of all, the potato crop failed occasionally in the '30s and then consistently in the late '40s. Robert Macnab commented bitterly to his cousin in Tennessee on a failure in 1838:

> the wet and cold has completely destroyed the Potatoes...I wish to God that I knew 4 years ago that you had been in that part of the world. I would have been there before now, the cause of my staying in this country was and is on account of my aged Mother.¹

In spite of his aged mother, he emigrated the following year. In 1845 Thomas Boyd wrote from his farm near Kilwinning in Ayrshire to his cousin in Illinois, congratulating him on his fine crops and wryly comparing his own potatoes to manure and black soap.² He was seriously considering emigration and several members of his family did join their relatives in America. Thomas Johnstone (Sr.), owner of Holehouse Farm near Denny in Stirlingshire, summed up a nation's distress in three laconic diary entries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/7/46</td>
<td>Disease now appears to be seizing the potatoes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/8/46</td>
<td>Potatoes in general have all caught the disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/2/47</td>
<td>Potatoes again failed this year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may not have been sheer coincidence that his son, Thomas Johnstone (Jr.), emigrated in 1848. Few Lowland families depended on the potato as their sole means of support and the failures never created the utter destitution which prevailed in Ireland and, to a lesser extent, in the Highlands where people tried to live on boiled grass and nettles;³ nevertheless, the failures did create hardship and were an additional factor encouraging emigration.

More evidence of the growing unrest in rural areas lies in the abandonment of small villages and industries. It was a sign of the times that the specialised weavers, knitters, cotton spinners and flax hecklers were displaced.

¹Ms. letter, Glenorchy, Argyll, December 1, 1838 to Adam Fergusson, Carthage, Tennessee.
²Ms. letter, Fairlie Bog, Kilwinning, Nov. 28, 1845 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
³Ms. diary of Thomas Johnstone, Holehouse Farm, Denny.
from their rural settings by mechanisation and power machinery to drift inexorably into the larger towns and cities. In the Parliamentary "Enumeration Abstract" of 1843 "cessation of work" is one of the most frequent reasons for decrease in population, being mentioned by 63 Scottish parishes.¹ Many small industries could not survive the periodic depressions and bleachfields, coal-mines, quarries, etc. went out of business with depressing frequency, leaving hundreds unemployed. William Blair was such a victim:

As to myself there is a change. The Tilework is stopt and I am now removed from it. I did not know what to try. I some times thought had I been twenty years younger I would have emmigrated, but my brother John advised me to try a shop...²

Many chose the other alternative. Another cause of "cessation of work", incidentally, was fire. Safety precautions were largely ignored and the area around Denny where, as Thomas Johnstone recorded in his diary, a bleachfield, a woollen mill and a "chip mill" (possibly the mill for chipping, rasping and grinding dye stuffs, belonging to the firm of Messrs. John Gray and Son—see NSA, VIII, p. 129) all burned to the ground in the space of one year was probably not exceptional in this respect.

In all, therefore, there must have been a significant, though not severe, redundancy in the rural Lowlands during the first half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, for every actual case of redundancy, there were probably many more who feared the possibility, who laboured under the shadow of want and saw no escape for themselves or their children. Robert Lamond described the causes of emigration in Scotland to the Earl of Dalhousie, Governor of Quebec, in 1821 thusly:

...many of the emigrants who have embarked this season have left from other considerations than the want of employment—those considerations I am quite aware of—the uncertain state of trade

¹PP, 1843, XXII, pp. 2-76.
²Ms. letter, Hawkhill, Ayshire, Jan. 24, 1852 to John Boyd, Union Grove, Illinois.
and labour here for years past, and a desire to better their circumstances with a view to provide for their families on a more steady principle.\(^1\) A Greenock orphan who emigrated at an early age to North Carolina and was eventually elected to the United States Congress wrote a letter published by The Scotsman:

> It is natural for people to have a strong predilection for their native soil; but this attachment, however strong, must yield to principles more powerful, and equally inherent in our nature;—I mean the dread of want, and the invincible desire of pursuing our own happiness wherever it is most likely to be found. Parents, in particular circumstances, are invariably actuated by these principles; and they are not so anxious to accumulate on their own account, as to provide liberally for the present support and future welfare of their offspring.\(^2\)

The "future welfare of their offspring" could well be a strong inducement to emigrate; the Kirkman Finlay Emigration Society, for example, named the welfare of "our hapless Children" as the prime reason for emigration.\(^3\) In Scotland farmers' profits were dwindling and disappearing and the chances of their sons ever owning farms of their own were becoming increasingly slimmer. Rather than leave the farm to the oldest son and watch the rest drift away to towns or foreign lands, the farmer might prefer to put what little capital he had into passage money to America where he could hope to find a large farm and keep his family together.

Those who were set adrift or who wished to better their circumstances would have to choose between migrating to the nearest town or city where they could enter into some form of industry and emigrating to a land where they might again take up farming. Most, of course, chose the easier alternative and went to the towns. There was, however, a class of people who did not wish to make, or were incapable of making, the psychological and physical adjustments which factory work would entail.\(^4\)

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\(^{1}\) Ms. letter, June 15, 1821; Register House, Edinburgh.
\(^{2}\) The Scotsman, Sept. 25, 1819.
\(^{3}\) See Petition to Thomas Chalmers, Appendix I.
Such people would probably emigrate after a short stay in the city and would help to give the early nineteenth-century emigration its "urban" character. For those torn between migration and emigration, the balance might have been tipped by a sentence in a letter from America—"men of small property may live well and bring up a family"—or by the appalling conditions they found in the cities.

2. Urban Unrest

ther is not much work at present and we have little hopes of having any in winter and if we are all spared in health tell the spring we will be very happy to emigrant to America and meet with you.2

The background of conditions in the industrial cities has been sketched in Chapter I, but little attention was given to how the conditions would affect emigration. The actual amount of poverty and/or unemployment varied a great deal from year to year and even from city to city, but there would have been at all times a sizable group of people with good reason for dissatisfaction or even, in many cases, desperation—fertile ground for the seeds of emigration.

In 1816 there were some 10,000 unemployed in Glasgow3 and it would get much worse—in 1843 there were 10,000 unemployed in Paisley alone and Glasgow cotton spinners were sleeping in pig-styes.4 Letters written by and to emigrants in the United States leave little doubt that employment and the state of "trade" were important factors in the decision to emigrate. The Robertsons of Dalgarven, Ayrshire, were a family of weavers and small farmers who corresponded copiously with relatives in America. In 1842 James Robertson emigrated to Illinois where he bought a farm near Union Grove; he took a large family with him and several other relatives joined them over

1Letter from Wayne Township, Ohio in The Scotsman, July 9, 1823.
2Ms. letter from Mary Robertson, Millhill (Ayrshire?), Aug. 25, 1852 to John Boyd, Union Grove, Illinois.
4Johnston, op. cit., p. 274.
the next two decades. James’ sister, Mary Robertson, wrote from Millhill (probably in Ayrshire), in 1847:

We are maken it no wors but we can not mak it much better. All that we can dwo [sic] if you Could giv us any encourgesment [is] to ama [grate?] to your Country.

In 1848 she wrote to her nephew, Robert, describing the conditions in Scotland:

the weven traed is verey bad at prasant and a grat number is going idle and is almost starven. Ther is so many irishmen in thes Country the half of them is unemployed. O what reasone hav you to bliss the giver of all good fore Carring you to a land of pecese and planty.

The year after he emigrated James Robertson received a letter from his brother, Andrew, in Dalgarven which probably recalled the reasons for his own emigration:

Trade is Much about the same state as when you left Scotland although at present there is a small or faint prospect of its revival. Prices are remarkable low. In short at the starvation point. The work we are mostly employed with at present is Bandanas & lapels. All other trades are in as bad a state may worse, for Mason’s wages are down to about 10/ or 12/ per week and cannot get work even at that wage, miserable as it is.

John Boyd followed his relatives to Union Grove in 1850 but by 1852 he was discouraged enough to contemplate returning to Scotland (ostensibly to pick up a Scottish wife). His mother discouraged him:

John when you com back you will not find this Country much better then when you went away. Work is very ill to get and wages is low...the new coal company is sinking ther for coal pits. They are men working ther lick slaves for one and a pene a day. Every trad is very dull hear. The weveng is very bad at prasant.

as did William Blair, a relative or close friend of the family:

Your Mother tells me you are not liking the cuntry well and that you have been speaking about returning or going to California. Now I think if your prospects

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1Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, April 28, 1847 to James Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
2Ms. letter, Millhill, March 20, 1848 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove.
3Ms. letter, March 15, 1849.
4Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, June 23, 1852.
be any way favourable for a comfortable living you should try it a little longer. Perhaps you may come to like it better, as times are no better here for the working man than when you left...  

Robert Macnab probably summed up the feelings of many embittered emigrants who left because of poverty and lack of opportunity: "I am not the least sorry in leaving this Country... for this Country is going to the D-1."  

The periodic depressions to which industry was liable had their effect on emigration. It is easiest to see this in the fate of the weavers because of the widespread publicity which their distress received, but it held true for many other groups of unemployed and underpaid labourers. During the depression of 1820 The Scotsman reported a Parliamentary speech by Lord Hamilton, a leading Scottish Whig, on the destitution of workers in the west of Scotland:  

many persons were in such an absolute state of destitution, that they looked on their existence as a burden which they could not support. They could neither maintain themselves nor their families; and the period was fast approaching, when, without food and without raiment, they must either perish, or prolong their existence by the plunder of their neighbours.  

The Scotsman was astonished at the Government's opposition to organised emigration.  

It was at this time that the newspapers began to notice the emigration of the weavers. The Dumfries and Galloway Courier noted in 1819 the departure of some Cumberland weavers for Philadelphia, "rage or rather perhaps the necessity for emigration still continues from this quarter", and the emigration of some 200 weavers from Dumfries in the following year, many of whom "being not altogether unacquainted with rural employments" were apparently set on farming—or, as the  

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1 Ms. letter, Hawkhill (Ayrshire?), Jan. 24, 1852.  
2 Ms. letter, Glenorchy, Aug. 11, 1839 to his cousin, Adam Ferguson, Carthage, Tennessee.  
3 May 6, 1820.  
4 May 25, 1819.
Courier had it, "exchanging the shuttle for the spade, axe or cross-saw".1 By 1827 the weavers were responding not only to the poor conditions in their native land, but also to demands in America. The Scotsman reported the emigration of a boat-load of weavers by the Camillus in that year2 and another full complement by the same ship the next year3 and again in 1830;4 furthermore, "scarcely a vessel has left the Clyde for New York these some months by-past but has either carried out people or materials for this branch of weaving."

These weavers had been "sent for" by the rising manufactures in the United States and they represented not the destitute handloom weavers, but the more skilled weavers of Paisley shawls and cotton spinners. However, emigration fever also affected the unskilled and for those who could ill-afford to pay their own passage, there were 13 Emigration Societies in Renfrewshire (representing 4653 persons) and 22 Societies in Lanarkshire (representing 8500 persons).5 In the two years 1820-21 the Government helped over 3000 weavers to emigrate--mostly to Upper Canada.6

There is also evidence in the New Statistical Account that the depressions of the early 1820s were causing emigration. The minister of Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire reported,

I have found the increase in population regular for the last seventeen years, with the exception of the years 1819 and 1820, when, in consequence of distress and discontent, there was a considerable emigration to America.7

And the minister of Balfron in Stirlingshire was gloomily prophetic:

There is...very much misery arising from poverty and destitution; and if some new impetus be not

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1April 13, 1820.
2Aug. 15, 1827.
3March 8, 1828.
4March 3, 1830.
5Donaldson, op. cit., p. 93.
6Macdonald, op. cit., p. 152; see also below for emigration assistance.
7NSA, VII, p. 97.
given, by some means or other, in a few more years."

"Far away, our children will have left the land."

It is interesting to speculate on the nature of the emigrants who were motivated to leave by the depressions of the first half of the century. Statistics are unfortunately not available to show the average financial standing of Scottish emigrants and it is difficult to estimate their resources. There are, however, some clues. A very significant editorial appeared in The Scotsman in 1820.

Our accounts from Glasgow are not favourable as to the state of trade...Emigration is going on at a great rate; but not, as we are informed, among those whom the country can best spare. One ship which sailed lately was calculated to have £50,000 of emigrant specie or property on board; and the emigrants generally are said to be those who are worth from £100 to £1000 each. In 1830 14,400 emigrants claimed to be taking £47,000 out of the country with them, but Captain Patey, the Emigration Officer at Glasgow, reckoned they had much more. When questioned, he replied,

I have known a Scotch passenger, a small farmer, going out with the poorer class of passengers, and paying the lowest rate of passage, and yet at the same time having from 700l to 800l. with him... and I knew a party of Scotch emigrants, consisting of 40 persons, who went from the town of Campbeltown with 14,000l. among them.

The Committee asked him if it was the habit of Highlanders to conceal their means and he replied "Yes". The Scotsman often commented that emigrants on particular ships were of a "rather respectable class" and the contributors to the New Statistical Account were quick to lament the loss of their finest native sons:

There is a general misapprehension, respecting the description of emigrants from among our rural population. From this parish, at least, they, for the most part, have been the robust, the enterprising, and the provident; they have been eminently successful; and the accounts sent home by them of their prosperity have extended the emigratory spirit.

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1 NSA, VIII, p. 302.
2 June 24, 1820.
4 Parish of Foulden, Berwickshire, II, p. 263.
Others simply pointed out that the emigrants were not generally of the poorest class.\(^1\) Certainly the impression given by contemporary sources is that it was the young, the enterprising, the productive and the potentially productive members of society who were departing for America.\(^2\) This would imply that the most important causes of emigration were fears for the future and loss of faith in the opportunities for success at home:

those who are trembling for to-morrow, and see a gloomy prospect for their children, may be naturally enough desirous of seeking another home, where, with industry, they will at least be secure from want and wretchedness.\(^3\)

James Flint, in his astute *Letters from America*, described the emigrants on his ship and, significantly, none of them were destitute:

Of our party were three farmers, with their families, whose leases were expired; all of them having declined engaging for a new term of years, under the apprehension of seeing their paternal stock, and the savings of many years' industry, divided between the landholder and the collector of taxes...With us also were several of the labouring class, whose utmost exertions could only procure the bare support of existence; and ploughmen, who prudently refrained from marrying with fourteen pounds a-year.\(^4\)

Other accounts would indicate that these emigrants were typical of those who left, certainly up to the 1840s and probably right up to 1861.

The destitute would not have enough money to finance their own emigration, although undoubtedly many managed to borrow enough from friends, relatives and kinsmen in America. Guillet, in fact, estimated that in some years over one half of the emigrants were helped by loans or gifts from their friends.\(^5\) The other possibility for the destitute and unemployed who wished to emigrate was some form of "formal" assistance; the main sources of which during the period 1815-1861 were the

\(^1\) e.g. Parish of Penninghame, Wigtownshire, IV, p. 60.  
\(^3\) Editorial from the *Morning Chronicle* quoted in The Scotsman, Dec. 19, 1818.  
Government, the parishes and emigration societies; philanthropists also donated large sums, but it is probable that very little of it went to emigrants bound for the United States.¹

In 1819 The Scotsman noted with satisfaction "that societies are about to be organised in some of the manufacturing districts, for the purpose of facilitating emigration". The editor intelligently warned the societies against trying to channel the emigration to particular colonies: "Precisely the same encouragement should be held out to settlers in Pennsylvania as to settlers in Canada."² This opinion must have been close to sedition in 1819 when the prohibition against artisans emigrating to non-Crown colonies was still in force (The Scotsman, in fact, later attacked this Act³). The societies appear to have been, for the most part, of the self-help variety with each member contributing weekly towards his own emigration.⁴ The weavers' societies have already been mentioned. Formed in the '20s, they continued to be active until the '60s; in 1826 more than 30 Scottish societies petitioned the Government for aid—usually requesting free land in Canada—and in 1843 19 of them joined as the United Emigration Societies of Paisley and Renfrewshire to request aid.⁵ During the destitution of the '40s altruistic societies were founded by the middle and upper classes to give aid to the Highlanders. In 1846, for example, various professors and doctors founded the Scottish Patriotic Society to improve crofting conditions, stimulate fisheries and aid emigration.⁶

The results achieved by the societies were, on the whole, discouraging. Some foundered because of lack of support and some because of utopian ideals and naive blindness to the hardships of emigration. Also, by and

²July 3, 1819.
³Aug. 16, 1823.
⁴Wainwright, op. cit., p. 173.
⁵Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 93, 96; see Kirkman Finlay Emigration Society Petition in Appendix.
⁶Ross, Valerie, op. cit., p. 71.
large, they encouraged the wrong kind of emigrants—those who had failed at home and would probably fail abroad.¹

Parliament made grants in 1819, 1821, 1823, 1825 and 1827 to assist emigration to specific colonies, viz. the Cape and Canada.² In 1834 an Act allowed parishes to mortgage their rates and spend up to £10 per head on emigrants and from that year until 1878 various sums were voted annually towards promoting "the removal of indigent people from the country". This latter assistance was directed primarily at Australia and the "bounty" was supplemented by the Government of New South Wales until 1843.³ Guillet reckoned that less than one-tenth of British emigrants received assistance, quoting for the period 1815-1825 the figures 7,090 assisted versus 65,704 privately arranged.⁴ Although Government assistance never played much of a part in the emigration to the United States, it was to have considerable influence at a slightly later period on the numbers going to Canada and, especially, Australia from Scotland. MacMillan pointed out that of the 12,000 Scots who emigrated to Australia between 1837 and 1846 probably about 10,000, most of them working-class, were assisted by either Government or colonial bounty schemes.⁵

Emigration assistance in Scotland is a neglected subject. It is probable, however, that such assistance as was forthcoming had little effect on emigration to the United States. Throughout most of the period under review the Government looked on emigration to the United States with a jaundiced eye, seeing America as a potential enemy (there were several threats of war) and as an economic rival. And the Government made its feelings on the matter quite plain. The Act of 1782 forbidding skilled artisans from emigrating to "foreign countries"

¹Weinwright listed 7 reasons for the failure of "almost all" (English) emigration societies; op. cit., p. 228.
⁴Guillet, op. cit., p. 20.
⁵MacMillan, op. cit., p. 271.
was widely evaded—it was easy enough to emigrate to Canada and then filter down to the States—but it was not repealed until 1824. The official policy was stated by the Poor Law Commissioners (in charge of Government-assisted emigration after 1830) in 1842:

We have objected to sanction the emigration to the United States, not only upon what may be considered as grounds of national policy, but also upon the ground of our not possessing sufficient guarantees as to the mode of treatment which such emigrants are likely to receive in countries over which our Government has no control.¹

It is not surprising, then, to learn that of the 25,852 persons assisted up to the end of 1860, less than 400 had been sent to the United States.²

Societies and individuals who petitioned for help invariably had the good sense to specify that they were going to Canada, although it has been shown that some parishes and trades unions in England financed emigration to the United States.³ The United States Consul at Liverpool reported in 1836:

I find it has been the practice with many parishes, for some years past, to send abroad such of their superabundant population as would consent to go, and although there has never been a restriction as to the place, they invariably preferred the United States, and ninety out of a hundred, New York.⁴

In spite of the lack of evidence, it is reasonable to assume that some of the myriad emigration societies in Scotland followed suit; however, at most this would represent a small fraction of the total emigration.

But if the masses of unemployed and destitute people in Scotland were not actually emigrating to the United States, they did have at least an indirect effect on the pattern of emigration. The Scottish poor laws were ill-equipped to deal with the changing distribution of population. The laws had been designed for the predomi-

nanty rural, parish economy and were financed by bequests and voluntary contributions at church; they made no allowance for the "able-bodied poor", being only pledged to support the "aged poor, impotent and decayed persons, who of necessity must live by alms" (it was reckoned that eleemosynary relief would encourage beggars). This system was placed under an intolerable strain with the growing concentration of population in urban industrial centres, the recurrent problems of unemployment and the changes in attitude towards charity ("One meets now and then with persons who, in the old Scottish spirit, refuse aid from the poor's funds. In general, however, they are abundantly clamorous."). The only solution was a Poor Assessment and Glasgow led the way in 1755 with Paisley following in 1740 and Dundee joining them before the turn of the century. By 1844 most of the towns of any size either had assessments or were seriously considering them and there is evidence to show that the poor were attracted to the towns for this reason. After three years of unsupported residence, they could claim relief from the urban parish.

But in 1845 almost half of Scotland was still "unassessed" and the people in the towns and cities were feeling the burden of supporting not only their own poor, but migrant poor from rural areas as well. This may have been the final straw for those considering emigration because of the economic situation. There was, at any rate, enough protest to secure the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1845 by which the residence requirement was raised to 5 years and a Central Board of Supervision set up. Parishes were pressured "indirectly" into introducing poor's rates and by 1850 there were few who did not have some form of assessment.

2NSA, VIII, Parish of Denny, Stirlingshire, p. 136.
3. The Irish Problem

The greatest grievance that is felt in this parish at present, and which is most detrimental to its respectability and improvement, is the extent of emigration, and the description of people that emigrate. Our native labourers and artisans, with their little property and many virtues, are drifting across the Atlantic, and Ireland, from her exhaustless store, is supplying their place.1

Thus wrote the minister of the parish of Whithorn in Wigtownshire, one of the counties that bore the brunt of the Irish "invasions" of the first half of the nineteenth century. And "invasion" seems hardly too strong a word; during the peak of the immigration in the 1840s six to eight thousand Irish labourers were flowing into Scotland every week in the harvesting season. Admittedly the vast majority of them were seasonal migrants who would shortly return to Ireland, but many of them stayed and the sheer magnitude of the labour force, whether migrant or not, was bound to have an effect on the Scottish economy.

There were only some twelve miles separating Ireland from Scotland and the histories of the two countries have often intertwined. There had been migration across the North Channel throughout Scottish history, but the "modern movement" from Ireland to Scotland began in 1798 following the Irish rebellion. In 1818 Napier's Rob Roy initiated a regular steamer service between Greenock and Belfast. The fare was 14/- for steerage accommodation, but by 1824 it had plummeted to 10d. with deck passage available for 5d. or even 3d. Various Government measures designed to limit the number of passengers per tons of burden brought the prices up again to 5/- and 3/- for steerage and deck respectively and for the next five years the prices vacillated around those marks. In the 1830s and '40s the prices were again reduced and varied from 2/6d. to 6d.2

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1NSA, IV, p. 60.
These reduced passages coincided with over-population and lack of employment in Ireland while in Scotland the size of farms was increasing with many holdings in the "granaries" of Berwickshire, Roxburghshire and the Lothians ranging from 600 acres upwards to over 1000.1 The fickle character of Scottish weather made harvesting a race against disaster and an army of labour was required for a short period of time. Some came from the Highlands, but increasingly the breach was filled from Ireland's "exhaustless store". In 1824 the Glasgow Chronicle noted that "except a few Highlanders, the Irish have completely usurped the place of the Scottish shearers".2

The Irish navvy also made his mark on the Scottish economy. It is a well-known irony that the Caledonian Canal (1803-1847) which was at least partially inspired by the hope of providing employment in the Highlands to stem the tide of emigration, was built largely by Irish immigrant labour.

It was argued in favour of the project, in and before 1803, that the work would afford employment at home, to the people of the vicinity, who would otherwise emigrate...But the canal work, ever since its commencement, has been performed chiefly by labourers from Ireland and the low country...3

It was also Irish backs that laid the tracks of Scotland's burgeoning railway lines—thereby serving their apprenticeship for the task of spanning the United States later in the century; harbours, canals and roads all benefitted from the relatively cheap labour. The development of the coal and iron industries in Scotland was also facilitated by the immigrants. By the middle of the century, two-thirds of the 350-odd collieries were located in the West and blast furnaces, foundries, rolling mills and metal works mushroomed up beside them. The

2Aug. 17, 1824; quoted in Handley, op. cit., p. 45.
3Larkin, Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland...1818, London, 1819, pp. 263-84.
Irish were used mostly as unskilled labour but during strikes they replaced semi-skilled Scottish labour as colliers and also worked at the furnaces,\(^1\) as, for example, in the terrible year of 1848 when thousands of hungry Irish immigrants were used by employers to break wage rates.\(^2\)

It should also be pointed out that the handloom weaving industry was severely affected by Irish influx. At a time when conditions were already bad, the industry was inundated with Irish weavers. In 1826 there were some 40,000 Irish living in Glasgow and vicinity, most of whom were reckoned to be weavers.\(^3\) This inevitably had the effect of depressing wages and aggravating conditions where oversupply of labour was already a problem.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Irish immigration apparently filled in a decreasing population in parts of the Scottish West. Between 1801 and 1831 only two parishes in Wigtownshire showed a decrease in population and the increases were universally ascribed to the Irish influx. In 1841 5,772 out of Wigtownshire's total population of 39,195 were born in Ireland\(^4\)—almost 15%—and in the next decade the percentages of Irish-born in counties farther east rose considerably. As the numbers of Irish "visitors" (as they were often euphemistically referred to in the New Statistical Account) increased, their character changed.

There was a shift from seasonal migration to a more permanent movement and, whereas before the Irish had sought to improve their conditions by coming to Scotland, during the famines of the '40s it was in order to survive that they fled the "black night of pestilence". Those

\(^2\)Johnston, op. cit., p. 278.
\(^3\)Macdonald, op. cit., p. 83.
\(^4\)PP, 1843, XXII, ii, op. cit.
who could beg, borrow or steal £4 for passage emigrated to America; the rest came to Scotland (or England).

The effects of this Irish immigration have been variously argued. The Irish tended to be poorer than their Scottish counterparts and were content to work for lower wages; they were also less educated and, for the most part, Roman Catholic. Their Catholicism aggravated economic resentment and sowed the seeds of religious strife based on "racism" which survives to this day. And there can be little doubt that their standards of education were substantially lower than those in Scotland (at least in the Lowlands where they settled). Parliamentary returns from individual parishes in 1837 often indicated the presence of illiterate immigrants from Ireland, stressing that the native Scots could all at least read while most could write as well. This was partly because the Irish did not lay the same stress on the value of education, but partly, also, their religion proved a barrier. The reports from Ayrshire and Lanarkshire were often bitter and accused the immigrants of lowering the moral standards of the community as well as the educational level.

Newspapers and other contemporary sources, however, were most alarmed about the lowering of the standard of living and the "unfair" competition from cheap Irish labour. The Farmer's Magazine reported a disturbing situation in Upper Annandale in 1815: "as the Irish workmen take the few jobs to be had at the lowest rates, there is hardly any thing to occupy the labourers of this district." The Edinburgh Review published a Report on the State of the County made by the "gentlemen of Lanarkshire" in 1826 which expressed common fears:

1 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 293.
2 PP, 1837, XLVII.
3 See Part II, Chapters V and VI.
4 See particularly the report of the Minister of Carluke, Lanarkshire; PP, 1837, XLVII, p. 475.
5 XVI, Feb. 1815, p. 100.
They justly state that the want of employment, so severely felt at present by the labourers and tradesmen of Glasgow, Paisley, etc., has been greatly aggravated by the continued influx of Irish paupers, who can bear almost every sort of privation; and they further state that the natives of the country are endeavouring to escape from their competition by emigrating in great numbers to America, leaving their places to be occupied by the half-famished hordes that are daily pouring in from the great officina pauperum!

And that was twenty years before the potato famines began in earnest. It can further be shown that counties like Wigtownshire, Kirkcudbrightshire and Dumfriesshire where the proportion of Irish labour was high had lower average wages than the rest of the South of Scotland.

The Irish historian, James Handley, has defended the immigrants from his country and shown that, for the most part, they performed labour which native Scots could not be persuaded to do—because of its strenuous or humble nature—and thus played a valuable role in the Scottish Industrial Revolution. He in fact went so far as to say that the Irish labour helped to create, eventually, more jobs for the Scottish workers. He admitted that Irish immigrants "gave the quietus" to the handloom weaving industry, but maintained that it was a wretched, dying industry anyway and the sooner it was put to rest the better for everyone concerned. He was also prepared to concede that the Irish did offer some competition in the iron and coal industries, but observed that the demand usually exceeded the supply.

Be that as it may, it would seem that the Irish immigration did have a definite effect on Scottish emigration. Handloom weavers and agricultural labourers were undercut and left without jobs or future and many more probably felt their positions to be threatened. It was feared by many that when the Irish arrived in

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1 December, 1826, pp. 54-55.
2 see Bowley, A.L., "The Statistics of Wages in the United Kingdom during the Last 100 Years", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, vol. 62, 1899, pp. 140-51; also Cowan, Edward, op. cit., p. 44.
their neighbourhood the moral, educational and economic standards would go down—all of which would have added to the general fear that society was crumbling and that there was no future in Scotland.

4. Church and State

We must trust to ourselves—we have nothing to hope for from a legislature which could grant £70,000 for the accommodation of a royal stud, and only £30,000 for educational purposes.

—Scottish Chartist Circular

Although the main causes of emigration were probably economic, there were others no less important to some people. Those who left Scotland for political and religious reasons were undoubtedly a small minority, but they should be mentioned.

There were, of course, many who did not agree with the political system and it is probably fair to say that prior to 1832 the more fanatical might have been tempted to give up a losing fight for reform and emigrate to America. The United States was receiving good publicity in the newspapers, especially in the more liberal organs like The Scotsman and the radical journals like the Chartist Circular, and was being acclaimed as the hope for democracy and freedom. This attitude to America was also reflected in contemporary letters:

We were all remarkably glad that You had fallen in with such a good situation & in so short a time after your arrival in that land of freedom.

William Fergusson (perhaps referring to "The Star Spangled Banner") wrote to Robert Robertson in Illinois "to solicit your advice in referent to my emigrating to America 'that land of the brave and the free'."

The Reform Act (Scotland) did not in itself right many wrongs (though it was more revolutionary than the English counterpart), but it did serve to give reformers

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1Nov. 21, 1840.
3Ms. letter, Andrew Robertson, Dalgarven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843 to his brother James, Union Grove, Illinois.
4Ms. letter, Mongreenan near Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Sept. 12, 1843 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove.
5Ferguson, op. cit., pp. 289-90.
and agitators hope for the future and perhaps convinced them that it was worth staying in Scotland and fighting for their rights; though, again, some were disillusioned by this time in the failures of the labour unions and sought to escape from the harsh reality of urban Britain to the bucolic freedom of American agriculture.¹ The Chartists and other radicals of Glasgow were an example of those who stayed to fight, although some of them overstepped the bounds of "acceptable" agitation and decided that America was better than a Scottish gaol.

Certainly there were those who spoke vehemently against rotten boroughs, the House of Lords and the privilege it stood for, sinecures, pensions, Corn Laws and the Established Church and there were those not afraid to act. The handloom weaving and shoe-making trades were particular hot-beds of political dissent and Chartism, perhaps because unlike the factories they allowed opportunities for talking and thinking. Andrew Carnegie's family were a good example of Chartist weavers caught up in political turmoil; discouraged by the political situation and teetering on the brink of ruin in the disastrous '40s they emigrated after receiving encouraging letters from relatives in America:

This country is far better for the working man than the old one, and there is room enough and to spare, notwithstanding the thousands that flock into her borders every year.²

The Chartists were full of enthusiasm for the United States and their generous propaganda may have helped many to decide where they would emigrate. The Chartist Circular, printed in Glasgow in the early '40s, tirelessly compared the British and American political systems, much to the latter's advantage:


Look on this picture!
Cost of the Royal Family of Great Britain.

Her Majesty, the Queen ............ £385,000
Duke of Cumberland ................. 21,000
Duke of Sussex ...................... 21,000
The Princess Mary ................... 13,000
The Princess Augusta ............... 13,000
etc.
Total Money Cost of the Royal Family... £794,200

And on this!
The President of the United States.... £6,000
a year, without one pensioned relative.

Comment on the above contrast is unnecessary.
The most muddle-headed person must be able to perceive at a glance the immense pecuniary advantages enjoyed by us under the enlightened and learned management of the ten-pounders, compared with those enjoyed by that Chartist- ridden people of the United States. But, verily! we are a great people, the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world. Ah! well, that is something, to be sure! 1

The American political system was described at length in glowing terms and Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Paine and other Founding Fathers were quoted frequently and with great admiration. America was presented to the readers of the Circular as the land of the working man. An article entitled "Working Men the Founders of the Wisest and Best Form of Government the World Ever Saw" pointed out that Washington had been a farmer, Franklin a printer and Paine a stay-maker:

Fellow-workmen, think, we beseech you, on the fact, that the founders of one of the greatest wisest and now most powerful and happy nations on the face of the earth, were merely operatives! 2

Contemporary speeches, newspapers, pamphlets and journals which reflected radical opinions "were shot through with articulate references to the United States" 3 and their praise of American institutions reached new heights during the growth of Jacksonian Democracy—the conservative upper classes, apathetic since the loss of the colonies,

1 Sept. 28, 1839 (issue number 1).
2 Aug. 15, 1840, p. 189.
began to experience a growing fear.\textsuperscript{1} The publicity was not all favourable, to be sure, but it seems unlikely that the "scathing remarks" of the embittered Mrs. Trollope's \textit{Domestic Manners of the Americans}, the "bitter satire" of Dickens' \textit{Martin Chuzzlewit} or the popular equating of "Americanising" with "vulgarising" would deter any but the most supercilious of emigrants; indeed, the "operatives" probably never heard of them.

The \textit{Scotsman} noted in 1827 the sailing of some skilled Paisley weavers and calico printers for New York and commented,

\textit{There we see our manufacturing population forced by corn laws and excessive taxation, to leave the land of their nativity, and seek an asylum in a foreign country.}\textsuperscript{2}

The newspapers were, in fact, fond of printing letters from the United States which emphasized the lack of taxes there: "The mosquito bites are very troublesome, but not so much as the taxman with you,"\textsuperscript{3} was one emigrant's sly jab while another had written ten years earlier from the Scottish Settlement at Silver Lake,

\begin{quote}
I, who have bought, and now hold, 115 acres of good land, am assessed for the present year, for county tax, one dollar and four cents; and two dollars and eight cents for road tax. This last I have to work out, and this is the total of all my taxes for the present year.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

Taxes were heavier in Scotland than in the United States and in Edinburgh the Annuity Tax caused considerable commotion towards the middle of the century.\textsuperscript{5}

The \textit{Chartist Circular} reserved its most potent spleen for the aristocracy and there are some indications that Scottish emigrants in America were thankful to have escaped from a social system where birth could

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}Pelling, Henry, \textit{America and the British Left}, London, 1956, p. 2.
\item \textsuperscript{2}Aug. 15, 1827.
\item \textsuperscript{3}The Scotsman, Oct. 30, 1830.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., Sept. 15, 1821.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Ibid., Sept. 15, 1821.
\end{itemize}
determine status. There is a well-known letter written by that staunch Republican, Andrew Carnegie, in reply to a request for a donation towards a statue of Robert Bruce:

Dungeness, Ga., Mch. 12. 87.

My Dear Sir,

I cannot feel much interest in Kings or in any who occupied or do occupy positions, not by merit, but by Birth. Let the successors of such build monuments to their predecessors, or those who can live contentedly under institutions which deny them equality.

I am too staunch a Republican. Hate with a bitter hatred and resent as an insult to my manhood, the Monarchical idea.

A king is an insult to every other man in the land. You see, my dear sir, why, entertaining such sentiments, I cannot give you 30£ to commemorate even one who was better than his class. Perish Kings and Queens and privilege in all its forms.

If you have a Man of the People who is thought worthy of a monument—or of assistance and you obtain subscriptions for this man, I'll send my 30£ to that fund, but not a penny for all the Kings and Queens in Christendom.

Sincerely yours,
Andrew Carnegie.

Other, less eloquent letters also professed a strong dislike for the privileged class. John Dick made several sneering references to the Edinburgh nobility and Robert Macnab, just prior to emigrating, wrote to his cousin in Tennessee, "You say that you have Slaves...but we are slaves to Lords & Lairds."

Finally, under the general heading of political unrest mention should be made of the "tradition" of urban riots in the industrial centres. There were no machine-breaking Luddites in Scotland, but there were many cases of violence, the best known of which was the so-called Radical War of 1820. The return of the army coupled with industrial depression and spreading unemploy-
ment caused the formation of radical societies and committees in almost every village in Scotland while Paisley, Dundee and Glasgow became "veritable hotbeds of sedition"; everywhere there were groups denouncing "vile aristocrats", "corrupt governments", "liberty crushing French wars", "heavy taxes" and "iniquitous corn laws". In 1819 riots broke out and mass meetings were called in Glasgow and Paisley while south of the Border 11 members of an essentially peaceful crowd were killed by Manchester yeomanry in the "Massacre of Peterloo". Following Peterloo the Government passed the repressive Six Acts and agitation in Glasgow resulted in the arrest of 27 members of a radicals' committee in early 1820. An appeal went out for a strike on the 5th of April and an estimated 60,000 workmen answered the call. Blood was shed in Paisley and Greenock and crowds were met by troops at the "Battle of Bonnymuir" where four people were wounded, forty-seven prisoners were taken and three of the leaders were executed. The agitation subsided, but left behind a legacy of unease.

There was very little political activity during the '20s among the working classes and in 1824, when the Combination Acts were repealed, attention was focused on trade unions. But in 1831-32, following the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords, the smouldering unrest flared up again: in 1831 the Riot Act was read in Lanark, stockyard fires broke out in Bo'ness, Montrose and in Berwickshire and mobs formed in Dumfries. Even after the Reform Bill was passed, the radicals continued to rise and in 1834 20,000 workers paraded under "Liberty or Death" flags on Glasgow Green. Three years later there were widespread strikes in Glasgow among cotton-spinners, colliers and iron-miners accompanied by violence and, if Sheriff Alison is to be credited, hired assassinations. 2 1838 saw the Trial of the Cotton Spinners

1 Johnston, op. cit., pp. 234-36.
2 Alison, Sir Archibald, Some Account of my Life and Writings, Edinburgh, 1883, I, pp. 382-87.
and the rise of the Chartist movement which "swept over Scotland like a flame"; 200,000 workers representing 70 unions demonstrated on Glasgow Green. The repressions of 1839 provided only a momentary check to radical ardour and less than 5 years later the Chartists were again riding high.

The French Revolution of 1848 was closely followed by armed uprisings in the Scottish towns: there were "Bread Riots" in Edinburgh and Glasgow and "sympathetic" riots in Kilmarnock, Ayr and Greenock. Glasgow was hardest hit:

The Chartists leaders immediately saw that their time had at length come,—issued from their dens, inflamed the minds of the suffering multitudes, and so worked upon their feelings, that, on the 5th March, they marched in a body from the Green into the heart of Glasgow, armed themselves with iron crowbars and railings...and...succeeded in pillaging about fifty shops.¹

The mob was eventually dispersed by some stern words from Sheriff Alison and a troop of dragoons.

Thomas Johnstone (Sr.) recorded the excitement in his diary during the months of March and April:

6/3/1848 Terrible mob in Glasgow to-day, many shot.  
10/3/1848 Great commotion in Germany & Italy. The rock of Cashel falls in Ireland.  
11/3/1848 Read account of the awful riots in Glasgow £12,000 of property destroyed.  
17/3/1848 Navvies threaten to spoil Denny & great excitement in consequence.  
10/4/1848 Great chartist petition presented to-day signed by 5,000,000 signatures.²

Mary Robertson described the same Glasgow riots to her nephew in Illinois:

There has been a very great desturbance in Glasgow at prasant. The worseveral killed and a grate many Wondered. Thy went in to the shops and carraed of what ever thy plesed but thy have lead up a grate many of the offenders to stand there triel.³

¹Alison, op. cit., p. 572.  
²Ms. diary of Thomas Johnstone, Holehouse Farm, Denny.  
³Ms. letter, Millhill, March 20, 1848 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
For the industrial labourers such "desturbances" may have been a source of hope for the future, but for the middle class, with memories of the horrors perpetrated by mobs in the French Revolution and news of the chaos in Europe in 1848, riots foreshadowed the destruction of their way of life. Alison noted that the Glasgow riots of 1848 spread "the utmost terror through the city"¹ and Mary Robertson encouraged her sister (-in-law?) Mary and Mrs. Murray not to dislike America "fore thy may think them selfs happy that is out of Scotland fore it is groieng reppedly woresh".²

Religion has always been a powerful force in the history of Scotland and the nineteenth century was no exception, yet it seems unlikely that it was the cause of much emigration. That there were ecclesiastical "desturbances" is evident from the "Ten Years Conflict" which culminated in the great Disruption of the Established Church in 1843 and the founding of the Free Church of Scotland. There was also a growing spirit of "voluntaryism" and opposition to the Established Church among Dissenters, and Catholics were not wholly emancipated until the Relief Bill of 1829.³ There was, therefore, discontent which might add to the desire to emigrate but there were really only two cases where religion might have provided a direct cause for emigration: viz. members of the Free Church who were forbidden to worship together on some estates in the Highlands⁴ and the Mormons, for whom emigration to Salt Lake City in Utah was part of their religion.

The Church of Latter Day Saints was founded on the 6th of April, 1830; the British Mission was founded in 1837 and the first converts emigrated in 1840. But it was not until the settlement at Salt Lake City in 1847

¹Alison, op. cit., p. 572.
²Ms. letter, Millhill, March 20, 1848, op. cit.
³For a fuller discussion of religion as a cause of emigration see Part II, Chapter VI.
⁴See Chapter III.
that Mormonism in Britain "revived". In 1843 more than 700 British Mormons left for Utah and for the next twelve years, with the exception of 1858, there were always more than 1000 leaving annually. From Scotland 1472 Mormons emigrated between 1850 and 1862, the largest contingent being from Glasgow and vicinity (601).¹

5. Escape

Much loss and mischief are occasioned by dishonest emigrants to America. It is well known, that the United States and the North American British Colonies are the quarters to which the eyes of thousands, who find they cannot thrive in their own country, are anxiously directed. And of these a considerable proportion are guilty of dishonest practices.

--Minister of Hutton and Corrie, Dumfriesshire²

Most emigrants sought to "escape" from some aspect of their lives in Scotland even if it were only the lack of opportunity, but some were more directly concerned with getting away. In view of the fact that even minor crimes such as stealing and forgery were usually punished with death (at least in the first two or three decades of the century), it is hardly surprising that many criminals resorted to emigration. The minister of Hutton and Corrie in Dumfriesshire estimated that during his incumbency "not much short of a score have left this parish under charges of various kinds"; he went on to list some of the common causes: to avoid supporting illegitimate children, and to escape charges of swindling, forgery and fraud.³

William Tannahill Stirling emigrated under somewhat mysterious circumstances; his first letter was to his father and in it he made a cryptic request for information about his daughter and wife: "send me word if my daughter is Baptised and now my wife came to know if you went and tolder and how she stood it and what


² NSA, IV, p. 552.

³ Ibid.
she said.\(^1\) His daughter's birth does not appear to have been registered though her death certificate places her birth in 1850—the same year in which William had been married and (probably) the year he emigrated to the United States. He returned to Scotland in late 1853 or early 1854 because of ill-health and died of consumption three years later.\(^2\)

During the 1837 strikes in Glasgow, Sheriff Alison uncovered a plot of carefully-planned terrorism among the cotton-spinners. A "select committee", using various melodramatic subterfuges to maintain its anonymity, hired assassins to kill "blacklegs" and key opponents of the strikes. If the assassins fell under suspicion, it was the union's duty to "take place for him to America". A killer named Macleod was actually apprehended by Alison before he could emigrate, but much to the Sheriff's disgust he was found not guilty of murder and merely transported for 7 years.\(^3\)

The Scotsman in 1819 recorded the case of a butcher's wife who "eloped" with a broker named Seaton (the intimate friend of the husband) and emigrated to Philadelphia where Seaton deserted her. "With much difficulty she procured a passage to Liverpool" and wrote to her husband who immediately flew to her side—and made an attempt on her life.\(^4\) In 1827 The Scotsman lamented the escape of defrauders to the United States.\(^5\) It is impossible to estimate the number who emigrated to escape the law, a bastard or a sharp-tongued wife. No doubt many benefitted in some ways by the change—debts were probably left at the quay-side as often as not—but "escape" is unlikely ever to have been a major cause of emigration in the nineteenth century.

\(^1\)Typescript of ms. letter, Acquacknock, New Jersey, 1850 (?) to Robert Stirling, weaver, Waterside, Kirkintilloch.

\(^2\)I am indebted here to the research of the current William Tannahill Stirling of Paisley; correspondence of Feb. 6, 1969 and Feb. 28, 1969.

\(^3\)Alison, op. cit., pp. 382-87.

\(^4\)Aug. 14, 1819.

\(^5\)Feb. 3, 1827.
Finally, one of the most original reasons for emigration was exposed by *The Scotsman* on July 28, 1829 in an article entitled, "A Disappointed Spinster":

On the 10th inst. a large vessel cleared for New York from Dundee, having a considerable number of passengers for the "rogue's howff" as the Post hath it. Among the rest appeared an old woman of seventy, the very model of tidiness and cleanliness...

"Is it not strange, goodwife, that you are going to leave your own country at your advanced period of life?" With a severity of aspect which we shall never forget, she replied, "Dinna ta'k to me o' my country, I care vera little for't, I wish I had left it thretty year syne. A bonny country sure enuch—na, na, I hae leeved near seventy year in't, an I ne'er had the offer o' a man yet— a bonny country, I'm sure, I wish I had left it thretty year syne."
Chapter III: The Highlands

Mackrimmon's Lament
by Sir Walter Scott

Macleod's wizard flag from the grey castle sallies,
The rowers are seated, unmoor'd are the galleys;
Gleam war-axe and broadsword, clang target and quiver,
As Mackrimmon sings, "Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!
Farewell to each cliff, on which breakers are foaming;
Farewell, each dark glen, in which red-deer are roaming;
Farewell, lonely Skye, to lake, mountain, and river;
Macleod may return, but Mackrimmon shall never!

"Farewell the bright clouds that on Quillan are sleeping;
Farewell the bright eyes in the Dun that are weeping;
To each minstrel delusion, farewell!—and for ever—
Mackrimmon departs, to return to you never!
The Banshee's wild voice sings the death-dirge before me,
The pall of the dead for a mantle hangs o'er me;
But my heart shall not flag, and my nerves shall not shiver,
Though devoted I go—to return again never!

"Too oft shall the notes of Mackrimmon's bewailing
Be heard when the Gael on their exile are sailing;
Dear land! to the shores, whence unwilling we sever;
Return-return—return shall we never!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Gea thillis Maclead, cha till Mackrimmon!

"The 'Lament', is but too well known throughout
the Highlands and Isles, from its being the strain with
which the emigrants usually take leave of their native
shore."

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A. Background to the Clearances

I. The Old Social Order of the Highlands

"The value of men declined, the value of money went up."\(^1\)

The social order of the pre-Jacobite Highlands revolved around clan loyalties. The chiefs of the clans represented the gamut of authority—father, landlord and general—with the clansmen assuming the roles of children, tenants and soldiers. The liaison between the twain was the tacksman who held large tracts of land "in tack" from the chief; he was the older brother, the middleman and the lieutenant of the clan system. The tacksman was often a close relative of the chief and as such he would enjoy a social prestige and power out of proportion to his economic position. He made his living by renting out his tack to small tenants, the difference between the rents he paid and the rents he received constituting his income.

The essence of the system was its military character and the value of an estate lay not in its money rent, but in levies of fighting men. Larkin in his *Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland...in 1818* quoted a Highland chieftain who, when asked what his rents were, replied, "My rent is a thousand men."\(^2\) From this military point of view it was important to have as many tenants as possible, but as population increased and holdings grew smaller subsistence became a problem and raids were made into neighbouring lands to supplement the fare. Lowland law, however, was moving inexorably northward and the practice of clan warfare was grudgingly in retreat even before the Jacobite Rebellions. Thus, by the time of the Forty-Five, the position of the tacksman was no longer as impregnable as it had once been. As early as the 1730s some of the tacksmen on the Argyll estates were eliminated. This was distant thunder to most of the clans, but it heralded the coming storm.

\(^{2}\)London, 1819, p. 233.
The men were not used to steady jobs or even to regular work. The climate of the Highlands often made subsistence agriculture impossible and anything more ambitious was seldom considered. Sir John Sinclair in his *Analysis* of the Statistical Account mentioned an average of 205 days of rain and snow with 160 days of fair weather per year on the West Coast. Incredibly, he defended the climate:

This moisture of climate, however, ought not, on the whole, to be lamented, when we consider of what essential utility water is for various personal, domestic, agricultural, and manufacturing purposes; and what pernicious effects dry air produces, by injuring the texture of the skin, drying up the flesh or muscles, and attenuating the whole body.

He went on to speak darkly of the "frightful effects" of arid winds and assured dwellers on the West Coast that rainy climates were not at all unfavourable to the mental powers. Scant comfort for those who sought to till the earth there. The soil was sour and poor, winds of near hurricane force were apt to sweep the coast at any time of year and carry salt spray inward to ruin crops, winters were long and severe and, in short, climatic adversity was apt to breed apathy.

Highlanders accordingly turned their energy to other occupations: hunting, cattle-raising, drinking, fighting or just lying around and these habits were slow to die. In 1772 Thomas Pennant noted the following about an area in Sutherland:

This tract seems the residence of sloth; the people almost torpid with idleness, and most wretched: their hovels most miserable, made of poles wattled and covered with thin sods. There is not corn raised sufficient to supply half the wants of the inhabitants; climate conspires with indolence to make matters worse; yet there is much improveable land here in a state of nature: but till famine pinches they will not bestir themselves…

James Bruce, touring the Highlands one hundred years

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after the last Jacobite uprising, found that little had changed. "The people of Skye are an indolent, ignorant, and dirty race; steeped in such wretchedness as never yet fell on a whole people", he exclaimed in disgust. He found the Highlanders "a people the bulk of whose household furniture is filth, whose idea of happiness is inaction, and whose antipathies are mainly directed against light and air." In case there might be any lingering doubt about his feelings concerning Highlanders, Bruce stated conclusively that

There is idleness in the distressed districts; and all the eulogiums which tongue or pen of poet or clergyman may pour out on Celtic virtue will never persuade me, that to be idle and innocent is a thing given to man.

He sneered openly at their "noble pride, their manly independence, and so on", proclaiming that "what is called working in the Highlands would be called play in the Lowlands." But even James Bruce saw hope for the Highlands. He interviewed many working men in his travels and he found among them the kernel of new, relatively realistic attitudes towards work:

...it is something encouraging to find that such opinions are making their way amongst poor men who recollect well that their fathers and grandfathers contrived somehow or other to live, while their employment mainly consisted in walking about all day with their hands in their pockets, and at night sitting down and telling traditions about great lords and mighty chiefs, and stories about ghosts and fairies, while their mothers and grandmothers, though living on the poorest fare, would have looked on themselves and their families as eternally disgraced, if it were to get out to the public that they had sold a dozen of eggs.

Thus the old social system clung tenaciously to the Highlands, though after 1745 the system—as it had been—existed only in the minds and habits and in the pride of the people. From 1718 to 1752 the Clan Acts took

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1Bruce, James, Destitution in the Highlands, Edinburgh, 1847, p. 50.
2Ibid., p. 53.
3Ibid., p. 15.
4Ibid., p. 16.
5Ibid., pp. 7-8.
away the estates of those who had been disloyal to the
British Government and placed them under the Forfeited
Estates Commission until 1784 when the lands were finally
restored to their original owners. In 1747 "heritable
jurisdictions" were reduced and by the end of the century
the chiefs had lost much of their former power to the
sheriffs as confidence in the central Government grew.

Many of the tenants found themselves in a delicate
situation. Formerly, under the tacksmen, they had for
the most part had no legal security of tenure or leases.
Tradition had been the only security they needed and often
one family would have had the same holding through many
generations, gradually assuming that it was theirs by
right. Tacksmen also considered their tacks a hereditary
right. As long as the traditions were stable this system
worked smoothly, but when law and order took the place
of tradition, those without legal security became fair
game for unscrupulous opportunists.

Among the first to suffer were the tacksmen. Theirs
had been a predominantly military role and with the break-
up of the clan system, there was suddenly no need for a
lieutenant who could mobilise a group of fighting men on
short notice; nor was there a need for the unswerving
loyalty which had until then prevailed. Although services
in payment for land survived as late as 1811 (in conjunc-
tion with money rents)\(^1\), there was a general movement
towards a cash economy soon after the middle of the eigh-
teenth century. The most conservative of the chiefs had,
for the most part, supported the Stuart Cause and were
either dead or dispossessed. Their lands were, as has
been noted, annexed to the Crown for forty years and
administered by Government commissioners. These com-
missioners set the pace for other landowners: they gave
fixed-term lease to their tenants; they limited land
per tenant to one holding; they encouraged the linen
industry; and they built roads and bridges. Other land-
owners who were unhampered by the finer feelings of

\(^1\)Macdonald, D.F., Scotland's Shifting Population
1770-1850, Glasgow, 1937, p. 32.
tradition and responsibility would and usually did make several changes. The tacksman was eliminated as a useless burden or perhaps his tack was sold on auction to the highest bidder. Small farms were consolidated and the old "runrig" fields were enclosed. It is not surprising that there was a wholesale emigration of tacksmen during the closing decades of the eighteenth century.

The upheaval in the Highlands began in the upper ranks of the clan hierarchy. The heads of clans had always been landlords as well as chiefs, but the emphasis was rapidly shifting from chief to landlord. In Larkin's picturesque phrase, "the sheepskin became a better title than the claymore." In some cases the chiefs saw the writing on the wall and altered their principles accordingly; in others they went bankrupt and sold their hereditary estates to businessmen. By the end of the eighteenth century three fifths of the Hebridean lairds were already absentee landlords. In Morvern, Argyll, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the land was still owned by Highlanders, but by 1838 all of the property had changed hands and by 1844 "there was scarcely a proprietor left who had any traditional or lengthy association with the parish, or (in most cases) with anywhere else in the Highlands either."¹ Their tenants "held to the spirit of the clan when the chief was bartering it for a house in Belgravia. They retained their respect for him long after he had lost his for them."² Living in the Lowlands or in England was comparatively expensive and the landlords raised their rents.

It was quite logical that rents should be raised—there was no longer an unwritten agreement that each tenant would provide one fighting man if the need arose. The relationship between tenant and landlord had become strictly a business one.

The pride, which formerly pervaded even the lowest classes...is deeply wounded by the distant behaviour they now experience from their chieftains—a mortifying contrast to the cordiality that subsisted in the feudal times.\(^1\)

Reactionaries blamed the "Saxon Conspiracy".

But perhaps the most important result of the changes wrought in the Highlands was the growing realisation of the undesirability of overpopulation. Formerly a clan's might had been measured in the number of men it could turn out, but, with the end of clan warfare, the surplus men became a burden on the land. This dead-weight and the evils thereof did not become immediately apparent for, although clan warfare was ended, British warfare was not and the Government soon found that the Highlanders were ideally suited to fill the ranks vacated by French bullets.

Statistics indicate that the Celts found the army an attractive career. In slightly over a decade (1793-1805) Skye sent forth some 4000 of her sons to wear the British uniform. In 1854 Donald Ross wrote an article for the *North British Mail* in which he tallied Skye's contribution in the period from 1793 to 1837: 21 Lieutenants and Major-Generals, 48 Lieutenant-Colonels, 600 Majors, Captains, and Subalterns, 10,000 N.C.O.'s and Men and, befitting the home of the MacCrimmons, 120 Pipers.

The Highlander must have found army life, with its glory and gay uniforms, its long periods of idleness punctuated by short burst of hectic activity, much to his liking.

This propensity of the Highlanders for military life fostered a picture of the Highlands as a "cradle of soldiers" which in turn led Imperialists to discourage emigration and contributed to the rising population. As late as the third decade of the nineteenth century David Stewart of Garth discouraged emigration for this reason and wrote that in spite of the ill feeling generated by the Clearances, it was not too late to mend the cracks, "if the people are rendered comfortable and contented, they will

INTERIOR OF A COTTAGE IN THE ISLE OF SKYE.
be kept loyal warlike, and brave.¹

There were other factors as well which contributed to the growth of Scottish population from one million in 1700 to four and a half million during the nineteenth century. The potato was introduced from Ireland in 1743 and soon became a substitute for bread; it was cheap, easy to grow and plentiful. Generally accepted in Scotland by 1800, it had become the major crop on some holdings before mid-century.² The coming of the potato to the Highlands made the further subdivision of property easier for it became possible, by exclusive use of this crop, for a family to subsist on a very small allotment of land. Finlay MacRae, minister of North Uist, noted in 1837 that there were 390 families in his parish who were not paying rent, "living chiefly of the produce of small spots of potato ground given them by some of their neighbours and relatives".³ Some people rarely ate anything else. In Morvern a small boy was asked what he had for his meals and replied,

"Mashed potatoes," on being farther asked by his too inquisitive inquirer, "What else?" replied, with great alertness, but with evident surprise, "A spoon!"⁴

So ubiquitous was the potato that the Greenock Advertiser quoted "a Provincial paper" which described how they could be used as a substitute for soap.⁵

Apart from the obvious problems attendant upon the periodic failures of the potato crop, it was impossible to maintain the cattle on such small holdings and the crofters thus lost their source of money income and often became unable to pay their rent. The change from joint-holdings to the crofting system had begun in the 1760's.

The growth in population was also supported if not actually encouraged by the kelp industry which flourished

³ NSA, XIV, pp. 180–81.
⁴ NSA, VII, p. 187.
⁵ NSA, IX, p. 187.
from the end of the eighteenth century on into the first two decades of the nineteenth. Kelp was produced by burning seaweed. During the Napoleonic Wars the Government placed high protective tariffs on alkali and related products, creating an artificial boom in the industry. Landlords along the West Coast and in the Islands of Scotland encouraged more people to settle in the already overcrowded kelping areas and raised the rents accordingly. The rental of Clanranald's lands in North and South Uist, for example, rose from less than £1000 in the eighteenth century to £17,000 in 1809.

The population expansion in kelping areas was almost as spectacular. Comparisons have been made between areas of Scotland unaffected by this industry and the West Coast and Islands. In the period 1755-1831 the population of Lewis, Harris and Uist increased by 139% as opposed to a 48% increase in the northern and north-western counties. In Uist and South Uist where kelp was very important the population went up by 211%. Looking at the entire kelping area under a demographic magnifying glass produces some significant results: out of 21 parishes, all but 6 doubled their population in the period 1755-1841; 9 of the parishes showed an increase of 150% or more and 5 trebled their population. But the population explosion remains a mystery; for, as Philip Gaskell has shown, some parts of the Western Highlands which remained outside the pale of medical improvements and which were relatively untouched by the kelp industry exhibited a parallel increase.

Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, prices fell as tariffs were cut; in 1808 kelp had sold for £20 a ton and by the early 1820s the price had been halved. In 1825 the excise duty on salt was abolished and Leblanc alkali

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1 For a description of the kelping process, see Selkirk, op. cit., pp. 151-32.
2 Smout, op. cit., p. 349.
5 Gaskell, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
began to be manufactured in Glasgow. By 1830 kelp, at £3 a ton, was not worth the trouble.

Also mentioned in contemporary accounts as a cause of overpopulation were smuggling and illicit distilling of whisky. The minister of Birse in Aberdeenshire attributed population growth to the fact that families could maintain themselves in the hills on the profits from illegal stills. This industry proliferated in the Highlands and at one time there were known to be 200 illicit stills in Glenlivet alone. Profits dropped during the century as the Government gradually reduced the tax on alcohol; however, in the parish of Killean and Kilchenzie in Argyll it was reckoned that up to 1821 a smuggler could clear 10 shillings a week, enabling him to keep a horse and an extra cow. The smuggler apparently needed a wife to assist him, hence early marriages and more children. Paradoxically, in Glenbucket, Aberdeenshire, it was claimed that the annihilation of smuggling caused the increase in population as it meant that people could lead longer and more moral lives. Theories varied considerably; the only indisputable fact was that the population increased.

Finally, there were reductions in clan warfare, the improved road systems and the smallpox vaccine, all of which contributed their share to the growth in population.

The land has already been described. It was not very good for farming purposes and it could not support such a number of people. In the survey taken by MacNeill in 1851 the following observations were made:

In every parish, with one or two exceptions, men of all classes and denominations concur unanimously in declaring it to be impossible, by any application of the existing resources, or by any remunerative application of extraneous resources, to provide for the permanent subsistence of the whole of the present inhabitants; and state their conviction that the population cannot be made self-sustaining, unless a portion removes from the parish.

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1NSA, XII, p. 793; see also Larkin, op. cit., pp. 115-22.
2Macdonald, D.F., op. cit., p. 22.
3NSA, VII, pp. 385-86.
4NSA, XII, p. 438.
Intelligent observers could not avoid the conclusion that the only logical solution was migration to the south or emigration across the sea.

It is perhaps proper to mention here that statistics relating to the population problems of the Scottish Highlands are often misleading. They must especially be used with extreme care in relation to the effects of the Clearances. Malcolm Gray pointed out that population statistics have little of importance to offer about the effects of the Clearances "due partly to inadequacy of record, partly to the difficulty of separating the many causes of divergent local trends". Many of the Highland counties continued to show an increase in population right through the worst of the Clearances. Perth and Argyll reached their maximum population in 1831; Inverness in 1841; Sutherland and Ross in 1851. This fact was obviously used by some of the defenders of the evictions, for in 1853 R. Alister wrote a sarcastic letter to the Duke of Breadalbane:

In Glenqueich, near Amulree, some sixty families formerly lived, where there are now only four or five; and in America, there is a glen inhabited by its ousted tenants, and called Glenqueich still. Yet, forsooth, it is maintained there has been no depopulation here!

The natural rate of increase must be taken into account as well as inter-parish mobility which does not show up in many of the statistics of the time.

The mobility of the Highland tenants during the nineteenth century is a subject which remains largely uninvestigated. The enforced mobility created by the Clearances has been chronicled, but the natural movement of the farmers remains a relatively obscure page in Scottish history. R.A.Cailey did conduct an investigation of one particular estate in the period 1800 to 1830. The estate was Invernieil in the parish of North Knapdale and in particular the land on the Taynish peninsula to the west of Loch Sween and the islands of Danna.

2Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 347.
A SKYE COTTAGE.
and Ulva. The tenant farmers on the estate lived in communal clachans and there were 22 farms involved with some 70 tenants. Gailey found a surprising amount of movement. In 1802 there were 21 changes and 35 showed no change of tenancy. In 1819 there were 31 changes and 39 showed no change. He hastened to add that these figures may be misleading since a change in farmland did not necessarily mean a change in dwelling and most of the movement obviously did not involve any great distance. It is difficult to ascribe the moves to any set motive but Gailey did point out that this mobility seemed to be connected in some way to multiple tenancies. The mobility died out with the rise of single tenants. ¹

In MacNeill's Report, for example, Alexander Kenneth MacKinnon, the factor for Lord Macdonald's Skye estates from 1841 to 1849, testified that during his tenure of office 1200 people had paid rents and "not twenty crofters were removed from one croft to another, or deprived of their crofts."²

There was, however, a certain amount of "temporary" mobility. It was common practice for younger sons to range farther afield in search of jobs. Many went to the east coast fisheries and some went south to work the Lowland harvests (though they had difficulty competing there with Irish labourers who could travel to Glasgow in 10 hours for 6d. while it might take several days and 10 to 12s. to come from the Hebrides and Western Highlands).³ During the famines it became common for crofters to seek jobs elsewhere as well, but all returned home for the winter. It was a source of constant amazement to the Lowlanders that people would come south and work hard for three months only to return to their hovels in the Highlands and loaf for eight or nine.

²MacNeill, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
³Macdonald, D.F., op. cit., p. 133; for example, there was no steamboat service between Lewis and the mainland until 1845.
2. Early Highland Emigration

Until the middle of the nineteenth century (with the coming of the steam ship) emigration figures for Scotland and especially for the Highlands are notoriously unreliable. There is no record but that of the occasional eye-witness to the hundreds of ships that loaded their human cargoes and slipped westward from the silent lochs and firths of the North. It is, however, certain that there was considerable emigration during the eighteenth century, even before 1745. There are records of settlements in Georgia and North Carolina around 1733 and possibly in Virginia even earlier. After 1746 there was a steady trickle, provided partially by the Commissioners of the Forfeited Estates as they evicted all persons suspected of subversive activities. During the next decades the trickle became a flow and assumed numerical importance—"a fever of emigration" in the oft-quoted words of Dr. Johnson. Between 1763 and 1775 Knox estimated that there were some 20,000 people who left the Highlands and, although this has generally been accepted as an over-estimate, it is probably not far from the mark. From Skye and the Islands, from the West Coast, from the glens of Inverness-shire, and from the hills of Perthshire and Sutherland the tacksmen were leading their flocks of supporters out of the country. In 1773 an ironic fear took shape in the minds of some local officials in the Highlands: "that the Highlands would be completely depopulated as a result of emigration". Pennant in his Tour of Scotland leaves us with an account of the early "emigration fever" in Sutherland—a grim foreshadowing of events to come:

Dispirited and driven to despair by bad management, crowds were now passing, emaciated with hunger, to the Eastern coast, on the report of a ship being there laden with meal. Numbers of the miseries of this country were now migrating: they wandered

1 See Appendix B.
in a state of desperation; too poor to pay, they
madly sell themselves for their passage, preferring
a temporary bondage in a strange land, to starving
for life in their native soil.1

Much of the emigration at that time was to what
would become the United States and this first burst of
emigration was ended by the American War of Independence
(1776-83). There was another surge of departures from
1786 to 1790 and though the French Wars had a dampening
effect for a while the exodus reached an early zenith
in the first three years of the nineteenth century. It
has been estimated that some 10,000 people left during
those years.2 J. Walker in his Economic History of the
Hebrides and Highlands of Scotland (1808) maintained
that many Highlanders went to Ireland in search of jobs
and, after but a brief look at the situation there, went
straight on to America.

Most of the emigrants from the Highlands after the
American Revolution went to Canada for various reasons
which will be discussed later, but at least one shipload
with the destination of Wilmington (probably North Caro-
lina, but possibly Delaware) in the United States was
reported by Sheriff-Substitute Robert Brown in 1802.3

B. The Highland Clearances

I...remember when the inhabitants of that country
lived comfortably and happily...Alas, alas! I have
lived to see calamity upon calamity overtake the
Sutherlanders.4

—Donald Macleod

...their employment mainly consisted in walking
about all day with their hands in their pockets,
and at night sitting down and telling traditions
about great lords and mighty chiefs, and stories
about ghosts and fairies...5

—James Bruce

For over a century and a half the so-called "Highland
Clearances" have been the centre of a heated controversy

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1Pennant, op. cit., I, 365.
2Macdonald, D.F., op. cit., based on a report by the
Sheriff-Substitute of the Western District of Inverness-shire.
4Quoted in Ibid., pp. 1-2.
5Bruce, op. cit., p. 8.
which strikes deep to the roots of the Scottish dichotomy: Highland and Lowland. During the second half of the eighteenth century elements of the two cultures clashed and the results of the '15 and '45 Rebellions enabled the Teutonic Lowland order to secure a toehold in the essentially Celtic Highlands. The transition was a painful one and not without its share of violence, though it would be a moot point which inflicted the deeper wounds, the pen or the sword.

Attacks and defences of the Clearances, from James Loch's *Account of the Improvements on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford* (1820) down to John Prebble's *The Highland Clearances* (1965), have been distinguished by passion of feeling and bias of information. No successful attempt has yet been made to sift through the original source material and present a dispassionate account of the advent of sheep in the Highlands. Modern efforts have tended to rehash and reinterpret Mackenzie, Loch and the others who wrote—in heat—during the nineteenth century. The result is an historian's nightmare.

Eye-witnesses have distorted the picture so much from both sides that it often seems incredible that two sources are indeed referring, as they claim, to the same incident. Loch and the other defenders of the "Improvements" give a picture of the carefully planned, well-organised progress of a basically humanitarian movement designed ultimately to secure the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Donald Macleod, Alexander Mackenzie, et al., leave a picture of bucolic pleasure and peace torn rudely asunder and given over to flame and sword by the merciless minions of the dissipated landlords.

Apart from the pitfalls of biased accounts, there is the more general danger of over-emphasizing the importance and effect of the Jacobite uprisings, especially with regard to the "Social Revolution" in the Highlands; of concentrating on the 5000 Highlanders who were with Bonnie Prince Charlie on April 16, 1746 and forgetting "the quarter of a million or so highlanders who were
nowhere near Culloden on that fatal Wednesday". There are obviously great difficulties to be surmounted before any impartial history of the changes and upheavals in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Highlands can be written, but this is not the object of the present study. The facts relevant to the history of emigration which emerge from this vast amount of impassioned material are that thousands of evictions did take place, whether for humane or avaricious reasons, and that a considerable number of these evictees did emigrate. It is therefore important in any study of nineteenth-century Scottish emigration to determine to what extent the Clearances acted as a primary cause and, if possible, what other factors were present in the Depopulation of the Glens.

1. The Reasons

It seemed as if it had been pointed out by Nature, that the system for this remote district, in order that it might bear its suitable importance in contributing its share to the general stock of the country, was, to convert the mountainous districts into sheep walks, and to remove the inhabitants to the coasts, or to the valleys near the sea.

--James Loch

James Loch was the Lowlander who eventually took over the management of the Sutherland "improvements". He wrote a book entitled: Account of the Improvements on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford which explained the reasoning and rationale behind the Sutherland Clearances. Being a Lowlander, it was only natural that he should find the Highlands "unfit for the habitation of man" and, certainly, as has been noted, it was indeed unfit for the habitation of so many men. He proposed that the useless land be converted into sheepwalks and that the inhabitants be removed to other districts "where by the exercise of their honest industry, they could obtain a decent livelihood". This was not only the practical thing to do, it was the best for the nation. And there

1Donaldson, Gordon, Scottish History and the Scottish Nation, Inaugural Lecture to the Fraser Chair of Scottish History and Paleography, Edinburgh, May 4, 1964, p. 10.  
3Ibid., p. 76.  
4Ibid., pp. 149-50.
is no doubt that many of the "improvers" looked to the future and were not primarily concerned with financial returns. The Marquess of Stafford, for example, is reputed to have lost £60,000 on his Sutherland estates between 1811 and 1835. (He could afford it; during the same period he spent £72,000 on a house for his son and gave him a further £50,000 for its maintenance—in the phrase of Charles Greville, he was a "leviathan of wealth".) Loch clearly saw that the "improvements" must be disagreeable to the tacksmen, who would be reduced to the state of working for a living he had once earned by his rank in society, but he could not understand the tenants who "deemed no comfort worth the possessing, which was to be purchased at the price of regular industry; no improvement worthy of adoption, if it was to be obtained at the expense of sacrificing the customs, or leaving the homes of their ancestors."¹

In 1820 Patrick Sellar, another Lowlander who had been factor of the Marquess of Stafford's Sutherland estates and who had aroused considerable public feeling (he was, in fact, unsuccessfully brought to trial) by the brutality of his evictions, wrote:

I was at once a convert to the principle now almost universally acted on in the highlands of Scotland, viz. that the people should be employed in securing the natural riches of the sea-coast; that the mildew of the interior should be allowed to fall upon grass, and not upon corn; and that several hundred miles of Alpine plants, flourishing in these districts, in curious succession at all seasons, and out of the reach of anything but sheep, be converted into wool and mutton for the English manufacturer.²

To give the man his due, he worked zealously towards the goals he had set for himself.

Aside from ideological and aesthetic reasons for the "improvements", there were sound economic ones. The crofters were less and less able to pay their rents as their crofts became smaller, in spite of contemporary assertions that subdivided farms could return more rent.

¹Loch, op. cit., p. 64.
²Quoted in Grimble, op. cit., p. 15. This is an excerpt from a very interesting letter to James Loch; for the entire text see Loch, op. cit., Appendix VII, pp. 50-67.
than enlarged ones and that three or four tenants could raise more on a piece of land than one could.\(^1\) During famines, especially the dire potato famines of the "hungry forties", the crofters tended to fall into arrears and were often unable to ever pay it back. At the same time that ready capital was declining, the rents were rising for several reasons: 1) special economic conditions created by the French Wars; 2) the fact that monetary rents were replacing the more nominal service rents of the eighteenth century; 3) increased competition for farms due to the rise in population; and, sometimes, 4) "pure greed and stupidity on the part of the proprietors".\(^2\) Sheep-farmers could not only pay the rents, they could pay three times the normal price—as was shown by Telford in his Survey and by Mackenzie in his *Agricultural Report of Ross and Cromarty* (1813) where an example is given from the Balnagowan estate.\(^3\) Another advantage of letting land to sheep-farmers was that rents could be "collected at less cost, with less trouble and with more certainty".\(^4\)

There were few considerations to be weighed in the balance against these economic arguments. Responsibility to the clan and paternal care for tenants were rapidly becoming a thing of the past. The hereditary clan chiefs and landlords were selling their lands to meet the high expenses of living in cities, dressing their wives as well as the socialites of the Lowlands and England and buying military commissions for their sons. It might also be said that the more humane landlords spent great sums of money trying to ameliorate the conditions of their hapless tenants, not to mention the money they lost by refraining (out of sympathy) from putting their estates on a sound economic basis. Unless they were possessed of vast fortunes, they soon found themselves unable to carry on and were forced to sell their ancient properties to newcomers and often died deep in debt.

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\(^1\) For such an assertion, see NSA, XIV, 106.


\(^3\) *Ibid.*, p. 79.

\(^4\) MacNeill, *op. cit.*, p. x.
There were other reasons for clearing the land and turning it over to sheep. A rumour spread in 1844 that a new Poor Law was to be passed, making landlords liable to poor-rates. Some proprietors were accused of encouraging emigration and effecting evictions in order to relieve themselves of this possible burden.¹

There was also the factor of greedy factors. Patrick Sellar, who by the time of his retirement had become quite a landowner in Sutherland, is a notorious example. It was probably not uncommon for factors to bid for land going up for auction and it would have been very tempting for unscrupulous men to take advantage of their position by clearing desirable tracts of land. Mackenzie quoted an example:

During the first years of the century a great many were cleared from Kintail by Seaforth at the instigation of his Kintail factor, Duncan Mor Macrae, and his father, who themselves added the land taken from the tenantry to their own sheep farms, already far too extensive.²

The fact that the evictions were carried out by factors was an added insult to the Highlanders who prided themselves on a man-to-man relationship with their chiefs and tacksmen. It was widely believed by the tenants, who as Prebble pointed out were often loyal far longer than their chiefs, that their chiefs were unaware of what was really happening. The absentee scions of noble blood were not culpable, they were merely having the wool pulled over their eyes by their villainous factors. Hugh Miller compared the Clearances rather artificially to the vivisection of a dog by proxy for the benefit of science.³

²Mackenzie, op. cit. (2nd ed., Stirling, 1914. This edition of The History of the Highland Clearances contains some material not found in the early editions, though it lacks other bits. It will hereafter be referred to as Mackenzie II.)
³Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 182.
2. Effect of the Clearances on Emigration

Far down the loch I watched the sail,  
Round the last headland disappear;  
But long the pibroch's moaning wail—  
Knell of the broken-hearted Gael—  
Came back upon my ear,  
Echoing to crag, and cave, and shore,  
"We return no more—return no more."

--Principal Shairp of St. Andrews in  
"The Clearing of the Glens"

I see the hills, the valleys and the slopes,  
But they do not lighten my sorrow.  
I see the bands departing  
On the white-sailed ships.  
I see the Gael rising from his door.  
I see the people going,  
And there is no love for them in the north.  
--Kenneth Mackenzie

They have been driven away  
To America across the sea,  
And there is no one left  
With kindly feelings, or peace in him.  
--anonymous poet

Many of the evictions resulted directly in emigration. Following the extensive clearance of the Macdonells of Glengarry, for example, there was a century of emigration and at the end of it "there were twenty thousand Macdonells in Upper Canada and next to none in Glengarry." There are many examples of large groups of people moving directly from their crofts onto waiting emigrant ships in which they were whisked away to the other side of the world. In 1841 the *Inverness Courier* described such a departure when a party of emigrants left the fishing town of Helmsdale:

Men, women, and children evinced signs of grief, the sorrow of the women being loud and open. As the vessel moved away, the pipes played, "We return no more." An old man, a catechist, accompanied the party on board the vessel, and before returning to shore he poured forth a long and pathetic Gaelic prayer.

4 See Appendix E.  
5 *Prebble, op. cit.*, p. 147.  
The "strong-minded and hard-hearted" mother of the delicate Chisholm wreaked havoc in Strathglass around the turn of the century. In 1801 799 people left Strathglass and neighbouring districts for Pictou, Nova Scotia; in 1802 473 more left for Upper Canada and 128 for Pictou and there were probably many from Strathglass in the 550 who sailed from Knoydart in that year; in 1803 four separate groups of 120 left for Pictou. In the neighbouring property of Knoydart, the crofters were informed that Sir John MacNeill, chairman of the Board of Supervision, had agreed to convey them to Australia. Because of technical difficulties the destination was changed to North America and in 1833 the government transport Sillery arrived at Isle Ornsay to receive its human cargo. Mrs. Macdonell showed up with some of her officials to "hound" the people onto the ship "whether they would or not". According to Mackenzie, "the wail of the poor women and children as they were torn away from their homes would have melted a heart of stone." 400 people were cleared, but some fled to the hills and escaped "transportation" to Canada.

Mr. Francis Clark, proprietor of the Island of Ulva and two-thirds of Laggan Ulva, testified in MacNeill's Report that over a period of four years (1847-51) he had reduced the population on his property from 500 to 150; 5 families were settled on other properties, 2 cottars went to Tobermory and the rest dispersed themselves to America, Australia or the Lowlands. 2

The notorious Colonel Gordon who evicted some 1500 people from South Uist and Barra was accused of tricking many of them into emigrating to Canada by false promises. In the end people were taken by force and loaded onto the Admiral—a "brawny Highlander" named Angus Johnston resisted to the last with such success that it was only by the aid of four policemen that he boarded the ship. Some did escape to the hills. 3

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1 Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 268.
2 MacNeill, op. cit., p. 10.
3 See also the statement by Colonel Gordon's evictees in Canada (Appendix).
One feature of the emigration necessitated by the Clearances was that the emigrants were often, if not usually, too poor to pay their own passage across the Atlantic. Thus many of them were sent at their landlord's expense which, however altruistic the intentions of the landlord, inevitably resulted in accusations of shipping off undesirables against their will. This was fuel to the fires of the anti-landlord complex which blazed through the middle and latter half of the century.

No one was "evicted" from the island of Lewis, but 2231 souls left it in the years 1851-63. The proprietor, Sir James Matheson, contributed £11,895 towards effecting their removal to Canada. The previous owner of Lewis, Lord John Russell, also made generous offers to aid anyone interested in emigration. He would cancel all arrears and debts, permit them to sell their stock and other property "for their own behoof", and pay whatever necessary of their fare and outfitting. Few took advantage of his offer.

In the united parish of Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon located in the south-western part of Mull the population diminished by 1114 during the eight years between 1841 and 1849. Many emigrated from the Duke of Argyll's property to the North American colonies at their own expense while others, of a poorer class, applied to him for aid which was granted. Another testimony from Mull is significant. W. Middleton, factor for Capt. Campbell of Possil, stated that eight families of crofters emigrated from the estate in 1850. Each family was excused its arrears in rents and was able to pay its way to America by the money they earned selling their stock.

These people did not emigrate from fear of destitution—at least of immediate destitution—but seeing the failure of the potatoes, the fall in the price of cattle, and that they were not, therefore, thriving in their crofts, wisely, in my opinion, resolved to go before their means were exhausted.¹

¹MacNeill, op. cit., p. 27.
There was a class of crofter wise enough to see the writing on the wall and bold enough to leave while they were still able.\(^1\)

Hundreds received aid from their landlords and in varying stages of willingness departed for Canada or Australia. It is pointless to go into wearying details about the hundreds who left North Uist (aided by Lord Macdonald and other sources), Tyree and Coll (where some were aided by the proprietor and 900 more petitioned for help), Bunessan, Ross of Mull and Iona (where many were aided by the Relief Committee) and countless, nameless other places. It would, however, be useful to take a short look at the mid-century emigrations from Glenselg, for they furnish a good example of "benevolent proprietorship". The landlord was James Baillie of Dochfour. In 1849 his tenants appealed to him for help to either improve their land or emigrate and, for reasons of his own, he chose the latter (it would have taken a brave, altruistic and wealthy man to choose the former). A committee was formed and it was decided that £3000 would be needed to send the 500 prospective emigrants to Quebec—this was a very liberal estimate and included passage over, free rations, a month's supplies after landing and clothing for those who needed it. Baillie offered them £2000 and the Highland Destitution Board promised £500 and the tenants apparently decided to make do with that, for, after some haggling over supplies and getting a doctor to accompany them, they set off in the Liscard.\(^2\) Baillie's factor, James Stavert, testified to MacNeill that when it came to the actual departure, many refused to go and in the end only 294 "statute passengers" emigrated. He further stated that those who did go wrote back urging their friends and families to follow and expressing their gratitude to Baillie for making it possible for them to go.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Earlier in the century Selkirk had noted the same "class" of crofter who left while the leaving was good, i.e. while the price of cattle was still high; \textit{op. cit.}, p. 52.
\(^2\)MacKenzie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 293.
\(^3\)MacNeill, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 66.
There were obviously conflicting opinions about the worth and desirability of emigration. Some of the tenants were resigned to leaving and even petitioned for help in going while others declared their willingness to die rather than leave their homes (though few resisted eviction to the death). Those who petitioned and seemed eager to leave would often change their minds at the last moment and fade quietly into the hills when the "white-sailed ships" appeared. If the Government were to take any decisive action, it was first necessary to determine what the exact state of affairs was and who was in favour of emigration. For this purpose they sent Sir John MacNeill into the destitute area.

If there's a hole in a' your coats,  
I rede ye tent it;  
A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,  
And, faith, he'll prent it.  
--Burns

C. Action and Reaction

1. Reaction

emigration is the only effectual remedy to afford elbow-room  
--Sir James Matheson to Lord John Russell

In my opinion, emigration must precede all substantial improvement.  
--Factor of Auchnacroich

I am seventy-six years of age...old as I am, I would rather go...than remain behind.  
--Tenant

With one voice they assured me that nothing short of the impossibility of obtaining land or employment at home could drive them to seek the doubtful benefits of a foreign shore.  
--Prospective emigrants from Glenelg.

On the 3rd of February, 1851 Sir John MacNeill set out for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and, following his return on the 17th of April, his Report was published. Along with his appraisal of the conditions in the destitute area and his recommended solutions, he appended the minutes of testimonies which he had collected.

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1 Letter of Jan. 27, 1851 referring to Lewis; in MacNeill, op. cit., p. 149.
2 W. Middleton quoted in MacNeill, op. cit., p. 27.
3 Farquhar Fraser quoted in MacNeill, op. cit., p. 73.
4 Mullock quoted in Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 295.
ted. The people he interviewed ranged from parish ministers, officials, proprietors and factors to lowly tenants and their testimonies are a valuable record of contemporary opinion. MacNeill's survey was occasioned by the terrible decade in Scottish history known as the "hungry forties". The failure of the potato crop in 1845 and subsequent years brought disaster to an economy which had become to a large extent dependent on that fickle mistress of nourishment and it was small wonder that proprietors and tenants alike were seeking desperately for an answer to the ever-present menace of destitution.

Out of some 250 people interviewed, 120 stated flatly that they favoured emigration; they usually specified that a "system of judicious emigration" was needed. 31 people testified that, in their opinion, a certain amount of "removal elsewhere" was necessary for the common good. 9 people felt that the problems could possibly be solved without recourse to emigration and the remaining 113 offered no opinion on the subject. These results are, in themselves, rather conclusive, but they become even more so when the following statement from MacNeill's introduction is taken into account:

Several persons who declined to state in their written evidence their conviction that emigration was indispensable, fearing that such an assertion of their opinion might give umbrage to persons whom they desired not to offend, nevertheless announced that conviction in unequivocal terms in conversation. 1

There was, in short, a strong backing for any Government sponsorship of emigration and there was a general feeling that, however unpleasant it might be, the removal of surplus population was a task that must be faced.

Most of the ministers declared in favour of emigration. The minister of the parish of Stornoway, John MacRae, stated the matter in a typical manner: "I can suggest no means by which the people of Lewis can be made self-sustaining, unless the number of inhabitants is diminished." 2 Many other men of the cloth echoed his

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1 MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxxv.
2 Ibid., p. 92.
sentiments and urged the Government to take action. The Free Church General Assembly acknowledged the absolute necessity of emigration and went on in a somewhat unrealistic vein to opine that

the poor people would consider it the greatest boon that could be conferred upon them, providing them with the means of removing to a place where they might, by their own industry, provide for themselves and families.¹

One thoughtful minister, Roderick MacLeod of the Free Church at Snizort on Skye, made the perceptive observation that many of his parishioners would be disposed to emigrate "provided there were no appearance of a desire to force them out of the country. I state this as the result of communication with the people themselves."²

The Parish Boards were almost unanimously in favour of emigration:

We are of the opinion, that this parish cannot be made self-sustaining unless a portion of the population remove elsewhere; and we can suggest no other means of extricating them from their present difficulties than by affording aid and facilities for emigration.³

This statement by the Parish Board of Lochcarron is typical of most of the Boards interviewed by MacNeill. They also pointed out that reports from those who had emigrated already to Canada "have on the whole been very favourable, and such as are calculated to encourage others to follow".⁴

The proprietors also favoured emigration and would gladly have accepted Government aid to subsidise the funds they were already paying out of their own pockets. Sir James Matheson's opinions have already been noted; James Forsyth, proprietor of Sorne, pointed out that emigration was as beneficial to those who remained as it was to those who departed. Although people like Baillie and Gordon were not interviewed, it is quite

¹MacNeill, op. cit., p. 133.
²Ibid., p. 45.
³Ibid., p. 74.
⁴Ibid.
obvious that they would have favoured any Government aid in their efforts to remove tenants beyond the sea. The factors were also whole-heartedly behind their employers in this regard.

Officials saw that it was necessary to remove some of the population. Charles Shaw, Sheriff-Substitute of the Long Island district of Inverness-shire, mentioned favourable reports from Canada and the benefits accruing to those left behind:

The result to the population remaining has been decidedly favourable; and I am of opinion, that if these periodical emigrations from all of the islands had not taken place, the general condition of the remaining population would have been infinitely worse than it is. Indeed, I cannot imagine how they could exist.1

Thomas Fraser, the Sheriff-Substitute of the Skye district of Inverness-shire, admitted that he was "reluctantly driven to the conclusion, that a considerable emigration is indispensable to restore the people of Skye to the condition of a self-supporting population".2 He also felt that the Government should help.

Several of the crofters voiced a desire to emigrate. One shoemaker who was unable to sign his name complained that he had plenty of business but no payment. He went on to say, "Some of the people on the farm say that they would rather emigrate than remain as they are, if they could find the means of going, and I am myself of the same mind."3 A seventy-six year old carpenter and his two sons who followed the same trade complained that they could get neither employment nor pay and expressed their desire to leave. MacNeill concluded that "the working classes in many parishes are convinced that the emigration of a part of their number, affords the only prospect of escape from a position otherwise hopeless..."4

Although all seemed agreed that it was essential

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1 MacNeill, op. cit., p. 118.
2 Ibid., p. 127.
3 John Robertson quoted in MacNeill, op. cit., p. 64.
4 MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxxv.
for people to leave, most did not wish to emigrate themselves. Many proprietors found no takers when they offered free passages to Canada. On Lewis, where Lord Russell had made a very favourable offer, there was as yet little enthusiasm and MacNeill thought he detected "a dread of unknown dangers". On Harris there was an equal reluctance on the part of crofters to take the big step. The most common explanation given for this reluctance was that the tenants felt that as long as they stayed in Scotland they would be provided for: "they have a strong impression that they will be and must be provided for where they are now,—a delusion, which, if not speedily dispelled, may lead to very disastrous consequences."¹ This belief was, of course, a product of the "eleemosynary relief" which had been administered by the Destitution Board during the famine years. MacNeill recommended the cessation of this relief as the first step to a satisfactory emigration process.²

There were many reasons for not wanting to emigrate. Apart from the obvious ones, a ground-officer in the parish of Applecross on the west coast suggested that the disaster which befell some Lochalsh emigrants in 1849 (cholera?) "alarmed the people all along the coast".³ Another reason which has already been mentioned and which was brought up by two tenants from Skye was the suspicion that emigration was a plot to clear more land for factors. The proprietors were so anxious to promote emigration that they promoted paranoia instead.

James Bruce, with characteristic bluntness, declared that the reason so few Highlanders wanted to emigrate was sheer torpidity. "In fine writing it has been made a point to lay to the credit of patriotic feeling what is due to nothing more exalted than want of energy."⁴ He was scandalised that the stoutest young men of the country

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¹George Rainy, proprietor of Raasay and Rona; in MacNeill, op. cit., p. 40.
²MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxiii.
³Ibid., p. 79.
⁴Bruce, op. cit., p. 71.
spent inordinate amounts of time "filling their pipes, lighting them, and smoking them—all of which operations are gone through with a calm deliberation which is nothing less than disgusting". ¹ He scoffed at the idea that the Highlander could feel grief at being parted from his mountains and glens as "the possession of such feelings supposes a degree of mental cultivation inconsistent with the great wretchedness, and the consequent great ignorance, in which our unfortunate countrymen are placed."²

2. Government Action

Sir George Grey is not aware of the existence of any sufficient grounds to justify the expectation which you state to prevail extensively of assistance from the government.

--Answer to Macleod of Macleod's letter requesting information about Government assistance to emigration.³

In 1805 Selkirk recommended that the Government should adopt a policy of sending Highlanders to Canada. He reasoned that the Highlanders would serve as a bulwark against United States infiltration and maintained that their language and customs would "preserve them from the infection of dangerous principles".⁴ Although the Government went so far as to actively discourage emigration to the United States⁵ no action was taken to promote emigration from the Highlands.

In 1837 a Committee on Unemployment and Poverty in the Highlands recommended emigration as a possible solution to the problems there; again, the Government did nothing. In 1840 a Colonial Land and Emigration Department was established, but hopes which had been raised by the pretentious title were soon dashed and it proved to be little more than "a filing cabinet for statistics and reports".⁶ In 1841 some Highland landlords petitioned

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¹Bruce, op. cit., p. 39.
²Ibid., p. 71.
³Ibid., p. 173.
⁴See Chapter II above.
⁵Ibid., p. 162.
⁶See Chapter II above.
the Government for a system of emigration to relieve them of the burden of poverty on their lands. A Committee of Inquiry was set up and subsequently declared that there were too many people in the Highlands and that a thorough system of emigration on a scale which only the Government could finance was needed. But the Government would not commit itself.

During the famines of the forties the system of poor relief proved inadequate and only charity from the Lowlands and the generosity of the Highland landlords averted starvation. The Government lurched into action in 1847 by establishing the Board of Destitution whose prime aim was to provide employment for Highlanders on roads and railways. The roads were sometimes called "meal roads" because the labourers were paid in meal instead of money which would have been immediately swallowed up in arrears of rent. It was a cure for the immediate destitution, but still no attempt was made at prevention.

MacNeill in his Report favoured Government aid to emigration, but, failing that, he suggested the possibility of a generous loan policy to help the proprietors help their tenants.

The question first to be determined appears to be, whether there is a public interest involved of a nature to justify the interference of her Majesty's government? and if this question must receive an affirmative answer, as appears to be probable, it will remain for the government to determine the nature and amount of interference that the circumstances demand.1

The Government compromised and the Emigration Advances Act was passed in 1851 allowing landlords to borrow from public funds to remove tenants who wished to emigrate. The Government also agreed to give advice and some financial assistance to private emigration societies.

A direct result of MacNeill's Report was the formation of the Skye Emigration Society which instituted aid and encouragement to people considering emigration. The prospectus reassured the emigrant:

1MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxxvii.
That you should feel pain in leaving your own country is natural, and proceeds from a praiseworthy sentiment; but is the sacrifice of this feeling which emigration demands peculiar to you? Remember the families that were most respected in this country twenty years ago. How many of them have gone abroad? Is it harder for you to leave your native land than it was for them. [sic] They have subdued the feeling of pain, and so ought you, for you have stronger reasons for emigrating than they had.¹

From a modest beginning the Skye Emigration Society blossomed into a national organisation—the Society for Assisting Emigration from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The funds were raised by public subscription and donations from landowners.

In times of extreme crisis the British Government was induced, seemingly against its better judgment, to make a few half-hearted gestures towards aiding emigration. But this was a far cry from the sweeping programmes requested from so many quarters. By and large emigration continued throughout the nineteenth century to be paid for out of private purses and/or public subscription.²

D. Other Causes of Emigration

No one would pretend that the Clearances were the only cause of Highland emigration in the nineteenth century; there is ample evidence that other factors were at work. In Morvern, for example, where 3,250 people emigrated during the century, only 750 were known to have been evicted and by no means all of the evictees emigrated.³ Some of the more obvious alternative reasons were the numerous natural calamities including the potato blight. The dependence of the small crofter on the potato has already been chronicled and it is self-evident that the pangs of starvation during the forties were an urgent spur to emigration. Other natural disasters such as the failure of the herring and unusually severe winters also contributed to the distresses which turned men's minds to the west.

² see also Chapter II above.
³ Gaskell, op. cit., p. 27.
The years from 1835 to 1837, for example, were a notable prelude to the famines of the 4Os: cold, wet springs, wet summers and Autumn gales produced poor corn crops and kept peat from drying enough to use for fuel; the potatoes were blighted, the herring failed and cholera made fearful inroads on the destitute people. Dr. Robert Graham, Professor of Botany at Glasgow University and an authority on public health and social problems, described the situation in the Western Highlands in 1837 as "worse than any ever known there before". Typhus and cholera continued to sweep the Highlands from time to time and contributed to the general destitution. (Donald Macleod saw it the other way around, blaming the diseases on the Clearances which, it must be admitted, was a bold stroke of imagination. He claimed that new diseases made their appearance with the Clearances, "viz., typhus fever, consumption, and pulmonary complaints in all their varieties, bloody flux, bowel complaints, eruptions, rheumatisms, piles, and maladies peculiar to females". Thus were the happy, healthy peasantry laid low.)

Another cause of emigration was lack of employment. According to MacNeill there were few crofting families on Skye (in the under-£10 bracket) that did not send at least one member south or east to seek employment by which to sustain those who remained at home. It is unlikely that the young Highlanders found work in the industrial towns of the south or in the fisheries to the east very much to their taste. Distance added to the problem. In the Lowlands people in the country could simply move into the towns and find employment and there were, moreover, hundreds of thousands of foot-loose Irish labourers arriving every summer. In the Highlands there was great attachment to the soil and greater distance to travel. These factors were combined with the habit of living off relatives "with no feeling of shame" due to strong

2Quoted in Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 25.
3See Chapter II, B, 3.
SKYE PEASANT WITH THE CASCHROM.
ties of kinship, all of which made it often easier for the Highlander to emigrate than it was for him to migrate.

Selkirk had noted in 1805 that "emigration is by far the most likely to suit the inclination and habits of the Highlanders", promising as it did a similar way of life and the possession of land. And Larkin echoed this conclusion 14 years later in speaking of the ancient race:

whose notions of living and labour were all connected with the occupation of land, and with whom, when separated from their native soil, the hope of land formed the great inducement to emigration.

The New Statistical Account also furnishes evidence that emigration was often more attractive than migration; the following entry from the parish of Moy and Dalarrossie in Inverness-shire is typical: "Our young men, for want of employment, are leaving us to seek their fortunes in America." It was pointed out that the Highlander, once he had made up his mind to go, "would as soon cross the Atlantic as he would cross an arm of the sea" and James Loch made the same observation:

...it cost them nearly the same effort to remove from the spot in which they were born and brought up, though the place of their new dwelling was situated on the sea-shore at the mouth of their native strath, or even in a neighbouring glen, as it cost them to make an exertion equal to transporting themselves across the Atlantick.

This feeling would not have induced people to emigrate, but it did make emigration a likely solution when the time came to leave.

In most parts of the Highlands the crofting system led to subdivision and increased facilities for population expansion, but in at least one area the reverse was true. In the parishes of Applecross and Lochcarron the tenants were still cultivating the land with the old "runrig" system and sharing farms in common. No sub-

1Adam, W.I., op. cit., p. 87.
3Larkin, op. cit., p. 283.
4NSA, XIV, 110; see also Kingussie, XIV, p. 72.
5Loch, op. cit., p. 64.
division was allowed except by special permission of the co-tenants and the proprietor. This prompted many of the children to seek the colonies for their livelihood. 1

Sheriff-Substitute Brown, writing in the early years of the century, ascribed the "late violent eruption of the rage of emigration" in part to the machinations of emigrant agents—"men who carried on a regular and profitable traffic by transporting their countrymen". 2 Margaret Adam, in her perceptive articles on Highland emigration at the end of the eighteenth century, also gave much credit to the persuasive powers of the emigrant agents. She quoted the Highland Society (Transactions, 1803) as declaring that the most effective way of cutting down on emigration would be to cut down on the profits of agents and shipping companies by promoting Government regulation of passengers. 3 At least one person would have heartily agreed. In 1819 the Bard MacLean settled in Barney's River, Nova Scotia and wrote a Song to America:

This is the country where there is hardship though the people coming across don't know it. It was evil they brought on us, those enticers, who contrived through their fairy-tales to bring us out here.

Great promises are made at the time; the magnificence of this spot is glorified. They tell you that your friends are happy and prosperous and without lack; by every descriptive report brought to you they try to make you yearn to go across after the others. But if you do get here safely, when you actually see them, their condition is no better at all than your own.

When these cattle-drovers come after you, they do their job with lies, not uttering a word of truth, their heart denying what their mouth says, representing that everything desirable under the sun is in this land. But when you reach it, there's little you'll see, but tall forests shutting out the sky from you.

Highland ministers also contributed to the exodus.

1 MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxvi.
3 Adam, M.I., op. cit., p. 76.
Mackenzie asserted bitterly that out of 17 parish ministers all but one sided with the proprietors during the Clearances. They told the people that they were being judged for past transgressions and that they should submit peacefully. The minister of Blair Atholl in Perthshire wrote confidently:

A system of more beneficial management has converted these dreary and comfortless habitations into sheepwalks; and greatly to their own interest, though not perhaps at first so congenially to their feelings, the people have emigrated to the large towns of the south, or to America.  

Prebble implied that the ministers did it in return for material compensations such as new manses, new roads and sometimes a few acres of sheep pasture.  

At any rate, it is probably fair to say that their attitude was partially responsible for the generally meek acceptance of the Clearances by the Highlanders (who were not by nature a docile people).  

A related reason for emigration was the search for religious freedom. Many people remained true to the Roman Catholic Church in the Highlands and a certain element of political persecution became evident after the Jacobite uprisings when so many of the Catholics supported the Stuart Cause. There was also prejudice shown against the Free Church. Many of the landlords who had fought against the Disruption refused to grant sites for churches to the Free Church and congregations were forced to worship in the open air. Sites were refused at Ballatar; on the Earl of Seafield's estates in Strathspey; on Lord Macdonald's land in Paible, North Uist; on Eigg and Mull; in Ardmurichan (where a floating church was devised); and on the Duke of Buccleuch's property in Canonbie and Wanlockhead, Dumfriesshire. A Committee of Enquiry was appointed by Parliament in March 1847 and doctors testified that open-air worshippers had been "hurried to premature graves" from exposure.

1 NSA, X, 569.
2 Prebble, op. cit., p. 71.
3 See the speech by Father McAdam in the Appendix.
4 Many, of course, sincerely believed that the "improvements" were for the ultimate benefit of the people.
In Sutherland and on Lord Macdonald's estates there were instances of people being evicted for supporting the Free Church.¹

Somewhat surprisingly, education was also mentioned by contemporary sources as a cause of emigration from the Highlands. William MacKenzie, the minister of Comrie in Perthshire, reported in 1838:

> Education having been general since the beginning of last century by means of the parish school, and by several schools maintained by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, the people were enterprising and ready to emigrate when they felt straitened at home.²

The SPCK found opposition to their schools from both proprietors and common people, it being maintained that knowledge "renders them dissatisfied with their condition, and ambitious of altering it for the better, either at home or abroad; and hence, say they, emigration to America."³

Finally there is the nebulous concept of the Revolutionary Spirit. It has unfortunately been impossible to trace or prove the existence of the rumoured Gaelic translation of Thomas Paine's writings, but there is testimony to the fact that in 1806 "self-appointed preachers" harangued the labourers on the Caledonian Canal. Sheriff-Substitute Robert Brown described, in the tone of one charting the advance of a particularly repellent disease, the spread the spread of the "levelling principles" in the Highlands:

> The late flame of emigration first began to be kindled along the tract of the Caledonian Canal, by certain religious itinerants, who addressed the people by interpreters, and distributed numerous pamphlets, calculated, as they said, to excite a serious soul concern...They next adopted a notion, that all who were superior to them in wealth or rank, were oppressors, whom they would enjoy the consolation of seeing damned...at last those levelling principles, which had long been fermenting in the south, made their way among them, and exited an ardent desire of going to a country, where they supposed all men were equal...⁴

²NSA, X, 585.
It seems reasonable to assume that the spirit which fired the American and French Revolutions may have trickled into the Highlands where the "ground" on which it fell would not have been as barren as the land. Highlanders, though renowned for their loyalty to chief and sovereign, also traditionally prided themselves on equality—did not every clansman, however mean his fortune, bear the name of his chief? Highland pride, injured by callous factors and absentee landlords, could find balm in the Gillead across the Atlantic where men were equal. There are at least two instances of Highlanders emigrating purely from desire for personal freedom. Hector mac Sheumais MacNeil discovered one day that his laird, finding himself short of victuals for a guest, had sent a servant to purloin, without Hector's knowledge or consent, some of his best poultry. Hector complained bitterly and sailed from his native Barra for Canada in 1802.¹ Peter MacKellar of Inveraray was given a tongue-lashing by the wife of his laird for pausing in his work to receive a message from a friend. He unyoked his oxen forthwith and went home, declaring to his wife: "Ma tha aite fo 'n ghrein anns an urrainn do mh a bhith saor o ching taireil an dubhsheirbhis, theid me 'n sin." (If there is any place under the sun where I can be free from the humiliating bondage of this wretched employment, I'll go there.) He and his wife left for Ontario where they settled in the year 1817.² Significantly perhaps neither of these cases involved political freedom. Highlanders in North America were often staunch Tories and supporters of the British monarchy.

These are a few of the many causes other than the Clearances that made men consider crossing the Atlantic. Perhaps the most fundamental realisation of the Highlander was that "if his utmost skill and industry can barely produce enough to keep him and his dependents alive, he is doomed to live in misery all the days of

¹Dunn, op. cit., p. 17; see also MacKenzie, op. cit., pp. 99-100.
²Dunn, op. cit., p. 17.
his life, if he remains there." Once he had admitted that to himself, there was little choice left for a self-respecting man.

E. Conclusions

From the dim shieling on the misty island,
Mountains divide us and a world of seas,
But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And in our dreams we behold the Hebrides.
Tall are these mountains, and these woods are grand,
But we are exiled from our father's land.

—"Farewell to Flunary" by Donald Macleod, D.D.

The Highlands are not a fruitful source for the study of Scottish emigration to the United States. It is well to admit that from the start. Highlanders emigrated mainly to Canada. There were a variety of reasons for this, some of them dating back to the American War of Independence when most of the Highland stock in what became the United States supported the Crown and moved up to Canada at the close of the war. The clan-nishness of Highlanders has long been celebrated in song and story and it is, therefore, not surprising to find that the vast majority of Gaels settled near their relatives and friends. Strong lines of connection developed between areas in Scotland and Canada:

South Uist and Barra.................Prince Edward Island
Other parts of the Hebrides..........Cape Breton
Lochaber, Keppoch, Glengarry........Glengarry
Arran.................................Megantic County
Skye, Sutherland, Ross, Argyll......Pictou

Margaret Adam observed that it was "rare to find the Highland emigrants departing from the orthodox routes opened up by their former neighbours". In Canada they could resume their old way of life virtually where they had left off: they owned land, lived in Gaelic-speaking

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1MacNeill, op. cit., p. xxxii.
2For an interesting analysis of the reasons behind this support and a comparison with the Scotch-Irish backing of the Revolutionary Government during the war, see Duane Meyer, The Highland Scots of North Carolina 1732-76, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1957.
3Adam, op. cit., pp. 75-76.
communities and quite probably sat around the fire in the evenings telling tales of mighty chiefs, ghosts and fairies.

Highlanders may also have been encouraged to follow their natural inclinations by the Government policy of favouring emigration to Canada, or, more accurately, discouraging emigration to the United States. This Government attitude of wishing to keep its manpower within the family coupled with apprehension towards the growing power of the United States has already been described. Landlords in the Highlands were probably influenced by Government prejudice and emigrants who were being assisted on their way would often have no choice.

The result is that there are very few references in Scottish sources to Highlanders emigrating to the United States. Of course, this does not mean that no such emigration took place; the difficulties involved in keeping track of ships leaving Highland ports has been already mentioned and it is even conceivable that some of the emigration to the States was hushed up for political reasons—a landlord who abetted his tenants in their removal thither would not have wished to broadcast the fact. It is also tempting to speculate on the hundreds (thousands?) of Highland emigrants who went to Canada first, for convenience, and then, for one reason or another—better pay, better climate,—better land—drifted down into the United States. Unfortunately the statistics are inadequate to the task. Suspicions are strengthened, however, by the many references to Highlanders in emigrant letters written from the United States and by the existence of at least two Highland Communities: Argyle in Illinois and "the Scotch Settlement" in Ohio. Argyle was founded in the late 1830s and early 40s by emigrants from Kintyre in Argyll while the Ohio settlement appears to have included a great many from Inverness. 3

1 See Appendix B.
3 Ms. letters from Hugh and Charles Rose; see Bibliography.
But even had there been no emigration of Highlanders to the United States, the study of Highland emigration is both worthwhile and necessary for a fuller understanding of the forces behind Scottish emigration as a whole. The causes of emigration remained basically constant, within given areas and situations, while the destinations of emigration varied according to convenience (availability and expense of transportation), chance (where relatives had settled, which pamphlets happened to be read), temperament or any of countless other factors. Many emigrants who went to North America chose the route to New York as the most convenient (passages were more frequent and regular and the ships had a better reputation for safety than those travelling to Canada) and arrived with no idea of where they wanted to settle. Their decision often appears to have been made by the first person they talked to after stepping off the ship; if he recommended Wisconsin, they went to Wisconsin; if he said Americans were all swindlers and Canada was the only safe place for an honest man, they went to Canada; some tried many different places.¹ There is still much work to be done on the psychology behind the emigrants' decisions of where to settle.

There remains the fundamental question of the importance of the Clearances as a cause of Highland emigration. It has been shown that there were a multitude of other causes during the nineteenth century and it is probably safe to say that the exodus from the Highlands would have taken place with or without the artificial stimulation of the Clearances. "The prime cause was the rejection of the conception that the land should support the largest number of people irrespective of their standard of living."² This change in attitude was fundamental, as was the fact that there were too many people in the Highlands to be supported by the

²Campbell, R.H., op. cit., p. 176.
meager amount of arable land. Unless the Government had seen fit to interfere on a massive scale, it was inevitable that thousands of people would have to leave their homes. This was the basic chemical to which other factors acted as a catalyst. Without the Clearances perhaps the emigration would have been the more painful for being drawn out; it would certainly have furnished less fuel for the fires of Celtic imagination.

Meantime, the Highlands may become the fairy ground for romance and poetry, or the subject of experiment for the professor of speculation, historical and economical. But, if the hour of need should come, the pibroch may sound through the deserted region, but the summons will remain unanswered.

—Sir Walter Scott
Chapter 4: The Lure of America (Pull)

Who feared the strangeness or miles of you
When from the unreckoned miles of you,
Thrilling the wind with a sweet command,
Youth unto youth called, young, young land?¹

The men and women who emigrated from Scotland to the United States were young, at heart if not in body; they had hopes for the future packed in with their belongings and they were answering a primeval challenge borne on the west wind from thousands of miles across the Atlantic. "I am glad that I did not settle in Scotland, for one's prospects of success there are greatly limited. This is a country of hope, and the other of fear, for the future."² Those who were old or without hope stayed in Scotland and as conditions deteriorated they complained—but they stayed.

The "push" factors in Scotland—depressions, unemployment, high taxes, low wages, changing social and economic structures, agricultural "improvements"—created a climate of restlessness among certain people who yearned to make better lives for themselves and their families. These people heard the siren call from America and the call was "Land! Jobs! Opportunity!"
Most of this thesis is devoted to the analysis of "pull" factors as expressed in emigrant correspondence. It should therefore suffice at this stage to point out the most salient attractions of the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century and to comment briefly on some of the means whereby those attractions were brought to the ken of Scottish emigrants.

The "pull" factors were essentially mirror reflections of the "push" factors. High rents and relative scarcity of land made it increasingly difficult for small farmers and agricultural labourers to rent farms in

¹Clark, Badger, Sun and Saddle Leather, Boston, 1942.
Scotland, but there was land a-plenty in America. Undoubtedly this was the biggest single attraction during the first half of the nineteenth century. For most of this period uncleared Government land could be bought for one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre—less than many, if not most, Scottish farmers were paying in annual rent.

Complaints of unemployment in Scotland were met with boasts from the far side of the Atlantic: "No man need remain idle here, if he be willing to work." The demand for skilled labour (for the fledgling industries) and unskilled labour (for the endless public works—roads, canals, railways, etc.) was practically insatiable. Wages were often twice as high as in Scotland and, although some prices were higher, it was generally agreed that wages in America made a higher standard of living possible.

An important consideration in the study of "pull" forces is the methods whereby the attractions of America were communicated to potential emigrants in Scotland. The traditional methods were by word-of-mouth: soldiers returning from wars in Canada and the United States brought favourable accounts of the country home with them and sometimes returned with their families to take up land there; successful emigrants also returned with glowing reports of the opportunities in the New World and infected others with their spirit.

The effect of professional emigrant agents in Scotland is a field of study largely untapped. Sheriff-Substitute Robert Brown and the Highland Society Transactions (1803) credited emigrant agents in the Highlands around the turn of the century with a salubrious (or, as they saw it, insalubrious) effect on emigration.\(^1\) There is, however, little evidence to show that emigrant agents from the United States were much in the offing during the period 1815-1861. After the Civil War in

\(^1\)see Chapter III
America (1861-65), organised groups would begin to promote emigration on a large scale with the object of enticing Europeans on behalf of American industry,\(^1\) state immigration offices and land-grant railroads.

Before the Civil War there were only a few half-hearted efforts. Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa, for example, all set up Commissioners of Emigration in New York City for the purpose of persuading newly-arrived emigrants to settle in their respective states\(^2\), but they confined their activities largely to the circulation of propaganda.\(^3\) Some of the states, notably Texas (then a Republic) and Virginia, made efforts to sell land in Britain in the 1840s and there were, in fact, a few disastrous attempts to found settlements in Texas.\(^4\) There is, however, little or no evidence that Scots participated in these ventures and the British Consul in Galveston, William Kennedy, advised unemployed artisans in Glasgow and his native Ayrshire to avoid Texas until it had been more fully developed.\(^5\) It was not until after 1865 that the states began to extend their salesmanship abroad in earnest.

Only one of the land-grant railroads was ambitious enough to tap the resources of British emigrants before 1861. By 1857 British shareholders held the majority of stock in the Illinois Central and they worked with the Land Department of the railroad to interest the British public. An M.P., James Caird, was sent to America to investigate the company and returned to write a highly favourable report—perhaps, as some have unkindly suggested, because he had become heavily involved in it himself. A few English and Scottish farmers settled on the Illinois Central lands, but the response was

\(^1\) An early example of this practice was initiated when the builders of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal sent emigration agents, armed with promises of meat three times a day, to Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Holland. Stanley Lebergott, *Manpower in Economic Growth*, New York, 1964, p. 39.


sporadic and insignificant until after 1865.\(^1\)

The "emigrant guides" were books describing America (often both Canada and the United States) and giving advice about where to emigrate, how to emigrate, what to take, where to find employment and how to buy land. From 1816 onwards there were new titles published in Britain every year. The better ones gave detailed information of a fairly high standard of reliability and were frank about conditions of travel and conditions in America, but their usefulness was sometimes marred by the personal involvement of the author in one or another emigration scheme—very few achieved objectivity. Most of the guides strongly advised emigration and recommended the United States above all other fields, including Canada which was usually runner-up. Excerpts from emigrant letters were used to emphasise points.

Two advertisements from *The Scotsman* in 1820 are typical of the general emigration guide and the guide directed specifically at the United States:

**TO EMIGRANTS**

This day is published, in 8vo, price 10s.6d. in boards, AMERICA and the BRITISH COLONIES: An Abstract of all the most useful Information relative to the United States of America, and the British Colonies of Canada, the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, and Van Diemen's Island; exhibiting at one view the comparative advantages and disadvantages each country offers for emigration.\(^2\)

and the more flamboyantly titled,

DRAKARD'S EMIGRATOR'S POCKET-BOOK, or,

GUIDE to the UNITED STATES; containing all necessary information relative to Embarkation, Voyage, Destination, the Situation, Soil, Climate, Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, &c. of each State, arranged under the proper heads; selected from the most modern and approved authors.\(^3\)

Among the best Scottish emigrant guides was the one

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\(^1\)Wainwright, M.D., op. cit., pp. 283-99.
\(^2\)Feb. 5, 1820.
\(^3\)April 15, 1820.
written by the Edinburgh publisher William Chambers, *Things as They Are in America*; it was devoted half to Canada and half to the United States and was highly favourable to the latter.\(^1\) It is difficult at this late date to tell which guides were most popular in Scotland; the fact that many of them received lengthy reviews in the newspapers shows that they were taken seriously. Only one reference appears in the present collection of letters: an emigrant on a farm in Illinois was asked about the reliability of a "guide" and replied, "You wish us to give you our opinions of an extract from Mr Sherriff works—we think it a very correct account in many things."\(^2\) The book referred to is *A Tour Through North America*, published in Edinburgh in 1835; it was directed primarily towards agricultural emigrants and had been written by Patrick Shireff, Esq., a prominent, wealthy and learned East Lothian farmer of the "improving" variety ("the first Scottish cereal breeder of note"\(^3\)). He was an observant and inquisitive man by nature and his book was one of the best of its kind.

It is unlikely that the emigrant guides had any great effect as causes of emigration; they were rather referred to when the decision had been reached, or was at least being seriously considered, as was recognized by the chatty editors of the *Counsel for Emigrants*:

> We would, therefore, leave every one to manage his own affairs in this respect, but when any intending emigrant has finally made up his mind, if he will apply to this little work for information, he will, most likely, find an answer to at least one anxious inquiry—*To what place shall I emigrate?*

The books contributed to the growing amount of information about America which was generally available to the

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\(^1\)Edinburgh, 1854.

\(^2\)Ms. letter, Alexander Allison, Middleton, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to Alexander Warx, Bathgate, West Lothian.


\(^4\)Counsel for Emigrants with Original Letters, op. cit., p. i.
public and they helped, no doubt, to make emigration seem less an irrevocable step into the frightful unknown and more a positive step towards a better life. ¹

Newspapers were another source of information.

The press was deeply concerned with and generally sympathetic to America's development and the United States received a great deal of favourable publicity. The Scotsman was notably pro-American and the following excerpt is typical:

The United States are alive with the spirit of improvement beyond every other country in the world, our own not accepted [sic] , and we find more pleasure in chronicling the march of society, and the triumphs of the useful arts, than the achievements of the warrior, or the troubles and convulsions which spring from vice and misery in old and crowded communities.²

The political system was especially admired. When Henry Bradshaw Fearon in his Sketches of America (1818) criticised the Americans for being excited by trifles and accused them of indifference to "the great principles of freedom", The Scotsman took him to task:

But he forgets that detached events are all that the Americans need to concern themselves about. Freedom is not militant there as it is here, but triumphant. All that the experience of mankind could suggest to guard the liberties of a nation is embodied in their constitution, and it would be difficult for the art of man perhaps to devise one additional security. The part of a true patriot there is, to watch the particular acts of the government, and the general tenor of political proceedings, to see that the practice corresponds with the theory.³

Fearon's book had been largely uncomplimentary to America and The Scotsman coldly implied that he had "taken an exaggerated view of some evils, misunderstood the true character of others, and been unconsciously influenced by the peculiarities of his own temperament and character."

¹for a bibliography of emigrant guides see Wainwright, op. cit.; Max Berger, The British Traveller in America, 1836-1860, New York, 1943; and Allen Nevins, American Social History: As Recorded by British Travellers, New York, 1924.
²Sept. 26, 1829.
³Nov. 14, 1818.
The American financial system was also greatly admired. In 1821 it was reported,

Ten millions of Americans this year are to pay 18,550,000 dollars, that is, about seven shillings each; ten millions of Englishmen, under Mr. Van- sittart's tender care, are to pay about L.48,000,000 Sterling, or four pounds eight shillings a-head. The American labourer, who complains of this tax, earns four shillings a-day; the English labourer, whose complaints are, by the Treasury Journals, called sedition, earns one shilling and sixpence a-day, and pays thirty shillings a-year of duty upon his salt alone.1

Newspapers delighted in pointed comparisons of British and American national expenditures, not forgetting to mention that the United States was actually managing to pay off her national debt; more radical organs like the Chartist Circular used heavy sarcasm in comparing the American system to British rotten boroughs, sinecures and aristocracy.

The newspapers also extolled America as a field for emigration and as the land for the labouring man. The Chartist Circular described how a common unskilled labourer could become the proud possessor of an 80-acre farm in one year:

Land is now sold in tracts of forty acres, at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. For fifty dollars, an unimproved tract of forty acres may be purchased. In any of the states west of the Ohio river, a labourer can earn seventy-five cents a day, and if his living be supposed to be twenty-five cents (which in this plentiful country is a large estimate), he can, by the labour of one hundred days, or about four months, purchase a farm. But as the working days in a year, excluding bad weather, might not amount to more than two hundred, it may be safely asserted that a labourer can purchase a tract of forty acres, by six months' steady work, and that by the labour of a year he may purchase eighty acres.2

Thus newspapers added up-to-date information to that supplied by the emigrant guides and effectively encouraged

1 The Scotsman, Feb. 3, 1821.
2 July 7, 1841.
emigration by praising the institutions and opportunities in the United States. They also printed emigrant letters which were uniformly favourable and which would serve to encourage by example. ¹

Finally there were the emigrant letters; next to the attraction of land and employment, they were probably the strongest "pull" from the United States. More personal than the emigrant guides, newspapers and printed letters, they brought America into the homes of the Scottish people and made names like Wisconsin, St. Louis, Mokelumne Hill and Eugene City household words. They convinced potential emigrants that America was not a strange land, nor a land of strangers.

You would wonder to hear how exactly they know the geography of North America, how distinctly they can speak of its lakes, its rivers, and the extent and richness of the soil in the respective territories where British colonies are settled: for my part, did I not know the contrary, I would be tempted to think they had lived for some time in that country: and yet I doubt not but they have, within these few years, acquired all this geographical knowledge of America in the view of emigrating thither. ²

Anyone was more likely to take seriously news written by his own friends and relations and Selkirk declared flatly that "it is certain that the Highlanders always show great distrust of any information which does not come from their own immediate connexions." ³ The Inverness Courier further reported in 1841 that,

In consequence of the good accounts sent home from America by small bodies of people who had emigrated previously, there was a very general desire on the part of the Western Highlanders to try their fortune also in America. ⁴

There is considerable evidence from newspapers, Parliamentary reports, the New Statistical Account and letters

¹ See Part II, Introduction.
³ Selkirk, op. cit., p. 164.
⁴ April 23, 1841; quoted in James Barron, The Northern Highlands in the Nineteenth Century, Inverness, 1903, p. 300.
testifying to the effect of letters from the United States on prospective emigrants; this effect is studied in depth in Part II.

The causes of emigration, then, would seem to have been primarily a mixture of economic and social grievances for which emigrant letters and other sources of information from the United States presented a daring answer. Some left because they had to and some fled destitution but most were of a breed that, like the Clarksons of Edinburgh, "thought to make their temporalities better" by venturing across the Atlantic.

The obituary of Robert Ferguson, a native of Dumfriesshire who emigrated to New York and became a highly successful businessman, stated that he had left Scotland to seek "wider fields for the energy and enterprise which were characteristic of his nature". It was a description that would have fitted most of the thousands of Scots who forsook their farms, crofts and tenements and turned their faces into the west wind, whence they scented hope for the future.

A west wind blowing, the wind of a western star,
To gather men's lives like pollen and cast them forth,
Blowing in hedge and highway and seaport town,
Whirling dead leaf and living but always blowing,
A salt wind, a sea wind, a wind from the world's end,
From the coasts that have new wild names, from the huge unknown.1

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1Benét, Stephen Vincent, Western Star, Oxford, 1944, p. 17.
Part II

ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS
OF
EMIGRANT CORRESPONDENCE

We beg to suggest one or two measures which might be adopted at little expense by the Government and their Emigration Committee to further emigration. The first is to effect a reduction in the postage of letters from America and Australia, and England. Such a reduction would do more to inform the inhabitants of this country with the views of their friends who have gone abroad, than thousands of books and pamphlets, and we hope to see it carried into effect...

Letters from persons who have been settled some years in America, to their friends in the mother countries, have long been a powerful cause of emigration.

...some of them write that they have flesh three times a-day—a change truly, from a few pounds of Indian corn meal a-week and shell-fish.

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1 "Correspondent", The Scotsman, June 23, 1838.
3 Reference to emigrants from Tyree in the Free Church General Assembly testimony in MacNeill's Report, PP, 1851, XXVI, p. 132.
The rising curve of emigration is paralleled by the increasing number of letters sent eastward over the Atlantic. These letters usually were brief, simple dispatches from the front. Suppose only one of the thousands of mail pouches of 1840 had been undelivered and today were found hidden away in a warehouse in Liverpool or Amsterdam, what a realistic picture of a century ago the yellowed sheets would reveal! Every line breathed a direct message from one human being to another; every report spoke the unvarnished truth of things as the writer had experienced them; every bit of advice sent to the brother who was to follow constituted a sacred commandment. In such a household the far country ceased to be a vague geographical designation. America was not New York, but a distant crossroads village; it was not Boston, but a forest clearing or a labor camp twenty miles from a post office. When a second member of the family set off, he directed his steps to that locality.  

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Introduction to Part II

I was surprised to find that both Mrs. Micklethrift and James Pirns, though but newly come to America, were much better acquainted with everything about them than those tavern-keepers and others to whom I applied. This was owing, as I learned afterwards, to the friends who had come before them, and who had written every particular necessary to be known. —Lawrie Todd

The primary source of information for the following seven chapters is emigrant correspondence; the field of research, like the emigrants themselves, is transferred to the far side of the Atlantic, though not, as will become evident, the field of interest. Before effecting this rather abrupt transition from Scotland to the United States, some definition of terms, materials and purposes is in order, beginning with the key words, "emigrant" and "correspondence".

The term "emigrant" is preferred throughout to the more scrupulously correct "immigrant" or "migrant". This is largely for the psychological purpose of underlining the field of interest. Use of the term "immigrant" would imply a study of Scottish settlement in and adjustment to the United States; "migrant", though it includes the meanings of both "emigrant" and "immigrant", contains innuendoes of transitory, seasonal shifting and is open to various interpretations. The use of "emigrant", even when referring, strictly speaking, to an immigrant, serves as a reminder that the research is primarily concerned with the causes and motives of emigration from Scotland.

"Emigrant correspondence" refers specifically to letters written from the United States to Scotland by emigrants who crossed the Atlantic between 1815 and 1861

1 Galt, John, Lawrie Todd, or the Settlers in the Woods, London, 1832, p. 84.
2 As used, for example, by Brinley Thomas in Migration and Economic Growth, Cambridge, 1954.
3 See below, "Purpose of Research".
with the intention of settling permanently; however, various liberties have been taken with this definition. In a few cases (e.g. William Garrioch's letter, James Ferguson's second letter and William Arnott's two letters) letters written after 1861 have been used because a) they were written by emigrants who settled in the States before 1861 and b) they illustrate conditions and motives which obtained during the period under review. In one instance the letters of a man who was obviously a gentleman-traveller rather than an emigrant --William Dundas of Ochtertyre--have been used to illustrate points common to emigrants, viz. comments on the appearance of progress in America and the possible effects of the American climate on the European constitution.

A. The Sources

Apart from what might be called the "emigrant letters proper", it has been necessary and, in some cases, desirable to introduce several other types of primary source material. Sources used for this part of the thesis include the following:

1. Emigrant Letters Proper--As stated above, these are letters written by Scots in the United States 1815-1861. They are generally addressed to members of the immediate family still resident in Scotland, to in-laws or to close friends. The vast majority of the letter-writers fall into the following three categories: 1) farmers; 2) merchants; and 3) skilled and semi-skilled artisans. There are a few letters from the professional class (mostly from ministers of the Gospel) and one letter from an agricultural labourer.¹

¹Charlotte Erickson, in her essay "Agrarian Myths of English Immigrants" (In the Trek of the Immigrants, O. Fritiof Ander, ed., Rock Island, Ill., 1964), divided the emigrants who wrote letters home into four groups: 1) farming families; 2) agricultural labourers; 3) urban or industrial emigrants "of some education and means"; and 4) "obscure industrial workers, village craftsmen, and provision dealers"; pp. 64-66.
2. **Emigrant Letters "in Reverse"**¹—Letters written by relatives and friends in Scotland to emigrants in the United States 1815-1861. These letters are, as E.R.R. Green pointed out in his essay on Ulster emigrant letters, an extremely important source of information. They form the ideal complement to the emigrant letters from the States, giving invaluable insight to the preoccupations of the prospective emigrant.

3. **Letters Written between Emigrants in the United States**—These letters are of obvious value, especially when the writers describe common emigrant experiences to each other or comment on their reasons for leaving Scotland.

4. **Scottish Letters**—Letters written between family or friends within Scotland with reference to emigration or friends who have emigrated. This is also a potentially valuable source of information, but very difficult to track down; finding such letters is virtually a matter of luck since no clues are given by the addresses or the names. The present collection contains only one instance of this type of material: the three letters (two from Robert Clarkson in Musselburgh and one from his son in Leith to their brother-in-law/uncle probably in Dundee) giving a thumbnail history of James Clarkson and his peregrinations to America.

These first four categories of material are the most important sources for the following seven chapters. Most of the letters were seen in the original manuscript, although in a few instances only typewritten copies of the original manuscripts were seen; these cases are so designated in the footnotes. It should perhaps be noted that the typescripts show no evidence

of altered or censored facts, though it must be borne in mind that the families concerned may have wished to gloss over certain less palatable aspects of their ancestor's character. There is evidence that some of the typescripts have been "tidied up" grammatically.

It has been the intention of the present study to adhere as closely as possible to the original spelling and punctuation of the letters in question whenever they are quoted directly. In some instances full stops and capital letters have been inserted to aid comprehension, but nothing else has been altered in any way.

Although preference was always given to material from the manuscript letters, paucity of information on some subjects—notably education—made the use of other, supplementary sources necessary.

6. Printed Letters—These appeared mainly in newspapers and magazines, but also occasionally in books, especially "emigrant guides". There is some controversy over the value of these letters. Theodore Blegen¹ and Alan Conway², in their works on Norwegian and Welsh emigrant letters respectively, made extensive use of this source, but more recently Charlotte Erickson³ and E.R.R. Green⁴ have seriously questioned the validity of the printed letters.

It can be argued that many of these letters were written with an eye towards publicity, for either business or personal reasons, and that the facts are consequently distorted. It is also conceivable that editors, zealous to promote emigration, might have fabricated "bogus" letters praising America, Canada or Australia. Certainly, a degree of wariness is

³Erickson, op. cit.
⁴Green, op. cit.
necessary and careful examination should be made before accepting printed letters as "genuine". It should also be kept in mind, however, that the letters, whether "genuine" or not, were read by prospective emigrants in Scotland and would have helped to influence their decisions. They are also, as Conway pointed out, an important indication of what the editors of the newspapers and magazines considered important—often a reflection of the climate of opinion.

For the present study, The Scotsman from its inception in 1817 until 1861 yielded 54 letters written by emigrants—mostly Scottish, though some are unidentified—in the United States. Throughout this period The Scotsman favoured emigration as the solution of many ills and was especially vociferous in its encouragement to emigrants in its early years under Charles Maclaren, William Ritchie and J.R. McCulloch, going so far in 1820 as to advocate compulsory emigration. The 54 letters are, with one exception, optimistic about prospects in the United States and The Scotsman apologised for the single exception. But, on the other hand, discouraging reports from emigrants in the Cape of Good Hope Settlement and from South America were freely printed, as were articles which would have discouraged settlement in Canada. The editors of The Scotsman were fair-minded men who often printed opinions conflicting with their own personal views and it seems likely that they would have aired critical letters from the States, had they come across them, if only to serve as a warning against indolence or other related vices.

1 Conway, op. cit., Preface (no page number).
2 The Scotsman, May 20, 1820.
3 Cowan, R.W.W., The Newspaper in Scotland, Glasgow, 1946; he mentions that at least in the early years most editors "did not refuse hospitality to uncongenial opinions", p. 27.
It is probably fair to say, however, that the editors, faced with a variety of letters ranging from enthusiastic to indifferent, would choose the enthusiastic one for publication, thus creating the somewhat misleading impression that all letters from the United States were favourable. But this is not to say that the newspaper letters were more enthusiastic than the manuscript letters as Charlotte Erickson found to be the case in England. Very few of the letters, either printed or manuscript, were at all "gushing" in their praise and by and large the newspaper letters are similar in tone and content to the most favourable of the manuscript letters.

The newspaper editors did, of course, exercise their censorship on the letters which were submitted for publication, but they probably restricted themselves to cutting out the "dross" of family and personal news. The one case where a manuscript original of a printed letter is available provides what is probably a typical example. The George Combe Collection in the National Library of Scotland contains a letter from one Archibald Campbell, a native of Edinburgh who settled in Cass County, Illinois; it is dated Town of Virginia, April 18, 1852. The letter was printed in the September 29 issue of *The Scotsman*. The manuscript letter reveals several grammatical corrections (probably made by either George Combe or the editor of *The Scotsman*) and the letter appears in its corrected form in the newspaper.

Basically the letter contains a description of the town of Virginia with a few peripheral remarks about the severity of the last winter and some flattering comments about the fame of Combe’s "System of Education". The text is printed in the newspaper word for word as in the manuscript except that some punctuation has been added and some of the spelling corrected. Three portions of the letter were omitted
in the newspaper version: 1) the phrases "it gave us great pleasure to learn that you and Mrs. Combe has[sic] enjoyed such good health. we are all very well at present."; 2) a short narrative of the author's about a trip he took the previous winter in which he nearly froze to death; and 3) descriptions of a land monopoly near the town, state roads, heavy settlement, how the farmers dispose of crops, hogs and cattle and the fact that most of the timber land had been claimed. Approximately two-thirds of the letter appeared in The Scotsman.

The first part omitted (1) was obviously of little interest to the general reader (though other, similar phrases were left in); the second part (2) was simply an amplification on remarks he had already made about the severity of the winter; and the third part (3) contained a great variety of information, good and bad jumbled together. The tone of the letter as it appeared in the newspaper was "we like it pretty well" and this was also the tone of the manuscript letter.

On the basis of this letter there seems little cause to fear that the letters in The Scotsman have been seriously tampered with, though of course one letter can hardly be regarded as proof conclusive. There is, however, nothing to indicate that "bogus" letters were ever accepted by The Scotsman. Melville Cunningham, present Librarian of The Scotsman, wrote, "Certainly, when our team of researchers were working on the history of 'The Scotsman' for our 150th anniversary two years ago, no evidence was uncovered which would suggest that the insertion of "bogus" letters took place as official newspaper policy." 1

The printed letters used for source material in this study have been carefully examined and com-

1Letter to the author, July 9, 1969.
pared with manuscript letters and have in almost every case been found "acceptable". Unless otherwise stated, they have been used to support evidence from the manuscript letters rather than to propose original theories. They were, however, important in their own right as part of the "pull" from America and, although their influence on individual readers may not have been as strong as that of manuscript letters from family and friends, they were probably more effective than books or articles (representing, as they did, the experiences of fellow-Scots who had gone before) and they reached a wide public.

7. Emigrant Journals—In some cases (e.g. William Anderson, Andrew Allison and John Stewart) reports home took the form of journals. And in a few instances information from manuscript journals and other private papers has been used to supplement (or complement) the emigrant letters.

8. Travelogues—During the nineteenth century hordes of "professional travellers" swarmed from Britain to the United States with the purpose of writing exhaustive descriptions of what they saw and experienced. These books were not without their influence on prospective emigrants, but for the purposes of this study the use of this material has been restricted largely to filling in blanks left in the observations made by emigrants in their letters.

9. Emigrant Guides—Like the travelogues, the emigrant guide books published during the nineteenth century are rife. Their use in this paper, however, is secondary and confined largely to supplementing information from the letters.
10. **Pamphlets**—A few pamphlets have been used as source material, notably to illustrate conditions in Scotland, e.g. Lewis' *Scotland, a Half-Educated Nation* for education in Scotland.

11. **Local Histories**—Some histories of small areas or towns in the United States have been used, chiefly for the reminiscences and references to early Scottish settlers. A good example of this type of book is *The Argyle Settlement in History and Story* by Daniel Harvey (Rockford, Ill., 1924).

12. **Parliamentary Papers**—The Reports of various Committees have been used not only to illustrate conditions in Scotland but also for comparisons with the United States, as for example the *General Report of the British Commissioners on the New York Industrial Exhibition of 1853* (1854, XXXVI) which gives much valuable information about the relative conditions of industry in Britain and America. Other Reports used are listed in the Bibliography.

13. **Novels**—Occasional reference is made to two contemporary novels. In Chapter I (The Voyage) a few excerpts from Herman Melville's *Redburn*—a novel about a mid-nineteenth-century sailor—are used to illustrate aspects of the emigrant trade. Elsewhere passages from *Lawrie Todd, or the Settlers in the Woods* (1832) supplement impressions from the emigrant letters.

This novel was written by John Galt, a Scottish novelist born in the emigrant port of Greenock. On the subject of emigration Galt knew whereof he spoke; he formed the Canada Company in 1824 (chartered in 1826) and was associated with the British America Land Company chartered in 1834 both of which were instrumental in advertising Canada throughout Britain. The town of Galt in Dumfries Township, Upper Canada, bears testimony to the efficacy of his efforts. He himself claimed that many of the characters in his
novel were drawn from real emigrants and that many of the situations, improbable though they seemed, were true incidents from their lives.¹

Before closing the list of sources, mention should be made of an important group of material which was not used—namely, Church Records. As will be shown in Chapter VI (Religion), many Presbyterian churches in the United States owe their origin to Scottish emigrants; the records and histories of these churches, and probably of many Scottish kirks whose members emigrated to America, form an important block of hitherto untapped source material for the study of emigration from Scotland to the United States. The scope of such an investigation along with the necessity of tackling it from the other side of the Atlantic have put it beyond the reach of this thesis. The same, incidentally, applies to the study of the Scottish Mormon movement. As emigration to Utah formed a central part of their religion, the Scottish Church of the Latter-Day Saints is an important source of emigration material. The Church records have now all been removed to Salt Lake City and any detailed research would have to be carried out there.²

B. The Value of Emigrant Correspondence

Letters written by Scottish emigrants in the United States between 1815-1861 have, apart from their intrinsic value as manuscript records of a bygone century, several

²Letter from Earl E. Olson, Assistant Church Historian, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, Sept. 4, 1969; also letter from Dr. Philip Taylor, University of Hull, Aug. 25, 1969; a thesis entitled "The Emigration of Scottish Mormons to Utah, 1849-1900" was submitted in 1961 by Frederick Stewart Buchanan for the degree of Master of Science at the University of Utah.
particular features which render them important beyond their "face value".

As has been shown in Part I and in the Appendix the emigration statistics for the first half of the nineteenth century are highly unreliable; the emigrant letters, on the other hand, are reliable in their context. They do not, of course, pretend to present extensive tabulated facts and figures, but each letter represents one person's experiences and observations. Taken together they help to fill in, however sketchily, the vast tableau of intercontinental migration during this period. This documentation of the emigration experience is their prime importance, superseding their contributions to local United States history.

The letters furnish valuable clues to the motives for emigration and were powerful "pull" forces in their own right; they are the only reliable index to the "mythology" of emigration: to the facts which emigrants, rightly or wrongly, believed to be true about emigration and about their country of destination. In terms of motives for emigration, what was believed to be true was often more important than what actually was true and this is reflected in the letters. A series of letters written by the same emigrant over a period of years can show how much this "mythology" varied from reality and how long it took the emigrant to lose his preconceptions and adjust to the situation as he found it.

The emigrants answered personal questions and gave advice to friends and relatives who contemplated following them; they compared standards of living in the two countries and gave information which they thought relevant to the decision of whether or not to emigrate. It is possible, therefore, to deduce from their letters at least some of the factors which determined emigration. Blegen called emigrant correspondence the "literature of the unlettered" and it is precisely this "grass-roots" aspect which makes it such valuable source material;
the labouriously-traced letters—faded ink on yellowed paper—are the only direct link with the common emigrant, the only chance to circumnavigate the text-books and the statistics, to see the human beings who were the statistics and to find out what forces, great and small, could wrench men from the soil of their childhood and propel them willy nilly across thousands of miles of hazardous ocean to seek a new life.

There are, however, pitfalls awaiting those who use the emigrant letters recklessly. Charlotte Erickson has rightly pointed out that important studies of the social, economic and psychological adjustment of emigrants in the United States must depend on a much more complete source than isolated letters from emigrants about whom little or nothing is known. W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki\(^1\) have broken the ground in this "scientific" use of letters with their massively inclusive work on Polish emigrant families in the United States during the first decades of the twentieth century. Not only have they gathered long series of letters from each family investigated, they have also assimilated complete information about the social and economic backgrounds of the families and are able to use this knowledge effectively in their assessments. The pitfalls, then, lie in the use of less adequate collections.\(^2\)

And the fact must be faced: the collection of Scottish emigrant letters 1815-1861 is decidedly and beyond all shadow of a doubt less adequate. There is often but a single letter left to tell the saga of a Scottish contribution to the building of America and, though there are a few collections of ten or more letters (mostly letters from Scotland to America, e.g. the Robertson Collection), the average number from any given emigrant is about three. There is also lamentably little

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\(^1\)Erickson, Charlotte, "Immigrant Studies", BAAS Bulletin, No. 4, New Series.

\(^2\)The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, New York, 1958.
information about the letter-writers; for the most part, their age, social position, education, marital status, etc. remain shadowy targets for informed guesses. In some cases it is not even known to whom the letters were addressed—the "envelopes" were not always formed by the pages of the letters, though this was certainly the common practice. As a final element of frustration, early nineteenth-century Scots exhibited a notable lack of imagination in their choice of Christian names—one is tempted to suppose that 90% of all Scottish emigrants during this period were named John, James, Robert, William, Alexander, Mary, Margaret, Jean or Janet—and an infuriating tendency to use the same names over and over again within the family. Thus every generation would have its Johns, James, Roberts, Marys and Jeans and, when they started naming their children after in-laws as well, the situation became chaotic; cases then arise where "John" could be son, father, grandfather, uncle or cousin and it is sometimes not possible to separate the references in the letters.

These deficiencies, great though they may seem, do not negate the contributions of even isolated anonymous letters to our knowledge of emigration. Viewed in its proper context, with an eye to its limitations, the correspondence offers a unique glimpse into the motives and aspirations of the nineteenth-century Scottish emigrant.

C. The Purpose of this Research

It is the intention of this thesis to assess and analyse the available emigrant correspondence for the purpose of shedding light on the motives of emigration from Scotland to the United States between 1815-1861. The investigation is made from the Scottish point of view; no pretense is made of documenting the emigrant's adjustment to American life except insofar as it is relevant to the encouragement or discouragement of prospective emigrants in Scotland. An attempt has been made to set
the letters and the information they relay in their historical context, but it must be re-emphasised that it is what the emigrants believed to be true (as recorded in their letters) that is of prime importance rather than what was historically true. The historical truth is, of course, more important in the study of "re-emigration" which is touched upon in the seventh chapter.

The subjects of this investigation are the emigrants who wrote the letters in the present collection and their kith and kin in Scotland who read those letters and felt their "pull"—individuals of what John Knox termed the "raskall multitude"—hewers of wood and drawers of water, ordinary men and women who made the extraordinary decision to leave their Homeland and cast their lot on a far shore. The lives and times of the more famous Scottish emigrants, the Carnegies, the Pinkertons and the Owenses, have been copiously chronicled in the history textbooks and the biographies. Our concern is not with the shouts and roars of the "giants among men" but with the whispers and inarticulate mumblings of the "common people".

The chapter headings chosen as vehicles for this analysis are in most cases self-explanatory; some of them, however, need justification. The first chapter (The Voyage) is in more ways than one a transitional chapter, combining British and American sources and transposing the emigrants from Scotland to the United States. The Atlantic Trade had an increasingly bad reputation during the Reform-minded first half of the nineteenth century, and that the reputation was well-deserved cannot be doubted. Granted that the conditions were abominable, and that the rate of fatalities during the crossing was often alarmingly high, was this, in fact, an important factor in the Scot's decision of whether or not to emigrate? An attempt is made to answer this question and other related ones.

Chapters II and III, dealing with farmers' and labourers' reactions respectively, are of obvious rele-
vance, but Chapters V and VI, which are concerned with education and religion, need a word of explanation. There are very few references to educational facilities in the Scottish emigrant letters and comparatively little concern shown for religious facilities. Given the Scottish preoccupation through the centuries with Church and School, this insouciance is remarkable, and, in a sense, it is because of rather than in spite of, the paucity of material in these fields that their investigation is undertaken. When Scots at home were boasting one of the finest educational systems in Europe and expending a good part of their energies on theological and theoretical debates, the apparent absence of these concerns in the United States might have had a significant effect on emigration. Emigrant reserve on the two subjects has compelled a greater reliance on other primary sources than in other chapters, but the topics are deemed of sufficient importance to justify this deviance.

Chapter IV is a rambling excursion into the amorphous and often emotional hinterlands of "freedom" with an attempt to evaluate the importance of that famed American commodity in the eyes of Scottish emigrants. Finally, Chapter VII is an exposition of the success or failure of the various letter-writing emigrants, the assumption being that nothing would encourage prospective emigrants more than news of a friend or relative's success in America.

There was, regrettable, neither time nor space to include chapters on Scottish emigrant mobility in the United States (there is evidence that many Scots adapted quickly to the necessity of moving around in search of jobs and there are four accounts in the manuscript letters of emigrants crossing the Oregon and Mormon Trails) and on the reactions of Scottish emigrants to the American culture and people ("If a hundred Americans of any class were to seat themselves, ninety-nine would shuffle their chairs to the true distance, and then throw themselves
back against the nearest prop. The similarities of language and custom make the letter a particularly fascinating (and complex) study.

D. The Typical Emigrant Letter

The emigrant letters, though obviously varying considerably from person to person, usually had many points in common. It would perhaps be interesting to include here the transcription of a "typical" emigrant letter and then to comment on its similarities and dissimilarities with other letters in this collection.²

To: Mr. Alexander Wark
Hardhill—Bathgat
Linlithgowshire [West Lothian]
Scotland
Middleton Logan County Augt 4 1843

Dear Uncle

We received yours of the 20th June last week and we were happy to hear you and all our Relations were well—we were all very sorry to hear of our Cousin's deaths it must have been a severe trial to the family—We have all enjoyed excellent health since we came to this Country—except myself On the 7th of last August I was taken sick with Bilious fever then I took Pleurisy which was succeeded with inflammation in the stomach and Liver and lastly with fever and ague which confined me to bed for two months and a half but I got well when the warm weather came in this last spring—Last winter was the severest one ever felt in Illinois—and a very dry summer no rain since the first of June You wish us to give you our opinion of Mr Sherriff works—we think it a very correct account in many things there is no good Prairie under £3. per acre and timbered land from five to eight dollars from 80 to 100 acres of good Prairie is a large enough farm with 30 acres of timber to fence it and fire wood Ploughing or Breaking up new prairie with 8 or 10 oxen £1 ½ Harvesting wheat £1 ½ per acre what is now 60 cents [end of first page] per bushel a good frame house can be built for £200 and furnished for £150 a good horse is worth about £50. Cows £8 to 10 Sheep £1 ½ Pork £2 ½ per hundred pound—Aug 5 There has been a fine rain last night it will help the corn very much—The soil in this country is very rich and easy cultivated when wet it looks like moss—there is no manure used—We have bought 280 acres of land 160 of Prairie and 120 of timber we are building a frame house—we have got 6000 rails split which will fence about eighty acres and improving as fast as we can we will

¹The Scotsman, Feb. 7, 1818.
²For a "typical" "reverse" letter, see Appendix.
Middletown, Logan County, Aug 4, 1861

Dear Uncle,

I received yours of the 24th June last week and we were happy to hear you and all our relatives were well. We were all very sorry to hear of the cousin's death. It must have been a severe trial to the family. We have all enjoyed excellent health since we came to this county—except myself. On the 4th of last August I was taken sick with Belles fever; then I took fever which was succeeded with inflammation in the stomach and liver and lasted with fever and ague which confined me to bed for two months and a half. But I got well when the weather came in the last spring. Last winter was the severest one ever felt in Illinois; and a very dry summer. No rain since the first of June. I wish us to give you our opinion. Our opinion of... One extract from Mr. Sherff's works—we think it a very correct account. I am many things there is no good prairie under $3 per acre and timbered land from five to eight dollars from $3 to $10 an acre of good prairie is a large enough farm with 30 acres of timber to fence it and firewood. Ploughing or breaking up new prairie with 6 or 10 of 1-| Harvesting Wheat at 6 or 1 per acre wheat is now 60 cents
per bushel a good frame house can be built for $200 and furnished for $350. a good horse is worth about $50. last night it will help the corn very much. the soil in this country is very rich and easy cultivated, when wet looks like moss. there is no manure used. we have bought 280 acres of land. 60 of prairie and 120 of timber. we are building a frame house. have got 200 rails split which suffice about eighty acres and improving as fast as we can. we will have a small farm in two years i like my well. it is very healthy nine or ten months in the year. but in august and september below and fever. i hope prevails. father and barbara have had their health better than in scotland. stock is very easy bred. in this country sheep pass very well and wool is worth thirty cents per pound or fifteen francs. english poultry of all kinds can be easily raised in abundance. deer and wild turkeys are plenty for chicken. wild geese. squaws here. no ducks here. i have got some of the best kind of perch. fish is plenty in the creek but it. do not fish any. bread does well here. there are a great many bees in the woods. if ever there was a land of milk and honey, this is it. for both are very plenty. there are some wild. it is fine sport to hunt. i think i have got five or six hounds. there are snakes too. i have seen them off
over six feet long. Our farm is sixteen miles from Spring it is a fine country for fruit last year we could get peaches by the wagon load for the pulling but there is none this year owing to the severe winter we tried agar many which we are now using for past people lives just well here I do not think you will ever catch me stage in Scotland over two months at a time. There are no carts used here all two and four horse wagons they work the same as a carriage without stop. They are worth from sixty to one hundred dollars and Harring $25 for two horses - Emigrants from Scotland are hot to leave in October and go by Liverpool and New Orleans then up the Mississippi to Saint Louis then up the Illinois river to Peoria - Mason is there in Springfield we shall be happy to hear from you soon if you write soon news and less complaints your letters would be sooner answererd give all our kindest regards to grandmother Mary James Mylie just lead people and remember me to Boston and Whiteside folks - George Suglet I shall be happy to hear from them all tell them all to write me or let me hear from them through you give my kindest love to John Doe just tell him to come out here and take a winter hunting - please do not put covers on your letters as they charge double postage on them in this country - I am yours sincerely - Alice Allan
have a beautiful farm in two years—I like this country very well—it is very healthy nine or ten months in the year but in August and September Billious and fever & Ague prevail. Father and Barbara have had their health much better than in Scotland—Stock is very easy raised in this country. Sheep pays very well. Raw wool is worth thirty cents per pound or fifteen pence. English poultry of all kinds can be easily raised in abundance. Deer and wild Turkeys are plenty. Prairie Chickens—wild geese squirrels &c &c. No Durhams here. I have got some of the best kind of Riffles—Fish is very plenty in the Creeks but I do not fish any. Bees does well here. There are a great many bees in the woods. If ever there was a land of milk and honey this is it for both are very plenty. There are some wolves. It is a fine sport to hunt them. I have got five or six hounds—there are snakes too. I have seen them often.

Our farm is sixteen miles north of Springfield. It is a fine country for fruit. Last year we could get Peaches by the waggons for the pulling but there is none this year owing to the severe winter. We dried a good many which we are now using for pies. People lives pretty well here. I do not think you will ever catch me staying in Scotland over two months at a time—There are no carts used here all two and four horse waggons. They work the same as a carriage without springs. They are worth from sixty to one hundred dollars and Harness £24 for two horses. Emigrants from Scotland are best to leave in October and go by Liverpool and New Orleans then up Mississippi to Saint Louis then up the Illinois river to Pekin—Marion is teaching in Springfield—we shall be happy to hear from you soon if you write more news and less complaints your letters would be sooner answered. Give all our kindest regards to Grandmother Mary James Wylie jun—Craig's people and remember me to Easton and Whiteside folk. George Slight and I shall be happy to hear from them all. Tell them all to write me or let me hear from them through you. Give my kindest love to John Tod jun—Tell him to not put covers on your letters as they charge double postage on them in this country. I am yours very truly.

Alex Allison

If you would be so kind send us a Newspaper occasionally.

In this particular copy the manuscript has been duplicated as nearly as is possible with a typewriter in order to retain as much as possible of the original flavour. It should be noted that although the £ sign has been used as most nearly approximating what Allison wrote he almost certainly meant $—thus his farm house would cost $200 to build, not £200. Leaving in the small mistakes.
has the academic value of helping to indicate the writer's degree of education and the more personal value of making the emigrant seem somehow more human—a man who loses the thread of what he is writing and repeats himself and who gets muddled about the number of s's in Mississippi is a man with whom we can readily identify, not just a figure in a statistical table.

The letter consists of four pages of age-brittled yellow paper covered with writing in faded black ink—three pages of text and one page with the address to which it is directed serving as an "envelope". It was common practice for the letters to be written on one large page and folded somewhat in the manner of a modern "air letter" into an "envelope" sealed with wax.

The spelling in this letter is comparatively good and the length—762 words—slightly longer than average. Some of the letters written by less-educated emigrants betray Scottish pronunciation or usage; for example, it is fairly common to find "the" instead of "they", a common Scottish pronunciation, or "injoin" for "enjoying", "sister" for "sister", "wear" or "where" for "were", "tack" or "tak" for "take", etc. By and large, however, the spelling is surprisingly good considering the lowly origins of many of the writers and this would seem to support Scotland's good reputation in education.

Some of the features of Alexander Allison's letter common to most emigrant letters are: 1) description of health and climate; 2) list of prices (often much longer); 3) description of progress; 4) advice to emigrants (often more detailed); 5) list of friends to contact on his behalf (often longer); and request for newspapers. The latter is interesting because it illustrates the point that high postage and limited space confined the emigrants to personal news in their letters. For more general news they relied on an exchange of newspapers.

Most of the letters were, like Alexander Allison's, predominantly optimistic, reflecting the emigrant's typi-
cal faith in the possibilities of improving his lot, but they also tended to be cautious about boasting too wildly of their achievements or their new country. They were also scrupulous to note any disadvantages they encountered, such as suffering from the effects of the climate, six-foot snakes, "smart" Yankees, etc. Charlotte Erickson suggested three reasons for this reserve on the part of the emigrants: 1) the most favourable accounts may have been taken to America in the pockets of emigrants responding to the challenge of the letters; 2) private letters are perhaps always more cautious than printed ones; and 3) it is possible that the social and economic adjustment of the English emigrants to the United States was not as easy as it is often assumed to have been.¹

This reticence of the emigrant letters is a highly significant factor in the study of those letters' effect on prospective emigrants in Scotland. The reasons for the caution displayed by the emigrants deserve careful attention and consideration. Doubtless, many of the most favourable letters were brought to America in the pockets of emigrants, but it is equally true that many of the letters brought to America are still in existence, in family papers and in state historical societies and museums, and, in the Scottish case at least, they show no marked difference in content or tone from those preserved in Scotland.

It is Dr. Erickson's suggestion that the English emigrant letters which appeared in newspapers, magazines and books were more exuberant in their praise (especially with regard to equality and democratic political institutions) and less restrained in their claims than were the manuscript letters for private consumption; this implies that the letters printed in English newspapers were deliberately written for the purpose of

¹Erickson, "Agrarian Myths", op. cit., p. 60.
seeking publication. The same would not appear to be true of the letters which appeared in *The Scotsman* 1817-1861; most of them seem to be, like Archibald Campbell's letter to George Combe, extracts from personal letters written to people in and around Edinburgh. They often include references to personal events which are meaningless to the general public and not infrequently phrases like "You will be surprized to learn that --- is now living here." In most cases the editor stated firmly that the letter was from an emigrant to his friend in Edinburgh, or in Leith, or to his parents in Kilmarnock. Occasionally they were prefaced by a few sentences from the "correspondent" who begged to lay the following letter before the public as a possible aid to those contemplating emigration. The letters do give uniformly good reports, as intimated earlier, but they do not hesitate to mention privations. "We want a good deal of conveniences that you have at home"¹ is not uncommon. Although two or three of the newspaper letters lapse into euphuistic flights of rhetoric not commonly found in manuscript letters, by and large the printed correspondence is remarkably similar in form and content to the best manuscript letters.

Very few of the letters in this collection seem to indicate any unexpected difficulties in adjusting to the social and economic conditions in America though the social adjustment did present some surprising problems. The native Americans were inordinately sensitive ("those most thin-skinned of all people" in Capt. Hall's phrase²), especially with Britishers, about their political institutions and their way of life in general. Most emigrants realised this quickly and turned it to their advantage as they found that praise was the quickest way to win friends. Some emigrants were either too blind or too

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¹ "Extracts from a letter, dated Wayne Township, Ohio, 6th April, 1823", *The Scotsman*, July 9, 1823.
proud to make any concessions and hardened old Tories like John Williams and James Matheson remained bitter foreigners even after thirty years of residence in the United States.

The results of this study would seem to indicate that the reticence shown by emigrants in their letters was due to more personal reasons. It was, in fact, a direct result of the emigrant's keen appreciation of the importance of his letters. There is ample evidence to show that the emigrants were aware that their letters might make the difference between someone at home emigrating or not. If the people at home did emigrate because of what they had read in an emigrant's letter, they were more than likely to turn up on his doorstep in America expecting help in finding homes of their own and work. It is hardly surprising that most of the letter-writers were loath to shoulder such an awesome responsibility while they were still struggling to make their own way. They accordingly confined themselves to a general praise of the country and opportunities available and a progress report on their own situation. When asked directly for advice about emigrating, they would invariably answer "Here are the facts as I see them; you must draw your own conclusions." Letters advocating emigration unreservedly are comparatively rare and usually directed to brothers or other close relations. There is a fuller discussion of this matter in the following chapters, especially Chapter VII.

Finally, some mention should be made of the possibility of "natural selection" in the surviving emigrant letters. Most of the letters in this collection are reports of success in varying degrees. Two questions need to be asked about this preponderance of favourable reports: 1) were the failures less likely to write home? and 2) are successful reports more likely to "survive"? In other words, are the letters which have survived unrepresentative of the letters written between 1815 and 1861? These and related questions are discussed in Chapter VII.
THE EMBARKATION, WATERLOO DOCKS, LIVERPOOL
Chapter I: The Voyage

If crosses and tombstones could be erected on the water as on the western deserts...the routes of the emigrant vessels from Europe to America would long since have assumed the appearance of crowded cemeteries.¹

The trauma of the emigrant's transition from his Homeland to the New World was considerably emphasised by the ordeal of the early nineteenth-century Atlantic crossing. "Ordeal by water" would hardly be too strong a term; one hundred and fifty years ago the Atlantic presented a formidable barrier two thousand miles wide and fraught with danger, privation and sickness. The Atlantic was a serious obstacle, an abattis which had to be carried before the real battle of settlement in a strange land could begin. There was no room on a sailing ship for the weak of heart or body and timid, irresolute souls must have been discouraged by this initial "screening" process.

Every emigrant who travelled to the United States by steerage class between the years 1815-61 faced, to a greater or lesser extent, a struggle against filth, pollution, under-nourishment, brutality, immorality, boredom and sheer discomfort; it was not a struggle that lent itself to Victorian concepts of romance and though many an emigrant faced dangers as real as the Russian guns in Crimea their heroics were largely unsung and unrecorded--except in the occasional journal or letter home. Countless thousands never reached the other side and yet the restless armies rolled ever westward, sweeping over the unmarked graves, moving irresistibly towards America and the chance to build a new life in a new land.

¹Friedrich Kapp, quoted in Carl Wittke, We Who Built America, New York, 1939, p. 113.
A. The Departure

The wind was fair; the weather mild; the sea most smooth; and the poor emigrants were in high spirits at so auspicious a beginning of their voyage. They were reclining all over the decks, talking of soon seeing America, and relating how the agent had told them that twenty days would be an uncommonly long voyage.

Every time a brother left for America, it was like a death in the family.

The traditional picture of the Scottish emigrant’s farewell is of the small ship putting off from a wind-swept cove or island, sped onward by the tears of relations on the shore with the keening notes of the pipes rising in wild lament over the rush of the wind. Just such a scene was described by the Inverness Courier in 1841 when a party of emigrants left Helmsdale:

Men, women, and children evinced signs of grief, the sorrow of the women being loud and open. As the vessel moved away, the pipes played, "We return no more." An old man, a catechist, accompanied the party on board the vessel, and before returning to shore he poured forth a long and pathetic Gaelic prayer.

A report of another emigration from the same town differed slightly in that it showed overtones of festivity:

Hands were wrung and wrung again, bumpers of whisky tossed wildly off amidst cheers and shouts; the women were forced almost fainting into the boats; and the crowd upon the shore burst into a long, loud cheer. Again and again that cheer was raised and responded to from the boat, while bonnets were thrown into the air, handkerchiefs were waved, and last words of adieu shouted to the receding shore, while, high above all, the wild notes of the pipes were heard pouring forth that by far the finest of pibroch tunes, Cha till mi tuille, We shall Return No More!

Such scenes were doubtless typical of a great number of

2Attributed to Andrew Allison’s niece, Annie Hogarth; letter from M. M. Allison, Feb., 1967.
departures in the North during the troubled first half of the nineteenth century. With few exceptions, however, the Highland emigrants went to Canada (see Part I, Chapter III) and, although many moved subsequently into the United States, they fell largely outside the scope of the present dissertation. The concern here is with those Scots who sailed for the United States and they left primarily from the ports of Glasgow and Greenock on the Clyde and Liverpool.

The emigrants who sailed from Glasgow, Greenock, Leith and the other Scottish ports were often more fortunate than their countrymen who took steamers down the West Coast to embark at Liverpool. Though there were bad lodging-houses in Scotland, there was nothing to compare with the network of corruption and malpractice which prevailed in Liverpool; nor were the "runners" and "crimps" who preyed so mercilessly on the emigrants in Liverpool extant to any degree in Scotland. General prevarication by agents and the infamous practice of selling false or misleading tickets would also seem to have been "under-developed" in Glasgow and Greenock, although doubtless some Scots were sent false tickets from relatives in New York where such frauds were widespread. The general practice in Scotland was to buy the tickets directly from the shipping companies; often the emigrants bought vouchers from the companies by sending a deposit and exchanged them, along with the balance of payment, for the tickets when they reached Glasgow. Witnesses who testified before the Select Committee investigating the Passenger Acts in 1851 agreed for the most part that the Acts worked comparatively well at Glasgow and Greenock.

But many Scots did emigrate from Liverpool which

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1 PP, 1851, XIX, "Reports from the select committee inquiring into the operation of the passenger acts, 1851", Testimony of T.O.Hunter, p. 573 and of Capt. Patey, p. 609.
2 See, for example, the warning against such frauds in The Scotsman, July 29, 1840; see also below Chapter II.
3 PP, 1851, XIX, T.O.Hunter, p. 555.
4 Ibid., A.R.Johnston, p. 589. He said they worked "exceedingly well" at Greenock; the other two witnesses from Scotland implied the same though the question was not put to them.
was the largest nineteenth-century emigrant port in
the United Kingdom, averaging 150,000 emigrants a year
around the middle of the century. It was no doubt this
great concentration of people that spawned the multi-
tudinous evils of that port. Several factors combined
against the emigrant: the port was often fog-bound,
its sandbars were a constant danger, ships had to be
boarded at the quayside and there was a prohibition on
early embarkation. The result was that emigrants invariably
had to spend at least two nights in the infamous lodging-
houses of the foul slums along the docks which were
probably the breeding-grounds of some of the diseases
which swept the Atlantic in the 1830s and '40s.¹ And
on every hand attempts were made to swindle, defraud
and take advantage of the naive emigrant; he was made
to wait for months before his ship sailed; he was sold
false tickets, "property in Texas" and "indispensable
equipment"; brokers suddenly declared themselves bank-
rupt and refused to honour their debts; ships were some-
times full and the emigrants who could not get on were
left with nothing. The Liverpool emigrant trade ran the
gamut of human vice.² In 1837 some 20,000 people emi-
grated from Liverpool; out of these, there were nearly
4,000 complaints for breaches of contract and "other
abuses" and 1,000 successful prosecutions.³ Melville
summed up the situation in Redburn, a novel about a
mid-nineteenth-century merchant sailor:

...of all seaports in the world, Liverpool, perhaps
most abounds in all the variety of land-sharks, land-
rats, and other vermin, which make the helpless
mariner their prey. In the shape of landlords, bar-
keepers, clothiers, crimps, and boarding-house
loungers, the land-sharks devour him, limb by limb;
while the land-rats and mice constantly nibble at
his purse.⁴

If the tough sailors were victimised, what chance had

¹MacDonagh, Oliver, A Pattern of Government Growth
²See MacDonagh, op. cit., pp. 51-59 for a complete
description of the conditions of the emigrant trade in
Liverpool from 1800 to 1860.
³Ibid., p. 19.
⁴Melville, op. cit., p. 175.
the gullible emigrant who had been used to dealing with friends and neighbours all his life?

It is probable that, regardless of the port of embarkation, the final moment of departure was a chaotic one. An emigrant from Craigie in Ayrshire made a brief entry in his diary which caught some of the turbulence:

But oh! the ship what a place... Cursing and swearing, women and children crying. I think we could compare it to nothing else than the fall of Babylon.¹

There would be shouting, weeping, scrambling for the best bunks, loading of cargo and luggage, "hair of the dog" to cure the hang-overs left from the "America wakes" of the previous night and a great nervous energy on the part of the emigrants to cover inner fears and uncertainties. A newly-wed emigrant who hoped to send for his wife in a year or so² had time to scribble a few short lines to her on the deck of his ship:

There is 320 of us going away, consider the confusion in the ship, I can get no liberty to write for people jumping over my back, so you must excuse the shortness of this scrawl.³

Finally there would be the clanking of the anchor chain, the snap of the sails billowing into life, the creak of the masts taking the strain, the cursing of the sailors and the first hints of waves to come as the ship got under way. Then the die was cast and the Great Adventure begun. Perhaps the glint of the sun on the white sails flapping over his head would distract the emigrant temporarily from the enormity of the step he had taken or, like Richard Weston, he might be "impressed" into helping to pull the ship out into the current whence a steam tug would tow her down the river.⁴ As he would soon find, the evils of the crossing were more than sufficient unto the day.

¹ typescript copy of the diary of John and Elizabeth Brown, Craigie, Ayrshire to LaCrosse County, Wisconsin, April 26—May 28, 1856; entry for April 28.
² a common practice; cf. PP, 1851, XIX,Capt. Patey,p. 617.
³ typescript copy of Letter, Greenock, May 21, 1852, to his wife, Eliza, Balerno. (John Ronaldson)
B. Conditions on Board

they have not more room than in their coffins. —Lieut. Hutchinson

Having boarded the ship and escaped the "land-sharks", the emigrants were immediately faced with new problems, the greatest of which was the lack of space. The normal custom in steerage class throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and even into the '60s was for passengers to sleep four or six to a berth. These berths were often temporary facilities thrown up in the between-decks of a timber-ship and they were insecurely divided. By the Passenger Act of 1853 no more than two people were allowed to share a berth. Some ships promptly cut the space down to six feet by three, but the testimony received by the Select Committee in 1854 indicated that the vast majority of berths still measured six feet by six and was meant to accommodate at least four adults.

Berths were allocated without regard to sex and even young, single girls travelling alone had to take their chances with the rest. By the Passenger Act of 1849 single men and women were forbidden to berth together, but, as indicated by the inquiries in 1851 and 1854, scant attention was paid to this law. Hundreds of men, women and children were crowded together on one deck with no partitions; women were forced by necessity to undress and sleep in the same berths with men they had never seen before; young people of both sexes slept in berths with married couples often covered by but a single blanket; berths were so arranged that people sleeping on the inside had to climb over those on the outside.

Perhaps it was an exaggeration to call these ships "floating brothels", but there can be little doubt that

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1Testimony to the 1854 Committee of Inquiry; quoted in MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 277.
the system led to "widespread immorality." The problem seemed beyond control in Liverpool, but in Glasgow and Greenock some attempt to preserve decency was made. In 1851 an agent, Mr. T.O. Hunter, claimed that in the ships leaving Greenock the single men were separated from the rest of the passengers at night (as required by law) and that there were special berths reserved for lady passengers. The Emigration Officer at Glasgow, Captain Patey, R.N., painted a less rosy—but probably more realistic—picture: he explained that he saw to the separation of sexes before the ship left the port, but was often told later by the captains that the women moved back in with the men once the ship was under way. The Committee asked him some leading questions:

Does not great indecency arise from single men and single women, and married, being all berthed in the same space, and dressing and undressing in the presence of each other?

Patey answered significantly:

Yes; but it appears that the lower classes of emigrants, particularly the Irish and Scotch, are very much accustomed to it; they herd together very much.

Upon being further pressed, "So that, in point of fact, immorality results?", he replied, "I have no doubt that there is very great immorality."

Nor was the fair passenger's virtue endangered solely by fellow-emigrants as is shown by the Act of Congress passed in 1860 "for the better protection of female passengers" by which crew members seducing passengers were made liable to one year in prison or a fine of one thousand dollars (unless they married the offended party). Viewed in this context, Janet Johnstone's naive flirting assumes sinister overtones: "I was a great favourit of the meats my bed was close to his little rome. He told me to come

1 Ibid., 1851, XIX; the testimonies leave no doubt whatsoever about this; see especially Reverend J.W. Welsh, pp. 224-243.
2 Ibid., T.O. Hunter, pp. 566-72.
3 Ibid., p. 610.
an sing him asleep."

Small wonder that some women sat up all night on their luggage rather than share a berth with strange men.

I had to creep out of bed or bed an lay on my chest an I said James where are you son. He said he was on his knees laying on the groundy with his head on the chest. If we had got our money back we would not have gone...

Having located himself in a berth, the emigrant next came to the gradual realisation that the toilet facilities on board were not all they might have been. The passengers were, as Melville put it, "cut off from the most indispensable conveniences of a civilised dwelling." Before 1850 ships did not even consider having water closets below deck and there were seldom more than two for several hundred people. They were usually located in precarious positions on the deck where they were in full public view and where the first heavy sea would either fling them open (exposing the occupant) or wash them overboard. During storms they were inaccessible and at night the women would not go up on the decks alone.

This situation allied with the poor ventilation common to most vessels produced an inevitable result:

We had not been at sea one week, when to hold your head down the fore hatchway was like holding it down a suddenly opened cesspool.

At the inquiry of 1851 J.W.Welsh, Chaplain to the emigrants in Liverpool, pointed out that the sailors had to go down every morning on some ships to shovel out the filth from the between-decks where the steerage passengers stayed. "Do you mean to say that the people attend to the calls of nature between decks?" "Yes." "On the decks?"

1. Ms. letter, West Flambris (?), Upper Canada, July 16, 1845 to her sister, Jane, in Stirling.
5. PP, 1851, XIX, Capt. Patey, p. 608.
6. Ibid., p. 609. "You say that the water-closets are sometimes washed away?" "I suppose they are." On the Washington it was common practice to douse the occupants with the sea-hose early in the morning (PP, 1851, XL,p.5).
"Yes; I have got myself more than once besmeared with nuisance of that kind." The stench, of course, was ineradicable and usually lingered to greet each new load of emigrants. There were ways of coping with the problem: on James Ferguson's ship there were 166 passengers in the steerage; "it was very close and confined. It was fumigated or Smoked with Tar about twice a week to prevent sickness."  

The poor ventilation and sanitation combined with the cramped space proved a breeding-ground for disease. When the hatches were battened down during bad weather and most of the people were sea-sick, there was no ventilation at all. Reverend Welsh reported some of the women saying, like Janet Johnstone, that had they known what conditions were like beforehand they would never have left home.

C. Food

Before being allowed on board, all emigrants had to display to the ship's officers cooking, drinking, and eating utensils and a supply of food sufficient for the journey.

...some of us were getting quite tired of the hard salt junks—the beef was like a piece of mahogany wood in color and for toughness I cannot really state anything that I know of which was so tough.

Initially the emigrants had to supply all of their food themselves, but by the end of the period under review the ships were providing the food as part of their expanded services. This came about largely through Government legislation. As early as 1803 attempts were made to make ships provide food but it was not until 1826 that the first effective Act required 50 lbs. of bread-stuffs (paid and provided by the passengers) and 50 gallons of water for every person on board. In 1835

1PP, 1851, XIX, pp. 229-30.
2Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848 to his brother, Robert, Netherholm Farm, Dumfries.
3PP, 1851, XIX, p. 230.
5William Anderson, Ms. letter/diary, Boston, 1834 to his parents.
the breadstuffs allowance was increased to 70 lbs., but in spite of this, in 1857 the Diamond took 100 days to reach New York and 17 out of 180 passengers died of starvation; the legislators went back to the planning board.

The Passenger Act of 1842 therefore required that the ship provide every passenger with 7 lbs. of bread, biscuit, flour, oatmeal or rice (or potatoes) weekly. In 1848 it became necessary for all vessels with more than 100 passengers to provide cooking facilities and the food supplies were increased almost yearly until by 1855 it was no longer necessary for emigrants to bring anything with them, although of course they continued to pack luxuries like salted meat and fish. John Ronaldson wrote in 1853 soon after arriving in the States:

I almost forgot, Jenny Bell if she is not started tell her to take a bushel of potatoes if she wants pleasure on board also a net to boil them in. Give her my address, salt fish is a grand thing with the potatoes, 99 passengers out of every 100 usually takes the above, Jenny will thank me for the advice yet.¹

There were inevitably many cases of cheating by the captains of emigrant ships. Good provisions were brought up for inspection and then saved on the voyage while bad food was served to the passengers.² Often emigrants were not provided with as much as they were due by law or promised by the agreement on their tickets. Vere Foster was a social reformer who, in 1850, decided to cross the Atlantic in the steerage class of the Washington to see for himself how some of the emigrants he had helped send off fared on ship-board. During his historic passage he weighed all of the provisions he was given and they averaged less than half of the amount stipulated by Act of Parliament.³

¹ Typescript copy of letter, Schagchticoke Point, April 10, 1853 to his wife; for examples of what emigrants took and were advised to take with them see Guillet, Op. cit., pp. 54-57.
² E.g. the notorious case of the Brooksby, PP, 1851, XIX, pp. 598-599.
³ PP, 1851, XL, "Treatment of passengers on board the Washington", p. 7.
complained that he had not got half as much food as promised and lamented, "truly I have fallen into a den of robbers." But at least by having the onus of providing food placed squarely on the shoulders of the ship-owners, the tragedies resulting from emigrant supplies running out after two weeks were substantially reduced.

The food, then, might be sufficient, but it was hardly more. James Ferguson and William Anderson both mentioned the relief of tasting the fresh fish off Newfoundland after a month of salt meat. Ferguson went on to give a terse record of steerage conditions on his ship, describing how "heartily tired" he and all the others were of the biscuits which were so hard they had to be soaked in water and fried before they were edible, let alone palatable. Oatmeal was used to make brose, porridge or "stirabouts" and the one luxury he had was some treacle which he bought on the ship. Two quarts of water were distributed to each passenger daily and that had to serve for brose, cooking and washing (if any).

Cooking facilities were pitifully inadequate; there was often but one large stove for several hundred emigrants and it was, as often as not, exposed to the elements and thus out of use a great deal of the time. Delany Finch was another Victorian social reformer who braved the Atlantic in steerage class to investigate passenger conditions. During his crossing on the *Fingal* in 1853 he witnessed "fighting and mauling" around the stoves as the passengers struggled for place—with the aged and infirm suffering accordingly—and Melville portrayed similar conditions on board the *Highlander*.

1. Typescript copy of diary, op. cit.
2. Boiling water or milk mixed with oatmeal or pease-meal with salt and butter added.
4. In MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 280.
The passengers on board John and Elizabeth Brown's ship suffered considerably from the want of adequate cooking facilities. On May 4 he recorded that it was "a most difficult matter to get our victuals cooked. The backward are half starved." By the 9th the situation had deteriorated still further:

The passengers are looking after their breakfasts and getting them cooked if they can which nearly is impossible. They are crowded round the galley and growling and fighting like dogs for a bone and no wonder for it is likely many of them did not get their supper.¹

David Livingstone's young brother, Charles, was one of the "backward" ones; when he crossed the Atlantic in 1840 to go to Oberlin College in Ohio, he found himself consistently crowded away from the fire by "wild Irishmen who kept bullying and fighting always". A kindly Irish woman took pity on him and cooked his food with her family's.²

When asked by the Select Committee whether it would not be a good idea to have all of the food provided already cooked, A.R. Johnston, a ship-owner at Greenock, replied cunningly that the cooking was an admirable cure for the natural indolence of the emigrants: "The very fact of their being hungry causes them to stir about, which is much to be desired on board ship,"³ he concluded complacently.

D. False-Starts and Opening Gambits

Joined the Steam Ship "Glasgow" bound for New York but had only proceeded a few miles when she broke down and was found unfit to proceed on her voyage.

—William Anderson⁴

The first days of the passage across the Atlantic were often enlivened by incidents and false starts.

¹ Typescript copy of diary, op. cit.
² Ms. letter, Colonial Hall, Oberlin, May 22, 1840 to his parents and sisters, Hamilton, Scotland.
³ PF, 1851, XIX, pp. 582-83.
⁴ Letter/diary, op. cit.
Perhaps the most common divertissement of the first few days was the discovery of stowaways. It was not until the Act of 1852 that stowaways were rendered liable to three months' imprisonment; prior to that (and no doubt subsequently as well) the allocation of justice was left in the hands of the Captain—and rough hands they were. William Anderson witnessed a typical incident while lying off the "Tail of the Bank" near Greenock in 1834:

I neglected to state that there was three stowaways found in different parts of the ship. The first one found was a lad about 18. The captain gave him a severe drubbing and sent him on shore. About 3 hours afterwards another was found in the Hold of the Ship. He was taken up to the Quarter Deck got a severe drubbing with a rope what seamen term a Rupes end and then tied to the mizzen Rigging and kept there all night. They discovered another in the second cabin. He escaped without receiving a drubbing. They were sent on shore along with the Steam Tug that tugged us out the length of Lamlash.1

The Captain seems to have taken this early opportunity to show both passengers and crew who was in command. T.O. Hunter testified in 1851 that stowaways were frequently found on board2 and Vere Foster noted that a stowaway was found on the Washington as the ship worked her way down the river from Liverpool; he was sent ashore.3

Other early incidents could be more serious and often involved damage to the ship. William Anderson was probably exceptionally unlucky in having his first ship literally "knocked out from under" him and his second ship in collision with a Steamer before even getting out of the Clyde,4 but it was not uncommon for ships to have to put back to port after only a few days for repairs. George Lewis met a young lady when

1 letter/diary, op. cit.
2 PP, 1851, XIX, p. 557.
3 PP, 1851, XL, p. 3.
4 Letter/diary, op. cit. The first ship had her sides knocked in as she moved down the Clyde and the second lost her Fore Yard.
he crossed the Atlantic with the Free Church Deputation in 1844 who was making her third attempt to cross the Ocean, each of her first two ships having been driven back. It was not, however, a laughable affair when the ships returned after longer periods of time.

The cases of the Brutus and the City of Rochester which returned to Liverpool after two weeks' disastrous voyage during the cholera-ridden year of 1832 became infamous. The mortality rate on the Brutus was eighty-three and both ships had been demonstrably over-crowded and short of food; the survivors were simply stranded in Liverpool. Less serious, but closer to home for the Scots emigrants, were the Brooksby and the American Lass which returned to Glasgow after two or three weeks in 1851. The one case was slightly mitigated by the Captain having been lost overboard during a storm, but the Brooksby was clearly a case of cheating, mismanagement and incompetence. Many other examples could be listed, but the important result of all these failures was that it gave the port officials a chance to see at first hand what conditions on the emigrant vessels could be like while at sea. The Select Committee invariably asked what conditions had been like aboard ships which returned from "stress of weather" or other causes and in most cases the answer was that they were filthy, although the ships which returned to Glasgow were generally allowed to be in better condition than those which returned to Liverpool.

Great though these inconveniences were for the emigrants, who were often left with no means of continuing their voyage, they were in the long run instrumental in the development of protective legislation. By the 1850s passengers whose ships had been forced back were

1Lewis, George, Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845, p. 15.
2PE, 1851, XIX, pp. 598-99.
3Ibid., p. 598.
being paid a shilling a day "compensation" as well as getting their board and keep on the ship.

E. Shipwreck

And others would fare worse in other ships,
Bad water, crowded quarters, stinking beef,
And, at the end, the hurricane and death.¹

The North Atlantic has always been a dangerous crossing and, considering the unseaworthiness of some of the "coffin-brigs" which plied the emigrant trade in the early nineteenth century, it is truly a miracle of seamanship that so many got through at all. In the first year of the period under survey, the hazards of wind and weather were multiplied by the hosts of Yankee privateers which roamed the sea in search of British prey. An example at random from Lloyd's Marine List for January 6, 1815 shows four ships captured by privateers and sent to America. The list included:

The Albion, Scoulding, from London to Bermuda, was captured 16th ult. off the coast of Ireland, by the Brutus American schooner-privateer, of 12 guns and 120 men, after an action of 2 hours, and sent to America.²

This was possibly the same Brutus which achieved notoriety in 1832.

However, these acts of war were over by the time the numbers of emigrants had begun to swell to an appreciable amount after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 on the other side of the Atlantic. Far more serious to the emigrant trade were the recurring tragedies of shipwreck, when, as often as not, vessels would go down with the between-decks packed with emigrants and left no survivors to tell the tale. Every season had its catastrophes, but even the British public, inured through centuries of sea-losses, were shocked awake by the toll in 1834 when seventeen ships were lost

²Greenock Advertiser, Jan. 10, 1815.
on the Canadian run alone, taking 731 lives and the possessions and life-savings of all the survivors.¹ A.C. Buchanan, scion of a Londonderry shipping family who settled in Quebec and was an avid supporter of emigration, pointed out in his annual report published in the Parliamentary Papers that the main fault was in drunkenness among ships' officers—especially on the Canadian route which for many years had been notoriously worse than the American.² Agitation from Canada produced a limitation on the amount of liquor which could be carried in 1855 and finally a prohibition on drinking and selling alcohol in 1842.

Bad weather and drunkenness were not the only causes of shipwreck. Ice and fire both took their share. The former, in the shape of massive icebergs, was particularly deadly when combined with the inevitable heavy fog which hung off the coast of Newfoundland. John Stewart noted in his diary a misty passage along the Banks of Newfoundland where he sighted an iceberg "about the size of Elsy craig or that of Dunstanlich in My old Country".³ The Captain of his ship never left the deck. William Anderson's ship, the Corra Linn, also had a nerve-racking passage through the ice-fields; some of the bergs measured 600 feet in height by the Captain's measurement. Anderson speculated nervously: "What would become of us if we were to come to close quarters with any of them."⁴ In 1842 the William Brown was destroyed when it collided with an iceberg and many other ships must have met a similar, though unrecorded, fate. In 1859 the Canada, bound for New York, struck an iceberg near Newfoundland; fortunately the damage was all above the water-line, but a shaken passenger declared:

² MacDonald, op. cit., p. 84.
³ Typescript copy of diary, Greenock to Columbia, California, April-July, 1855.
⁴ Letter/diary, op. cit.
"From the immensity of the shock, I have no doubt of the cause of the silent and signless fate of the President, Pacific, and City of Glasgow."\(^1\) All of which makes David Whyte's innocent remark the more chilling: "We passed a Mountain of Ice next night it had a beautiful appearance at Moonlight."\(^2\) In 1844 there were two well-known cases of ships, the Ocean Monarch and the Caleb Grimshaw, burning at sea and John Ronaldson told of his ship catching fire "which was very near doing for us"; axes and water eventually brought it under control.\(^3\)

There was another rash of shipwrecks in 1853 which, combined with an epidemic of cholera, pushed the mortality rate for that year up to 10% and caused the Emigration Commissioners to warn people against emigrating that season. Some of the ships which went down that year loaded with emigrants were the Annie Jane, the Staffordshire, the Tayleur and the California Packet, accounting for the loss of almost 700 souls. Another disaster of the period which aroused considerable public sympathy (and alarm), especially in Scotland, was the 1854 disappearance in mid-Atlantic of the proud new City of Glasgow with a full complement of passengers.\(^4\)

Inspection into the cause of shipwrecks revealed a further significant factor. By the 1850s there had been a sudden increase in cargoes of pig-iron on the sailing ships bound for the United States from Scotland. This was due partly to the expansion of pig-iron production in Scotland mentioned in Part I, partly to the beginning of the railroad expansion in the United States and partly to the increased number of steam ships which were taking over the lighter cargoes. Investigation revealed that

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\(^1\) Letter in the Glasgow Herald "borrowed" by The Scotsman, July 27, 1859.
\(^2\) Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855 to his brother in Scotland.
\(^3\) Typescript copy of letter, Schaghticoke, Rensselaer County, New York, Oct. 13, 1852 to his wife, Eliza.
\(^4\) For first-hand descriptions of shipwrecks, see Guillet, op. cit., Chapter XIII.
a disproportionate number of the ships that had gone down in the early '50s had been carrying heavy loads of pig- or bar-iron. Unless the ships were expertly loaded, they would be top-heavy or wallow too low in the water; the iron also interfered with the ordinary compasses carried by most ships. Many Emigration Officers took it upon themselves to limit the amount of iron that could be carried by individual ships or helped to supervise the loading. By the Act of 1855 ships were required to carry azimuth compasses.

F. Sea-Sickness

The Cabin Bell has rung for supper but I think there are few able to attend...¹

I was very sick and the Ship rolled so much we could neither Sit Stand nor lie in a place...²

The stormy weather of the North Atlantic had other consequences which, though not as dire as shipwreck, were enough to make the emigrant's life a living hell. James Flint warned emigrants: "In a voyage from Europe to America, most passengers may expect to be sea-sick." He himself suffered for three-quarters of the crossing.³ Few were the stomachs that could withstand a heavy sea in one of the small, cramped sailing ships, especially when the holds were loaded with a heavy cargo like pig-iron which caused them to wallow and roll inordinately: "The Sea is running very high and the cargo being pig-iron it is causing the ship to roll about most dreadfully", groaned William Anderson.⁴ Patrick Shirreff, the sturdy East Lothian farmer, found the sea little to his liking; he became sick one hour after sailing and was "severely afflicted" for nearly thirty days.

For women there were the added complications of

¹William Anderson, letter/diary, op. cit.
²James Ferguson, Ms. letter, Aug. 22, 1848, New York.
³Flint, James, Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 2.
⁴Letter/diary, op. cit.
children and modesty. "It is terrible to be sick", confided Janet Johnstone to her sister, "you are never out of the sight of men." She went on to give an inarticulate but extremely moving description of a violent "gail":

for some times happen the sea is rude. You can neither sit nor lay nor stand an how can you manage [manage?] a child...some times you stomach is lik to come out in your mouth. If you had seen me one gail sitting priped between to cheasts. They where one terrible schok they give. She was on her one side. James went down thro chists I thought he was killed. I thought my brith was coming above me. I had they children in them they were not feared. It was that cold we was lik to frish.

Small wonder that she would not advise her worst enemy to come to sea with children. ¹

One emigrant dismissed the subject with a laconic reference to two deaths on board—"that was all the sickness we had on board except sea sickness"²—but many were, like Shirreff, severely afflicted on the long and usually rough crossing. James Ferguson had a "pretty calm" voyage, but there were times when the ship carpenter had to nail down the boxes and trunks.³ William Anderson had a very bad passage; he referred to Cabin Class as being "more like a Hospital than anything else"—conditions in the Steerage did not bear thinking about. Sea-sickness runs like a red thread through the 13 pages of his journal:

Have undergone all the horrors of Sea Sickness for the last few days and no appearance of getting better. We nearly all are reduced to perfect skeletons.

On one occasion the ship was pitching so much that the stove in the cabin fell through the wall of the Captain's state room "with a crash like the fall of a house" and during yet another storm a wave struck the ship with

¹ Ms. letter, West Flambris (?), Upper Canada, July 16, 1845 to her sister, Jane, in Stirling.
² W.T. Stirling, typescript copy of letter, New Jersey, 1850s to his father near Kirkintilloch.
³ Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848 to his brother.
such fury that every dish was shattered and one of the pigs in the hold had his back broken (which cloud had the silver lining of pork for dinner the next evening).  

A few of the passengers found remedies or at least managed to take their minds off their stomachs. George Lewis lost his sea-sickness by preaching the sermon in the Sabbath gathering and David Whyte, who had an extremely rough crossing, was pointed out amongst the passengers as one that never was sick but they were not aware that I was running [sic] about helping Margt with the children and vomiting every now and then. Such ordeals were bad enough for the young and hale; for the old and infirm they could be fatal. William Tannahill Stirling mentioned the death of one of his fellow passengers—an "auld man"—in the midst of a great storm.

G. Epidemics

There is a great mound in Montreal to this day bearing the inscription, "To preserve the remains of six thousand immigrants who died of ship-fever."  

There are a hundred cases of dysentery in the ship, which will all turn to cholera, and I swear to God that I will not go amongst them; if they want medicine they must come to me. --ship doctor of the Washington

Sea-sickness, however acute, cannot be spoken of with the same breath as some of the other sicknesses which stalked the seas in the nineteenth century. The mightiest killers of all were cholera and "ship-fever" (a form of typhus) and death-rates of 10% or even more of all passengers were lamentably common during the worst years. Until 1840 sanitary conditions and defi-
ciencies in diet made disease almost inevitable and it is possible that a majority of the ships crossing the Atlantic prior to that time had deaths attributable to those causes. But it was the epidemics which struck terror; at sea the emigrants, packed together between decks with little or no ventilation, had no escape and they fell like grass before the sickle. The sheer hopelessness of their situation struck many of them with such force that, once a disease appeared, they just gave up and lay in their bunks waiting for the end.

Guillet quoted a Scotsman named Sholto who, during his crossing in the awful year of 1832, watched 53 victims of a ship-board epidemic, including his mother and sister, thrown overboard: "One got used to it—it was nothing but splash, splash, all day long—first one, then another."

The typhus outbreak of 1827 was bad and produced unprecedented rates of mortality, but the cholera of 1832 set new records. From 1846-49, during the height of the potato famine and the resulting mass exodus from Ireland, the epidemics raged across the sea and spread along the coast towns and ports of the Atlantic. Coast dwellers fled in terror from the immigrants who staggered from the hell-ships of 1847. The statistics for that ghastly year surpass credulity: 215,000 peasants left Ireland and it is estimated that 25,000 to 30,000 of them died either at sea or immediately after landing; countless thousands wound up in Canadian or American hospitals.

More epidemics followed in 1853-54.

William Anderson's ship, the Corra Linn, was host to only one case of typhoid, but other passengers suffered from "intermiton Fever" and "Meizles". He wrote, "you have no conception of the horrors accompanying sickness at Sea. I sincerely hope you will never have to come

1MacDonagh, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
2Ibid., p. 50.
3Guillet, op. cit., p. 90.
4MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 187.
through what some of them have come through."1 James Ferguson recorded the death of one seaman from the smallpox on his voyage and Andrew Allison was lucky to escape with nothing worse than a minor bout of seasickness and a major bout of homesickness ("There is scarcely a night passes but I dream of home...and my feelings are touched so much that I awake bathed in perspiration."2)

Perhaps the most tragic aspect of the history of sickness at sea is the fact that only a negligible proportion of the emigrant ships carried doctors of any sort; the case which Delany Finch recorded of a cholera outbreak where there was plenty of medicine but no one who knew how to use it could not have been uncommon. The problem seemed insoluble, for there was simply not a supply of competent physicians to administer to the needs of the growing emigrant trade.

The legislators were aware of the problem; they first tackled it in the Act of 1835 whereby vessels were required to carry medicines of a "sufficient" kind and quantity. In 1848 they made a braver attempt and required that every vessel carrying more than 100 (steerage) passengers either provide a physician or allow fourteen feet of space per passenger instead of the statutory twelve. This was a reasonable attempt to get around the problem of a lack of doctors, working on the assumption that if more space were provided it would at least decrease the chances of disease.

It soon became apparent that ship-owners preferred to provide the extra space and forget about the surgeon even though they were prepared to admit that passengers preferred to have a doctor.3 Others simply hired a doctor to stay on the ship while it was being inspected

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1 Letter/diary, op. cit.
2 Typescript copy of letter/diary, New Orleans, 1837 to parents in Ayrshire.
3 "I would have 14 feet and no surgeon." "But for the well-being of the emigrant which is best?" "To have a surgeon." PP, 1851, XIX, p. 564; also cf. p. 585.
prior to departure and then discreetly let him off somewhere outside of the port. 1 In 1849 the "physician or extra space" provision was extended to vessels carrying more than 50 passengers (in effect all passenger ships) and in 1852 and 1855 it was made mandatory for ships carrying more than 500 and 300 passengers respectively to carry surgeons irrespective of the space provided.

But this still did not solve the basic problem: competent doctors could not be persuaded to cross the Atlantic in emigrant ships. Following the repeated appeals from Canada, a medical inspection of all emigrants prior to embarkation was made statutory in 1848, but this was rarely more than a matter of form: "He [the Government surgeon] said without drawing breath, 'What's your name? Are you well? Hold out your tongue; all right.' "2 In the end, the emigrants had to depend, for the most part, on home remedies: the omnipresent epsom salts and castor oil, 3 and luck.

Certainly there can be little doubt about the qualities of those "doctors" who did sail the Atlantic. Dr. Poole, the quarantine physician on Grosse Isle, mentioned in the Durham Report one case of a vessel in 1838 where the "surgeon" testified that there was no serious sickness aboard; examination showed forty cases of typhus. In 1851 Captain Patey, the Emigration Officer at Glasgow, testified that the majority of ships' surgeons were drunken, inefficient and, in many cases, working with forged credentials. 4

It would be fitting to close this section with a mention of the infamous Mr. Charles Reynolds, surgeon on board the Washington: he refused to treat the dysentery cases unless they came to him; he made it known

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1MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 204.
3"The captain denied that the passengers' health was his responsibility, but in the end administered epsom salts and castor oil to everyone." Delany Finch quoted in MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 280.
4PP, 1851, XIX, p. 604.
that anyone expecting "particular" treatment would do well to cross his palm with silver; he often charged money for the medicine he dispensed and on one notable occasion he strode into the steerage and roared: "Now then, clean and wash out your rooms every one of you, God damn and blast your souls to hell!" When someone suggested raising a subscription for him, several passengers replied that they would not be averse to contributing a shilling each towards buying him a rope to hang himself with. "This is a correct index of the general feeling towards him." ¹

H. Death at Sea

—They are not remembered, the bodies cast overside While the captain stands for a moment with bared head. ²

As indicated by the previous section, death was far from being an infrequent passenger on the emigrant ships and the result—burial at sea—was one of the most awe-inspiring of ship-board ceremonies. These funerals never failed to make a deep impression on the emigrants who saw them and descriptions have survived in many an emigrant journal and letter home.

He was buried at 12 oclock the Same night and I Sat up to see it and a very Solemn Sight it is to see a funeral at sea, the Body was wrapt in a Sail cloth with a lot of Iron tied to the feet to Sink it. The Captain made all the Sailors come round and he read the funeral Service out of the prayer Book (the Same as the [sic] do in England) after which the Body was plunged into the deep and every thing went on as nothing had happened. ³

Such were the final rites of one of James Ferguson's fellow-passengers. The "auld man" who died on William

¹PF, 1851, XL, report on the Washington, pp. 2-7.
²Benet, op. cit., p. 48.
³Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848 to his brother, Robert, near Dumfries.
Tannahill Stirling's ship was disposed of in a similar fashion:

the second mat soed him in his bed clous and tied about fifty pounds of pig iron about his feet and fetched him up on deck and the captain read the 14 chaptour of Job.¹ They then piched him over bord.²

Meagre though these services were, they were more than was provided on some ships. An old woman was buried at sea during John and Elizabeth Brown's eventful voyage; she was tied in a bag with stones and thrown overboard: "There was no ceremony about the matter more than if she had been a common animal." Four days later a little child died and was simply dropped in the Ocean: "The little thing floated away on the top of the waves."³

On board the Washington Vere Foster witnessed the burial of a child which had died from dysentery; it was sown into a sack with a great stone. No funeral service was to be given, as the good doctor explained, because the Catholics objected to a layman performing the service; however, one of the passengers took matters into his own hands:

As there was no regular service, the man appointed to attend to the passengers seized the opportunity, when the sailors pulling at a rope raised the usual song of—

Haul in the bowling, † the Black Star bowling,
Haul in the bowling, the bowling haul— to throw in the child overboard at the sound of the last word of the song, making use of it as a funeral dirge.⁵

I. The Sabbath

The Captain who is a very irreligious sort of animal paid no attention to it. —William Anderson⁶

Dear Jane, it is a fearful thing to hear so much swearing on the lords day. —Janet Johnstone⁷

¹"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble..."
²typescript of letter, op. cit.
³typescript copy of diary, op. cit., May 13 and 17.
⁴this should possibly be "bowline".
⁵PP, 1831, XL, p. 6.
⁶letter/diary, op. cit.
⁷Ms. letter, West Flambris (?), July 16, 1845.
The burial service, perfunctory though it usually was, seems to have been the only time that the ship's company were willing to indulge the religious needs of the emigrants, but the Scots were not to be denied their Sabbath. Here, as elsewhere, it was up to the passengers to fend for themselves and many of them did. James Ferguson and his fellow-passengers were appalled to find that the officers and crew did not regard Sunday as different from any other day and "did not seem to take the least notice of it". They eventually persuaded the Captain to allow a Wesleyan Preacher to deliver sermons on the deck.¹

On John and Elizabeth Brown's ship Sunday was "not very like a Sabbath day" and, although some passengers sat quietly reading their Bibles (or telling their beads), there was dancing, singing and accordion-playing.² The Captain of the Corra Linn was "a very irreligious sort of an animal" but even he grudgingly allowed the passengers to use the Cabin for an hour every Sunday and one of the emigrants "took upon him the duty of Chaplin and went through it admirably".³ Andrew Allison's ship was a bit more civilised and on Sundays "little unnecessary work was done although some were whistling and singing as usual".⁴ Other travellers recorded varying degrees of Sabbath-spirit on their ships: William Chambers attended an elaborate divine service and "the rest of the day was spent with the ordinary decorum of Sunday in England";⁵ George Lewis, after preaching the sermon, was "glad to observe more than usual quiet and order prevail throughout the day, and no attempt on the part of any to introduce cards".⁶ (at least, not in his sight); John Stewart recorded Bible-reading and psalm-

¹Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848.
²typescript copy of diary, op. cit., May 4.
³William Anderson, letter/diary, op. cit.
⁴typescript copy of letter/diary, New Orleans, 1837; he comforted himself that God was not confined to temples.
⁵Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1853, p.21.
singing on Sundays; and Isabelle McKinnon found public worship on the quarter-deck "very impressive on the mighty deep".

In 1848 the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners issued an order-in-council which stipulated among other things that passengers must appear on deck in "clean and decent" clothes at 10 a.m. each Sunday, and the Sabbath was "to be observed as religiously as the circumstances will permit". It seems hardly necessary to add that no one ever paid any attention to the order and no attempt was made to enforce it.

On the whole, sea-board Sabbaths on many ships must have opened the eyes of many Scottish emigrants and caused them to gird their loins against the godlessness they could expect to encounter in the American "wilderness".

J. Hard Ships and Hardships

We testify, as a warning to, and for the sake of future emigrants, that the passengers generally, on board of this noble ship, the 'Washington,' commander A. Page, have been treated in a brutal manner by its officers.

The gallant ship Washington was described as "a magnificent vessel...as well furnished with all the necessary conveniences as the best of the emigrant ships"; it was, furthermore, an American ship of the Black Star line which had a reputation for better ships than their British counterparts. When Vere Foster returned from his voyage in the steerage class of that ship, his report was published, in letter form, in the Parliamentary Papers of 1851 (vol. XL) and caused such an uproar that it may be deemed at least partly responsible for the success of the Passenger Act of 1852. Not only did he take a set of scales and weigh all of the provisions

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1. Typescript copy of diary, op. cit.
2. Ms. diary, Findhorn to Otsego, March-June, 1852, April 18.
3. MacDonagh, op. cit., pp. 204-5; Guillet, op. cit., p. 70.
he was given (they came to slightly less than half of what was required by the existing Passenger Act), but he also recorded for posterity a tale of callous brutality on the part of the crew and criminal negligence and malpractice on the part of the ship's doctor. If we accept that the Washington was not an unusually bad ship, then the mind boggles to think what some of them must have been like.

When water was served on the first day, only 30 of the 900 passengers got any and the crew stood around "kicking, cuffing and abusing" the emigrants. When Foster "gently remonstrated" with one of the mates who was thus occupied, he was told in no uncertain terms that he would be knocked down if he said another word. From that time on, he was a marked man. Four days later no provisions had been issued since the beginning of the voyage and Foster wrote a petition to the Captain at the request of some of the other passengers. Whilst writing it, he was spied by the first mate who uncere¬moniously knocked him down "flat upon the deck with a blow in the face" without provocation of any kind. When Foster tried to read the petition to the Captain, he was accused of being a "damned pirate and a damned rascal" and threatened with being put in irons on bread and water for the rest of the journey.

Throughout the voyage the passengers were gratuitously beaten with fists and rope ends for the slightest infringements of rules and in some cases infirm people were severely injured. All of this was invariably accompanied by abusive language as the officers, surgeon and cook

very seldom open their lips without prefacing what they may have to say, with 'God damn your soul to hell, you damned b---,' or, 'by Jesus Christ I'll rope's end you,' or some other expression from the same category."
John Brown witnessed an incident on his ship which was remarkably similar to those on the Washington. As the impatient emigrants queued for water, the second mate jeered that they were a good deal readier to come for water than to clean their berths and places. An old man argued with him,

till the second mate seized the old man's throat with one hand and with the other struck the old man several times on the face until his blood dropped on the deck. It was a most savage business... 1

There were various instances of brutality on the Corra Linn: drunken sailors were put in irons and left to lie on the deck all night; stowaways and crew were "drubbed"; and on one occasion when a Second Cabin passenger and a crewman were suspected of breaking into the Store Room they were put in irons on the deck when the weather was so rough that they had to lie prone. 2

And what recourse did the emigrant have to justice? On the sea—none at all; and even once he had landed on the other side his chances of prosecuting successfully were so slim as to be not worth taking. Vere Foster had the signatures of 128 passengers testifying to the brutality and inadequacy of provisions on board the Washington but he was advised by legal council not to try bringing the case into court. 3 Besides, once the emigrant was ashore in the New World, he tended to cast his troubles behind him and turn to face the new problems of living in a strange land. As MacDonagh put it,

...forty years' experience went to show that the emigrant's capacity for not complaining, after he had disembarked, was almost infinite... 4

With conditions and treatment being what they were on the emigrant ships, the writer in the Quarterly Review may have been speaking literally when he referred to emigration as "transportation for crimes uncommitted". 5

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1 typescript copy of diary, op. cit., May 8.
2 letter/diary, op. cit. (William Anderson).
3 PP., 1851, XI, pp. 7-9.
4 MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 311.
5 Vol. XCI, p. 545.
The convict ships were luxury compared to many of the emigrant vessels.¹

K. Mutiny

A meditated mutiny was discovered amongst the men. Six of the crew and two of the passengers (steerage) were to give the Captain a drubbing.²

Not all of the brutality was directed towards the passengers; the crew and the Captain both came in for a share of it. Indeed, if Herman Melville's Redburn is a true indication of life at sea in the mid-nineteenth century, then it would seem that violence, blasphemy and brutality were a way of life. Certainly the experiences recorded in some of the emigrant journals and letters would indicate that such was the case.

When William Anderson was five days out from Greenock, two of the sailors on the Corra Linn managed to inveigle some spirits from the steerage passengers; there followed an incident worthy of Captain Marryat's Victorian novels:

The Chief Mate observing one of them unfit for duty went up to him and knocked him down. The other one seeing his companion lying on the Deck got up to strike the Mate. The Captain was on the Quarter Deck at the time all this was going on. He ran down to his cabin for a cutlass and his pistols and would have shot the man had it not been that he too was stretched on the Deck. However, they were both put in Irons and allowed to ly [sic] on the deck all night without either bread or water.

Nor was that the end of their troubles. A "meditated mutiny" of crew and passengers was detected in time by the vigilant Captain and he, uncharacteristically, pacified the leader by promoting him to Boatswain. In other incidents on this eventful voyage the Captain thrashed various members of the crew for, among other things, not steering well and jogging his chronometer.

It is probably fair to accept that sailors were by

¹See Lieut. Hutchinson's testimony as quoted in MacDonagh, op. cit., p. 276. "Few [emigrant vessels] would have satisfied the admiralty specification for convict ships..."

²William Anderson, letter/diary, op. cit.
and large a rough lot, as were for that matter many of
the passengers. The more delicate emigrants simply had
to endure the tribulations of life at sea for the length
of the voyage.

L. The Captain

For the emigrants in these ships are under a
sort of martial law; and in all their affairs are
regulated by the despotic ordinances of the cap¬
tain. And though it is evident that to a certain
extent this is necessary, and even indispensable;
yet, as at sea no appeal lies beyond the captain,
he too often makes unscrupulous use of his power.
And as for going to law with him at the end of the
voyage you might as well go to law with the Czar
of Russia.1

Between the lines of emigrant diaries and letters
looms the Captain—a powerful and often sinister figure.
His power was very real; apart from corporal control
(which he exercised with whip, fists, cutlass and pistols)
he was the ship's judge, jury, undertaker and, in spite
of the various legislations, the closest thing to a
doctor. Every life on the ship depended on him. The
power was often wielded with discretion and ideally it
was only the crew who felt the weight of his hand
(figuratively as well as literally) though, as has been
illustrated, he was not above addressing himself to the
passengers in blunt terms.

It is perhaps worth noting that the American captains
were generally acknowledged to be "a much better class
of men"2 than their British counterparts for various
reasons.3 Shirreff, for example, commended the commander
of the Napoleon: "Captain Smith, was an American by
birth, and part owner of the vessel. He was indefatigable
as a seaman."4 This was of great benefit to the Scottish
emigrants as a majority of the emigrant vessels leaving

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2 PP, 1851, XIX, p. 607.
3 They were usually part-owners of their ships and
American insurance companies were more stringent about the
Captain's character than were the British. Testimony of
R. Bunch, British Vice-Consul at New York, PP, 1851, XIX,
p. 75; see also Guillett, op. cit., p. 49.
4 Shirreff, op. cit., p. 6.
Glasgow/Greenock were American.¹

Some of the worst Captains were immortalised in song and story (e.g. the infamous John A. Burgess of the Davy Crockett who plied the Atlantic between 1863 and 1874, in the Scotch/Irish ballad "The Leaving of Liverpool"). Other Captains of "strong character" like A. Page of the Washington found their way into emigrant letters and of these the Captain of William Anderson's ship, the Corra Linn, must have his place: "drubbing" the stowaways, rampaging up onto the deck armed with cutlass and pistols to deal with drunken sailors, clapping passengers and crew alike in irons and forcing them to lie on the open deck at night, bellowing at the steersman who misjudged a wave and threatening to throw him overboard, lashing the bed-ridden emigrants out of their cabins up onto deck and making them dance their sickness away, breaking up a mutiny and dealing rough justice to a Steward who had touched his chronometer "thereby causing a difference in time".²

The Captain of the Browns' ship was equally prone to hitting from the shoulder; he ordered the crew to catch and wash a particularly offensive young Irishman:

He was stripped, two bucketsful of water dashed on him, then another jumped on him and two sailors brushed him with brooms. The poor fellow was a great deal the better of it as there was a multitude feeding upon him.

Later on the same day a young passenger was bound to the beam of the Foresail for smoking in his berth. "Everyone admitted the justness of the punishment", commented Brown smugly.³

But the Captains had their good sides as well. For example, the 138 passengers of the Lady Hannah Ellice, upon their safe arrival in New York, commemorated their

¹PP, 1851, XIX, p. 607.
²"I thought he had broken every bone in his body."
³letter/diary, op. cit.
⁴typescript copy of diary, op. cit., May 10.
Captain's good services by buying him a handsome silver snuff-box inscribed:

Presented to Captain John Liddell, by the passengers of the ship Lady Hannah Ellice, as a testimony of their gratitude for his unremitting attention to their comfort from Greenock to New York, 28 May, 1834. 1

And "drubber" of men and irreligious animal though he may have been, when the chips were down and William Anderson was "bound up in [his] Bowels", it was the Captain who found the "half glass of wine with a little callop & cammomile" which provided relief. The Captain of the Corra Linn also measured some of the icebergs for the amusement of the passengers, procured them fresh fish from the fishing boats off Newfoundland free of charge (as did Captain Brown on Isabelle McKinnon's ship, the Sarah Mary 2) and lent his glasses to young Anderson to allow him to watch the fishermen at work. Clearly he was a man of many parts.

M. Staving off Boredom

I got completely tired of doing nothing and was at a loss how to pass the time... 3

We had some short speeches proposing the healths of our different friends, anything to pass the time, for one scarcely knows how to do to pass it. 4

The report that the elephant, Miss d'Jeck, had been thrown overboard, on her voyage to America, turns out to be unfounded. 5

When the emigrants were not being kicked, cuffed, abused, fed, sick, or immoral, time hung heavily on their hands. There was little to do and less space to do it in. Emigrants like James Ferguson took plenty of books with them, but they could only read when the weather was fine. Andrew Allison admitted occasionally to having "a very dull day of it" but usually he kept himself busy observing

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1 The Scotsman, June 28, 1834.
2 Ms. diary, op. cit., May 7.
3 James Ferguson, Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848.
4 Andrew Allison, typescript copy of letter/diary, 1837.
5 The Scotsman, Dec. 25, 1836.
the minutiae of ship life—recording the latitudes and longitudes and speed of the ship, checking the barometer and thermometer, passing civilities with two young Irish ladies and, most of all, standing on the deck watching the sea, counting the fish and straining his eyes for sight of another sail. "Speaking" other ships was one of the great events of any crossing and was invariably noted in diaries and letters. Apart from the joy of seeing other human beings and the comfort of knowing that they would carry news back to Scotland, there was an aesthetic pleasure as well: "It is beautiful to see two large ships so closely together in full sail." James Ferguson's ship only spoke "2 or 3 vessels" and W.T. Stirling's ship only spoke one small brig on the entire crossing—they gave it a rousing three cheers. John Stewart was incensed by a ship which passed them and ignored their greeting.

On Andrew Allison's comparatively monotonous voyage any disturbance was greeted by the passengers as a deliverance from boredom. On one occasion he separated two fighting dogs and "reproved the passengers for the brutal enjoyment which they took in seeing dogs tearing each other". Entries in other diaries and letters indicate that fist-fights and brawls were staple forms of amusement (especially among the Irish).

Failing storms, fights or mutinies, the Captain had his own methods for distracting the passengers. After one particularly long storm, the Captain of the Corra Linn came down with rope and lashed everyone out of their beds and made them get up on deck and one of the passengers had a Fiddle so the Captain caused him to play and us to dance which soon drove away the sickness.

Following three days of fine weather and inactivity, the Captain thought of another diversion. He "had all the cocks taken out of the Coops and fighting on the quarter deck. One of them went overboard." He also baited a shark which followed the ship, but it would not rise to it "because there was sickness on board".  

1 Typescript copy of diary, 1837, op. cit.
Music and song often whiled away the weary hours. On the Sarah Mary there was dancing to the music of the bagpipes, fiddle and tambourine;¹ and during a lull in a long storm the passengers on George Lewis' ship sought to cheer themselves by joining on deck to sing "Scots Wha Hae", "Auld Lang Syne" and "Ye Banks and Braes".² There was also invariably gambling, gaming, card-playing and betting on every conceivable occurrence (from what colour of dress Mrs. MacPherson would wear tomorrow to how many miles the ship would make in the next twenty-four hours) and, in the Cabin Class, a "well-bred and select society" played shovel-board, chess and back-gammon.³ Ladies who did not have children to keep them occupied could pass the hours between bouts of sea-sickness reading, knitting and crocheting.⁴ Worry and tension also helped to while away the long hours; in their spare time William Anderson's fellow-passengers pumped water out of the leaky old Corra Linn—and glad they were to do it: "everyone is anxious to work at the pumps and the sailors had very little to do at them." Later in the voyage icebergs and fog kept every man waiting tensely for the jarring crash which would spell disaster; wrapped in their coats and blankets they stood on the deck in the numbing cold, straining their eyes in the whiteness, imagining the dark outlines of mountains of ice. "Standing with only one plank between them and eternity causes a strange sensation in the breast which you can have no conception of."⁵

¹Isabelle McKinnon, ms. diary, op. cit., April 12.
²Lewis, op. cit., p. 10.
⁴Isabelle McKinnon, ms. diary, op. cit.
⁵Letter/diary, op. cit.
N. Land

...thin with distance, thin but dead ahead,
The line of unimaginable coasts.¹

something...like a cloud²

Exitement mounted as the ship drew closer to the New World. To Andrew Allison, travelling the southern route to New Orleans, the small island of Deseada was the first sight of land—"a gratifying sight"—and thereafter his ship passed many islands, going close enough for him to see the houses and even the pigs and other animals. Though it was the end of December, the temperature stood at 96°F (Fahrenheit) in the shade and he was beginning to have second thoughts about America.³

On the northern route the first sign of approaching land was the fleets of fishing schooners off the Banks of Newfoundland. Here the emigrants often picked up fresh fish to vary their salt beef or pork⁴ diets and newspapers to while away the remaining days of travel. Becalmed and befogged, the Corra Linn groped her way blindly south with a "heaving of the lead"⁵ every hour; the mournful sound of the fog-whistle was constantly in the emigrants' ears and tales of shipwrecks on the shoals and quicksands of the Bank were whispered nervously. It was a full two weeks again⁶ before William Anderson awoke to the cry of "land in sight" and staggered up on deck to see "something it looked just like a cloud. This was long island that is the first land you see before intering [sic] into America."⁷

James Ferguson's ship also passed the Newfoundland fishing fleet and emigrants were able to buy fish at 6d. a piece. They were also treated to the sight of

¹Benét, op. cit., p. 15.
²William Anderson, letter/diary, op. cit.
³typescript copy of letter/diary, op. cit.
⁴the American ships preferred pork and the British beef.
⁵a lead weight, filled with tallow or grease which brought up samples of the sea-bed, was lowered to the bottom to check the depth. Anderson collected some of the pebbles that were brought up.
⁶John Stewart's ship wandered for three weeks in the Newfoundland shoals (letter/diary, op. cit.)
whales and flying fish, but they "were all getting very anxious to see the Land and looked for it 2 or 3 days before it came in sight, but on the night of the 10th...a Light House came in sight which proved to be one Long Island about 30 miles off New York..."\(^1\)

Janet Johnstone had endured as rough and miserable a crossing as is possible to imagine. During the latter part of the seemingly endless voyage she had taken to committing the family's spirits into the hands of God every night: "an I thought if we did sink we would be all the gather." It is hardly surprising that, when she heard land had been sighted, she could not help crying.\(^2\)

Once landed at New York, the only ordeal left was the Health Inspection: "Ships are all insceptid there & if there is any fever about them are not allowed to go any farther."\(^3\) All were glad to feel firm ground beneath their feet again, but none more so than the hapless William Anderson who declared fervently: "I may say our voyage is ended and if ever I cross the Atlantic again I know it will not be in a Sailing Ship."\(^4\)

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2. Ms. letter, West Flambri (?), July 16, 1845.
4. letter/diary, op. cit.
Chapter II: Through Emigrant Eyes--Alabaster Cities and Amber Waves of Grain

As the emigrants walked down the gangplanks and stepped for the first time onto American soil, the hardships they had so recently endured fell forgotten from their shoulders and they gazed with wonder at the New World. Those literate enough to have been exposed to Natty Bumpo might have experienced a fleeting disappointment at the conspicuous absence of shaven-headed savages, leather-clad mountain men and long rifles, but other emotions would soon prevail: the relief of feeling dry land under their feet, the exhilaration of having made it so far and a nagging unease about what they were going to do now that they were HERE all crowded through their minds as they gaped in wonder at the hustling, bustling metropolis for which no letters or emigrant guides could have prepared them. Though the port might be superficially similar to Liverpool and Greenock, there were a multitude of differences: customs officials, medical inspectors and porters all spoke in unfamiliar nasal accents, addressing the new arrivals with brusque and easy familiarity. After weeks of enforced idleness and boredom on shipboard, suddenly everyone around them was hurrying purposefully about his business--did they imagine it, or was the air really more invigorating?

A. Cities and Towns: 1. New York and the East Coast

The emigrants soon found that the air bred the same genre of dockside life that they had so recently escaped in Britain. There were no painted savages to greet them to the New World, but the "runners", boarding-house keepers, swindlers and thieves who infested the quayside of New York and other ports swept down on them with a vicious remorselessness that would have done credit to the most fiendish Redskins in the annals of fiction.
The victimisation might even begin before the ships ever docked. Some boarding-house keepers paid agents to travel back and forth across the Atlantic, worming their way into the emigrants' confidence and directing them to hostels in New York where they were detained by guile or force until most of their money was gone. And when the ships docked the "runners" swarmed on board with enticing, empty offers.

Persons are allowed to go on shipboard, the lighters, and on the wharves in the city, who make representations which prove to be false; lead the immigrant into houses in the city unfit for man to live in and they require exorbitant pay; or take money for the transporting of the immigrant west, and give worthless tickets for a passage, or charge a very much larger price than the actual charge by respectable and responsible lines of steam or canal boats. Cases which come under the evils above enumerated, are very frequent and very grievous...

There is no way of telling how many hapless emigrants suffered in this way at the early stages of their adventure. Certainly there was no lack of warning from emigrants in America:

*Be sure and Looke out for these Runners at New york albany and Bufalo. It is impossible to Lay down a Rule to walk By for these Runners. The Leave No scame untried to skin foreigners so all that I can say is Look out for your self.*

Charles Livingstone, younger brother of the explorer, profitted by such advice as he related to his father soon after arriving at Oberlin:

One of the man catchers came into the tavern on Monday night and offered to carry all who were going to Buffalo for 7 dollars each, an Englishman engaged with him and was anxious to get me to do so too, but W. Naisneth had warned me to beware of them.

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3 Ms. letter, Robert Pollock, Lake Mills, Wisconsin, to his niece and brother in Ayr, Jan. 29, 1848.
4 Ms. letter, Colonial Hall, Oberlin, Ohio, May 22, 184 to his parents and sisters, Hamilton, Scotland.
Once through this gamut, the emigrant could pause and look about him at the country in which he had decided to cast his lot. Although some of the emigrants who sailed to the United States disembarked at Charleston, South Carolina, Boston, Massachusetts, or other minor ports along the Eastern Seaboard, most landed at New York, Philadelphia or New Orleans with the former being well in advance of the others in numbers received. Apart, then, from those who travelled by the cheaper route to Canada (it was generally cheaper until the '40s), most of the Scots would have gotten their first taste of American life in New York City. This is borne out by the emigrant letters in the present collection; many of them describe the city which by 1820 had attained a population of 123,706—outstripping all others in the United States.

Emigrants found much to marvel at in New York: the bustle and the industry, the crowds of well-dressed people, the wide, fashionable streets like Broadway and the Bowery, and the elegant brick houses. Robert Dick wrote to a friend in Edinburgh,

In regard to the Buildings they are very Handsome. For example the City Hall is entirely built of White Marble the Front of it is Fully longer than the Custom House at Leith.

But there were less attractive features as well. George Combe, the Edinburgh lawyer, phrenologist and educator, noted in his manuscript journal (and not, significantly, in his book) that his first impressions of New York were of dirt, untidyness, disorder and swine wandering unchecked in the streets; it was a town "run up on a few weeks notice to serve a season or two". Charles Dickens also made sarcastic comments about the pigs that roamed even the main streets but William Chambers,

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1Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 24, 1833 (or 35?) to Mr. Forbes (probably Edinburgh).
3Ibid., p. 141.
the prominent Edinburgh publisher, phrased it more delicately:

I am indeed sorry to hint that New York is, or at least was during my visit, not so cleanly as it might be...The mire was ankle-deep in Broadway. 1

Another emigrant recorded his opinion, preserved for posterity by The Scotsman, that many of the streets were "very ill-paved, and...kept uncommonly dirty" and did not hesitate to criticise the "ranges of small paltry wooden tenements, such as those in Leith Walk, or the like". 2

The latter were often the cause of disastrous fires which swept the city with devastating thoroughness and alarming frequency:

to a person coming here at first, it is rather alarming as there is hardly a night passes, but a terrible cry of "Fire" is sure to be heard, wrote Robert Dick soon after his arrival in New York and he went on to hint darkly that most of the fires were set on purpose in order to collect insurance. 3 A few years later his father, John Dick, wrote to a friend in Edinburgh describing a holocaust which levelled 750 large houses to the ground. He was only partially reassured by the 51-engine (all well "maned") fire fighting force. 4 John Stewart was also "alarmed" by the number of fires during his brief, six-day stay in New York 5 and William Chambers repeated Robert Dick's implication of arson. 6

Among those who refused to be impressed by New York was James Matheson, a crotchety old Highlander from Sutherland who had emigrated around the beginning of the century and set up shop in the city. His consuming wish was that he had emigrated instead to Canada and he wrote lengthy letters to his brother, Angus,

1 Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1854, p. 192.
2 Sept. 1, 1832.
3 Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 24, 1833 (or 33?) to Mr. Forbes.
4 Ms. letter, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836 to William Kerr.
5 Transcript diary, Greenock to Columbia, Tuolumne County, California, April-July 1855.
6 Chambers, op. cit., p. 194.
in Dornoch, which he filled with tirades against the Yankees. In spite of the fact that he had become rich enough to buy over 1400 acres of New York backland, he retained an unshaken belief (first expressed in a letter of 1815) that the Americans were a low, conniving people who lay in wait to cheat him at every turn. It was inevitable that he would view American progress with a jaundiced eye; he was not impressed by the vast increase of wealth and population in New York City:

it [New York City] is greatly altered within a few years. As it increases in Population it increases in Poverty and distress. During the last year there was over Twenty Seven Thousand Supported by the Public in Poor Houses, Alms Houses, and Hospitals in this City.¹

If he thought that Scottish cities were better-off, it was only because he had been away for so long. In Glasgow in 1830 (before the "Hungry Forties" had taken their toll) it was reckoned that one out of every forty people was a pauper and in Edinburgh a decade later, there was one pauper for every 33 inhabitants.² Although the Scottish industrial centres were also coping with massive influxes of migrants and immigrants, the scale of their problem was nothing like that which obtained in New York where immigrants from all over Europe poured in, often destitute and diseased and too poor in pocket and spirit to move farther inland.³

The actual impact of foreign immigration was relatively small, in demographic terms, until the 1840s, but as early as 1827⁴ American newspapers were complaining bitterly that ships from Britain were inundating New York and other cities along the coast with paupers. It was "discovered" that some English parishes were "unloading" their surplus population by shipping them at £4.10.0. a head to the United States; many of them

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¹Ms. letter, New York, March 19, 1842.
²NSA, VI, p. 185; I, p. 750.
⁴The Scotsman, Aug. 22, 1827.
were said to be between the ages of 50 and 60: "John Bull has 'squeezed his orange,' but insolently casts the skins in our faces", cried Niles' Weekly Register in 1830,

We have a large proportion of these miseries from England and Ireland. Measures must be taken to shut the doors of the asylums, for our own unfortunate poor, against all such inhuman impositions. Let them be piled up in the halls of the houses of the British consuls, and British humanity take charge of them—pay their passages back again or feed them. 1 Later, during the midst of the Irish Famines, the situation provoked strong reactions even in Britain:

Some years ago, Mr. Charles Buller called the emigration of the day a "shovelling out of paupers." He might call that of the present year "the emptying of a lazaret house." 2 It was certainly undeniable that thousands of the occupants of prisons, orphanages, almshouses and hospitals on the East Coast of the United States were immigrants. 3

Most emigrants were impressed, however, with the prosperity of the native Americans of all classes. James Ferguson could still boast after one week in New York "I have not seen a Single Beggar yet and only one drunk man." 4 And George Lewis, who visited America in 1844 as one of the Free Church deputation, confirmed that in all his travels "from end to end of the Union" he did not see any beggars or, indeed, any rags except on an Irishman newly come over. 5

Yet there was undeniably poverty in America, especially in the sea-port cities, and David and Allison Smillie probably presented a more balanced picture in their 1850 letter from Wayne, Ohio to their family in Lochee, near Dundee:

I may say, and truly, that I have seen more suffering in one week before I left Scotland, than I

1Niles' Weekly Register, XXXVIII, July 3, 1830, p. 335; quoted in Abbott, op. cit., pp. 110-12.
2The Scotsman, July 3, 1847.
4Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848 to his brother.
5Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845, p. 420.
have in all the time I have been in this country. That there is suffering in some places in the States, no one is in doubt, but it is almost confined to the sea-board cities, and in not a few cases may be traced to the misconduct of the sufferer.  

The American cities did not feature the "abject population that may now be seen on the streets of our Scottish cities, in the midst of unbounded wealth and luxury". Emigrants were quick to assume that because America offered so many opportunities for people that were willing to work hard anyone who failed deserved little sympathy—in contrast to the beggars in Scotland who, often through no fault of their own, could find no work.

The over-all impression conveyed by the emigrant letters was one of hustling prosperity and opportunity but those emigrants who stayed for any length of time in the sea-board cities often faced the hard reality of overcrowded trades where cheap immigrant labour glutted the market. The solution for many enterprising Scots lay farther west.

Should you or any of your friends ever come to this country you ought never to stop in New York or any of the old states as the country there is filled up but go immediately into the far west into the new states where you can have all those advantages so desirable to a new emigrant.

2. Go West, Young Man, and Grow Up with the Country

There was agreement that the emigrant ports were to be avoided; conditions there were generally worse, the people were often hostile to strangers who represented an economic threat to them and job opportunities were more scarce. Emigrants in the United States were almost unanimous in advising their friends and relatives to leave their ports of disembarkation as soon as possible.

My advice to anyone who may want to come to America is, that if they are for farming they should not stop in any of the cities, but make their minds up

1 Lewis, letter, Jan. 25, 1850.
2 Lewis, op. cit., p. 102; see also Chapter VII.
3 Adam Ferguson, Ms. letter, Carthage, Tennessee, April 3, 1838 to his cousin, Robert Macnab, Glenorchy, Argyll.
HINTS TO EMIGRANTS TO NEW YORK.

The following valuable document, containing directions for immigrants into New York, has lately been published in that city. It is dated "Office of the Commissioners of Emigrants of the State of New York, New City Hall, Chambers Street, New York, August 13th," and signed "Gulian C. Verplanck, President of the Commissioners of Emigration, New York." —

"Passengers arriving at the port of New York with the intention of proceeding to the interior should make their stay in the city as short as possible, in order to save money. It will generally not be necessary for them to go to any hotel or inn, but to lodge in boarding-houses or boarding-houses. This course saves not only much money for board, lodging, and carking, but also prevents many occasions for fraud. If passengers go to an inn or boarding-house, they should see at once whether a list of prices for board and lodging is posted up for their inspection, as is required by Law. Never employ a cart that has no number painted on it, and be careful to note down the number. Always make a bargain for the price to be paid before engaging a cart to carry your baggage. The price allowed by law for a cartload any distance not over half a mile is 25c, and for each additional half mile one-third more. Among the impossibilities practised on emigrant passengers none is more common than an overcharge in the rates of passage to New York against which there is no protection, except by a close attention to the following remarks, and by insistence on strict adherence on the part of forwarders to the scale of prices established by the mayor of the city of New York and the Commissioners of Emigration, which will be found below. There are two principal routes to the interior from New York; one is by way of Albany and Buffalo, or by the New York and Erie Railroad. The passage from New York to Albany costs from 5c to 50c. (half a dollar.) From Albany there are two modes of conveyance to Buffalo—either by canal, which takes from seven to ten days, at $1 dols.; the other by railroad, going through in thirty-six hours, at 4 dols.; and no higher prices should be paid. The route to the south and west is by way of Philadelphia and Pittsburg. The passage from New York to Philadelphiia is 1 dols. 50c., and from there to Pittsburg 3 dols. to 5 dols., making from New York to Pittsburg from 1 dols. 50c. to 5 dols. 50c. There is also a route to Pittsburg by way of Albany in the summer season, which will cost 3 dols. 50c. On all these routes passengers have to find their own provisions, and, consequently, the difference in the cost between travelling by canal and railroad is not as great as it appears at first, as the passengers by canal have to pay for a week's provisions more than those travelling by railroad, besides losing time and being longer exposed to fraud. Passengers are advised in no wise to engage their passage to distant small places that do not lie on the main route, but only to engage to the nearest main station, and from there to make a new engagement to their final place of destination. If not differently advised by the Emigration Society, and in all cases when passengers have not been able to consult these societies, they should never engage passage further than Buffalo or Pittsburg, and there make a new contract. Otherwise, their passage-tickets, though paid for, may prove good for nothing, and passengers are cautioned that baggage is very often stolen, and the owners should always keep an eye upon their effects, and not allow themselves to be enticed or bullied into giving the transportation of them to irresponsible people, or going into boarding-houses or forwarding offices not of their own free selection. Emigrants should always decide, immediately upon their arrival, what they will do before they spend their small remaining means in the boarding-house, and they should generally proceed at once on their journey while they have the means. On their arrival here they should not give ear to any representations nor enter into any engagements without obtaining first the advice and counsel of either the Commissioners of Emigration, or the Emigrant Society of the nation to which they belong, or its Consul; and in inquiring for the office of the Society, or Consul, or the Commissioners, they should be careful not to be carried to the wrong place. There are many individuals sufficiently unscrupulous intentionally to mislead the stranger. If the latter, for instance, inquire after the agency of the German Society, or the Irish Emigrant Society, the person applied to will say that he is the agent, or that he will take the stranger to the office of the German Society; but, instead of doing so, will take him to a place where he is almost sure to be defrauded. As a general rule, the Emigrant's agent is urged to give a passage, or has to pay for the advice he asks, he may take it for granted that he is not at the place where he was asked, and his best course is to look about for the name of the persons or office he is in search of at the door of the house in which he is shown. All the forwarding agents and the emigrant societies, as well as the Commissioners of Emigration, have signs over the doors of their offices. The office of the German Society is No. 50 Greenwich Street; of the Irish Emigrant Society at No. 20 Reade Street; and of the Commissioners of Emigration in one of the public offices of the city, in the Park, N. B.—The Commissioners earnestly advise all emigrants who bring money with them to deposit it as soon as they arrive in the Emigrant Industrial Savings' Bank No. 51 Chambers Street, opposite the Park. This institution was established by the Legislature for the express purpose of affording to emigrants a safe place of deposit for their moneys, which they can draw out at pleasure, whenever they want it; and, after a certain period, with interest added to it. Never keep money about your person, or in your trunks. Evil persons may rob or commit worse crimes upon you. Take it to the Savings' Bank. Passengers while travelling should always always be provided with small silver change, as they may otherwise be more easily cheated on the way. Never take bank-notes, if you can avoid it, and, if you are able to judge of their value for yourselves, as there are many counterfeit and broken bank-notes in circulation. What is called a shilling in America is not more than sixpence sterling."
as to which part they want to go to and push on as fast as possible, was the advice given by the Smillies and it was echoed by an emigrant in Delhi, Delaware, whose letter was published in The Scotsman thirty years earlier:

When passengers land at New York, they should all go three, four or five hundred miles into the country to get employment. The hundreds and thousands that land there cannot get all employ, and when they are disappointed in this they become discouraged, and thus unfavourable accounts go home of the country. 

Examples could be multiplied.

Many of the Scots followed this advice. John Ronaldson wrote to his wife, "I left the ship on the 13th and the same day took my passage away into the interior, so I had little opportunity of seeing New York." Other letters recorded stays in New York of one hour, one night, four days, one week, and so on. John Stewart stayed only long enough to see the wild animals, the giantess and the bearded lady with her infant child, Esau, before boarding ship for California. Another emigrant who let no grass grow under his feet sailed from Leith, landed at Philadelphia and after three days set out with his family in a covered wagon. They crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains (a breathtaking introduction to America) and settled in Wayne Township, Ohio.

There were advantages to settling down as soon as possible. For one thing, it provided the emigrant with far fewer opportunities of squandering his little money. The entire process of emigration and settlement

1. Ms. letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850.
2. June 13, 1818.
8. Typescript diary, op. cit.
could be carried out with surprising alacrity. John Rutherford left the family farm—Mill o' Cart near Johnstone, Renfrewshire—in 1848 partly because it was too small to support both him and his brother and partly because he was courting Jean Allison and he had "some difficulties" with her family.\(^1\) It is worth quoting at length from the first letter he wrote back to his brother describing his journey, for, although his rate of progress was not typical—indeed, he rushed across fifteen hundred miles of the United States like the heel flies were after him—his route was one followed by many emigrants.

Now I will give you a statement of my travels. I paid five shillings from Glasgow to Liverpool in the steamboat. When I landed at Liverpool I took out my passage for New York. I paid four pounds ten shillings and went aboard that night and sailed next day. There was two hundred and fifty passengers on board and was thirty eight days on sea and had a favourable passage. There was no deaths but all arrived in good health. And when I arrived at New York I employed a carr to take my chest to the Albany steamboat and was just an hour in New York...and when I arrived at Albany I took out my passage in the Bufflo cannall luggage boat. I was just six hours in Albany...and when I went to Bufflo I took out my passage to Millwalkie on the grand lake Erie in a steamboat. I was just half an hour in Bufflo till the steamboat sailed for Millwalkie being eight hundred and sixty miles distant and when I landed at Millwalkie I put up in a tavern that night. Millwalkie being our principle market there are farmers from all parts of Wisconson every day mostly and next day I engaged with a farmer to take me to Maddeson and when I landed at Maddeson I travelled out that night to William Young and stoped all night. Next day William Young and me went and bought my farm and the length of time that it took me was eight weeks and three days from I left the Fulwood Holm to I had my own farm.\(^2\)

Jean Allison followed him on the next ship.

Most of the Scots who were so assiduously warned

\(^1\) Correspondence with Mrs. Elizabeth Rutherford, Albany Cottage, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire, Feb. 5, 1969 and Feb. 12, 1969. It seems also likely that his decision to emigrate was influenced by the recurring potato failures.

\(^2\) Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 1848.
away from the Eastern cities were farmers and avoiding the congested centres of population was obviously in their interest—many of them wanted to buy Government land at a minimum price and for this they needed to go farther inland. It was a less obvious course, however, for the mechanics and skilled tradesmen who formed a high proportion of the Scottish emigrants, especially after 1830. These people naturally sought the areas where their skills were in greatest demand and this often meant the industrial cities of the East Coast. But even the skilled emigrants were advised to leave the city ports which teemed with unemployed manpower; James Matheson was, as usual, pessimistic:

there is always enough such [mechanics] here, and at common labour, there [are] always some that cannot get employment, and clerkship is not easily got that is worthy a persons time and attendance...

A young emigrant in Philadelphia reported the same situation there to his parents in Kilmarnock:

Mechanics of all kinds are very numerous in this city; so numerous, indeed, that it is difficult for some of them to find employment at their own business...The reason of so many mechanics being in this city is on account of the multitudes of emigrants that come into this port.

He went on to observe that while many mechanics did proceed directly inland without pausing, "greater numbers have it not in their power, and are obliged to stop until they are loosed from the bonds of poverty."

Many of the emigrants were probably tied as much by the lack of initiative and imagination as they were by poverty to the cities where they landed, for inland travel was generally acknowledged to be inexpensive and there were canals and rivers leading westward from the ports.

For those who stayed on the East Coast trying to

1 See Berthoff, Rowland T., British Immigrants in Industrial America (1790-1950), Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953, pp. 21-29; however, most figures for emigrant occupations are post 1873 and can be misleading in pre-1861 contexts.
2 Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, March 7, 1818.
get jobs in highly competitive trades, inflexibility presented a grave danger. There was a tendency for Scots and other Europeans to stick to their own trade and carry on through thick and thin partly because of habit and partly because of rigid specialisation. In the New World there was less specialisation and Americans, facing situations that would have ruined anyone in Britain for life, simply turned their hands to other trades and built up again from scratch. All over America people were moving from one end of the country to the other, searching for opportunities, trying any jobs they could get. It was not without cause that successful emigrants advised their friends and relatives: "Be not afraid to try your hand at any job." The Smillies advised a young man of their acquaintance who could "turn his hand to anything" to emigrate to a town like Pittsburg which was far enough inland to escape the brunt of the invading labour force. The steel industry of that city can testify that many Scots followed such advice.

Alexander Allison, a West Lothian man with a good farm in Illinois, told his friends to avoid the East Coast altogether and to travel via Liverpool and New Orleans and thence up the Mississippi to the Midwest. This was a favoured alternate route for farmers who intended to settle in Illinois, Wisconsin and Ohio and was considered by many to be safer than the North Atlantic; although it was to be avoided during the heat of the summer when the fevers drifted out of the Louisiana bayous into New Orleans and up the Mississippi as far as St. Louis. Industrial workers also followed this route, generally drifting north into the big cities.

This same route had been followed by another Allison,

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1See Part II, Chapter III.
2Ms. letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850.
3Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to his uncle, Alexander Wark, Bathgate, West Lothian.
Andrew,\(^1\) when he and his two brothers emigrated from Ayrshire to the United States in 1837. Their first taste of the New World was the Old World flavour of New Orleans, which Andrew found to be a "beautiful city; there are some splendid buildings. Although built of brick they look remarkably well."\(^2\) It was an appropriate landfall for three brothers on their way to a rich uncle's cotton plantation, but even the charms of New Orleans could not detain them long and they proceeded up the river as soon as they could.

From Philadelphia and other Middle Eastern seaports, emigrants moved west over the National Road which was extended by 1818 to Wheeling, and from there they passed down the Ohio River to Louisville and Shawneetown and then north through Indiana and Illinois. Those who were leaving New York City were well-advised to follow the route taken by John Rutherford. The Erie Canal, completed in the autumn of 1825, could be reached by the Hudson River and provided easy access to Lake Erie and beyond. In 1834 Chambers' Edinburgh Journal published several letters from the daughter of "a respectable individual who lately emigrated from the town of Dalkeith, near Edinburgh, to the state of New York, where he is now settled on a cleared estate". The editors pledged themselves for the accuracy of the letters "a perusal of which we were favoured with".\(^3\) The family sailed from Greenock and after a voyage of 50 days arrived in New York, where they sojourned but four days before passing on up the Erie Canal in the luxurious steamer \textit{Ohio} which "might well be called a floating palace". On their way to Buffalo they stopped off to visit their old minister who was farming near Schenectady and he warned them not to proceed to Ohio as planned.

\(^1\)The families knew of no connection; there was more likely to have been a kinship between Andrew and Jean Allison, who married John Rutherford, as they were both from the same neighbourhood.

\(^2\)Typescript letter/diary, New Orleans, 1837 to his parents in Ayrshire.

\(^3\)Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, Jan. 11, 1834, pp. 395-96.
because of the fearful cholera epidemics there. Accordingly they went no farther than Rochester where they rented a house and looked around for some likely farm-land.

They were impressed by Rochester. It was a "large, handsome and increasing place", and indeed its population had quadrupled in the decade following the opening of the Erie Canal. As the town was situated on the Canal and only a few miles from Lake Ontario it offered natural advantages to trade and manufacture of which the "fair writer" of the letters was duly appreciative. She summed up by saying it was "as busy and stirring a place as any other of its size in North America". It has, in fact, been referred to as America's first boom town.

Enthusiastic descriptions such as this of inland towns were probably of great benefit in attracting Scots away from the labour-ridden East Coast. There were opportunities for everybody all over the vast country in the mushrooming cities. From farther afield came reports of another boom town in which Scots were, from the outset, destined to play an important part. Two of the founders of Chicago were Scots, John Kinzie and Alexander White, and by 1850 there were almost 5000 Scots in the city. Among the early settlers there were the Mungers; Marion Munger was a sister of Alexander Allison whose farm was located farther south in the same state. In 1846 she wrote to her grandmother and described Chicago:

This is quite a flourishing place 200 miles north of Springfield on the banks of Lake Michigan; a few years ago it was only a trading post with a garrison; it now contains about 13000 inhabitants and is rapidly improving. There are 15 Churches all well filled, and between 20 & 30 hotels, several larger

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2 Ellis, op. cit., p. 188.
3 Donaldson, Gordon, The Scots Overseas, London, 1966, p. 120.
than any in Glasgow. This is owing to the immense
deal of travellers from the Eastern to the Western &
Southern States—About 25 Steamboats besides
propeller & sailing vessels sail between here and
the Lower lakes, the former are splendidly furnished
and generally carry a band of music, which has a
pleasing effect in the summer evenings. 1

The rapidity of growth in America would have encouraged
prospective emigrants; it must also have astounded them.
In 1833 Chicago had a population of 350 souls; 2 in 1836
when the noted East Lothian farmer, Patrick Shirreff,
passed through on his tour of America it consisted of
about 150 wood houses, placed irregularly on both
sides of the river, over which there is a bridge...
Almost every person I met regarded Chicago as the
germ of an immense city. 3

By 1841 it was larger than Dalkeith and by 1850 it had
outgrown Kilmarnock and was almost half as populous as
Dundee; a decade later it had surpassed Edinburgh and
by 1870 it had a larger population than any city in
Scotland. David Whyte reported a similar population
explosion in Watertown, Wisconsin, "a Beautiful city
Eight Churches in it and a good number of splendid
stores—14 years ago there was only one shanty house." 4

The reports from the towns were, on the whole,
encouraging and prospective emigrants in Scotland could
take heart. If they had friends or relatives in America
or if they read the letters published in newspapers, they
would know that, while jobs might be scarce on the East
Coast, there were plenty of opportunities in the growing
country to the west. The skilled technicians in the
new industries could pick their jobs throughout the first
and most of the second half of the century and their
knowledge was a valuable asset to burgeoning American
manufactures. The less skilled had only to keep filtering
westward where, with their willing hands and backs, they
would help to lay the tracks, dig the canals, build the
towns and break the prairies to fulfil America's Manifest
Destiny and stretch the country from sea to sea.

1 Ms. letter, Chicago, Jan. 27, 1846 to Bathgate.
2 Pierce, B.L., A History of Chicago, New York, 1937,
vol. I, p. 44.
3 A Tour through North America, Edinburgh, 1835, p. 226.
4 Ms. letter, Feb. 15, 1855 to his brother.
B. The Land

Men of the older, gentler soil,
Loving the things that their fathers wrought—
Worn old fields of their father's toil,
Scarred old hills where their fathers fought—
Loving their land for each ancient trace,
Like a mother dear for her wrinkled face,
Such as they never can understand
The way we have loved you, young, young land!

Born of a free, world-wandering race,
Little we yearned o'er an oft-turned sod.
What did we care for the father's place,
Having ours fresh from the hand of God?
Who feared the strangeness or miles of you
When from the unreckoned miles of you,
Thrilling the wind with a sweet command,
Youth unto youth called, young, young land?

Scots who settled in the cities on the East Coast probably found competition and employment problems there similar in kind if not in magnitude to those in the industrial cities of Scotland, albeit the work was more financially rewarding. However, as has been noted, the great fascination of America, even for mechanics and artisans, lay in the availability of land. Was there not at least a hidden corner deep within every Scot that yearned to own land, to be a laird—if only a "bonnet laird"?\(^1\) And was there not, as Crèvecoeur observed, an intoxication in the very air which made a man want to rush out and buy land?

Many of the Scots, though comfortably ensconced in the hierarchy of an American industry or snug behind the counter of a profitable store, would have agreed with the gloomy reflections of James Matheson when he maintained that farming was "the Safest and Surest Business in this part of the world".\(^2\) He went on in

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\(^1\)Clark, Badger, Sun and Saddle Leather, Boston, 1942.
\(^2\)"bonnet lairds" were small landowners in Scotland whose property consisted of "a house, a garden, a few acres, a small farm on the outskirts of the towns". They sometimes made their living in industry, but their land made them "independent". J. Saunders, Scottish Democracy, 1815-1840, Edinburgh, 1950, p. 70.

\(^3\)Ms. letter, New York, March 19, 1842 to his brother.
a later letter to lament not having taken up farming himself when he first came to America, for thus

I should avoid being so much exposed to the vexations and Mortifications caused by frauds and deceptions to which a mercantile is always Subject to, and lived a happier life and probably would possess as much or more than now I do.\(^1\)

It is difficult to estimate how many of the industrial emigrants yielded to the temptation to take up land. Apart from the obvious attractions of owning property, there was a class of mechanic, as we have seen in Part I, who was psychologically unsuited to the new urban life and there were vast numbers of "mechanics" who had been farmers before they migrated to the cities in Scotland prior to emigrating. Farming also had the material advantage of providing subsistence for a man and his family even when markets were bad. An emigrant Scotswoman on her way to join her son in backstate New York confided to Lawrie Todd:

There's no steadiness in trade more than in the seasons. It was this persuasion that made my son loup off the treadles and go into the woods, where, if he now and then meet with a bad crop, he's still as certain of making a living; and as men increase and multiply, the value of his land will rise in the natural way, and without the artifice of speculation.\(^2\)

Buying a farm was out of the question for most labourers in Scotland, so those who dreamed of escaping or returning to an agricultural life would have to emigrate to find land.

Charlotte Erickson in her study of English emigrant letters and the lure of "agrarian myths" from America found evidence that English emigrants with industrial skills were being attracted by the idea of farming in the United States\(^3\) and there is reason to believe that this also held true for the Scots. David

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\(^1\) Ms. letter, New York, April 30, 1844 to his brother.

\(^2\) Galt, John, Lawrie Todd, or the Settlers in the Woods, London, 1832, p. 79.

Whyte, for example, mentioned meeting Scottish weavers who had worked "down east" (on the East Coast?) for several years before coming west to buy land in Wisconsin and he himself hoped to earn enough money by his weaving to buy a farm.¹ The Robertsons of Dalgarven were weavers as well as small farmers who settled on a farm in Illinois; William Johnstone, a skilled stone mason, retired to a farm in Ohio; William Tannahill Stirling who worked as a farm labourer in New Jersey was the son of a weaver; the Scots who settled on the uncleared land of southern Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, were mostly miners who had worked first in the mines of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Kentucky before coming west to buy land;² John Greenlee worked as a stone mason before joining the Argyle settlement (though he had also been a small farmer in Scotland);³ and there are other references to masons and blacksmiths buying farms in The Scotsman.⁴ Some merchants like Robert Pollock also bought land and John Dick intended to farm when he had collected a little more of the "needful". There is unfortunately not enough evidence for any firm conclusions. Many of the weavers mentioned above, for example, came from rural or semi-rural areas of Scotland and may well have had experience on farms before emigrating.

None of the letters in the present collection are from people who could be unswervingly classified as industrial or factory workers; this is not surprising, for, as will be shown below in Chapter V, industrial workers tended to be less literate than their rural counterparts in Scotland and often were incapable of writing. Certainly the Scottish miners who were among the pioneer settlers of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, were said to be unskilled

¹Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, ²Feb. 15, 1855.
⁴See next chapter.
at farming and only succeeded through sheer stubbornness and hard work. There were probably many others of the same breed.

1. The Beauty of the Land

The woods exceed in beauty any thing I ever beheld.¹

...prairies forty by fifty miles as smooth as the surface of the Firth of Forth on a May morning.²

The reports from America were sometimes conflicting and often seemed too good to be true. Charles Rose, an emigrant from Inverness who settled in Ohio before 1822, compared this to the time when the Israelites sent 12 spies to view the land of Canaan; ten of them returned with discouraging reports of the land and only the other two told the truth

and altho the ten spoke lies yet [they?] were believed, and I doubt not if Caleb and Joshua should give some there as true a history of America as they did of Canaan they would not believe it.

He concluded philosophically, "This is a good country let who will say to the contrary but every good has its own evil in this world where there is no perfection..."³

Many emigrants wrote flattering reports; they were impressed first of all with the sheer delight of the land and the opulence of the natural resources. "I like this country very well...If ever there was a land of milk and honey this is it for both are very plenty,"⁴ wrote Alexander Allison from Illinois. And from New Jersey William Tannahill Stirling reported back to his father with simple elegance, "with regard to the country yo told me to wright the truth, well it is a butfull contry."⁵

Few emigrants found New York City poetically inspiring but the surrounding countryside and the "glorious

¹ Letter in The Scotsman, June 14, 1834.
² Letter in The Scotsman, Feb. 12, 1848.
³ Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1822 to his nephew, John Rose, Inverness.
⁴ Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to uncle, Alexander Wark in Bathgate.
⁵ Typescript letter, undated (1850s) to his father, Robert Stirling, Waterside near Kirkintilloch.
"Hudson" received many compliments. James Ferguson from near Dumfries found time during his brief stay in New York to notice that the city was "all surrounded with water and the scenery round it is really beautiful". His younger brother, Robert, who followed him to the States was equally taken by the splendours of the rivers and bays of New York and wished that his niece in Dumfriesshire could see the Bay in the summertime.

From the Midwest a Scots emigrant in Indiana mused (somewhat ungrammatically)

When travelling through the woods, I see the beautiful land still unoccupied, (which has remained so, I conceive, from the beginning of time,) and think of the thousands of my fellow-countrymen starving at home, and dragging out a miserable existence, I am astonished at their infatuation.

And a farmer in upper New York state mentioned the limpid streams in the neighbourhood and listed their "beautiful Indian names", while the Greenock-North Carolinian pointed out more practically that the "fine streams and noble rivers" of his adopted state were navigable for great distances.

The young lady from Dalkeith whose family had moved up the Erie Canal and settled three miles outside of Rochester compared their new farm favourably with what she had seen at home, asserting that "there is no place half so pretty in Scotland." For those who might have been deterred by remarks like those of Dr. Johnson ("But a man of any intellectual enjoyment will not easily go and immerse himself and his posterity for ages in barbarism.") she had words of comfort: the country thereabouts was well cultivated "and more populous than many parts of Great Britain" including many Scottish neighbours.

1 Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 22, 1848 to his brother.
2 Ms. letter, New York, Feb. 17, 1856.
3 Letter from "Scots Settlement", The Scotsman, Aug. 17, 1821.
4 Letter from an emigrant, The Scotsman, March 26, 1823.
5 Ibid., Sept. 25, 1819.
6 Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, Jan. 11, 1834.
2. The Richness of the Land

There are more than a thousand acres in this town... as handsome as the haughs of Clyde.

Those who contemplated buying farms in America would have been more concerned with the fertility of the land than its beauty; the reports were equally good. Alexander Allison, ever alert to the possibility of persuading his relatives in West Lothian to join him in Illinois, described the soil enticingly:

The land is very rich and black like mud. There is no stones in the ground. I have often Ploughed a week at a time and never turned over a stone the size of an egg. We always plow two acres a day, and sometimes more. The ground is so loose and mellow the Horses goes along free—our plows turns over 12 to 14 inches and 3 to 4 deep.2

To Scottish farmers who had built walls with the stones turned up from one field this must have sounded a good deal like heaven—truly a "promised land".

Scots in America were fond of comparing the land around them to what they had known (and their readers would know) in Scotland: "as handsome as the haughs of Clyde" was a typical phrase. An emigrant who had settled in Western New York on the shores of Lake Ontario described his land to a friend in Edinburgh as "the East Lothian of America, a fine strath of rich land".3 A wealthy emigrant farmer from Strathmore located on the banks of the Hudson and reported that his land was "as good as any in the How of the Strath and I flatter myself under as good cultivation".4 In Ohio Hugh Rose compared the hilly land to Aberdeenshire5 and farther west, in Indiana, an emigrant wrote to friends saying the land was much richer than in Scotland, though he admitted it was uneven and compared it to Milrig, Kirk-

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1 letter in The Scotsman, April 15, 1820.
2 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Jan. 8, 1847 to his uncle.
3 letter in The Scotsman, March 8, 1826.
4 Ms. letter, James Robertson, Still Water Village, New York (?), Jan. 17, 1830, to Patrick Kirkaldy.
5 Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother, John Rose in Inverness.
liston Craigs and Back Braes. This was language a Scottish farmer could understand and the reports of rich land would have been reassuring news for agricultural emigrants had probably heard disturbing rumours about American farming methods.

3. Farming here is not like farming with you.

—David and Allison Smillie

Oh man, they’re miserable farmers. It would break your heart to see how they just scart the grun’. It’s no very guid ony way, but they dinna gie’t a chance.

—Aberdeenshire farmer

It is noteworthy that many of the emigrants hastened to proclaim the ease of farming in America, comparing it favourably with the toils of Scottish agriculture; nor were they backward in boasting of the rewards. Alexander Allison, apart from describing how easy ploughing was on his land, had also mentioned that he never used manure. A Scottish farmer near Philadelphia wrote to a friend in Edinburgh:

Farming here is certainly not the toil it is with you; the climate is steady and certain; the soil is loose and friable; and, in every stage, requires little labour of men and horses.

Many wrote that they did not have to bother with fertilizers and some even boasted that they did not need to rotate their crops. Hugh Rose reported somewhat critically,

they do not value dung, when their doors are overcome by it they drive it out on some near field, not but their land requires it, but hands are so scarce that they cannot do what they would wish with it.

1 Letter in The Scotsman, May 4, 1822. It is interesting to note in passing that Hulbert found the Scots preferred prairie land to forest, whereas the Germans, for example, did not mind the trees: Archer Butler Hulbert, Soil. Its Influence on the History of the United States, New Haven, 1930, p. 144.

2 Ms. letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850 to friends.


4 Letter in The Scotsman, March 19, 1823.

5 Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
But in Wisconsin David Whyte spoke to an old Scottish farmer who had tried to use manure on his farm—with unforeseen results: "he told me 4 years ago he had dunged 4 acres and lost the crop for three years. It rushed up too rank and lay all down."\(^1\)

The lack of concern shown by many emigrants for fertilizers is significant for it indicates that they were quick to pick up the typically American attitude towards farming: scorning intense cultivation and using the land recklessly—spending it like a handful of coins. Wasteful though it sounded, the system was based on sound economics for land was plentiful and labour was scarce. On the fringes of the farming frontier, especially, "The land was mined, not farmed, and when the surface treasures had been skimmed off, the process was repeated in another place where Nature's bounty was as yet untouched."\(^2\) To what extent was the emigrant involved in this process?

Marcus Lee Hansen and others contended that emigrants were rarely pioneers; being a frontiersman was a "highly skilled profession" and one in which few Scots had previous training. As Crèvecoeur phrased it, "it is not easy for those who seldom saw a tree, to conceive how it is to be felled, cut up, and split into rails and posts."\(^3\) The Nova Scotian was lyrically sarcastic:

> to export a 'bog trotter' from Killarny, a 'knight of the needle' from the purlieus of Bond Street, or a Scots 'dealer in weft and web' from Glasgow, and imagine that they are to make a vigorous attack upon our forests, and fashion a new world for themselves, is as ridiculous as it would be to hire an army of Lilliputians to invade Patagonia...\(^4\)

The "traditional" pattern of settlement was for the "pioneer farmer" to follow about ten years behind the hunter/trapper frontiersman; the pioneer farmer would

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\(^1\) Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.


\(^4\) quoted in The Scotsman, Dec. 29, 1827.
clear some of the land, build a substantial cabin and
plant subsistence crops; in another ten years he might
sell to a "permanent farmer". This type of land
speculation was a profitable business and besides:

Somewhere was a perfect hundred-and-sixty-acre
tract: the right balance of meadow, arable and
forest, a clearer spring, a more sheltered spot
for his home, more wild game in the woods and
fewer snakes and crows.¹

As John Rutherford told his brother, "the Americans
make a trade of improving land and then selling out
and going farther back."² This was a difficult concept
for the European to grasp initially: instead of building
the land into sacred ancestral homes whence untold
generations of descendants would spring, the Yankees
"traded farms in the same light-hearted spirit that
they swapped horses".³ There is evidence that many of
the pioneer farmers had no intention of settling
permanently; they were small speculators who hoped to
realise a tidy profit as the value of farm-land went
up.⁴ Land speculation had always been a popular "sport"
in America, but these small farmers were not in the
same league as the "professional speculators" who bought
massive tracts of land at Government price and sold it
for profit. Paul Wallace Gates suggested that 29,000,000
of the 38,000,000 acres of public land sold between
1845 and 1857 "represented speculation".⁵

Because of 1) the specialised skills required for
farming uncleared land, 2) the European's emotional
attachment to land, 3) the widespread advice in emigrant
guides to buy improved land and 4) the reputation
American farmers had as land speculators, it was widely
assumed until comparatively recently that the emigrants'

¹Hansen, op. cit., p. 61.
²Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 1848 to his
brother in Renfrewshire.
³Hansen, op. cit., p. 60.
⁴Curti, op. cit., p. 66.
⁵quoted in Bogue, op. cit., p. 42.
role in this process was, in Hansen's phrase, as "fillers-in". The pioneer work was done by the Old Stock who had received their training in the harsh school of the Eastern forests and the emigrants came along with the permanent farmers and paid money for the improvements which the pioneers had made, freeing those worthies to move farther west. It has been shown, however, by Bogue (who studied the patterns of settlement in Illinois and Iowa¹), Curti (in his painstaking investigations of agricultural mobility in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin²), Erickson (in her work with English emigrant letters³) and others that emigrants not only settled frequently on uncleared public land, but that they had a high rate—often higher than the native Americans—of mobility, frequently selling out and moving on westward in the "traditional" pattern. Both Bogue and Curti found that the non-English-speaking foreign-born had higher rates of mobility than the Americans and English-speaking foreign-born. The 1860 Census of Trempealeau County revealed that while 70% of the American-born had left the county 76% of the English-speaking foreign-born had left and 88% of the non-English-speaking foreign-born had moved on.⁴ The mobility factor was also found to relate to age (the young were more likely to leave), occupation (non-agriculturists were more likely to leave) and the amount of property owned, but "the striking thing is the high percentage of turnover among all groups."⁵

The Scottish emigrant letters offer plenty of proof that Scots were buying land on the farming frontier. In the Pennsylvania backwoods Robert McIntyre and his sons struggled with a 120-acre lot of uncleared land;⁶

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¹ Bogue, op. cit.
² Curti, op. cit.
³ Erickson, op. cit.
⁴ Curti, op. cit., pp. 67-72.
⁵ Ibid., p. 69.
⁶ Ms. letter, "Firehauld", Sugargrove, Warren County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1845 to his brother (—in-law?), George Hiss, Dumbarton, Scotland.
Adam Fergusson's family settled in Tennessee in the early years of the century while it was still a "wilderness full of wild game"; Charles Rose and each of his sons had 162 acres of Ohio land in 1822; in the 1840s and '50s many Scots had reached Illinois, among them Alexander Allison who farmed 280 acres of largely, if not completely, unbroken prairie; the Dalgarven Robertsons took up land in Whiteside County, Illinois, in the early '40s and James Ferguson in 1857 was one of the earliest settlers in Centralia, having already moved farther west twice before from other farms. Scots had also pushed into Wisconsin: in 1848—the year that Wisconsin was admitted to the Union as a state—John Rutherford bought 160 acres in Verona, Adams (later Dane) County which by the Census of 1850 had only 7 acres improved (by 1860 there were 60 acres improved and the land had more than doubled in value); in 1850 John Thomson had 80 acres near Wingville, Wisconsin; Robert Pollock settled on a 137-acre unimproved farm near Cambridge (Wisconsin or Illinois) in the early '50s and David Whyte was inspecting uncleared Government land in Wisconsin in the mid-'50s with a view to purchasing some. Even farther west Peter McKellar took up a farm

1 Ms. letter, Carthage, Tennessee, April 3, 1838 to Robert Macnab, Glenorchy, Argyll.
2 Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1822 to his nephew, John Rose, Inverness.
3 Ms. letter, Middletown, Logan County, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to his uncle, Alexander Wark, Bathgate.
4 Ms. letter, Andrew Robertson, Dalgarven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843 to James Robertson, Union Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois.
5 Undated and unidentified newspaper obituary notice of his wife, Margaret, who died in 1886.
6 Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 1848 to his brother, Thomas, Mill o' Cart, Johnstone, Renfrewshire.
7 United States Agricultural Census, 1850, Adams County, Wisconsin.
8 United States Agricultural Census, 1860, Dane County, Wisconsin.
9 Ms. letter, Wingville, Grant County, Wisconsin, Jan. 24, 1850 to his brother, David, Auchtermuchty, Fife.
10 Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 7, 1854 to his niece and brother in Ayr.
11 Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855 to his brother in Scotland.
in Iowa in the early '50s and later wrote about pioneer life there, and the Smillies and Stewarts left their farm in Ohio to push across the Oregon Trail in 1853 and settle near Eugene City in Oregon Territory six years before it attained statehood.

Curti discovered two groups of Scots who were among the earliest settlers on Decorah Prairie in Wisconsin where they bought the land from speculators for nominal sums and John Muir's father bought a quarter-section (160 acres) of land from a land-agent at Kingstone, Wisconsin, for the "Government price" in 1849. At that time, there was no other settler within a radius of four miles of our Fountain Lake farm, in three or four years almost every quarter-section of government land was taken up, mostly by enthusiastic home-seekers from Great Britain, with only here and there Yankee families from adjacent states, who had come drifting indefinitely westward in covered wagons, seeking their fortunes like winged seeds...

Many of the "Scotch Settlements" were founded in frontier areas as well: Charles Rose wrote from the "Scotch Settlement" near Wellsville, Ohio in 1822; Argyle in Winnebago County, Illinois was founded on uncleared land in the late '30s and the John Proud Settlement near Verona, Wisconsin, bought their land at the Government price of $1.25 and acre.

The letters written to The Scotsman rarely mention settlement on uncleared land and, indeed, advise that emigrants should buy at least enough cleared land to practice subsistence agriculture. Many of the letters, however, came from relatively unsettled areas: Western and Northwestern New York state, March 26 and Sept. 10, 1823 and March 8, 1826; backstate Pennsylvania, March 19, 1823; Ohio, July 9, 1823; Kentucky, April 16, 1834;
Indiana, May 4, 1822 and April 4, 1827; and Waterville, Wisconsin, Feb. 12, 1848.

The evidence is strong that Scots, along with Germans, Scandinavians, Englishmen and even Irishmen (the Irish were "supposed" to favour cities), were pushing out to the fringes of the frontier farming areas and participating actively in the settlement process. They were quickly adapting to American attitudes; some, like James Matheson in New York, even bought land for speculative purposes. They changed in other ways as well: rather than buy neighbouring farms for their sons, they would often expect them, like their American friends, to move farther west themselves and make their own homes. The Ferguson boys who left their father's farm in Illinois to take up ranching in Montana were typical of this development.¹

Those who settled on uncleared land, unless they had farmed before in the United States, were flying in the face of advice from all quarters. It was widely advertised that the lure of cheap land often led to disaster: it was a siren-call beckoning unwary emigrants onto the rocks of financial ruin and failure.

Neither should the emigrant forget that it is in the end much cheaper for him to rent or buy land ready cleared, than to encounter the hardships and loss of time consequent on a selection of that in the woods.²

Quite apart from the "hidden expenses" of cheap land, emigrants who did not have enough land to practice subsistence agriculture on before clearing or "breaking" was begun were letting themselves in for hardship and possibly starvation. Great skill was required to clear wooded land and the matted prairie grass roots were so tough that they had to be "broken" by special steel "breaking" ploughs which turned a furrow up to 30 inches wide and needed 5 or 6 yokes of oxen and two skilled men.

¹Obituary notice of one of the sons, Robert Ferguson, who was killed by marauding Indians; in the Boston Herald, dated Helena, Montana, June 11, 1890.
²Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 29, 1829.
to operate. And even once their land was ready for the plough, there were still problems unique to the local conditions, which only experience could solve: when to plough (if prairie land was ploughed in April, for example, the grass roots were likely to have grown back enough by fall to make cross-ploughing impossible), how deep to plough (it was only gradually realised that a shallow furrow would allow grass roots to rot more quickly), what crops to plant, etc.¹

Many successful emigrants went so far as to advise their friends and relatives not to come until they could bring at least £200 with them. Often they would scout around in their own neighbourhood and find available farms (whose owners were showing signs of "itching feet") which they would then depict at great length in an effort to help their relatives to make up their minds to join them. John Rutherford described three farms to his brother in Renfrewshire which varied in size from 40 to 200 acres and in price from 70 to 250 sovereigns of gold.² Alexander Allison warned his relatives that, apart from the cost of the land, they would have to reckon on at least $200 to build a good farm house (which he was then in the process of doing) and $150 to furnish same.³

In North Carolina in 1819 it was reckoned that 300 guineas would purchase a "good little farm" and outfit it for one year.⁴ And from Newbury a Scottish emigrant wrote:

There is a lot of land that corners with mine, of about 130 acres, can be bought for 500 dollars, that is good land, about a quarter of a mile from the road, but it is all in a state of nature. If you have two hundred pounds, I know of a number of farms that you can buy, with a large clearing, and house and barn on them, for that sum.⁵

Your letter and was happy to hear that you and your
and family are all well but I was sorry to hear that my
son was averse, but I was happy to hear that the rest of your
farmers and workmen and their families are all well and we are
enjoying good health and all have done since we came to
See my wife is very happy that her new friends living with
their attention to her and you mentioned in your letter of the
many farms for sale in the neighborhood. There have been busy
buying and inquiry ever since I read your letter and the moment
I received it of improving land and then selling it and
finding that the house where we live is called the three
families and they were all watching it yesterday and they
will sell it for gold. The house from contains five
hundred acres a good dwelling house on it, and the offices
are not very good. And there is two one hundred
acres on the farm within in one of the... as good.
There is a small river that flows near the farm.
The farm it contains two hundred acres one hundred
and fifty acres of hay, forty acres of meadow, and ten acres
are one hundred and twenty one acres fenced in.
The house is bought for two hundred and fifty sovereigns of gold and
the other farm contains one hundred and sixty acres is hundred
fifty yard of wheat, twenty acres of wood, there is a good
house but the offices that there is twenty acres fenced
on it bought for one hundred and twenty sovereigns of gold.
There is another farm two miles distant containing four
hundred acres. A good dwelling house on it, and
on it can be bought for three hundred and
fifty pounds of gold, there is another farm four miles distant
of forty acres all in order with a good standing one
sovereign. Dear Brother I have found me
than any that you may so they are written down our
and
An emigrant in Troy, New York, proposed a lucrative offer to some of his friends in Scotland: he had become enthusiastic about the prospects of making cotton and woollen fabrics and he was "authorised to say" from the "first authority" that dyeing and bleaching would soon realise a fortune. He proposed a joint venture, combining the various manufactures and his plan illustrates, if nothing else, the infectiousness of Yankee speculation:

I have lately visited a place for sale, upon the Banks of the Bottinkill...that would be an excellent site for such an establishment, it consists of about 300 acres of good land, and contains a fall of water sufficient to drive any extent of machinery. There is a good saw and grist mill upon it, with other premises, the whole, I understand might be had for less than £2000, and a cotton factory running 1000 spindles, and 24 water looms, might be set up for £1500, throwing off above 4000 yards of shirting per week.

He also suggested getting some other friends to farm the land, thus making themselves self-sufficient.¹

Obviously, the cost of the land in terms of money, labour, equipment, etc., would vary considerably not only with the quality of the land, but with its nearness to settlement and transportation facilities, the availability of wood and water and the year in which it was bought (unless, of course, it were bought directly from the Government which charged a uniform price).

An article in the Scottish Chartist Circular (quoted in Part I, Chapter IV) which was, in fact, filched from James Hall's Notes on the Eastern States (Philadelphia, 1838, p. 204) assured readers that a skilled mechanic could easily save enough money (£100) from his wages to buy an 80-acre farm in six months while an unskilled labourer could buy a 40-acre farm in the same time.²

This was dangerously misleading; the estimates for wages, living expenses and the cost of land were fair enough, but no account was taken of the cost involved in making the land ready to plough and building a cabin. A more

¹Letter in The Scotsman, March 26, 1823.
²Chartist Circular, July 3, 1841.
realistic "guide" published in the same year estimated additional expenses at another $200 for a 40-acre farm, making the total cost $250, or two or three years of work.1 The farmer could reduce the expense by doing most of the work himself, but then there would also be the equipment (waggon, ploughs, harrow, yoke of oxen, team of horses, axes, rakes, shovels, etc.) to buy which in the 1830s would probably have cost around $300.2

By the '50s, when prices had risen and more sophisticated equipment was necessary, estimates for buying 160 acres with all costs included had risen to nearly $1000.3 The classic study in this field is Danhof's "Farm Making Costs and the 'Safety-Valve', 1850-60".4 He reckoned the total cost at around $1000 but that did not allow for availability of wood, help from sons, etc.

The alternative for those who could not bring enough money with them to buy a farm outright was to work as farm-labourers until the necessary capital had been raised. Estimates for how long this would take varied enormously and would obviously depend on individual factors such as wages received, standard of living, quality and quantity of land desired and personal industry. It was considered a good idea to put in a year or two working for an American farmer before attempting to go it alone in any case. Crevecoeur pointed out that by so doing the emigrant would acquire "knowledge, the use of tools, the modes of working the lands, felling trees, etc."5 and a "gentleman whose impartiality and ability to judge are indisputable" had the same advice for persons proposing to emigrate: "the most cautious poor settlers usually employ themselves for some time in labouring for other people, or in renting land that

2Bogue, op. cit., p. 159.
3Lebergott, op. cit., p. 141.
4Journal of Political Economy, June, 1941.
5Crevecoeur, op. cit., p. 29.
is cleared.” Working for someone else also had the advantage of giving the emigrant time to size up the land and to buy wisely when the time came. Unless friends or relatives were already there to give advice, this was highly desirable.

When they had bought their farms, many of the Scottish emigrants found themselves, despite the best intentions in the world to farm thriftily, adjusting more and more to the American system of husbandry. They were using different implements which solved special problems: "their harrows are very different from yours, they are made of three pieces of timber after this fashion, they answer well for getting between the stumps." An emigrant farmer in Newbury warned his friends who were planning to emigrate not to encumber themselves with heavy equipment on the journey "as you can get anything here for money...Our farming utensils are different from yours, and suit the country much the best." The use of labour-saving devices was greatly stimulated in America by the lack of farm labour and the availability of land. While in Britain agricultural machines replaced labour to a certain extent, in America they made possible the cultivation of land that would otherwise have been left in a state of nature. Many Scots commented on the scarcity of labour in America and its consequent exaggerated value. David and Allison Smillie observed ruefully, "we have to work hard ourselves, for wages are so high that we cannot afford to hire much." One of the early settlers in Ohio complained that "no American will work except he get extravagant wages."

The ideal solution was to have a large family of boys who would help to run the farm as they grew up.

1 The Scotsman, Feb. 5, 1823.
2 Ms. Letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother, John Rose, Inverness.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, April 15, 1820.
5 Letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850.
6 Letter in The Scotsman, Jan. 10, 1818.
The Scottish journalist, Alexander MacKay, in his informative and highly entertaining *Western World or Travels in the United States 1846-1847*...including a chapter on California, recorded the sentiments of a Paisley emigrant who had become a successful farmer near Columbus, Ohio:

To get a wife was one of the first things I did, after gettin' my farm. It's nae here as it is in Scotland, where there's mair mous's to fill than there's bread to fill them wi'. The sooner a man gets married here the better, always providin' he's nae a mere striplin'.

Robert McIntyre farmed 120 acres in the back country of Pennsylvania with the help of his boys; but clearing forests was not an easy way to earn a living and two of his sons had left as soon as they were able. A third, William, had recently gone to join one of the other two in New York—back on the farm with his three remaining sons, McIntyre commented scornfully "the woods was tow hard work for him."

The emphasis was on cultivating as much land as possible in as short a time as possible, for the American farmer had many other chores to tend to: he might have to hunt, fish, split rails for fences, chop fire wood, build houses and "offices", clear land, etc. Alexander Allison, for example, was breaking prairie sod to plant his crops and building a frame house at the same time but still found time to split 6000 rails which he reckoned would fence about 80 acres. A farmer might also brew his own malt, and in the backwoods he would probably have to do his own blacksmithing.

An emigrant who settled at Silver Lake, Susquehanna, declared:

He who has no capability to adapt himself to new employments and methods, and who cannot for himself turn carpenter, wheeler, cooper, tailor, and shoemaker, had better stay at home; unless he can bring with him as much money as will buy all these things, to carry with him to the settlement.

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6. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1821.
It was this need for diverse skills that caused many authorities to doubt that English agriculturists with their relative specialisation could adapt to the American system of husbandry. Charlotte Erickson has pointed out that this would probably not hold true of the more pastoral west and north of England where there were many family-managed farms; apart from some of the large farms in the Lothians, it would hold even less true for Scotland where most emigrants were probably leaving from farms of less than 100 acres (although it would be fair to add that some of the farm labourers who emigrated from Scotland may have come from the newly enlarged farms where there was an increasing amount of specialisation during the nineteenth century).

In America the want of specialisation, the scarcity of "hands" and the pervading atmosphere of impermanence resulted in a certain casualness in the approach to farming. John Dick was irritated by this attitude in the country around New York City: "for 20 miles round farming is slovenly gone about—they just plant what grows quickest with the least manual labour & turns in the money." On the "old" settled lands of the East Coast this system was already taking its toll before the 1820s in Virginia and the Carolinas and some of the soil was rapidly being exhausted. It was characteristic that the American farmer—and some of the emigrants—simply sold out, packed his bags and crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains to look for fresh land.

Many of the Scots fell easily into the American attitude towards farming, but some fought it—for a while:

None of our neighbours were so excessively industrious as father; though nearly all of the Scotch, English, and Irish worked too hard...every uncut weed

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1 Charlotte Erickson referred to several historians and travellers who were pessimistic in this regard including Percy W. Bidwell and John I. Falconer, William Cobbett and Samuel Laing; op. cit., p. 65 n.
2 Erickson, op. cit., p. 65.
3 Ms. letter, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
distressed them; so also did every ungathered ear of grain, and all that was lost by birds and gophers; and this overcarefulness bred endless work and worry.1

At least some of the Scots who gave in and joined the Yankees in letting the crops take care of themselves suffered from guilty consciences. An emigrant in Newbury admitted ruefully "we do not labour our farms as they ought to be"2 and perhaps there was some truth in the bitter words of a Scottish farm labourer (reputed to be the brother of the famous "Ettrick Shepherd") in New York: "They ken naething about working lan' here, but how to plough stumps."3

4. Lairds and Bonnet Lairds

Sinclair, in his Analysis of the Statistical Account, reported that Scotland was owned by less than 8,000 proprietors.4 It was, therefore, hardly surprising that the "possession of land gave economic opportunity, political rights and social prestige."5 It is noteworthy that the Scandinavians, who also came from countries where there were severely limited supplies of arable land, were widely known in America to have great emotional regard for its possession.6 The difference in America where almost anyone could become a landowner at will was striking. Adam Ferguson explained to his cousin, Robert Macnab, that land was readily available to all and, while Americans treasured the privilege, yet "to own land in this country is no more thought of than for you to own property of any other kind."7 Buying land was so easy that the Scot's "overweening desire to be a 'Laird'" was apt to get the better of common sense and to prove his undoing.8 However, thousands of Scots bought land in America and became successful

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2Letter in The Scotsman, April 17, 1820.
3The Scotsman, Sept. 20, 1837.
5Ibid., p. 14.
6Bogue, op. cit., p. 21.
7Ms. letter, Carthage, Tennessee, April 3, 1838.
8This problem is discussed with particular intelligence by John Prentice in his excellent "Letter to the Working Classes of Edinburgh" in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
farmers and the emigrant who farmed his own land, regardless of how hard he was struggling to make ends meet, probably thought himself a better man, materially and psychologically, than he had been in the old country. His farm was his own and his son's after him—if he wanted it. There was something about owning the land on which he worked that touched chords very deep in the being of the Scottish emigrant. Prose could not describe it adequately, but perhaps Crèvecœur touched upon some of the feelings of the proud new landowner when he wrote:

The instant I enter on my own land, the bright idea of property, of exclusive right, of independence exalt my mind... No wonder we should thus cherish its possession, no wonder that so many Europeans who have never been able to say that such portion of land was theirs, cross the Atlantic to realise that happiness. 1

It would be interesting to compare the sizes of the farms which emigrants left in Scotland with those they settled on in America. Unfortunately, in the present study there are few instances of emigrants leaving specific, traceable farms and, in addition, it is very difficult to reckon the "average" size of Scottish farms. However, it is perhaps worth comparing what little information there is.

Many of the farming emigrants came from the Southwest Lowlands, from Ayr, Renfrew, Lanark and Dumbarton where the "average" farm was somewhat less than 100 acres in 1812; 2 in his Analysis Sinclair found the average farm in the Western counties to be between 20-80 acres (Scotch) with an average of less than 60 acres of arable land. 3 Dawson, in his abridgement of the New Statistical Account put the figure at 50-150 acres 4 and Saunders agreed with that. 5 In the "Borders"

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1 Crèvecœur, op. cit., p. 20.
5 Saunders, op. cit., pp. 69-70.
and the Lothians, the farms would tend to be bigger, varying from 50 to 300 acres. The danger of being misled by such figures is obvious. If a parish has five farms of 20 acres and five farms of 200 acres, it does not mean that most people farm 110 acres. Still, it is probably safe to say that the people who emigrated left, by and large, from the smaller farms which were not large enough to support several sons and/or to cope with the expense of "improvements"; thus it is not unreasonable to guess that the farms they left were usually less than 100 acres. It should also be noted that very few had owned the land they lived on—most had been tenants, hinds or labourers.

Robert McIntyre from Dumbarton farmed 120 acres of stubborn Pennsylvania backland, although, to be more precise, he had not actually sown more than 30 acres at the time his letter was written; he was working fairly remote land and still clearing it. An emigrant from Ayrshire bought 100 acres in South Carolina of which 40 was cleared and another Scot from Clydesdale bought 160 acres near Louisville in Kentucky according to their letters in The Scotsman.

Alexander Allison was probably from Bathgate in West Lothian where the "average" holding was around 200 acres, but he came from a hard-working and not very prosperous family. In Illinois he bought 280 acres of which 160 was arable prairie land and 120 was timber. Far from being useless, the timber was necessary on the prairie for fencing, fuel and building. Allison reckoned, in fact, that a farm of 80 to 100 acres of good prairie—more or less the minimum necessary for serious farming—would require about 30 acres of timber to supplement it.

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2 Ms. letter, "Fairehauld", Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1845 to his brother in Dumbarton.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1819.
4 Ibid., July 3, 1819.
5 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843.
The "respectable individual" from Dalkeith who settled with his family near Rochester bought 160 acres of high quality land of which 106 acres were cleared and the rest timber. In densely-settled areas like Rochester, the timber land was as valuable as the cleared for there was little coal and wood was the main fuel in the towns.¹ Other emigrant letters record farms of 84 acres and upwards with most of the emigrants owning about 120 acres—the largest was James Robertson's 300-acre farm on the banks of the Hudson. None of the letters in the present collection were from emigrants who were renting land in America.

The general picture which emerges from the scanty evidence available is that the farms taken by emigrants in the United States were bigger than the ones they had left in Scotland. This, of course, is not in itself evidence that the emigrants were more prosperous than they had been; in many cases comparatively few acres were actually "under the plough" and there is also the factor of the quality of the land to be considered. Balanced against these possible disadvantages, were two very strong advantages: there was great potential in the American land with the farms "growing" as more land was cleared or "broken" and there was the fact of ownership as opposed to tenancyship—it is difficult to measure this benefit, but, apart from the obvious psychological fillip of owning one's own land, there was no rent to pay, less taxes, freedom to farm as one wished and security of tenure. Judging from the letters, it would appear that ownership of the land was very important to the emigrants and it may well have played an important role in influencing emigration.

Two specific examples support some of the general conclusions. John Rutherford left Mill o' Cart Farm north-east of Johnstone in Renfrewshire and settled

¹Letter in Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, Jan. 11, 1834; James Robertson also mentioned that land with wood sold for more in the "old settlements"; Ms. letter, Still Water Village, Jan. 17, 1830 to Patrick Kirkaldy.
near Verona, Wisconsin in 1848. Mill o' Cart was no larger than 100.8 acres\(^1\) and his farm in Wisconsin was 160 with a value of $1000 in 1850 and $2400 in 1860; by 1860 he was taking in 300 bushels of wheat, 700 bushels of oats, 200 pounds of butter and 15 tons of hay.\(^2\) He boasted to his brother that the farms in his neighbourhood (which were for sale) were all better than Mill o' Cart.\(^3\)

James Ferguson was born on Netherholm Farm in Kirkmahoe Parish about three miles north of Dumfries; there is no record of his function, but he was not the owner. Netherholm contained 98 acres from 1800 to 1875\(^4\). He unfortunately does not give the acreage of his American farm, but as one of the earliest settlers in Centralia it is unlikely that he owned less than 160 acres.

It was also probably true that the emigrants paid less for their land. The price charged by the United States Government for its land was $2.00 until 1820 when the minimum price was dropped to $1.25 per acre. By the Pre-emption Act of 1841 the following people could have prior rights to buy land they "squatted" on before it was auctioned: 1) the head of a family; 2) a man over twenty-one; 3) a widow; or 4) an alien who satisfied one of the first three requirements and announced his intention of becoming a citizen. By the Act they were entitled to settle 160 acres of public domain\(^5\) and after fourteen months they could buy it at the Government price of $1.25 an acre. The Graduation Act of 1854 provided that the price of land would diminish according to the length of time it had been for sale. There were actually acts passed between 1842 and 1853 which made it possible for settlers to obtain free land grants, but only for specified frontier land—where

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\(^1\) the original (1860s?) 25-inch-to-the-mile Ordinance Survey maps give the acreage for each field, but do not denote ownership. In this case the maximum number of fields which could reasonably have appertained to the farm totalled 100.8 acres.

\(^2\) U.S. Agricultural Census, 1860, Dane County, Wisc.

\(^3\) Ms. letter, Verona, Wisc., Dec. 1, 1848.

\(^4\) Title deeds, etc.; Royal Bank of Scotland, St. Andrews Square, Edinburgh.

\(^5\) The public domain "includes all lands that have been acquired by the United States or that have been for sale under Federal laws." W. P. Webb, The Great Plains, New York, 1931, p. 399.
the settler would be expected to pay with his blood if the need arose. The West clamoured for free land and finally in 1860 Congress passed a compromise Homestead Act by which land was to be sold for twenty-five cents an acre; however, there was strong opposition from Easterners, Southerners and conservatives and Buchanan vetoed the Bill; it was not until 1862 that Lincoln signed the Homestead Act.

The emigrants who sought land in the West usually went to the nearest Federal Land Office, but sometimes they were forced by circumstances to buy from state officials, land-grant railroads and speculators at a considerably higher price. In such cases the emigrants paid for the land according to its relative worth.

To estimate the true value of any particular farm or track [sic] of land, you must ascertain its situation as to health, its relative distance from market, the actual state of improvement, the fertility of the soil, and its natural growth and productions. Hence the great variety of prices. Alexander Allison paid between $2.50 and $3.00 an acre for his prairie land and $5 to $8 for the timber land. In the East the price was higher and could easily vary from $2 to $70 or more per acre, depending on fertility and location. A Scots emigrant in Newbury cautioned his friend in Scotland who had been offered land for $2 an acre:

...that is nothing to the purpose. I think that I could buy a thousand acres in this town[ship] at that price; but there is a good deal of poor land in this country. You cannot buy land any where that I know of for less than 3, 4, or 5 dollars an acre that is good, and fit to settle on...The value of land altogether is according to the situation...Land, on a road, will bring double of that 1 or 2 miles from it.\(^1\)

An emigrant in Pennsylvania paid $70 an acre for his 100 acres in 1823.

This is again difficult to compare with Scotland, partly because of the usual difficulties in finding

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\(^1\) Letter in The Scotsman, Sept. 25, 1819.

\(^2\) Letter in The Scotsman, April 15, 1820.
"average" figures and partly because most farms of this size in Scotland were rented rather than owned by the occupiers. As in America, the value of the land varied considerably depending on the quality. In Hamilton Parish, Lanarkshire, for example, the relatively poor, high land had an annual rent of 15s. per acre; reasonably good, arable land was £1.5.0. to £2.5.0. per acre and the best ground was £3 to £3.10.0. In the rich Lothian farming country around Penicuik the rent varied from 5s. a year per acre to £5. In addition a Scottish farmer might have to pay an extra 5s. an acre for improvements like draining, £2.10.0 for allowing a cow to graze and 4s.3d. per head of sheep. Taking the exchange rate of the early 1830s as a convenient index, the dollar was worth 4s.2d. At this rate the Scottish farmer was paying a minimum annual rent of $1.20 per acre! Wages in America, especially for farm and unskilled labour, were considerably higher too.

In America an emigrant could buy an acre of public domain for the price of renting an acre in Scotland for one year. But it must also be remembered, as the emigrants so often cautioned their friends, that there were hidden expenses involved in buying cheap land. Transportation would be expensive; land would have to be cleared at great expense of time and/or money; and on the prairies, whither many emigrants were drawn by the low cost of the land, skilled men with steel ploughs had to be hired to "break" the tough, prairie grass roots. Alexander Allison paid $1.50 an acre to have his land broken in 1843 and for the next 20 years the cost would average between $2 and $3 an acre. Later when the land was given free to Homesteaders, the price of breaking it in would rise to

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1NSA, VI, p. 281.
2NSA, I, p. 44.
4NSA: the figures are similar for most Lowland parishes.
5see below, Chapter III.
6there was a nominal claims fee.
$3 or $4 an acre. But even allowing for every "hidden cost" and contingency, the emigrant still came out ahead in America if he had the capital to invest in land. The simple listing of land prices in the United States must have been an irresistible attraction to Scottish farmers faced with the problem of whether or not to cut their losses and emigrate. The ready availability of land was traditionally one of the strongest "pulls" that America exerted and letters written by emigrants in the United States show that this was widely recognised. The low cost of land in his neighbourhood was an ace that every emigrant who wrote home had up his sleeve; when he wanted to encourage relatives or friends to join him, he did not hesitate to play his strongest card and lists of farm prices were regular features of the letters. The figures spoke for themselves with an eloquence that few emigrants could rival, but occasionally one of them could not resist gilding the lily. An emigrant pointed out to the weavers of Southwest Scotland that he could rent (sic) 18 acres of land for the same rent he had paid for a 6-loom shop in Glasgow and another wrote from New York: "Excellent lands are to be purchased here, in fee simple, for less than the tithes and poors' rates in many parts of England." 5

5. The Fruits of Labour

...you would think the one half of the country was covered with fruit trees. 4

Farmers in Scotland would have been impressed by the reports of produce from their friends in America. Many of the emigrants were country-born and it was natural for them to express their appreciation in terms of reports on the fecundity of the land. Everywhere

1Hansen, op. cit., p. 73; Bogue, op. cit., pp. 70-71.
2letter in The Scotsman, Nov. 6, 1819.
3Ibid., April 7, 1824; although the term "England" was often used by nineteenth-century Scots to denote Britain, this particular emigrant probably was English since he referred to "tithes" instead of the Scottish "teinds".
4Ms. letter, William T. Stirling, New Jersey, early 1850s to his father, Robert Stirling, near Kirkintilloch.
they went, they saw fruit growing wildly, abundantly:

...all sorts of fruit grows here apels pears plumes chires grapes and peaches, grapes and cheres grow wild you would think the one half of the country was covered with fruit trees.

This was William Tannahill Stirling's first impression of the "Garden State", New Jersey, where he set to work a few days after landing in New York. In Illinois Alexander Allison had "peaches by the waggon load for the pulling" and an emigrant in South Carolina found peaches, apples, "plumbs", figs, quinces "and a great number of other kinds of fruits ...They are so plenty that they feed their hogs with them. They grow all over the fields, and such loaded trees I never saw." In western New York state melons, cucumbers, gourds, squashes and "luxuriant" red currants were reported and in Ohio every farmer had an apple orchard.

The crops were no less satisfying. A farmer in Newbury boasted: "This is a good country for grass and grain, and plenty of good water; I easily raise good wheat, peas, beans, Indian corn, rye, oats, and potatoes." To the Scottish farmer, who was unlikely to have raised any other crops than wheat, barley, turnips, oats and potatoes, some of the produce in the South—cotton, Indian corn and sweet potatoes—must have sounded exotic and would present some initial problems in cultivation. The crops raised in New York were more homely and reports from farmers there were very attractive: "The soil of my farm is about the best I ever saw; we raise wheat, barley, oats, maise, beans, peas, turnips, potatoes, grass, etc." And Farmer Robertson's problems with his two acres of "swedes" (Swedish turnips or rutabagas) would have sounded familiar to his friends in

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1 Ms. letter, New Jersey, early 1850s to his father.
2 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1819.
4 Ibid., March 8, 1820.
5 Ms. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother, John Rose, Inverness.
6 Letter in The Scotsman, April 15, 1820.
7 Ibid., March 8, 1820.
Strathmore. Some of the Scots enjoyed agricultural renown. From Wisconsin Mrs. Rutherford wrote to her brother in Renfrewshire to boast of her husband's success at the Country Fair: first prize for barley, second prize for oats, first prize for beet-root and third for carrots.  

The American food was also largely to the emigrants' liking. In contrast to the "farinaceous" diet of most people in Scotland, the Americans "have butchers' meat three times a day, and frequently fowls, and almost always fruit pies". This compares startlingly with Scotland where a prosperous Glasgow spinner in the 1820s and '30s might eat fresh meat three or four times a week; where Glasgow colliers in 1833 ate meat two or three times a week; where flax-spinners in Kirkcaldy existed primarily on "potatoes with a little herring or fat"; while the poor weavers might not taste meat for months on end: "as for broth or flesh meat, it is a very rare thing that is in a weaver's house." 

Young Allen Shaw wrote from North Carolina to his uncle in Jura referring him, for Scottish opinion of American food, to a recent visitor at their small farm:

If you dispyte what I tell you write to your friend McDougal and enquire of him how he likes our Indian bread, our rye, our potatoes, our pork, our beef, our mutton, our venison, and our wild turkies. Ask him too, if he does not think our butter and milk and honey is not equal in flavour to any produced in Canaan in the days of Joshua or John the Baptist or at the present day.

Hugh Rose, who was not as uncritical as Allen Shaw, was willing to concede that American farmers ate "high off the hog":

the people here lives on the fat of the earth, their breakfast generally consists of coffe, loaf of bread, & butter, eggs & ham, or bacon, pickled or fresh

1 Ms. letter, Still Water Village, Jan. 17, 1830.
2 Ms. letter, Verona, Wisc., March 17, 1850s.
3 The term is universally used in the NSA parish reports.
4 Letter from John Prentice, The Scotsman, April 16,1834.
6 Typescript letter, March 15, 1840.
cucumbers, also beets, their dinner varies, by the introduction of potatoes, & stewed apples, also apple dumplins.¹

Many of the foods which were strange when the emigrant first arrived were found to be quite palatable. Turkey meat was widely praised and some of the farmers like Alexander Allison went out of their way to procure it. In the South, the sweet potatoes were excellent: "we like them better than the other kind."² In New York buckwheat pancakes with a cup of coffee for breakfast were allowed to be "princely feeding"³ and in Ohio Hugh Rose became quite partial to "roasten ears" of corn.

As might be expected, the Scots missed their oatmeal porridge. Robert Ferguson, when he was homesick for Dumfriesshire, would imagine himself sitting down with old friends "to a good big dish of Porritch".⁴ An Orcadian, William Garrioch (or Garrick as it was pronounced and later spelled), living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, wrote to his brother in Perth complaining that there was no such thing as oatmeal in Michigan. When he had first settled there (having drifted down from Canada) he asked around for oatmeal and was eventually directed to the "Doctor's shop" where he found it was being sold as medicine at the exorbitant rate of 6d. per pound! By 1862, however, oatmeal was beginning to filter into Michigan from Canada and was selling at the more reasonable price of 2d. per pound.⁵ Thomas Johnstone, the farm-lad from Stirlingshire, also proclaimed that in his peregrinations through America he had found nothing "like our hearty oatmeal".⁶

But other Scots found a substitute: "The corn that we have here is Indian corn; but we love it well. It makes both a good porridge and bread; so that we find

¹Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
²Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1819.
³Ibid., April 7, 1824.
⁴Ibid., April 7, 1824.
⁵Ms. letter, New York, Feb. 17, 1856 to his niece.
⁶Ms. letter, Feb. 29, 1862.
⁷Ms. letter, Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras County, California, Nov. 28, 1852 to his parents in Denny.
ourselves at no loss for want of oatmeal."¹ Hugh Rose found the "mush" quite acceptable and some of the emigrants even liked it better than oatmeal porridge²; one family praised it every time they ate it and knew of nothing better for breakfast.³

The only major complaint about the new diet was the American predilection for pork.⁴ Thomas Johnstone wrote to his parents in Stirlingshire from Peoria, Illinois:

at every meal they have on their tables the flesh of the Hog disgusting every sober thinking person. When I begin to eat pork I begin to think about its action when alive, about them eating their young alive & if one of them dies the others eat him up and all their abominable action.⁵

Interestingly enough, he went on in a later letter to attribute the English and American lusts of the flesh to the fact that those nations consumed more meat than the righteous Scots. Crèvecoeur had a similar theory, viz. that the wildness of frontiersmen was caused by the wild meat that they ate.⁶ Not all Scots disliked pork; Hugh Rose found it better than the American beef.

Finally there is the warm praise of a Scottish emigrant in northern New York for the culinary talents of the American housewife:

You would stare to see tea presented to you in this wilderness—warm rolls, cookies, biscuits, and a dozen kinds of cakes that would tickle the Baxters of Auld Reekie to rival.⁷

In fact, the Americans were so well-provided with the victual necessities of life that, in the opinion of one young Highlander, they were "getting no less than too choicy, or ailghiosach".⁸

The land was also a prolific provider of game and fish and the nineteenth-century Scottish farmer was duly

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¹ Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1819.
² Letter from Indiana, The Scotsman, May 4, 1822.
³ Letter from New York, The Scotsman, April 7, 1824.
⁴ See Part II, Chapter I: pork was usually served on the American ships, beef on the British.
⁵ Ms. letter, May 24, 1850.
⁶ Crèvecoeur, op. cit., p. 48.
⁷ Letter in The Scotsman, April 7, 1824.
⁸ Ms. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
appreciative, for it meant not only food for the table, but sport as well. Obviously the quantity and type of game differed according to how close the emigrant lived to "civilisation", but on the whole wild life was still plentiful in the States. Most farmers probably took the opportunity during slack times (not that there were many of those) to go off to the woods for a "shoot" thereby bringing a little variety to the home table; perhaps the Scot also enjoyed his escape from the oppressive game laws* and the "lairdly" privilege of hunting game on his own land: "there is no...gamekeepers here. A man may take his gun over his shoulder and go and shoot where he pleases" said John Rutherford to his brother.¹

In Illinois Alexander Allison found deer, turkey, prairie chickens, wild geese, squirrels and plenty of fish; he also found "snaks" and wolves. Wolf hunting was, in fact, a fine sport in his neighbourhood, though a costly one as a great many horses were killed in the chase. The extermination of wolves was of prime importance to the farmers as the predators often made off with sheep and young pigs.² More settled areas offered less sport. The word from Indiana was frankly discouraging; an emigrant reported:

From the representations of this country being said to abound so much with game, you would think it an easy matter to have always plenty of fresh food; but it is not so.

He went on to explain that, although there were a lot of wild animals in the neighbourhood, they were so exceedingly shy that the only fresh meat he and his family got was squirrel (it tasted not unlike chicken). He did admit that some of the animals were not so shy; a bear had recently made off with six of neighbour Morton's hogs and only the day before writing the letter he had almost stepped on a four-and-a-half-foot diamond-backed

¹Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 1848.
²Ms. letter, Middletown, Ill., Aug. 4, 1843 and Jan. 8, 1847 to his uncle.
*see below, Chapter III.
rattlesnake—he staggered back "as much afraid as ever I was when the night mare was upon me", but the man with him coolly chopped the snake's head off with his axe.¹

In the New York of 1823 the woods were so full of partridges, quail, hares, rabbits, squirrels, foxes, wood cocks, pigeons, wild ducks, etc. that "even a blind eyed fellow like me cannot escape shooting them."² But by 1830 the wild life had thinned out enough for James Robertson to complain: "We have no field sports as at home no game but a few Pheasants and though good fishing it is not to be compared with our fly fishing."³ However, James (his son?) owned an island in Lake George "where there is plenty of deer Bear and thousands of Bass 6 lb. weight and trout 20 & 30 lb." and he cordially invited his "old friend the Laird of Drumkilbo" to partake of his hospitality there as "there are few places in the world more likely to afford amusement to a Sportsman."⁴

6. Progress

The United States are alive with the spirit of improvement beyond every other country in the world, our own not excepted, and we find more pleasure in chronicling the march of society, and the triumphs of the useful arts, than the achievements of the warrior, or the troubles and convulsions which spring from vice and misery in old and crowded communities.⁵

Between the lines of descriptions and narratives, the emigrant letters betray a wonder at the hustle and bustle of the huge, sprawling, undisciplined new land in which they had settled and to whose future they had committed themselves. Often the feeling was unwritten, but sometimes the emigrant could not repress his exuberance as he realised that he was a part of this great new nation. It has already been mentioned that many Scottish newspapers were anxious to publicise American progress

¹Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 17, 1821.
²Ibid., March 26, 1823.
³Ms. letter, Still Water Village, Jan. 17, 1830.
⁴Ibid.
⁵The Scotsman, Sept. 26, 1829.
and they sometimes illustrated their editorials with excerpts from favourable emigrant letters. The Scotsman quoted a Scot in Pennsylvania who wrote:

Roads, canals, and buildings, public and private, are going on everywhere. This country is actually on the march to outstrip all that the world has yet seen. 

Another emigrant, one G—H—W—, Esq., who had recently returned to American soil after visiting Scotland wrote a letter which was printed to show "that the late embarrassments there have entirely disappeared":

Philadelphia, 8th Jan. 1822.

Every thing is going on much better than when I left this country sixteen months ago. Manufacturers are doing wonders. All is life, spirit, and bustle. There are astonishing improvements making, particularly in farming. Canals, roads, &c. are going on at a great rate. Every one seems to be doing well, and I hear no complaints of any kind. This will shortly be a glorious country, and I thank God that I am again in it. I expect to purchase a farm in this neighbourhood, and to sit down in peace and comfort, unmolested by any one. This is more than the inhabitants of any other country can say.

James Flint quoted the same letter is his book. Some emigrants could not refrain from comparing America to their former country:

This country seems destined to a glorious course; yours really seems to be approaching ruin under the present system. Here, manufactures, mines, roads, canals, agriculture, etc. are advancing most rapidly, whilst your labourers are starving and out of work.

The cities—Rochester, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia—were all "flourishing" and the populations were soaring at such a rate that houses could not be built fast enough. And beyond the cities the line of settlement was surging relentlessly westward, farms were springing up, fences, furrowed fields and log cabins appeared where for time immemorial there had been only wind and buffalo grass. The emigrant saw it all from the perspective of a small, ancient country.

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1 Letter from Holmesburg, Pa., The Scotsman, March 19, 1823.
2 The Scotsman, Feb. 9, 1822; James Flint, Letters from America..., Edinburgh, 1822, p. 315.
3 Letter from Pa., The Scotsman, Oct. 28, 1826.
Economic fluctuations like the panics of 1819, 1837 and 1857 were recognised as only temporary setbacks in America's inexorable march of progress. Everywhere the emigrants could not help but see the prodigious expansion of population and industry. A few like James Matheson and John Williams (of whom more later) were embittered for one reason or another and found grounds for endless complaints,¹ but the vast majority of Scots recorded in their letters back to the Homeland a deep satisfaction with the new land they had found and with the boundless opportunities which existed there. Considering America's extravagant reputation, it is remarkable that more emigrants were not embittered. The friends and relatives in Scotland who received the letters or read them in the newspapers would have had to be very timid or very secure not to feel the "pull" of the land.

Dundas of Cchtertyre in a letter to his brother, David, described his travels across the United States: "have been much gratified by all I have seen of rich cultivation & romantic scenery and of the rapid rise & progress of this great and rising world."² This was strong praise, but Alexander Allison probably struck nearer home for most emigrants and prospective emigrants when he wrote simply, "If ever there was alland of milk and honey this is it..."³

¹Reverend Lewis met a man in New York City who was remarkably similar to James Matheson. He had lived in the States for 27 years but vowed never to become a citizen. He claimed no one could be trusted, the politicians were all crooks, etc. Lewis later learned that the man had "contrived to realise in this miserable country the respectable competence of £30,000". Lewis, op. cit., pp.34-35.
²Ms. letter, St. Louis, Missouri, July 25, 1842.
³Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843.
Allison was speaking literally, but his letters show that he also meant it figuratively.
Chapter III: Land of the Labouring Man

A. Work for All

I do not know that there is a country in the globe where the labouring classes are better off than they are here.

--the Smillies

On this point the letters from Scottish emigrants showed remarkable agreement: "it is the best country in the world for the poor man and the man with a small capital"; 2 "This is the country for poor people"; 3 "This is the best poor man's country in the known world"; 4 these and similar embellishments on the same theme flowed eastward across the Atlantic, feeding the hungry imaginations of the working classes in Scotland. These letters were backed by the authors of "emigrant guides" like William Chambers, who wrote in 1854:

from all that came under my notice, I am bound to recommend it [the United States] as a new home to all whose hearts and hands are disposed to labour, and who, for the sake of future prospects, as regards themselves and families, are willing to make a present sacrifice. 5

More official sources also agreed, including the Commissioners' Report of 1853 which states categorically that "full employment can always be obtained by competent workmen." 6 Both Chambers and the Commissioners were writing at the end of a period of high prosperity in the United States; however, apart from two or three periods of severe depression, employment opportunities were good throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

As we have seen (Part I, Chapter I) there was an oversupply of labour in Scotland during the first half

1 typescript copy of letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850.
2 Ms. letter, Alexander Allison, Middletown, Illinois, Jan. 8, 1847 to his uncle in Bathgate.
3 Ms. letter, Marion Munger, Little Fort, Illinois, March 7, 1847 to her uncle in Bathgate.
5 Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1854, p.344.
of the century due to 1) the demobilisation of a large part of the armed forces after 1815; 2) migration to the industrial centres of displaced or discontented agricultural labourers; 3) the Irish immigration into Scotland; and 4) the unprecedented population explosion. Consequently jobs were scarce, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. In America there was work for everyone, but the demand fluctuated and there were times when the emigrant had to travel far to find a job. His quest was often aided by the emigrant letters which helped to keep him informed about the state of the labour market in America. These letters often contained advice to friends and family and indicated where particular talents were most likely to succeed:

Morrison wants to know how a wheelwright and turner could do here. There is not much of that kind of business here...I think Morrison could do well in any of the towns in this country, as he can turn his hand to anything. If he wished to be in a town, Pittsburgh [sic], I think would be a good place for him.1

Early in the century emigration from Scotland to the United States was probably of a predominantly agricultural cast, but, as the American Industrial Revolution gathered momentum, vast fields for skilled and unskilled labour were opened and Scottish emigrants could furnish many of the mechanical skills which were most urgently required. British artisans were prohibited by law from emigrating to countries not under the Crown, but the law was easily evaded: 1) some ships claimed to be going to Canada and went instead to the United States; 2) some sailed from remote and unsupervised coastal ports; 3) mechanics sometimes obtained forged certificates identifying themselves as common labourers; and 4) many went to Canada and then moved down to the States.2

1 Typescript copy of letter, David and Allison Smillie, Wayne, Ohio, op. cit.
Following the repeal in 1825 of the Parliamentary ban on the emigration of artisans, the flow became an open one and burgeoning American industries welcomed the influx of British skill.

The labour market in the United States was influenced by the fluctuations which dominated the country's economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. During the period 1815-1861 there were three severe depressions: from 1816 to 1821 conditions were often bad, culminating in the financial panic of 1819; it has been estimated that during the worst part of that year 4% of the labour force, or about 120,000 men were idle. The late 1830s and early '40s were years of depression and during 1837-38 a severe recession threw thousands into unemployment—probably 6 to 8% of the 5,660,000 labour force. The economy revived strongly with the discovery of gold in California in the late '40s and entered a period of great prosperity in the early '50s. There was, however, another severe recession from 1857 to 1861 and, although it is very difficult to estimate the number of unemployed at this time, "he who cannot quiet his soul without such an estimate may use 6 to 8 percent"; by this time the labour force had reached 11,110,000.¹

The depressions were most strongly felt in manufacturing, which had two significant results: it meant that the worst effects were centred in New England and that the effects became increasingly important as the century progressed. In 1810 some 80% of the labour force were occupied with farming but by 1850 the proportion had fallen to about 50%, although in some areas of the country, like the South, it was still over 80%. It is worth remembering, however, that the labour force engaged in manufacturing still accounted for less than 15% by 1860.² During periods of prosperity there was a strong


movement westward, particularly among unskilled workers who were required for opening new areas. This created vacancies on the East Coast for the annual influx of emigrants to fill. During depressions, however, labour tended to accumulate in Eastern cities and jobs became relatively scarce. There was usually a corresponding drop in the number of emigrants arriving, as in the late 1830s.

Highly-skilled mechanics were in demand throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and the British emigrants, coming as they did from the foremost industrial nation in the world, had much in the way of skill and knowledge to offer American industry. It is probable, in fact, that no other nationality had as high an average of skill to contribute. Most of the British mechanics who emigrated to the United States came voluntarily to seek better opportunities, but Dr. Charlotte Erickson has demonstrated that the British trades unions, especially the old established ones like the Iron Founders, the Engineers and the Carpenters, pursued policies encouraging and even financing emigration from 1850 well into the 1880s. In theory they discouraged emigration to the United States (for fairly obvious reasons) and, although the members often insisted on going where their skills could best be used, it was not until after 1860 that this trades unions movement contributed at all significantly to the flood of emigration.

Scots gained an early toehold in American industry. In New England and New York where most of the new manufacturing centres were, print works, weaving mills, carpet factories, cotton thread factories and paper mills came to rely heavily on Scots for superintendents and craftsmen. The lower-paid ranks might be filled by French

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1 Habakkuk, op. cit., p. 96.
4 Berthoff, op. cit., pp. 31, 33, 39, 44 and 77.
Canadians or Irish emigrants, but the orders given often betrayed the lilt of the Clyde or the burr of the Forth. From the 1840s onwards coalminers from Scotland worked the bituminous and anthracite seams of the Alleghenies and southern Illinois; along with English and Welsh miners, they "provided the United States with its first generation of skilled coal miners, constituting a mining aristocracy from whom were recruited mine engineers and managers, state inspectors of mines and trade union leaders".¹

In some cases Scottish emigrants brought not only their skill and know-how, but the very machines whose secrets the British Government so jealously guarded. It was not until 1843 that the prohibition on exporting weaving and spinning machinery was relaxed.

Trained Scottish operatives who could afford to do so often waited for specific offers of employment before venturing across the Atlantic. Scottish weavers were in particular demand as is shown by the following excerpt from a report in The Scotsman of the sailing of the Camillus from Greenock in 1827:

Many of the passengers by the Camillus have been sent for, for the express purpose of being engaged in the rising manufactures of the United States. We learn that great exertions have been made in New York and its vicinity to establish what is termed the Paisley line of manufacture, viz. shawls and trimmings, and scarcely a vessel has left the Clyde for New York these some months by-past but has either carried out people or materials for this branch of weaving, and some of the passengers who have gone out in the Camillus are engaged to assist in this manufacture.²

These weavers obviously fared well in America, for the very next spring The Scotsman again reported that the Camillus sailed with a full complement many of whom were weavers:

the greater number of whom are operative weavers and cotton spinners, who have been chiefly induced,

²August 15, 1827.
by the persuasion of friends already settled at New
York and the neighbourhood, to go out thither with
a view of bettering their condition in life...1
And two years later the same ship left, again packed with
weavers and their implements and materials going to join
those successful friends and relatives who went before:

We lament to see so many of our countrymen forced
by dire necessity to leave their native country,
and carrying the improvements made in our manufactures
to another country.2

Unemployed weavers in Scotland must have been en-
couraged by such reports. Letters written by some of
the weavers who left on the Camillus may well have been
similar to the one written by David Whyte to his brother
30 years later:

I learned that there was a good Woolen Factory here
but principally in Hoserie yarns; after resting 4
days I went out after Breakfast waited on the Manager
of the Factory and asked a job—not too much ceremony
here—was interrogated can you weave (yes) show me
what you can do then. Can you warp on the stakes
(yes) there is a Web half warped, let me see what you
can; so after he saw me take hold of the yarns he
stated the Master was from Home but warp out the
Web and then go on the Loom & it was likely I would
be engaged...they were happily surprised when I came
home and told them I had been warping all forenoon;
I have been employed there ever since...have had
double the wages I had at home.3

Other emigrants wrote home echoing Whyte's success at
the weaving4 and in the paper mills.5

Perhaps the greatest opportunities in America lay
in the era of massive public works which the Government
and states were carrying out from the 1820s on. The
fact that labourers were needed in America rapidly
became known throughout Britain. Scottish newspapers
printed many emigrant letters attesting to the need for
strong backs and willing hands and quoted as their most
eloquent argument the wages which could be earned.

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1 March 8, 1828.
2 From the Glasgow Chronicle in The Scotsman, March 3, 1830.
3 Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 19, 1855.
4 e.g. letter from a Kilmarnock emigrant in Philadel-
phia to his parents in The Scotsman, March 7, 1818.
5 Ms. letters, Henry and William Arnott (see below).
In 1826 an emigrant wrote a typical letter which was published in The Scotsman:

Here manufactures, mines, roads, canals, agriculture, etc., are advancing most rapidly, whilst your labourers are starving and out of work. Ours are earning eight or twelve dollars a month, with board, and 50 cents a day, with board. Labourers were never so scarce, and never so much in demand. In the state of Ohio alone, there are about 6000 employed in canals... Working class newspapers like the Scottish Chartist Circular were also quick to spread the word of labour opportunities opened by the public works in the United States. There were occasional rumours of unemployment in America and from time to time a letter would be published which was not as optimistic as the others; The Scotsman apologized to its readers after printing one such discouraging extract: "The difficulties of America, we are convinced, are merely temporary; but it is only right that they should be known." James Matheson was characteristically gloomy about the prospects of employment for his brother's son in New York:

if he had learned Some Mechanical Business he might make a living, although there is always enough Such here and at common labour there always some that cannot get employment and clerkship is not easily got that is worthy a persons time and attendance excepting in large Mercantile and Shipping Houses and Banks & Insurance offices where they have approved and Experienced Clerks, Such gets good Salaries, Most of the others a bare living.

The vast majority of letter-writers, however, conveyed an optimism about job and wage prospects in America. Some agreed with James Matheson to the extent of pointing out that clerks (a popular example) were comparatively ill-paid in the States; to those with the interests of the "labouring classes" at heart, this narrowness of the wage-gap between skilled and unskilled labour was encouraging.

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Oct. 28, 1826.

C.g. July 3, 1841.

Sept. 23, 1820. This was written just after the severe depression and financial panic of 1819.

Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother, Angus, in Dornoch.
It meant that in America canal diggers could live as well as clerks. In 1834 The Scotsman printed a remarkable letter addressed "To the Working Classes of Edinburgh"; it was remarkable firstly because the author's name was given (this in an age when it was seemingly considered bad taste to violate an individual's privacy be dragging his name into the press) and secondly because of the shrewdness of its insight into American labour conditions. The author was John Prentice, a brother of Archibald Prentice the Lanarkshire-born founder and editor of the radical reform *Manchester Gazette* (1824-1828) and later manager of the *Manchester Times*. He belonged to a world-wandering family who were deeply interested not only in the labouring classes, but in emigration to the United States. (Archibald Prentice recorded this family interest movingly in his *Tour in the United States*: "Now, the graves of a household are far asunder; the father's and the mother's on their native vale of the Clyde, one son's on the banks of the Hudson, a daughter's and a son's on the Schuykill, and another daughter's on the Ohio."\(^1\))

John Prentice was concerned with bettering the conditions of the Scottish working classes and after seven months of careful observation in New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cleveland and Louisville he wrote:

> Physical strength is more in request than scientific acquirements; and the wages of the mere labourer approach nearer to those of the finished artist than they do with you. Internal improvements have been rapidly progressing; and canals and railroads have been made and are being made to a great extent, and are projected to a much greater, giving present and promising future employment to thousands of thousands.\(^2\)

He was personally known to many of the Edinburgh workers and his word would have carried weight beyond that of the emigrant books and unsigned letters in the newspapers.

Prentice also pointed out that labourers need not fear the economic responsibilities of a large family

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\(^1\) *London, 1849, p. 30.*

\(^2\) *The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.*
in America—there was work for the young as well. "Boys at apprenticeships are boarded, lodged, and clothed by their masters, sit at table with him, and are like his sons." Girls could hire out as help for one to two dollars per week and wives could take in sewing and washing which was "well paid for".

B. Hard Work

...any man or woman coming to this country that is able & willing to work will get Plenty of it & well paid for it; nobody can come to this country & say they cannot get plenty to eat & drink else you may just say they are drunkards & not willing to do any thing for a Sober man Labourer & mechanic is highly valued here.

The good reports flowed across the Atlantic to beleaguered workers in Scotland: "There is plenty of work for every man, and good wages." Here was fuel for ambition. "I like this country very well; a man can make a good living here if he will only half try." The "voices" from America were insistent. But always underlying the promises of good jobs and high wages was the emphasis on hard work; invariably sentences opening with "he may have for himself & his family, plenty of the necessaries of life", ended with the provision "if they be industrious". It has, in fact, been suggested that the general shortage of labour in the United States often meant longer hours and more concentrated work.

There was no room in America for people who were not willing to work or, as John Prentice put it, the only unsuitable vocation was that of "moneyless gentleman". An emigrant in North Carolina wrote

The idle and the indolent may live and die, in any part of this country, poor enough. But it is correct to say that the honest, industrious and frugal man will be amply rewarded for his toil.

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1 Ibid.
2 Ms. letter, John Dick, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
3 Letter from Louisville, The Scotsman, July 3, 1819.
4 Ms. letter, Alexander Allison, Middletown, Illinois, Jan. 8, 1847, to his uncle.
5 Ms. letter, H. Rose, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
7 The Scotsman, Sept. 25, 1819.
If a man were willing to work hard, he would not only earn a better wage than he could in Britain, he would also earn the respect of his neighbours, for no one was more highly valued than a sober, hard-working labourer. As for the thousands of emigrants who did not succeed and who either returned to their Homelands or ended their days in poverty, the successful emigrants had little time or sympathy for them: "you may just say they are drunkards."

Indeed, it is worth noting in passing, that Scots were particularly advised to shun the "creature". Liquor in America was cheap and potent and the temptation to relieve the hardships of the first few years was great. So great, in fact, that drink was reckoned by many to be the greatest single cause of failure among Scottish emigrants. A joiner who left Aberdeen in 1834 wrote back to a friend there from Buffalo:

One great cause of the want of success on the part of some of our countrymen, is their intemperance, for the prevalence of which vice there is unfortunately too much encouragement afforded, by the cheapness of whisky, which can be purchased so low as 4½d. a-bottle. No industrious man can possibly fail in making a livelihood.

While industry and sobriety were unquestionably two of the best qualities which a person might bring with him to America, there was another commodity which was reckoned equally desirable, at least at the outset, viz., money. Next to hard work, the best guarantee of success for the emigrants was hard cash. Time and again they were advised not to encumber themselves with heavy luggage on the voyage over:

If any of my friends or acquaintances are wishing to come to this country...I would wish him to bring Spanish dollars instead of cotton shawls and linen thread, or instead of any kind of goods, for it is very probable he would have to sacrifice them on the

1 Ms. letter, John Dick, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
2 Buffalo, 15th Dec., 1834; quoted in Counsel for Emigrants with Original Letters from Canada and the United States, Aberdeen, 1835, p. 49. See also below, Chapter VII.
altar of auction in the temple of necessity.¹

Robert Pollock wrote a more personal injunction to his brother William in Ayr:

Bring all the Money with you that you can; you will find it very useful here. Do not Encumber yourself with any old use less old Cloaths or old Pots or Pans. Bring nothing but what is Light and usefull.²

The emigrants who had been in America for some time were keenly aware of the limitless opportunities open to "small capitalists" in the United States. Scotsmen were particularly alive to the benefits of buying land while the prices were low—"this is the best time that ever was for any person who has money to come here, they can buy land very cheap either in the woods or cleared land";³ and this applied as well to the periods of "panic" which occasionally shook the American economy.

The most cautious Scots, like James Matheson, put their money into land even when they were working in the city; it was a safe investment—providing that the emigrant had enough experience not to overpay for it in the first place. But ready cash had many other uses: get-rich-quick-schemes would seem to have been a part of the American way of life. It was one of the facets of America that the emigrant first noticed and one of the most difficult to resist of all his temptations; "he no sooner breathes our air than he forms schemes, and embarks in designs he never would have thought of in his own country."⁴ Thomas Johnstone outlined several such "designs and schemes" in a letter to his parents in Denny, Stirlingshire; he concluded his remarks with an ingenuous hint: "I could tell you about many a profitable way of making money, but its of no use to say any more about it as I have no money."⁵ Others, like James Aitchison, succumbed.

¹Letter in The Scotsman, March 7, 1818.
²Ms. letter, Cambridge (Wisconsin?), Jan. 29, 1848.
³Ms. letter, Charles Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1822 to his brother's son, John Rose, Inverness.
⁵Ms. letter, Peoria, Illinois, May 24, 1850.
to the temptation and were ruined by it.\textsuperscript{1}

Although emigrants were encouraged to bring money, if they possibly could, they were also told, in most cases, that it was not essential: "Many a one has come over here with nothing, and some with less than nothing,—whose circumstances in a few years have become completely independent."\textsuperscript{2} This was the tenor of many letters and it was not uncommon for the writers to offer shelter to prospective emigrants for the first few months while they found their feet in the new land. It is interesting to note that such offers were frequently followed by "there will be plenty of work for you to do while you are here." Parasitic relatives were not to expect an expenses-paid vacation at their "rich American cousin's" luxurious new home.

But generally relatives were welcome, partly because of their common blood and familiar faces, and partly because of their willing hands. "It takes nearly all I can make to Pay my hired help...if there was any of Brother Thomases children that was able to Pay there [sic] Passage and come here to Me the could get Plenty of work and good wages."\textsuperscript{3} It is tempting to suppose that the "good wages" would not be quite as high as those extorted by the Americans. James Matheson wanted a son or daughter of his brother in Dornoch to help him in his advancing years\textsuperscript{4} and Robert Pollock wished for "a good steady scotsman to help Me as I am not so able to work as I have been."\textsuperscript{5}

The ideal solution, especially for merchants and farmers, was to have a large family. Provisions were comparatively inexpensive and wages were very high; emigrants who were successful soon reached a natural plateau

\textsuperscript{1}See below, Chapter VII.
\textsuperscript{2}Letter from N.Y. state in The Scotsman, June 13, 1818.
\textsuperscript{3}Ms. letter, Robert Pollock, Cambridge, April 16, 1858.
\textsuperscript{4}Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother.
\textsuperscript{5}Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 16, 1858 to his niece in Ayr.
where in order to increase their business they would have to hire help and the high rate of wages made it difficult to proceed beyond that point. If a man had some growing sons to help him, he was in a far stronger position economically. "About the farmers in this place", observed Hugh Rose, "I am given to understand, that a man with a strong family, that will not require assistance from any other hands, can do well." To those in Scotland, farmers, mechanics and merchants alike, whose large family may have been a burden rather than a blessing and to the newly-married who were worried about the mouths they would soon have to feed, such news from America must have been heartening.

C. Jacks of All Trades

Be not backward to do anything at the first that you can find to do.  

One of the predominant factors concerning American industry in the early nineteenth century was that the machinery was comparatively short-lived; it was built quickly and cheaply and just as quickly scrapped and replaced. This had two very important side-effects: it meant that the machinery was often more up-to-date than in comparable British industries and there was a pervading atmosphere of innovation— an openness to change. The importance of this latter aspect of American industry cannot be over-stressed: "The most brilliant innovation in economic growth may well be the willingness to consider innovation itself as a permanent regimen."  

It has already been noted that there was a comparatively high ratio of skilled labour in the United States. This has been attributed to several factors inherent

1 Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.  
2 Typescript copy of letter, David and Allison Smillie, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850 to friends in Scotland.  
3 Habakkuk, op. cit., pp. 61-62.  
4 Lebergott, op. cit., p. 6.
in the economy and the people: 1) the shortage of labour was most acutely felt in the unskilled classes; 2) the pull of the agricultural expansion was greatest on the unskilled; 3) the high level of general education in America meant that more people were capable of becoming skilled; 4) immigrants during this period had a high proportion of skill; 5) almost everyone in America had a rudimentary mechanical skill of some sort; and 6) it was easier for people to move up from unskilled to skilled labour in the United States.¹ Semi-skilled and skilled labourers from Scotland, then, would normally face greater difficulties in finding "suitable" employment. The letters warned the labourers that, when they first arrived in America, they could not afford to be "choosy" about the jobs they took. The important thing was to get work, any kind of work, and to save enough money to create an independence which would allow more discrimination later. The stress which the emigrants in America put on this advice implies that it was not as obvious as it seems to be. It is likely that most of the Scottish skilled and semi-skilled workers were used to following one trade all of their lives; if, for example, they started life as weavers, then they would weave until their dying day—and if there was no weaving to be had, then they would starve.

Not only were the American industries more flexible in their acceptance of innovation; the workers themselves shifted incessantly from one trade to another, learning new skills and discarding old ones:

If one thing fails, the American is not cast down but sets about some other occupation, to which he accommodates himself with wonderful adroitness; and where we should think a man ruined for life, he re-appears in another profession, as enterprising, active, and sanguine as ever.²

Emigrants who were fortunate enough to find employment

¹Habakkuk, op. cit., p. 23.
²Lewis, George, Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845, p. 420.
in their proper trades would still probably face adjustment to less division of labour and greater diversification:

In a new country he [the skilled workman] becomes almost entirely dependent upon his own resources and ingenuity alone for the supply of those means and materials which, in a more advanced stage of manufacturing progress, the division of labour abundantly aids him in procuring.¹

The division of labour in most American industries remained rudimentary until 1860 or after.²

Pressures wrought by the Industrial Revolution in Scotland were forcing a gradual change, but the emigrants could scarcely have been prepared for the flexibility of occupations and skills which they found in America.³ This would not be as true of the common labourers, of course; they would naturally try anything they could get. But the semi-skilled and the skilled often faced an unemployment which was literally of their own making.

Some people think it below them to work at anything, but their own trade. In this country a man may be working in a barnyard today, and to-morrow he may be in a counting-room. It is no shame to be honestly employed.⁴

Pride could easily lead to failure. Still, the economic situation whereby common labourers were paid almost as much as trained clerks must have helped the emigrant to justify a temporary "debasement" in occupation; and the general acceptance of the American philosophy of equality would also have made the change less degrading. The Americans judged the emigrant not so much by his occupation as by the fact that he was "honestly employed"—better a hard-working canal-digger than a proud but unemployed craftsman. Under the heading "All Work in America" the Scottish Chartist Circular assured its

readers that "Many a great man in Congress was seen in his boyhood leading his father's horses to water; and, in his youth, guiding the plough in his father's field."\(^1\)

"By accepting of a small appointment at first, an industrious or talented man, in proportion as his abilities become known, rises rapidly in estimation."\(^2\)

The higher the emigrant was on the social ladder in Scotland, the more difficult it was for him to accept the American situation. Even a skilled craftsman who found employment in his profession would be likely to resent the fact that common, unskilled labourers were considered his social equals. John Prentice summed up the difficulties of the transition from Scottish to American values with shrewd candour:

> there is not much aristocracy of trade here, and two Scotch proverbs are nearly falsified, "Jack of all trades, master of none;' it requires a "master of all work" to be at home here. Again you say, "Ae good head is worth twa pair o' hands," but if you cannot lay down your hands here, the head work will not much serve you.\(^3\)

Certainly there is evidence that many of the Scottish emigrants adapted quickly. Thomas Johnstone, who had lived on a farm in Stirlingshire for the first twenty years of his life, worked on a Mississippi steamboat, mined coal in Kingstone, went on two hunting expeditions, practised shoemaking (his father had been a shoemaker as well as a farmer), peddled wares throughout the Midwest, helped to drive cattle from Fort Kearny to Salt Lake City and panned for gold in California during his first three years in the United States.\(^4\)

David Whyte (or White) had been trained as a weaver

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\(^1\) Aug. 8, 1840.
\(^2\) Letter from New York, The Scotsman, Sept. 18, 1833.
\(^3\) Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
\(^4\) Ms. letters to his parents in Denny; Peoria, Illinois and Upper California, 1849-52.
in Scotland and he was probably acting on advice from an earlier emigrant when he went straight out to find a job two days after arriving in Watertown, Wisconsin. Though a weaver by trade, it was not until he had been to various stores in town "trying to get a situation" that he tried the Woollen Factory where he eventually got his job.\footnote{Lawrie Todd, the hero of John Galt's novel about a Scottish emigrant's trials and tribulations in the United States, was in many ways true to life; his experiences were similar to those of hundreds of other real emigrants. He was raised in East Lothian and had become, by the time he left Scotland, one of the most skilful nail-makers in the country. He did practice his trade when he first arrived in New York, but he soon branched out into other activities and tried, among other things, shop-keeping and small-time farming before moving on farther west.}

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Perhaps typical of the Scots who did not heed the advice in the emigrant letters was John Ronaldson who came to the United States determined to "make good" as a flax "hackler".\footnote{As luck would have it, the trade was foundering in the 1850s when Ronaldson roamed the New York and New England manufacturing towns looking for a job. He noted that the Yankees thought "nothing of shifting a few thousand miles" and, in the face of the competition from cheap Irish labour in New England ("being nothing but a colony of Irish"), he considered removing to the Far West or the South, there to "pick up what chance may throw our way". But his resolution wavered, and in the end he stayed in New England, working the flax when he could, and eventually gave up to return to Scotland.} As luck would have it, the trade was foundering in the 1850s when Ronaldson roamed the New York and New England manufacturing towns looking for a job. He noted that the Yankees thought "nothing of shifting a few thousand miles" and, in the face of the competition from cheap Irish labour in New England ("being nothing but a colony of Irish"), he considered removing to the Far West or the South, there to "pick up what chance may throw our way". But his resolution wavered, and in the end he stayed in New England, working the flax when he could, and eventually gave up to return to Scotland.\footnote{Perhaps typical of the Scots who did not heed the advice in the emigrant letters was John Ronaldson who came to the United States determined to "make good" as a flax "hackler".}
Whatever jobs he took unless he were a skilled mechanic or tradesman, the emigrant's ultimate aim was often a farm. David Whyte got to know many of the farmers around Watertown when they brought their wool in to his factory and he found that many of them were Scots and "a number of them has been Weavers from the down east". They were apparently men who had practised weaving on the East Coast and had subsequently moved west and taken up farms. He himself was already planning to have a look at the Government lands "though we do not take possession for a year or two" afterwards.¹

William Johnstone, who emigrated to Pittsburgh in the 1840s from Lochee, set up business as a sculptor and after a few initial setbacks (his business was burned to the ground once) he became very successful and secured contracts for mason-work with the new railroads. In 1854 he retired and bought a farm in Decator Township at Little Hooking Creek in Ohio which became the "Mecca for all members of the family who followed to the States".²

Another mason who emigrated from Ayrshire wrote to his parents from Cambridge, South Carolina, saying that he had bought 100 acres of land in the Abbeville District.³ And a blacksmith from the Upper Ward of Clydesdale emigrated to Louisville, Kentucky, where he worked at the smithing with his son as hammerman until he could earn enough to pay for a 160-acre plot of land near there.⁴ Shirreff mentioned meeting a journeyman tailor and a blacksmith, both from Edinburgh, who had settled in the Scotch Settlement near Madison; the latter had a 480-acre farm and "would not return to Scotland though the property of which he formerly rented a part, were given to him for nothing".⁵ Shop-keepers also took up farms as was

¹ Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.
² Correspondence with Mrs. Madeline D. Leishman, Feb. 15, 1869.
³ Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1819.
⁴ Ibid., July 3, 1819.
the case with Robert Pollock and, possibly, John Dick. The pattern was a familiar one and must have figured in the dreams, if not the plans, of many Scottish labourers, mechanics and merchants.¹

People considering emigration as a possible solution to their problems would be anxious to know what the chances of success were in their particular field of labour; it was a universal question and a great number of the emigrant letters contained information about local prospects. The letter-writer would often answer a specific question with reference to "cousin John" who was a wheel-wright in Ayrshire and then go on, presumably for the benefit of all the neighbours who would be given "a read of" the letter, to list the types of jobs that had good prospects and also the ones that were unlikely to be profitable.

In 1836 John Dick wrote to Edinburgh and replied to questions about farming in the area of New York City. He was more enthusiastic, however, about the opportunities for a common labourer and, as far as the skilled professions were concerned, he recommended house carpentering as "a first rate Buisness [sic] here"; blacksmithing was also well remunerated, but coachmaking was "no trade here there being no Gentleman riding in the carriages & like to trample you down". He was a shop-keeper himself and doing an excellent business with "more work than what we can do or has any conveiences [sic] for to do it with". As intimated above, he was tempted to buy a farm but decided to tarry awhile in New York until he had got "a little more of the Needful".²

As might be expected, John Prentice went into far greater detail and had obviously devoted much time and research to the problem. He pointed out that the ever-expanding "public works" of the United States would

¹see also above, Part II, Chapter II.
provide opportunity not only for the unskilled labourers but also for such skills as are involved in mining, melting, moulding and forging iron; also every aspect of the timber trade from felling to carving was involved in the process of national expansion as were quarrying, masonry, brick-making and laying and all other facets of building industries. Nor was private enterprise unproductive of employment opportunities: boat-builders, machinists, engineers, carpenters, plasterers, painters, etc. could not fail. And for independent enterprise saddle-making, shoe-making, tailoring and hat-making were allowed to be profitable occupations. Prentice could, in fact, find few fields which were not at least potentially promising, though he allowed that fine craftsmen such as cabinet-makers, book-binders and artists would have to limit themselves to a few of the large East Coast cities and their work was unlikely to be fully appreciated. He also admitted that printers, book-keepers and the unfortunate clerks received less pay in proportion to other trades than in Britain—in fact they received no more than unskilled labourers at first, though they could rise after several years to positions of relative affluence.¹

Unlike the other amateur economists who sent their advice back to Scotland, Prentice showed a keen awareness of the different situations which could obtain in the different regions of the United States. Quarrying and stone-cutting were only profitable businesses where there was stone available to use a very obvious example; iron-workers should go to the centres of the industry like Pittsburgh. A little information could, in a very real sense, be dangerous. Scotsmen emigrating to America would have had little or no concept of the staggering distances and of the changes in the economic picture which might occur between New York and Charleston, South Carolina—between Philadelphia and Madison, Wisconsin.

¹Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
Many were doubtless saved from disaster, or at least disappointment, by the fact that they tended to emigrate to the same places from which the advice had been sent. Thus they would encounter the same conditions which had been predicted. That they did seek to settle near relations, friends or fellow-Scots, at least initially, is evident from the references in many of the letters. John Rutherford, for example, recorded that he made a beeline for the farm of his friend William Young with whom he had (presumably) been in correspondence. Rutherford also mentioned in later letters the arrival of various friends from Renfrewshire, some of whom settled in the area, though in one case only temporarily.\(^1\)

The Stewarts, Smillies and Johnstomes of Lochee—inter-related by marriage—congregated initially at the Ohio farms of the Smillies and William Johnstone, some settling there and others pushing on as far as Oregon.\(^2\) Thomas Johnstone from Denny visited several former residents of Stirlingshire during his peregrinations in the United States and stayed for several months with one of them while he was recuperating from an illness.\(^3\) The parents of Archibald Campbell moved out into the country near Virginia, Cass County, Illinois, to take up a farm beside a former neighbour from Scotland who had preceded them to America.\(^4\) There are many other instances of this "clannishness"; perhaps the most significant of which are the various so-called "Scotch Settlements". There was Proud's Scottish farming community near Verona, Wisconsin,\(^5\) and a "Scotch Settlement" in Switzerland County, Indiana,\(^6\) another near Wellsville, Ohio,\(^7\) the Argyle settlement in Winnebago County, Illinois,\(^8\) and

\(^1\) Ms. letters, Verona, Wisconsin, March 17 (probably 1859) and March 21, 1859.
\(^2\) Ms. letters and correspondence with Mrs. Madeline D. Leishman, Feb. 15, 1969.
\(^3\) Ms. letters, Peoria, Illinois, Nov. 25, 1849 and May 24, 1850.
\(^4\) Ms. letter, April 18, 1852.
\(^5\) Ms. letter, Peoria, Illinois, Nov. 25, 1849 and May 24, 1850.
\(^6\) Letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 17, 1821.
\(^7\) Ms. letters, Charles and H. Rose, Oct. 15, 1822; Feb. 2, '30
\(^8\) Harvey, Daniel, The Argyle Settlement in History and Story, Rockford, Illinois, 1924.
many more. Curti has also drawn attention to early
groups of Scottish settlers in Wisconsin and Dr.
Stephen Gredel's study of ethnic groups in Buffalo,
New York, has shown that the Scots there tended to
congregate in the same "wards" and that the main con-
centration of Scots (in the north-western sector of the
city) bordered on the area where most of the English
emigrants had settled; the census figures for 1855
reveal that 383 out of 624 Scots living in Buffalo
were concentrated in three of the wards (the 1st, 8th
and 2nd). In the Ohio "Settlement" there were several
members of the Rose family from near Inverness and
one of the older members there saw so many of his friends
and relations from Scotland coming in that he was moved
to lament, "mo chreach nach iad a bha uille bhos"
(alas, that they are not all here).

Apart from the very natural tendency to go where
friends and familiar faces were, this gravitation towards
fellow-countrymen is probably indicative of economic
advantages. There was, for example, the immediate ad-
vantage of having a pied à terre and financial assistance
if necessary. Relatives would also either provide jobs
or help to find them and give valuable advice about
buying land in the neighbourhood. As Scots rose to pre-
eminence in various lines of endeavour, they tended
to employ Scots wherever possible: Robert Ferguson,
after emigrating from Netherholm Farm near Dumfries in
1851, was first employed in New York by James Beck,
another Dumfriesian; and when Ferguson achieved success
and became a partner in the prosperous Boston firm of
Shepard, Norwell, & Co. "not a few Dumfriesians" were to
be numbered among his employees. Similarly, when David

3Dr. Gredel is a Research Associate of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society and was kind enough to
supply me with census figures and early maps of the city. His conclusions are that the Scots liked to settle close
Ma. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Feb. 2, 1830.
4undated obituary notice in unidentified clipping
in Henderson family papers.
Whyte signed an agreement with his employer at the Woollen Factory in Watertown, he had the employment of his relatives, Joan and Elisa, written into it: "that is in my agreement" he boasted to his brother and spoke of getting another relative, Robert (a brother?), hired for one of the new power looms. These small webs of nepotism existed all over the United States but held their greatest sway in some of the Scots-dominated industries in the East. The granite trade, the carpet industry and various branches of the weaving industry produced many "Scotch Settlements".

From 1829 to 1833, for example, there was extensive employment of Kilmarnock carpet-weavers by the Thompsonville factory in New York. In the spring of 1830 The Scotsman "borrowed" an article from the Glasgow Journal which reported the emigration of a number of these weavers:

On Friday last the American brig Floyd sailed from Greenock for New York, with 90 passengers...Among them is a number of fine young men, carpet weavers from Kilmarnock, who were forced, by the want of work, to accept of an engagement to go to a large carpet manufactory in the State of New York. This manufactory was erected and set going about a year ago, and is conducted and manned by Scotsmen, principally from Kilmarnock, who were taken out for that purpose. The principal part of these emigrants have a little money, and are going to America, as some of them expressed it, to save their little all from falling into the hands of Jews and jobbers, sinecurists and pensioners.

Before leaving Scotland, many signed contracts of which the following is a typical example:

'A.B.' of Kilmarnock agreed with James F. Smith, agent of Andrew, Thompson and Co., of New York, to work for the Thompsonville Carpet Manufacturing Company for two years. The sum advanced for his passage would be deducted from his wages in weekly instalments.

From 1853-82 Scottish women weavers were imported by an

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1 Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.
2 April 3, 1830.
agent of the Hadley Falls Company, Holyoke, Massachusetts and the Clark Company of Paisley set up a branch of their cotton-thread manufacture in Newark, New Jersey, in the 1850s where employees for the rest of the century were mostly from Paisley. When a Scottish emigrant went to the United States, he was likely to find "plenty of his countrymen most willing to promote his views."

The emigrants who wrote home to their families and friends saying, "I'm well employed at the weaving at double the wages I received at home and the seat at the loom next to mine is empty..." were offering the same kind of inducements to emigrate as were their country cousins who found vacant farms near to their own. With a definite job awaiting him at the other side of the Atlantic, a hesitant labourer might hesitate no longer. One such sentence in an emigrant letter could have been the decisive factor in changing a family's entire life.

D. Dreams of Riches

The country is so vast and the temptation to other and easier pursuits so great, that there is no constancy to certain employment as in England. The laboring population in America is not stable; it is a shifting, unsteady, improving mass.

--James Caird

to try and retrieve My Bad fourtoune I started with a few adventurers for the Land of gold and d[j]iggers.

--Robert Pollock

The emigrants who wrote letters back to Scotland were keenly aware of the importance such information might assume in the lives of their friends and relatives. They knew that one sentence could change a life and the result was an almost academic preoccupation with reporting the facts as objectively as possible. They were particularly careful to avoid wild generalisations and scrupulously

1Ibid., p. 285.
2Berthoff, op. cit., p. 44; see also pp. 31, 39 and 79.
4Prairie Farming, New York, 1859, p. 116; quoted in Lebergott, op. cit., p. 120.
5Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 7, 1854 to his brother, William, in Ayr.
weeded out the exaggerations which one would have assumed to be humanly inevitable. This fact is not only evident from close perusal of the letters, it was often stated by the emigrants: "dear Brother I have given you A true statement as far as I know";¹ "I can advise nobody—every one knows his own case the best. I have written you as fair a statement as I am able, therefore judge for yourselves."² While it was relatively common for the emigrants to absolve themselves thus of responsibility, James McGowan outdid them all in his refusal to commit himself:

You wanted me to give you the news of America; I believe that I cant give you an account of it but youl not believe it but you can tell them that America is large and not all nown yet; Just to come over and se it leke all the rest...³

At least no one could argue with the fact that America was large.

One of the results of this feeling of responsibility on the part of the letter-writers was that they felt obliged to warn their friends against dreams of quick riches:

The mechanic and labourer...must improve his condition by settling in America; but he must not extend his views very far, since all he has to pay wages for is loss to him; he cannot make profit... In farming, a man can maintain his family independently, but cannot realise property.⁴

And the same was true in any line of work; the emphasis was always on hard work producing comfort and independence, not wealth. But people have always been quick to believe what they want to believe and there was a definite class of deluded emigrant who came to America looking for easy living and quick wealth in spite of the warnings in public and private letters—"Money is not to be found

¹Ms. letter, John Rutherford, Verona, Dec. 1, 1848.
²Letter from Ohio in The Scotsman, Jan. 10, 1818.
³Ms. letter, Richmond, Virginia, Nov. 26, 1818, to John McGregor, Monivierd by Crieff.
⁴Letter from Susquehanna, The Scotsman, Sept. 15, 1821.
for the lifting, nor is a business to be made without toil and privations." The deluded returned to Britain, certainly sadder and perhaps wiser, by the shipload:

A few days since, the Elize Warwick took back 250 to Liverpool, and the Orpheus more than a hundred; all of them bitterly denouncing the base arts of swindling captains and shipowners, who had induced them to leave their happy homes, by advertising in Europe that "labourers in America were gaining three and four dollars per day," and other lying and delusive statements, to tempt and betray poor emigrants into greater miseries than any they would be likely, in the worst of times, to encounter in their native land.¹

These particular emigrants had had the misfortune to try their luck in America during the depression of 1837-38; it is perhaps noteworthy that those, if any, returning to the industrial centres or Highlands of Scotland would find conditions little better than they had been in America. Whatever arts of swindling captains and shipowners may have been responsible for, the emigrant letters were, with very few exceptions, guilty of no greater crime than stoking the fires of hope and optimism—their facts were carefully honest, but sometimes their spirit of adventure crept between the lines.

From the earliest days America had lured men with dreams of wealth, men in search of Eldorado; but it was not until 1848 that those dreams became reality. After Sutter discovered gold at his mill, men flocked from all over the world to the gold fields of California during the ensuing years. Those who caught the "fever" in Scotland were likely to have travelled by the same route as that used by John Stewart in 1855; he sailed from Glasgow to Liverpool, from Liverpool to New York and thence to the Caribbean, across the Isthmus by train and by ship again to California.² For the most part these "diggers" had little desire to settle and it is

¹ The Scotsman, Oct. 11, 1837.
² Typescript copy of diary, Greenock to Columbia, California, April-July 1855.
unlikely that they wrote many letters while they were there, for all expected to make their money quickly and be on their way home within a year or two.

Some Scots who had settled in the States at an earlier date were also caught up in the rush, however, and they were more likely to write back to Scotland about their adventures, if not while they were in California, then when they had returned to their homes and families back in the States. Two such emigrant prospectors were Thomas Johnstone and Robert Pollock. Johnstone had been in the United States for two years and had tried many jobs in many parts of the Union with only mediocre success when he became seized with the desire, the obsession to follow the "Western Star" to California and become rich. He threw up his job in Peoria, Illinois, moved south to join a wagon train and crossed the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City where he spent the winter defending his Presbyterian faith against the Mormon attempts to proselytize him. Early next summer he moved on and arrived in Sacramento City by the end of June, 1851.

He found California a country of "hussel and life" with all kinds and colours of humanity jostling for riches. He went to work in the mines for $5 a day, finding it hard work (though no harder than working on a farm) and when he had earned enough "clothes money" he struck off on his own. His luck was not very good. Writing to his parents a year and a half after his arrival in California, he described how he had staked a claim only to discover that it had been worked dry (three or four thousand dollars' worth) by Frenchmen before he got there. He had another claim in Cook's Gulch from which he panned three to four dollars a day, but he left it in search of greater wealth and formed a partnership with some other men to run a more ambitious operation at Mokelumne Hill in Calaveras County. They worked with cradle and wheel and were making
$2.50 to $4.00 a day until a flash flood washed away their apparatus. Discouraged by this reverse, Johnstone wandered restlessly back to his claim in Cook's Gulch where he found that two men had worked it for two to four ounces of gold per day during his absence; he got back his claim but most of the gold was gone by then and it was only by dint of hard labour that he made it pay five to ten dollars a day for two months. Suspecting that fortune was not smiling on him, Johnstone trudged back to join his partners; they built another wheel and were carrying on with indifferent success but unflagging optimism at the time he wrote his last letter. They were working their way down to bedrock on a bar in the river and he still had hopes of striking a rich vein: "If I be so fortunate as to find it, I would try and make the trip home." It was the last his family in Denny ever heard of him.¹

Robert Pollock emigrated from Ayr to Lake Mills, Wisconsin, where he set up shop. For the first three years business was good and he cleared about $300; one of the problems which he faced, however, was the use of barter for payment. Barter was common, especially in the West, right up to 1860: "a bushel of corn or a bowie knife might well be preferred to a handsome engraving issued by a log-cabin bank with almost no assets."²

While the markets were favourable, there was no problem, but when the next three years produced bad crops and the farmers were hard-put to pay him, he was forced to take in wheat as payment and when the price of grain fell even more his savings were wiped out; and it was, of course, at this time that a favourite grey mare worth £20 died.

News of the tattered California-bound armies with the gleam of gold in their eyes reached his store and he finally determined on the desperate gamble.

¹Wes. letters, Cook's Bar, California, July 20, 1851 and Mokelumne Hill, California, Nov. 28, 1852.
²Lebergott, op. cit., p. 146.
With two of his brothers-in-law, six acquaintances, three wagons and nine yoke of oxen he set out in April 1852 (at the time when young Thomas Johnstone was working his Cook's Gulch claim for the second time) "on a Journey of nearly 3000 Miles and 2000 of that... uninhabited Exempt By wild Indians". They underwent hardships ("I never sleept in a bed But 3 nights for More than 6 Month and only 3 nights had off My Cloaths and very seldom My Boots"), suffered privations and survived dangers, but managed to arrive in California without losing so much as an ox. Once there, Pollock's gamble paid off:

My luck when there was Fretty good compaired with some that went with Me; the have not Made as Much as Pay there fare Back. I Made about 300 Pounds... in nine weeks; the rest of the time I made nothing.

Eight months in the mines produced nothing at all and he admitted ruefully that "Winning in California is quite a loterey." During his best days, however, he once managed to clear £21 in a day. He had word from his family in Wisconsin that they were suffering "a great deal of sickness" and he immediately sold his claim and started home. Having survived the cross-country journey once, he decided not to push his luck and went back by ship to New York and thence to Wisconsin, taking 25 days from San Francisco and accounting for £40 of his gold.

He had left Lake Mills 100 pounds in debt, but his success in the gold fields enabled him to clear himself and buy a 137-acre farm. His was almost a classic example of success—in modest measure—in the Gold Rush; he was away from home for one year and during that time he made more money than he could have saved by many years of steady work in Wisconsin. He had the good sense to leave before his earnings were squandered (the cost of provisions in California was sky-high—"flower", for example, was $32 per hundredweight) and his combination
of daring adventure and cautious thrift enabled him to set up profitably as an independent farmer.¹

What Scottish labourers who read his letter could resist a dream of adventure like that? They would pay scant heed to the hardships and perils involved and their optimism would not encompass the possibility that they, like some of Pollock's less fortunate friends, would not even earn enough to pay their return fares. How could a farm-hand, shop-keeper or labourer who had never in his life left the confines of Ayrshire or East Lothian conceive of the Great American Desert—the endless, waterless flatness, the 9000-ft. mountain passes, the heat, the cold, the snakes, the Indians, the poisoned water-holes, the trails marked by bodies of horses, oxen, burned wagons and unmarked graves? What would he know of survival in the "husselling" lawless society of California where the scum of the earth were out to rob him of every penny he made? Perhaps James McGowan was right after all—they would just have to "come over and se it leke all the rest".

E. Land for Labouring Women?

how would Jean like to work from sunrise to sunset in summer and from 7 a.m. daylight until 8 p.m. winter? but there are better places than this in America for women and I must look about me...²

Reports on feminine reactions to the United States were conflicting and it is likely that much depended on where they settled. On the East Coast there would be fewer adjustments to make than in the interior. There are, unfortunately, very few records of what emigrant women thought or felt after they arrived in America; most of the letters were written by men and, though they frequently mentioned their wives, sisters and daughters, they rarely attempted to express anything beyond superficial everyday occurrences.

¹Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 7, 1854 to his brother.
²typescript copy of Ms. letter, John Ronaldson, Schagchticoke, April 19, 1853 to his wife, Eliza, Balerno.
There can be little doubt that women were the greatest sufferers on the voyage over and the entire process of uprooting, leaving family and friends, packing belongings and having to leave treasured heirlooms behind, being responsible for babies and children during the travelling and for their health in a new climate would make emigration a nightmare for the "weaker sex". Once they were settled in America, however, it is unlikely that they were so unhappy as has sometimes been assumed. Life in the towns and on the small farms in the East would present few privations unknown to Scotland. It is true that the women would probably feel more keenly than their men the loss of family and familiar surroundings, but on the other hand they rarely had to go out and find jobs and they had their families and new homes to keep them occupied. The farther west they settled, the greater would be the distances between them and their nearest neighbours—"Neighbours do not settle close as they do in Scotland. We wand range for our stock" and the more they were likely to suffer from paucity of shops and facilities and difficulties of transportation; such conditions would probably weigh more heavily on most women than they would on most men.

The women who worked in the New England factories were expected to work thirteen hours a day according to John Ronaldson but he also thought that conditions were better in other parts of the States. Factory girls in fact worked an average of 12 to 12½ hours a day, 6 days a week for about $3 between the years of 1800 and 1835. This compared favourably with domestic help who were expected to work 14 hours a day, 7 days a week for $2.50. The well-bred young lady from Dalkeith who settled near Rochester warned her Scottish friends that

1 see above, Part II, Chapter I.
3 Ms. letter, John and Mary Thomson, Wingville, Wis., Jan. 24, 1850 to John's brother, David, in Fife.
4 Lebergott, op. cit., p. 129.
American women were very industrious and all had to work as servants charged such extravagant wages.  

Although it was relatively uncommon for emigrants' wives to take full-time jobs, many of them did try to help with the family economy by taking in sewing or washing at home. A Scottish emigrant in Louisville, Kentucky, wrote that his wife was earning $2 a week with her sewing and John Prentice confirmed that such part-time occupations were well remunerated. The Louisville emigrant went on to say:

This is the best country for women. They do nothing without doors, and very little within; if they go out they are flying in silks and muslins; they seem to be kept for a conceit.

Which does not agree very well with the Dalkeith lady's observations about the industriousness of American women.

From Centralia, Illinois, in the midst of the Civil War, James Ferguson wrote to his sister, saying that it had been uncommon until the War for women to work in the fields. He had managed "not to draw a prize in Lincoln's draft Lottery", but the high cost of labour made it necessary for his wife to put in an occasional day in the fields. Interestingly enough, Crèvecoeur reckoned that more German emigrant farmers were successful than Scots because, though the Scots were industrious and saving, "their wives cannot work so hard as German women, who on the contrary vie with their husbands, and often share with them the most severe toils of the field, which they understand better."

In Chicago Mrs. Munger's only complaint was that children were more sickly in the climate there than in Scotland. Apart from that, her letters reflect a genteel, enjoyable life with plenty of society, neighbours to visit.

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1 Letter in Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, Jan. 11, 1834.
3 Ibid., April 16, 1834.
4 Mrs. letter, Centralia, Illinois, Nov. 6, 1864.
5 Crèvecoeur, op. cit., p. 58.
and family living close by. 1 From a farm near Union
Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois, Mary and Margaret
Robertson wrote that they had made a change for the
better2 and their niece (?), Margaret, who came over
from Ayrshire to marry Robert Jack found life in the
"big city" of St. Louis, Missouri, to her liking:

Margaret enjoys pretty good health and likes the
city much better than I anticipated. She has made
a good many acquaintances here and is becoming right
fashionable. Her Scotch dresses she can hardly
bear the sight of them unless it be to cut them up
and make skirts and quilts of them2

I only wish you could see her now you would hardly
know her how fashionable she has got to be. She
never goes out now but she has a french bustle on
but as you live so far from the fashionable world
you may not understand what kind of thing the french
makes. Well—I cant describe it but it is made
exclusively for married laydies so Marget would
not be content untill she had one.4

Margaret wrote to her sister, Mary, who had married
Robert Robertson and lived at Union Grove, and teased
her gently by describing the fine fashions in St. Louis;
she concluded "so in regards to comfort I am as happy
with my Bob as the queen beside prince albert."5 She
had, however, always had a frail constitution and suffered
from ill-health. The St. Louis summers wore her down
and she died soon after the birth of her first child.

From farther west, in Verona, Wisconsin, Mrs. John
Rutherford wrote to her brother in Renfrewshire describing
her happy family life and saying "Dear Brother, I have
bettered my circumstances a good deal by coming to
America."6

Finally, from the other side of the continent, a
mother and daughter who had crossed the Oregon Trail
wrote back to their friends in Scotland, some 5,000 miles

1Ms. letters, Jan. 26, 1846 and March 7, 1847.
2Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, Ayrshire,
May 15, 1849 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
3Ms. letter, Robert Jack, St. Louis, Dec. 23, 1849
to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
4Robert Jack, St. Louis, Dec. 29, 1849 to Robert
Robertson.
5Ms. letter, St. Louis, Easter Sunday (probably 1850),
to Mary Robertson c/o Robert Robertson, Union Grove.
6Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, c. 1859.
away. They had suffered on the Trail and one member of the family, little Stewart, had been left "on a beautiful little hillock near a desert spring", but they found the Oregon country a fine place to live. Settling quickly into their new homes, they made many friends and on Christmas Day, 1861, Mrs. Stewart was surrounded by five daughters, four sons-in-law and fourteen grandchildren. All she lacked for complete happiness was some heather, hawthorn and gowan seed and she offered to send her sister in Lochee some Oregonian wild flower seeds in exchange for them.

Down the coast in California, Thomas Johnstone found a great contrast between the West Coast and the female-infested (or so it had seemed to him) Mormon capital, Salt Lake City, Utah. From near Sacramento he wrote home to his parents in virtuous indignation:

there is but few woman here and can make plenty money but dount wish my sister here; to many industmints here to do roung. There is spanish woman here, French and all kind. They dress in slim wastes long skirts sweping the ground and lady like dashing past at ful spad. What impresson must this have on Californian mind who allmost gos mad to look at a woman.

There is nothing in the letters to indicate that the Scottish women found the new land as hard as the English women quoted by Berthoff—e.g. "As for saying how I like the cuntry all I can Say is I am Happy with a good husband and I know it is my Duty to strive to make him happy also."—but unfortunately the lack of material makes firm conclusions impossible. Few emigrant women were exposed to the harshness of the Far West and it was not until after the Civil War that the emigrants began to move out into the Great Plains in earnest; there the vast, flat, unvarying grassland preyed on

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1 Ms. letters (typescript copies), Allison Smillie, Eugene City, Oregon, Jan. 1854; Jannet Stewart, Eugene City, May 7, 1861 and Dec. 27, 1861 all probably to Lochee.
2 Ms. letter, Cook's Bar, California, July 20, 1851.
3 Berthoff, op. cit., p. 137.
the minds of women who had been raised in hilly or forested country. The suffering and subsequent mental derangement of Beret, a Norwegian emigrant woman, in Rølvaag's Giants in the Earth\(^1\) is a particularly eloquent testimony of what might befall a Scottish woman in similar circumstances.

Those few Scottish women who did penetrate with their husbands into the backwoods were quite likely to have undergone the same torments as Janet Johnstone from Stirling who passed through the United States to settle on a small farm in Upper Canada. She lived in a hut "like a pig house" and described to her sister a life of constant back-breaking work, cooking, looking after the children, helping her husband, fighting mosquitoes and climate; she hoed turnips and "was like to fall down with the heat", shivered through cold nights and found her lambs killed by wolves. Small wonder that she wrote despairingly: "Dear Jane I never was in a place under the sun I liked worse...O if I was back to Scotland again I would say fareweel with the greats of glee to the old pine Stumps in Beverly."\(^2\)

But few emigrant women in the States were put to such tests of endurance and, though the lack of evidence stymies any attempt to present revolutionary theories, there are examples which indicate that the life of the Scottish emigrant wife was not as black as might otherwise have been thought. Many of them benefitted by the higher wages of their husbands and a general raising of their standard of living and, surrounded by family and new friends, they were happy.

F. Independence

\(\text{Man, as man, is something in America; but man in Great Britain is cheap.}^3\)

\(^1\) Rølvaag, O.E., Giants in the Earth, New York, 1927.
\(^2\) Ms. letter, Beverly (?), Upper Canada, Jan. 30, 1847.
\(^3\) Lewis, op. cit., p. 420.
Remember that a stout labouring man is a greater and more useful person here than a Sir Isaac Newton...1

Labourers in Scotland who were seriously considering emigration to the United States would naturally be concerned about the material advantages which they could expect from such a transition. They wanted to know about employment conditions, wages, the price of provisions, equipment and houses in order to assess whether or not they had a good chance of raising their standard of living. It was all very well to read paens of praise and promises of success in Emigrant Guides, but for a true reflection of how they might expect to fare in America they would turn to the letters from their friends and relations who were already there. It was the inevitable question, though phrased in many ways and approached from different angles: "Will I be better off in the United States?" And the answer came back from hundreds of Scots—from lodging-houses, from village shops, from town houses and small backwoods farms—almost as one voice: "Yes!"

"A man can do better in this country by far than he can do with you; manual labour is so much here a common labourer receives from 3/ to 4/ per day & board."2

"I will tell you now my own opinion and advice as one who wishes you well. If you use both economy and industry with what money you said you have you may depend on a better way of living here (if providence permit)."3

"I have no hesitation in saying that the working man would better his conditions by exchanging Britain for this—because he would have a better price for his labour and pay less for that from which labour is produced—food."4 These were the summations of contemporaries

1"Scottish gentleman", Gull Prairie, Michigan Territory, July 8, 1833; quoted in Counsel for Emigrants, op. cit., p. 53.
2Ms. letter, John Thomson, Wingville, Wisc., Jan. 24, 1850 to his brother.
3Ms. letter, Charles Rose, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1822.
4John Prentice, The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
who had balanced prices, wages, taxes, rents and all other considerations. The actual comparison at this late date of prices and expenses would result in a morass of figures into which even a professional economist might sink without a trace of relevance. For the present study, at any rate, the important point is what impression the figures would have had on prospective emigrants in Scotland.

Almost every emigrant letter contained lists of wages and prices and the figures varied from year to year and from place to place (and sometimes from writer to writer) as might be expected. By and large, however, it would seem that labourers' wages in America were roughly double the amount received in Scotland at any given time. This very general impression can be further broken down; it is generally agreed, for example, that the unskilled received comparatively higher wages than the skilled. Habakkuk divided labour into three classes: the unskilled masses, those performing work requiring "dexterity and aptitude, but not much training", and those with skills involving long training. He reckoned that on average the wages of the unskilled would be one third to one half higher than in England; the wages of the semi-skilled would rarely be more than 20% higher than in England; and the skilled might often receive less than in England, especially in the early years of the century. In Scotland the wages were generally lower than in England, so to the Scots the American wages would have been proportionately higher. The letter-writers were probably not exaggerating when they claimed that many of the semi-skilled (especially weavers and spinners) as well as the unskilled were earning "twice as much".

Obviously in some years when an economic depression in the States was not shared in Britain the ratio would diminish, but over the half-century the balance remained

\[\text{Habakkuk, op. cit., p. 22.}\]
strikingly consistent, if the emigrant letters are to be credited. The availability of land was a factor in maintaining the high level of American wages, for unless the labourers were paid enough to attract them, they would simply take up land and farm—at least in theory. Granted, then, that the American wages were considerably higher than those to which the Scottish emigrants had, for the most part, been accustomed, prices and other living expenses must be considered. Generally speaking, meat, flour and alcohol were notably cheaper in America, vegetables were approximately the same and clothes, clocks and rents were higher in the States—taxes, of course, were considerably lower.

Actual comparisons were infrequent in the letters, but in 1841 The Scotsman noted that the average price of wheat in Britain over the period 1820-35 was 58s.8d. per quarter whereas the same quantity ground into flour cost only 46s. in Philadelphia. Most of the letter-writers contented themselves with the magic phrase "I am earning twice as much" or simply listed the material possessions which they had never been able to afford before they came to America.

The letter written by John Prentice to the Working Classes of Edinburgh is an important document in this study for he actually compares the standard of living in Louisville with that in Edinburgh.

...the following will exhibit, in a striking light, the difference betwixt a labourer's daily wage here and in Edinburgh employed in an important branch of his expenditure:—

**Louisville:** 100 cents, 4s.2d., or 25 lbs. of beef, or 50 lbs. of flour, or 6 bushels of coals, or 128 gills of whisky.

**Edinburgh:** 40 cents, 1s.8d., or 5 lbs. of beef, or 10 lbs. of flour, or 4 bushels of coal, or 5 gills of whisky.

This was certainly an eye-opening difference, and one which the working classes would not have been slow to appreciate. He went on to admit that clothes were
dearer and house rents high, but allowing a man in either country to set aside one-half of his wages for house-rent, fuel, and clothing, he would still be better lodged, warmed, and clad by this appropriation here than with you. I have conversed with many Scotsmen here, and all agree that industry is sure to be rewarded.

It is interesting at this point to compare his observations with those of his brother, Archibald, who was equally concerned with the well-being of the working classes, but who, presumably, based his comparisons on the wages and prices in Manchester. He reckoned as follows:

If the labourer has earned three shillings a day in England, he will earn four shillings and sixpence here. Let us compare his relative position in the one country and the other. At home his food has cost him twelve shillings a week, and his rent, clothes, and coals, six shillings, absorbing all his wages. Let him live in the same style here, and he will pay eight shillings for his food, and nine shillings for his rent, clothes, and coals, leaving him ten shillings a week of clear savings. The misfortune is that whisky is only a shilling a gallon.

Though the English wages would appear to have been higher than the Scottish, the other figures are similar; food was less expensive in the States while clothing and rent cost more. It is significant that John Prentice, who had lived longer in the United States and made a closer study of emigrant life there, did not speak in terms of "savings", but stressed rather a raising of standards and an ability to afford new luxuries. The impression given by the emigrant letters is quite a clear one: workers who had been spending their entire earnings all their lives did not suddenly start saving one-third of their weekly wages; rather, in a variation of Parkinson's Law, their spending expanded to encompass their new salaries. They earned more and spent more with the

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1 Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
result that they lived better. The meanest, unskilled labourer ate meat three times a day (Chambers noted, if fact, that in America "the hired labourers in the fields are provided with better fare than falls to the lot of thousands of the 'genteel' classes in England."\(^1\)); like the Yankees, he dressed as well as his employer; and he lived in a house which, though only an average working man's house in America, was a mansion by Kilmarnock, Paisley or Dalkeith standards. The Scottish Chartist Circular painted an alluring picture of a typical American "operative's" house:

On entering the house of a respectable mechanic, in any of the large cities of the United States, one cannot but be astonished at the apparent neatness and comfort of the apartments, the large airy parlours, the nice carpets and mahogany furniture, and the tolerably good library, showing the inmates' acquaintance with the standard works of English literature. These are advantages which but few individuals of the same class enjoy, by way of distinction, in Europe, but which in America are within the reasonable hopes and expectations of almost all the inferior classes. What powerful stimulus is not this to industry! What a premium on sobriety and unexceptionable conduct!\(^2\)

Conscientious emigrants did save a bit each week towards a farm or a shop of their own or towards paying a wife's passage over, but as often as not relatives in Scotland who asked for financial assistance—which, judging by the letters, they frequently did—were told that the cash was not available.\(^3\) Many pleaded that all of their earnings went into "improvements", but perhaps an emigrant in Pennsylvania was nearer the mark when he wrote self-righteously, "I estimate that the waste and extravagance in living and dress in this country exceed in value all your exports."\(^4\)

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1Chambers, op. cit., p. 342.
2July 10, 1841.
3e.g. John Ronaldson, East Braintree, Mass., Feb. 5, 1854; Robert Pollock, Cambridge, April 16, 1858; John and Mary Thomson, Wingville, Wisc., Jan. 24, 1850; and John Williams (most of the letters from him and his mother mention his refusal to send money).\(^5\)
4letter in The Scotsman, Oct. 28, 1826.
The high wages in America meant more comfort for the working man and it also meant more independence. Robert Pollock, a shop-keeper who eventually bought his own farm, wrote of the high salaries paid to working men and said, "I like this country to Live in far Better than Scotland; we Enjoy far more Freedom and here a working Man can assume a state of independance that he never Could atain in Scotland."¹ This economic independance was tied in with social equality. An English aristocrat writing to a friend in Edinburgh preferred "the refined society and the purer administration of public affairs in Britain, to the lower, although more general civilisation of America", but he was open-minded enough to admit that

the physical condition of the masses in America is greatly superior to that of the same classes in Britain, and the republican institutions have some share in producing this effect. They inspire every man with confidence in his own powers, stimulate his ambition, and lead him to act boldly in pursuit of his own good... Reason confesses that what the upper classes lose, the lower gain and more than gain in America.²

This new self-confidence was also reflected in working class political activity in America. The labourers' votes could determine the outcome of an election (the Irish vote, for example, was a significant factor in New York and New England) and, at any rate, they were a force with which to reckon. John Prentice wrote, "The working classes, from their numbers, are an influental body, and no policy could long exist if deemed inimical to their interests."³

The result of this economic, social and political independence was that workers could attain a respectability and security unknown in Scotland. Most of them attempted to express this in terms of wages, prices and, in some

¹Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 7, 1854 to his brother.
²letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 10, 1839.
³Ibid., April 16, 1834.
cases, political activity. The lists of figures which filled their letters home were inarticulate efforts to convey their success but it was a language that would be readily understood. Occasionally they would find a phrase that was far more evocative than dollars and shillings, a message to the heart rather than the head:

there is great value set upon Labour here. All has to work. You will see the Master & Servant here sitting in the Same Seat in the Church and not know the one by the other.

G. The Letters

Accounts have since been received from many of the emigrants, by letter to their friends...there has been no concealment of unfavourable passages or accounts. In fact, I am assured that no such accounts have been received at all, directly or indirectly, from any of the emigrants.

--G. Poulett Scrope

Letters received by labourers all over Britain from America were encouraging. They were, in fact, so encouraging that the editors of Emigrant Guides containing extracts of letters were accused then—as they are by some historians now—of printing only the favourable ones. The Aberdeen editor of Counsel for Emigrants with Original Letters from Canada and the United States defended himself by claiming to have printed the most honest and representative letters which were available to him.

To the charge of their being highly coloured, he told the tale of the Irish labourer who wrote home from the United States saying that he had butcher's-meat twice a week. His employer happened to see the letter and indignantly pointed out that he knew for a fact that the Irishman had meat three times a day. The Irishman replied, "Faith...my friends would disbelieve all I have said, if I told them that." The truth really was hard to believe.

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1 for a further discussion of economic, political and social freedom, see below Chapter IV.
3 Extracts of Letters from Poor Persons who Emigrated Last Year to Canada and the United States, London, 1831, p.6.
4 Counsel for Emigrants, op. cit., p. v.
In 1831 G. Poulett Scrope edited a collection of letters from emigrant labourers from the Corsley, Wiltshire area; the emigrants were mostly weavers, but there were shoe-makers and other skilled workers among them as well as unskilled labourers. He summarised the letters in his introduction:

The tenor of all their communications has invariably been to the effect that, though...those who will not work are not likely to be better off in that country than in any other, any labourer or mechanic, who is willing to exert himself, may be sure of obtaining full employment at high wages, and the very best of living; employment, not for the man only, but for every member of his family likewise, down to children of six years old.

The letters pulled over a great many from the same area in the next year. In Wales the reports were equally encouraging as, indeed, were the Ulster emigrant letters.

The letters formed a vital link between family, friends and "Brothers in Trade" and their influence, especially among the labourers, was an important one as is shown both by the information they contained and by the number of emigrants who settled initially near letter-writing kith-and-kin. This "literature of the unlettered" was reliable in its context for the emigrants who wrote home about conditions in America were alive to the importance which might be attached to their every word and feared that they might be held responsible for any misrepresentations. Workers in Scotland relied heavily on the information relayed in the letters because a) their personal acquaintance with the writers made it possible for them to judge their competence and b) the letters would depict the "up-to-the-minute" (by early nineteenth-century standards) situation in America; emigrant guides and almost any printed material would refer to conditions.

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4 The phrase seems to have been coined by Blegen with reference to Norwegian emigrant letters (in *Land of Their Choice*, University of Minnesota Press, 1955).
of one or two years past and labourers were well aware of the vicissitudes of their own trades. Although wages were always higher in America, the job opportunities varied and the emigrant letters could answer specific questions about where wheelwrights could find employment, where stone-masons should settle, etc.

The letter-writers rarely exhorted their friends to come over; they presented the facts and figures and allowed them to speak for themselves. Their warnings were meticulous: labourers could expect to have to start at the bottom and work their way up and they would have to work as hard, if not harder, than ever before in their lives; quick riches were a pipe-dream and even the fabled Gold Fields of California were as likely to lead to ruin and death as not. But they did say that there was work for all at wages unknown in Britain (except, of course, for book-keepers, clerks, carriage-makers and artists), that large families were an asset and that industry, economy and sobriety were guaranteed to result in a higher standard of living and a Burnsian state of independence and equality where the man was recognised as the gowd for a' that.

\[1^{1}\text{cf. Lebergott, op. cit., p. 47.}\]
In the Court of Common Pleas, for the City and County of New-York.

STATE OF NEW-YORK

I, __________, do declare on oath, that I am bona fide my intention to become a Citizen of the United States, and to do declare on oath, that it is bona fide my intention to become a Citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever, and particularly to the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, of whom I am a subject.

Sworn this __________ day of __________ 1850.

GEORGE W. RIBLET, Clerk.

I certify, that the foregoing is a true copy of an original Declaration of Intention, remaining of record in my office.

Witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, and affixed the seal of said Court, this __________ day of __________ 1850.

Clerk.
Chapter IV: Freedom

Oh, say, does that Star Spangled Banner yet wave, O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

In the early nineteenth century the American "image" was a noble one. In 1817 The Scotsman declared, "America is now synonymous with an asylum for the oppressed and persecuted" and throughout the civilised world the United States was known as the new Cradle of Democracy and the Land of Liberty. British politicians, it is true, were not above referring to the new Republic as a fool's paradise and a flash-in-the-pan experiment in rabble government, but everyone knew that they had their own axes to grind and the personal reports from America told a different story. Emigrants repaired thither in confident expectation of finding freedom of various kinds: freedom from want, freedom from oppression be it political, religious or economic, freedom from taxes and teinds and, in some cases, freedom from jails and nagging wives. Their expectations were great—so great that disappointment seemed inevitable; unless, of course, the freedom they sought really existed.

A. Endless taxes, unholy tithes and fat-bellied factors

The concept of "freedom" is an elusive one. The Scotsman recorded a "conversation" between two soldiers on an unidentified battlefield: "'We fight for freedom,' said a republican to an imperial soldier. 'And do you think we fight for slavery?' was the reply."2 The fact that emigrants sought freedom in the United States did not necessarily mean that they were unfree in Scotland. It is more likely that emigrants expected or hoped to find a greater degree of a particular kind of freedom by removing to America. Each individual would have his own idea of what he was looking for.

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2 Oct. 12, 1825.
Some equated "freedom" with the absence of teinds, poor's rates, oppressive taxes, game laws and high rents. A Scot who owned 200 acres of land near Waterville, Wakiesha County, Wisconsin, wrote to a friend in Edinburgh:

No saucy factor, no haughty landlord, no rent-day here! It cannot be possible that the farmers in Scotland are aware of the privileges, comforts, and satisfaction that the inhabitants of this country enjoy.¹

A farmer in Ohio summed up the advantages of living in a free country when he wrote to his friends in Britain telling them that he had bought a farm on Olive Green Creek where he and his wife and family intended to live out their lives without paying tithes to keep fat rectors; high rents to rich overgrown landlords; or endless burdens of taxes, to support placemen and pensioners.²

Taxes were predictable targets of vilification, but it is somewhat surprising to find the tithes coming in for a good deal of abuse from across the Atlantic; phrases like "the parson gets nothing from me", and "We have no unholy tithes to 'grind the faces of the poo'" are features of several letters printed in the newspapers. It is surprising, because in Scotland there were no "tithes" and although the "teinds" were roughly comparable to the English tithes, they affected the landowners primarily and did not share the unpopularity of the latter. There was, however, opposition to the "Annuity Tax" which was a property tax, peculiar to Edinburgh and Montrose, for the support of the ministers of the Established Church (see below Chapter VI). The abuse of tithes in some of the letters printed in The Scotsman would appear to indicate either that the emigrants had become imbued with Yankee propaganda or, as is more likely, that the letters were written by Englishmen and "borrowed" from English newspapers.

¹Letter in The Scotsman, Feb. 12, 1848.
²Ibid., Jan. 10, 1818. The reference to "tithes" indicates that the writer was probably English; The Scotsman mentioned that the letter had been addressed to Liverpool.
It is not, on the other hand, surprising to find that the Scottish game laws were unpopular. Legally the Scottish farmer had to own "at least a ploughgate of land" before he was entitled to hunt anything but noxious animals without the owner's permission.¹ For some, then, freedom meant—as it still does to some Americans—the right to bear arms:

The people in this country they boast of their freedom...Their is no sausy big bellied factors here—no gamekeepers here. A man may take his gun over his shoulder and go and shoot where he pleases....²

Another Scottish emigrant wrote from Pennsylvania and boasted, somewhat paradoxically, "I can carry a gun if I choose; I leave my doors unlocked at night."³ Perhaps the lyrical prose of a farmer in the "Scotch Settlement" near Susquehanna strikes closer to the core of the matter:

We are as free and unfettered as the deer that bound over our fields, and the birds that delight me with their notes, while I am taking the trout from a fine stream that meanders through my lot.⁴ It is, after all, difficult to explain freedom without getting lyrical.

The emigrants also took pains to point out that there were no "Sinecure berths" in America for "if you do not work here, you do not eat."⁵ Nobody rode free in the American economy and the emigrants were perhaps even more appreciative of that than the native-born. Many Scots commented on the lowness of taxes in proportion to the improvements—railways, canals, roads—undertaken by the states and private enterprise, though the more scrupulous also admitted that they lacked some of the facilities and comforts of home. They were acutely conscious that the money they earned by the sweat of their brows was, for the most part, theirs to keep and

that the little which did go to the State was still working for them—not paying for a royal stud. Since before the American Revolution/War of Independence, taxation had been a favourite topic of debate in the United States. In Britain the taxes were relatively heavy and the Scottish emigrants who wrote to their families and friends did not hesitate to point out the "freedom" of lighter taxes.

The only complaint, predictably, was from James Matheson, writing to his brother soon after the end of the War of 1812.

...the Government of this Country...are now under a Load of debt that the next Generation will not be able to pay and every article that I could mention is taxed to pay the interest of this debt.¹

This "Load of debt" was a result of the late "outrageous" war with Britain and, according to Matheson, represented a form of divine reproach against the iniquitous Yankees. But only four years later a Scot in North Carolina was proclaiming that taxes were exceedingly light and that a man could keep what he earned and "enjoy it with all the dignity of a free man".² In the same year a Clydesdale man in Louisville wrote home that there were "no lick-stick gaugers here".³

In 1823 a Scottish farmer, the proud owner of 100 acres in Pennsylvania, wrote to friends in Scotland saying that he was paying only $25 a year in state and road taxes and poor's rates;⁴ and in 1824 a Scot wrote from New York "Our government is the most free and liberal that ever existed...Taxes are so light as not to be felt."⁵ In 1830 an emigrant admitted that the mosquito bites were troublesome "but not so much so as the taxman with you".⁶ And John Dick wrote from Brooklyn

¹ Ms. letter, Lansingburgh, June 20, 1815 to his brother, Angus, in Dornoch.
² Letter in The Scotsman, Sept. 25, 1819.
³ Ibid., July 3, 1819.
⁴ Ibid., March 19, 1823.
⁵ Ibid., April 7, 1824.
⁶ Ibid., Oct. 20, 1830.
in 1836, claiming that he had no taxes "nor is there any men upon the town coming around every now & then... calling for taxes. What taxes there is the land lord pays."¹

Emigrants who settled on uncleared land were exempt from taxes for five years and in the West taxes (and amenities) were very light, especially before 1840. As late as 1852 a typical tax on farmland in Iowa was still only 4¢ per acre; in 1860 it had risen to 10¢. Generally speaking, up until 1850 a few dollars would pay all of the taxes for the average farm in Illinois or Iowa.² There was another way of looking at it, of course; in 1815 an article in the Greenock Advertiser attacked British soldiers who were deserting in Canada and—sucumbing to the "insidious allurements of American guile"—taking up land in the "frontier" areas of Kentucky and Ohio. The Advertiser warned them grimly that they would be "most severely taxed with those afflictive burthens already mentioned, fever, ague and diarrhaea".³

B. Equality

...the people here are all on an equality the one that behaves himself best is most thought of.

--Alexander Allison ⁴

Had a Scottish emigrant asked an American for his interpretation of "freedom", the definition given would almost certainly have included the concept of equality. Alexis de Tocqueville, the young French aristocrat and author of one of the most penetrating books on America ever written, did not underestimate the importance of this factor:

Amongst the novel objects that attracted my attention during my stay in the United States, nothing struck me

¹Ms. letter, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
³Jan. 3, 1814 [sic].
⁴Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Jan. 8, 1847.
more forcibly than the general equality of condition among the people. The more I advanced in the study of American society, the more I perceived that this equality of condition is the fundamental fact from which all others seem to be derived, and the central point at which all my observations constantly terminated. It was, of course, the great boast of America that all men there were created with equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Without going into the semantic niceties involved in interpreting the word "equal", it is probably fair to say that Americans believed every man should have a chance to prove himself. It was a staggering concept for the emigrants to grasp; no longer were they to be judged by the fact that they had been born into a certain class or financial stratum and no longer would anyone else be considered superior through the simple expedient of being born a notch up the social scale. Alexander MacKay, in his travels through the United States, met a man who described himself as a "Scotchman" though his father and grandfather had been born in America. "Then you have a longer line of American ancestors than most of your fellow-countrymen can boast of", observed MacKay. "We don't value these things in this country", replied that worthy, paraphrasing Ben Franklin, "it's what's above ground, not what's under, that we think on." The emigrants, many of whom had "failed" in one way or another in Scotland, were to be given a chance to start from scratch and achieve success and they were not unappreciative of the opportunities that an open society afforded to their children. To earn respect, all they had to do was work hard. A Greenock orphan who had been elected to the House of Representatives was, understandably, enthusiastic:

2 The Western World, London, 1850, II, pp. 202-210. MacKay's meeting with this unsavoury character and their ensuing repartee form one of the most amusing sketches in his entertaining works.
Thrice happy country! the asylum of the poor
and oppressed! where every man, according to his
merit, without any other distinction than his
good conduct and intelligence, may gain the favour
of his fellow citizens, and be promoted to the
highest and most dignified stations in life! 1

The Scottish Chartist Circular delighted in highlighting
the humble origins of many of America's great men and
Founding Fathers 2 and John Prentice put an even finer
point to the expression of this freedom: "here the
working man will find himself enjoying a more exalted
station in society than his brother in Britain; here he
is not declared by act of parliament to be of an inferior
grade." 3

The Americans were obsessed with equality to the
point, wrote de Tocqueville, where "they call for equality
in freedom; and if they cannot obtain that, they still
call for equality in slavery." 4 This complete equality
was a relatively new facet of American democracy which
achieved fruition during Andrew Jackson's presidency
(1828-36), but it should not be underestimated as a
force of attraction. Political and social radicals of
all hues sought to escape from hereditary power—one of
the best known of all Scottish emigrants, Andrew Carnegie,
came from a family of strong radical beliefs and became
in his own right a staunch supporter of the "common man". 5
Another well known Scottish Republican and spokesman for
equality was the Dundee-born reformer and free-thinker,
Panny Wright, whose father had in his day financed and
promoted a cheap edition of Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.
Equality, then, meant that people of talent were given
a chance to use it—a chance they were denied in their
older class-bound societies. As President Kennedy said,
speaking in the Irish town where his family originated,

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1 Letter in The Scotsman, Sept. 25, 1819.
2 E.g. Aug. 8, 1840 and Aug. 15, 1840.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1843.
4 De Tocqueville, op. cit., p. 192.
5 See above Part I, Chapter II.
When my great-grandfather left here to become a cooper in East Boston, he carried nothing with him except a strong religious faith and a strong desire for liberty. If he hadn't left, I would be working at the Albatross Company across the road.¹

In Scotland in the early nineteenth century the relationship between farmer and farm labourer was becoming increasingly distant. Farmers who had, before 1815, been indistinguishable from their hired men were beginning to dress more smartly, insisting on eating at separate tables and generally making it clear that there were social distinctions separating them.² Farm labourers in this "new" Scotland must have been gratified, therefore, to hear that the "hands" in America sat at the same table with the farmer and his family;³ in fact, according to John Rutherford, "You would scarcely know Jack from his master as they all sit at one table."⁴ The farm labourer in America was reckoned as good a man as his employer and would, in all likelihood, have a farm of his own in the near future.

It was, of course, a two-sided coin or, more appropriately, a door that opened both ways. In the pithy words of one Scottish emigrant,

If you want to ride, or be rode upon, stop in Europe. If you wish equality and independence, you will find them here; but recollect that all others are independent as well as you.⁵

The vast majority of emigrants from Scotland to the United States were probably middle or lower class and for them the new atmosphere was exhilarating. However, to those who came from classes where the servants were expected to be subservient, the change might be an unpleasant one. An upper class English farmer had, for example, less favourable comments on the practice of having the

farm hands eating at the same table as the family:
"...a daughter of an Independent Freeholder rising from
the table to make room for the servant. Was there ever
such a thing? I could not abide it." The daughter
of a well-to-do Dalkeith farmer who settled near Rochester
evinced similar reactions during a brief stay in New
York City:

...the storekeepers are the sauciest set you can
think of, and do not seem to care whether they
serve you or not. The American servants are as
ill every bit. The hotel we staid at has a good
many servants, but no one would brush our shoes;
if you want them cleaned, you must go to a place
where there is a sign of a brush, and a Negro will
do it.

Another emigrant wrote back to a friend in Edinburgh
telling him that in New York house-owners were obliged
to clean their own shoes "and do a number of other jobs
which a servant will not do". It was, as James Flint
and others pointed out, significant that the term "Servant
Man" was translated in America to "Hired Man".

The emigrants noticed the difference as soon as
they stepped from their ships. Most were impressed by
the independent carriage of all classes in America; etiquette had not yet been "narrowed into parlours" as
Robert Louis Stevenson expressed it. He himself turned
emigrant in 1879 and wrote an interesting and amusing
account of it called The Amateur Emigrant. His first
impression of Americans was that "the people were sur¬
prisingly rude and suprisingly kind", and though he was
often offended by their rudeness (especially in shops)
he felt it was outweighed by their kindness and he
concluded that "in America, and this again in all classes,
you will find some of the softest-mannered gentlemen

1 quoted in Berthoff, op. cit., p. 136.
2 letter in Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, Jan. 11, 1834.
3 letter in The Scotsman, April 18, 1829.
4 Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 264.
5 Nevins, Allan, American Social History as Recorded
by British Travellers, New York, 1932, p. 6.
in the world."¹ Chambers observed that the Americans "with some faults of character, possess the singular merit of not being exclusive, extortionate, or subservient".² An emigrant "lately arrived in New York" found that American officials were more civil than at home and there was none of the obsequious bowing and scraping to men in authority; he noted with approval the American attitude towards "service":

On landing, you will find no porters besieging you for leave to carry your luggage, nor beggars asking charity: nor will a shopkeeper thank you, or say he is much obliged to you, although you were to purchase all his stock. On all occupations they are polite; but whether it be goods, or labour that they have to dispose of, they consider that you are as much obliged to them, as they are to you for your money.³

Naturally this independence did not meet with universal approval. Henry Bradshaw Fearon in his Sketches of America published in 1818 found that the shopkeepers of New York were "Deficient in common civility, coarse in their manners, slovenly in their persons, and in their habits of business."⁴ Interestingly enough, Reverend Lewis attributed the "sassiness" of a young Glaswegian girl working as a serving maid in Alexandria, Virginia to slavery:

This is the natural effect of slavery on female servants that are free. They become unmanageable and troublesome to all about, by their notions of independence and freedom. Extinguish slavery, and this will disappear.⁵

In 1861 the Hon. Grantley F. Berkeley wrote a book, typical of its genre, called: The English Sportsman in the Western Prairies. Berkeley, with his entourage, hounds and private arsenal, toured the United States killing, or attempting to kill, various forms of wild

¹The Amateur Emigrant, London & Glasgow, Collins' Clear Type Press (no date), pp. 86-96.
²Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1854, p. 180.
³Letter in The Scotsman, April 18, 1829.
⁴Review in The Scotsman, Nov. 14, 1818.
⁵Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845, p. 69.
life including the American buffalo. His relationships with Americans, particularly those of the working class, were highly revealing. On one occasion, typical of several, he addressed a blacksmith as "my good man" and ordered him to make a repair to his carriage immediately. The blacksmith looked at him coldly and said he would fix it after he had eaten. Berkeley, seeing which way the wind was blowing, offered extra money for quick service, but he had misjudged his man and was told to fix it himself if he was in that big a hurry. "Rum chap" mused Berkeley. His verdict on the United States was that a man "has but to travel in America and to mix with all classes, to see the errors in the system of what may be called the universal suffrage of an irresponsible people".¹

The emigrants did not miss the significance of there being no class division on the steam-boats (though lady passengers had a room to themselves) and one emigrant gazed with awe at a steam boat on which the President of the United States was at that very moment eating dinner at the public table with all the other passengers.² John Adams also travelled around the country as a common citizen and, much to an emigrant's amazement, his privacy was respected. Even the American President had more freedom than his British counterpart.

The American concept of equality did, in fact, extend to the President and people in Britain must have been surprised by the reports of his "accessibility". One Scot wrote back to Edinburgh about his meeting with Old Hickory:

President Jackson has been here and I went to his levee. He is not popular in this town, and nobody, they say, went to see him but the rabble. I having been of that party so long, went and made the best Scotch bow I was master of, and was bowed to in return by the Chief Magistrate of the Union.³

¹London, 1861, pp. 203, 28.
³Ibid., Aug. 7, 1833.
He was writing from Philadelphia which was an aristocratic town and Jackson's unpopularity there indicated perhaps that the "equality" had not yet permeated all branches of American society. Several of the "travellers" were received by the President, often without appointment and with very little formality. George Combe spent an hour talking to Martin Van Buren: "the brewer's son received by the head of state and his opinion sought, courteously and humbly, on a variety of subjects."¹

All in all, the British aristocracy escaped with surprisingly little punishment in the letters from emigrants. Robert Macnab did claim to be a slave to Lords and Lairds and John Dick did mention that the Gentlemen of Edinburgh rode their carriages like wheelbarrows through the streets "like to trample you down" and implied in other ways that the upper class of Edinburgh had incurred his displeasure, but on the whole the emigrants seemed to be more appreciative of their new status of equality with other workers both semi-skilled and skilled. John Dick apart, very few of them reflected the bitterness towards nobility expressed in, for example, the Chartist Circular, and none expressed his resentment as strongly as the Englishman, Morris Birkbeck, who founded an emigrant colony in the States: when he listed the inconveniences of living in a new land, he concluded "but it is not to be compared to the inconvenience of living at the mercy of a villanous aristocracy".²

C. Politics

We are all politicians here, you know...³

In Scotland the local affairs of a parish were run by the heritors (proprietors of land valued at no less than £100 Scots rent), the ministers and the kirk

²Letter in The Scotsman, June 20, 1818.
³Ibid., April 7, 1824.
session. In America every man was involved in the
government of the entire country—thus "letting loose
into the field of politics, a multitude without property,
principle, or education", and allowing elections to be
"swayed by the votes of united and priest-ridden Irish-
men", as Reverend Lewis commented bitterly; after re-
turning to Scotland with the Free Church Deputation, he
admitted sarcastically, "We have certainly not fallen
in love with the democratic idea since visiting the
States." Bitterness was also evoked in James Matheson
who, still smarting under the British defeat at New
Orleans, observed sourly,

"...the people in this Country...feel so proud of
their Boasted liberty that a drunken Vagabond
Strutting in Rags and involved in debt will talk
as much about the affairs of Government and feel
himself as much Interested in the Welfare of the
State as a member of Parliament would in England." Such had assuredly not been the case in his native town
of Dornoch in Sutherland.

Everyone in America was a politician at heart;
George Lewis complained that even the ministers of
religion were involved "and the pulpit has a license
for political discussion, which it has happily not yet
obtained in Britain". De Tocqueville found that
politics was about "the only pleasure which an American
knows" and saw even the women attending political de-
bates. Many of the emigrants were not slow to exercise
their new-found freedom. One recently-settled Scot,
whose "infant state as a citizen" limited his role to
" lisping", attended public meetings, lent his hand to
framing resolutions and "lifted up an independent voice
in the newspapers". Another wrote proudly back to
Edinburgh,

1 Dunlop, A., Parochial Law, 1830, pp. 229-230.
3 Ms. letter, Lansingburgh, June 20, 1815 to his brother.
4 Lewis, op. cit., p. 394.
5 Letter in The Scotsman, Jan. 5, 1825.
We are all politicians, here you know...I have already been induced to hoist my flag, and you will readily believe it to be deeply democratic; and that "liberty and equality" are words that will be found upon it.

He went on to muse wonderingly over his new freedom:

...often, when I see the question of who shall govern us? and how shall we be governed? put to the most obscure citizens in the state, it makes me, who have been used to the government of Kings and Princes, stare, and it is some time before I can muster belief as to the reality of the thing.¹

The emigrants discovered very quickly that the Americans were extremely sensitive about their government; because they felt a part of it, any criticism was taken personally. The outspoken Captain Hall, who pulled none of his punches when arguing with the Yankees—he derided the educational system, their universal suffrage and their classless society—referred to Americans as "these most thin-skinned of all people".² The surest way for an emigrant to ingratiate himself with his new neighbours was to praise Democracy, the Constitution and universal suffrage (after Jackson). Once they had repeated the formula often enough, it would be easy to start believing in it; there are few subjects as intoxicating to talk or boast of as freedom. Die-hard monarchists like James Matheson and John Williams probably began criticizing America and Americans as soon as they stepped off their ships and became increasingly bitter at the hostility they encountered.

Although involvement in politics must have been a new experience for most of the Scottish emigrants, some of them waded in with their sleeves rolled up. The orphan from Greenock who rose to be a Congressman has already been cited; John Rutherford never aimed quite that high, but he did delve into local politics in his later years, having established himself as one of the

¹ Letter in The Scotsman, April 7, 1824.
² Hall, Capt. Basil, Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828, 1829, II, 168.
most successful farmers in his county of Wisconsin, and he eventually became a Justice of the Peace:

There is no doubt but you will think we are pretty scarce of good timber when they made me Justice. There is no doubt, Tom, but you would laugh if you saw me sitting on the Bench on Court days with my black coat on deciding cases over the Yankie boys.1

Morris Birkbeck, the political and religious liberal who brought a group of emigrants to the Indiana frontier in the early part of the nineteenth century, was an emigrant who became much esteemed in his adopted country—"He was one of the ablest, most cultured, and most public-spirited men on the frontier."2 He had left England because "he found it increasingly irksome to be taxed by a government that denied him a vote and tithed by a church whose doctrines he disapproved" and in America he became enthusiastic about the possibilities of the democracy he found there. In a letter published by The Scotsman he expressed sentiments which politically-conscious Scottish emigrants may have felt with equal keenness:

Here I am part of the government—identified with it, not virtually, but in fact, and eligible to every office but one.3 I love the government; and thus a novel sensation is excited; it is like the development of a new faculty. I may become a patriot in my old age.4

D. Laws

If the great gentlemen in Old England had their lands let to tenants in this country, they would find, to their sorrow, that they would not have the law all in their own hands...5

Essential to any maintenance of freedom is a sound basis of law. Oddly enough, the emigrants rarely mentioned the much-vaunted Constitution in their letters, but they did occasionally refer to the specific laws which affected

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1 Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, undated, to his brother.
2 Dictionary of American Biography.
3 The President must be born in the United States.
4 June 20, 1818.
5 Letter in The Scotsman, Jan. 10, 1818.
them. They found them fair. Even the perennial critic, James Matheson, could find little ground for complaint here. Admittedly scoundrels and blackguards were stealing timber from his property in upstate New York and he was powerless to bring them to justice (as an absentee landlord, he realised he would have little chance against a band of backwoodsmen who would stand ready to support each other's pleas of innocence), but he blamed that on the treachery and low morals of the Yankees, not on the laws.¹

John Rutherford, as befitted a future J.P., found the laws "just and good"; he was especially impressed that a landowner with a wife and family need not make out a will as his property would automatically be inherited by them.² Allen Shaw boasted to his relations in Jura that the civil laws in America were such that rich and poor were "on a perfect equality".³

The "equality" of the law was an important fact for the emigrants. Rich gentlemen and poor farmers were equal legally as well as socially. John Dick was impressed to find "the Gentlemen here just pays as the poor man"; this was not always the case in his native Edinburgh.⁴ He was also surprised to find that in New York you just paid the landlord the sum that had been agreed upon, whereas in Edinburgh he had experienced having to pay 25% more during the year on one pretext or another.⁵

Naturally the Land Laws, favouring as they did the purchase and settlement of land, were popular with the emigrants. It is possible, however, that the emigrants were most appreciative of the lack of laws or, rather, the lack of the restrictive laws which seemed to regulate every phase of life in Scotland. The American laws gave

¹Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother.
²Ms. letter, Verona, Wisc., Dec. 1, 1846.
³typescript copy of letter, North Carolina, March 15, 1840.
⁴see below, Chapter VI.
⁵Ms. letter, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
every (free) man the right to carry a gun and hunt
where he pleased, to raise whatever crops in whatever
manner he pleased, to move where he pleased, to work
at whatever job he pleased, to be drunk or sober, rich
or poor—however he pleased. By and large the laws
were similar to those in Britain, except that like the
country they were looser and more expansive, more
egalitarian. And some of the new Americans at least
must have taken pride in the fact that their status
as free and equal citizens of the nation was embodied
in the highest law of the land.

E. Inequality

Had I met them under a hedge, I would have thought
them a gang of tinklers.¹

Most of the emigrants who came to America found
more freedom than they had enjoyed in their homelands.
But there were two kinds of Americans who were created
unequal. One was the aborigine—the American Indian.
It is significant that only one of the present letters
mentioned the Indian (a letter published in The Scotsman
from a Scot who saw Black Hawk & Co., a group of Indians
who were being used as a showpiece for political pur-
poses; he was sorely disappointed, for he had expected
physical strength, beauty and symmetry and found instead
that they resembled a gang of tinklers). This would
seem to support the theory that emigrants were seldom
frontiersmen, though Robert, the oldest of James Ferguson's
sons, was killed by Cheyennes in Montana in 1890.²

The question of slavery seems to have troubled the
emigrants but rarely, and they expended little writing
space on the less fortunate Negro "emigrants". Some
of those who lived in the South owned slaves, but they
tended to deprecate the matter. John Williams, the
Scottish merchant in Wilmington, North Carolina, mentioned

¹letter in The Scotsman, Aug. 7, 1833.
²obituary in the Boston Herald, June 11, 1890.
in an off-hand manner that he owned "6 Blackieys" and made no further comment, but Adam Fergusson felt called upon to defend himself:

I have eight Negroes men women and children that is slaves for life. Our Slaves in this country are not so in reality. They most of them live as well as their masters who have the greatest interest in protecting feeding and clothing them well.

His cousin, Robert Macnab, in Argyll did not seem shocked by the news and, in fact, joked bitterly, "You Say that you have Slaves...but we are Slaves to Lords & Lairds."

Soon after, he joined Fergusson in Tennessee.

The young lady from Dalkeith mentioned that only Negroes would shine shoes at the hotel in New York but gave every indication of accepting that as the normal order of life; though probably few Scots would have supported the extremist position of the Scotswoman Patrick Shirreff met in Springfield, Illinois: she "smiled at my objections to the slave states, and maintained the coloured population were not human beings, but inferior animals created for slavery". Her opinion was more than counter-balanced by another Scotswoman, Fanny Wright, who travelled through America and gave public lectures in halls crowded with mechanics and labourers in which she urged general emancipation of Negro slaves (and, incidentally, women both Black and White). In 1825 she bought some slaves and established a "model colony" in Tennessee called Nashoba where they were to be "prepared" for freedom (she realised the dangers of simply turning slaves loose without teaching them skills to live by). The colony failed for various reasons, including accusations of inter-racial free love, and the freed slaves were settled in Haiti.

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1 Ms. letter, Wilmington, N.C., "about 1840" to his sister.
2 Ms. letter, Carthage, Tenn., April 3, 1838.
3 Ms. letter, Glenorchy, Argyll, Dec. 1, 1838.
Allen Shaw made only an oblique reference to the situation in North Carolina when he wrote "white girls and boys know nothing of servitude in this country." Colin McIver, author of the Southern Preacher (which defended slavery), made no mention of the "peculiar institution" in his letter to Thomas Chalmers though he did send a copy of his book for Chalmers' personal library.

Some of the emigrants who settled in the North voiced pride in the absence of slavery there. A Scottish farmer in Ohio wrote in 1823 about the system of equality in America, "nor have we a single slave in the state; its constitution is the most liberal in the Union"; and from western New York came the smug report: "The slave states are retrograding fast, and New York now ranks first in everything."

One of the few letter-writing emigrants who seemed to take a deep personal interest in the problem was a man for whom The Scotsman could vouch "from personal knowledge". He was convinced that the only solution lay in the plan to "re-emigrate" the Negroes back to Africa and he had great praise for his noble friend, Fitznugh of Ravensworth, who was sending his numerous slaves to "our thriving colony at Liberia".

This most glorious charity of the age...is very rapidly gaining ground, and promises at no distant day, to free the beautiful states of Maryland and Virginia from the curse of slavery. During a long visit recently made to the South, I could not but be delighted with the general and increasing favour with which the scheme was viewed by the most intelligent part of the population.

By and large the emigrants were involved so much in the day to day process of settling and breadwinning in a strange land that they had little time to spare.

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1 typescript copy of letter, North Carolina, March 15, 1840.  
2 letter in The Scotsman, July 9, 1823.  
3 Ibid., March 8, 1826.  
4 Ibid., Aug. 29, 1829.
for ideological issues, especially ones that had no
effect on their personal lives. When they did become
involved in politics it tended to be at a more direct
and practical local level. Moreover, it is possible
that their feelings on the issue were not as strong as
is often assumed. It was always possible to "accept"
slavery on a variety of tenuous but conscience-saving
grounds. It was possible to maintain that the slaves
were no worse-off than the lowest classes in Britain.
William Thomson, a weaver who had worked in the South,
returned to Scotland and compared slave conditions
favourably with Scottish factories and was supported
by "a mechanic who [had] worked in the Free as well
as the Slave States of America".\(^1\) Shirreff had noted
in Louisville that the waiters ("of colour") were
addressed occasionally in a language which disgusted him
"yet I had often heard waiters in Britain similarly
addressed". (When he saw, however, that Negroes were
not allowed to attend the theatre, he became incensed
and could not leave the town soon enough.)\(^2\)

Various Scottish clergymen, including the highly-
respected Thomas Chalmers\(^3\), proved that slavery and even
slave ownership were not necessarily incompatible with
Scottish Presbyterianism. Even George Lewis, who was
personally very opposed to slavery, was not hasty to
condemn Southerners who had known nothing else as a way
of life. However, this does not imply that Scots were
insensitive to the moral problems, or, indeed, to the
horrors of the institution as it was embodied in the
American South—some of the earliest opposition to
slavery on moral grounds came from the Scottish High-
landers of Georgia.\(^4\) There is also evidence to show

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\(^1\)Shepperson, George, "Harriet Beecher Stowe and
Scotland, 1852-3", SHR, 32, 1953, p. 43.
\(^2\)Shirreff, op. cit., p. 273.
\(^3\)see Appendix I.
\(^4\)Haywood, C. Robert, "Mercantilism and Colonial
Slave Labor, 1700-1763", Journal of Southern History,
that there was strong Scottish support, at least in Scotland, for the abolitionist movement. William Lloyd Garrison first visited Britain in 1833 and his visit, coupled with the emancipation of the West Indian slaves, stirred the British interest in American abolition. A disciple of Garrison's, George Thompson, founded the Glasgow and Edinburgh Emancipation Societies which in times of national excitement (e.g. the "Send Back the Money" campaign of the mid-'40s) were capable of raising fervid audiences running into the thousands. Although there is no way of telling what the composition of the audiences was, it is worth noting that the Committees of the two societies were "overwhelmingly" middle class and professional—not the elements of society most strongly represented among emigrants to the United States.

Few of the emigrant letters of this period are from south of the Mason-Dixon Line; in itself this means little, but it does perhaps help to substantiate the theory that very few middle and lower class emigrants chose to settle in the South. There were at least six good reasons for this: 1) a scarcity of cheap virgin land; 2) the plantation economy which required a substantial initial investment; 3) unfamiliar crops; 4) competition from slave labour; 5) lack of industrial opportunities; and 6) Southerners tended to classify all foreigners as abolitionists and did not encourage them to settle. The result of these factors was that, of the four million foreign-born people in America in 1860, only one half million lived in the slave states.

1See Shepperson, George, "The Free Church and American Slavery", SHR, 50, Oct., 1951; and "Thomas Chalmers, the Free Church of Scotland, and the South", Journal of Southern History, vol. XVII, Nov., 1951; see also The Scotsman reports of massive support for the Thompson-Garrison-Douglass campaign of 1846.
It is easy to jump to the conclusion that this indicates widespread opposition to slavery amongst emigrants, but the six factors listed were more than enough reason by themselves and it could also be noted that the number of foreigners in the South actually decreased following the emancipation of the Negroes. One other factor which could be apposite to the lack of emigrants in the South was the widespread fear of the Southern climate, the "graveyard of the European constitution"; judging by the protestations to the contrary in the letters from the South, this was considered a very serious matter.

J.H. Burton summed up the arguments against settling in a slave state in his Emigrants' Manual published in Edinburgh in 1851:

The mechanic and farm-labourer will not seek a country where honest industry is associated with bondage and all its degradations. But what is more material, there is no room for him...At the same time, slave states are unsuitable to the constitution of the inhabitants of this country, and especially to those who require to labour... Thus wherever the mechanic, the agricultural labourer, or the industrious small farmer, sees a state branded as one of the regular slave states, he may know that it is not the place for him.

P. Freedom

If you can not get shoes you can go bare footed.  
--James McGowan

Freedom meant many things. An emigrant in Pennsylvania voiced the dream of many a poor man in Scotland when he said, "I am here lord and master of myself and 100 acres of land." To the farmer freedom was, as Crèvecœur said, knowing "no other landlord than the lord of all land"; and for the mechanic, artisan, labourer

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2 e.g. the letters of Mitchell King in the Chalmers Papers; see also below Chapter VII.
3 The Emigrants' Manual, Edinburgh, 1851, pp. 80-81.
4 Letter in The Scotsman, March 19, 1823.
and technicians it was being able to move without 
hindrance or prejudice from job to job, being unfettered 
from social usages which had held him down in the old 
country; it was being free to fulfil his life as best 
he was able, and to raise his children in a land where 
there was quite literally no limit to their potential. 
The Scottish emigrants, for the most part, adapted 
rapidly and within a year, or less, of landing on "free" 
soil, they were "dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to 
dream before"—or so it must have seemed to them. They 
threw themselves into "growing up with the country", 
as Horace Greeley had it, and were swept willy nilly 
into the pace of American life where 

Everything bears the aspect of haste. To be rich, 
or to obtain office and public honours, seems in 
every one's power, and to be a successful merchant, 
lawyer, or legislator, takes early possession 
of the heart, and makes all impatient to engage in 
the race of life.1

  The significant factor which emerges from the letters 
written by these emigrants is that they did find the 
freedom they sought in America. Again and again it comes 
out in the letters, even those written by emigrants who 
eventually gave up the fight and returned to Scotland.2 
And when they found their freedom, they became disciples 
and their letters pulled more friends and relatives 
after them. Allen Shaw ended his letter to relatives 
in Jura with an urgent plea:

    On the whole I would say to you leave Egypt and 
embark for Canaan without delay—you may be poor 
here—so am I, but I have liberty, I have food to 
eat, I have raiment to put on, and should be con¬ 
tent...In conclusion I would say to all my honest 
friends that are oppressed—Come.3 

There is a simple dignity that is hard to refute in the 
phrases: "you may be poor here—so am I, but I have 
liberty..."

1 Lewis, op. cit., p. 389. 
2 see below Chapter VII. 
3 typescript copy of letter, North Carolina, March 
15, 1840.
It has been argued that manuscript English emigrant letters indicated little interest in social equality or democratic political institutions. While it is true that Scottish "newspaper letters" were more consistently addressed to this aspect of life in America, this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that many of the manuscript letters were equally "republican".

Alexander Allison spoke warmly of the social equality in Illinois where men were judged by their hard work and respectability; John Rutherford was bitter when he recalled the "sausy big bellied factors" and gamekeepers of Scotland and proud of his political role in America; and not even the Chartist Circular could surpass John Dick's vitriolic condemnation of the Edinburgh aristocracy. Most pungent of all were the comments of Charles Rose who emigrated from near Inverness to Ohio. It was probably in response to news about the Clearances that he wrote, "I am sorry to hear the disasters which my old friends and neighbours have to encounter in that land of bondage and thraldom." He was full of praise for the independence of life in the United States and entreated his friends to come over and enjoy "this land of Liberty" where "no man can dispossess you again like those Tyrants in that country". It is possible that the Scottish emigrants were more receptive to the benefits of freedom in the United States than their English neighbours.

After 1832 British radicals began to feel that there was, after all, hope of changing laws in their own country. But there were other kinds of freedom that they could never hope to emulate. In cynical, world-weary times it is easy to turn a blind eye to the romance of freedom. America was "youth calling youth",

2Ms. Letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1822 to John Rose near Inverness.
offering a naive and pristine hope for the future. Who can measure the appeal of fresh new shores and the opportunity to start life anew? When Thomas Boyd wrote, "I have no doubt but that e'er long we may be all in America together enjoying the blessings of that free and highly favoured land", he expressed the hopes of many Scots.¹

In conclusion, it must be borne in mind that freedom, too, could be a double-edged weapon. As will be shown below in Chapter VII, some emigrants found that they could not cope with their new-found freedom and they returned to their teinds, taxes, factors (fat-bellied or otherwise) and, in some cases, to their wives. James McGowan, an apprentice in Richmond, liked America, but he also showed an intuitive grasp of the dangers:

you ned not go with less than a Dollor in you Pokect but this get the name of a free Cuntry.
As Paddy said if you can not get shoes you can go bare footed. That is your free Cuntrey said Paddy. But that is nothing as they tell us if you dont lek it you ned not stay in it.²

¹Ms. letter, Fairlie Bog by Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Nov. 28, 1845 to his cousin, Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois.
²Ms. letter, Richmond, Virginia, Oct. 3, 1818 to John McGregor, Smith, Moniviard by Crieff, Perthshire.
Chapter V: Mind and Soul (I)—Education

If I were to emigrate I believe I should prefer some part of Australia, but it is unlikely I shall leave Africa. I have no wish that my children remain here, and for the purpose of education I should choose the United States.  

—David Livingstone

Emigrants were influenced by the desire to establish a better way of life for their children. In any assessment of emigrant motivation, therefore, it becomes important to establish 1) the relative importance of education in the emigrant's list of priorities, 2) whether or not the American educational system was better than, or at least as good as, that from which the emigrant was transferring his child and 3) the emigrant's reaction to his concept of American education. Phrased more succinctly, the question is: was the American educational system part of the "pull" which helped the emigrant to reach his decision to leave Scotland? In order to answer these questions, the state of education in both countries must be reviewed.

A. Education in Scotland

...we tried hard to hold high places in our classes and gloried in being Dux.  

—John Muir

In the mid-1840s Horace Mann, a prominent American educationalist, made a tour of Europe in which he inspected educational institutions with an eye to improving American schools. His "Seventh Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education" was published under the title Report of an Educational Tour on both sides of the Atlantic in 1846. It is interesting to note that while he dismissed the English schools as containing nothing not already extant

2See Part I, Chapter II.
3Story of my Boyhood and Youth, New York, 1913, p. 29.
in America he was highly impressed in Scotland and ranked the Scottish educational system second only to Prussia and some of the German states.1

Scotland had long been associated with a high standard of education liberally dispensed to all classes of people.2 Traditionally the poor-but-deserving scholar who thirsted for knowledge found neither low degree nor empty pocket a barrier to the pursuit of at least a fundamental education; whether or not the lowest classes were equally free to pass on to secondary or university education is less certain.3 At any rate, the concept of education for the masses was deeply-rooted in Scottish history and it was part of the cultural baggage which the Scot took with him when he emigrated.4 Scottish schools were closely tied, both by tradition and law, to the reformed Church and in the international annals of education the Church of Scotland must hold an enviable record.

The beginnings of the Scottish educational system are lost in the mists of time, but as early as 1616 an Act of the Privy Council had stipulated that every parish should establish a school "where convenient means may be had" and there were movements by the Church to sponsor education before that.5 By 1696 many of the Lowland parishes boasted schools—in the three Lothians the rate was as high as 61 out of 65 parishes6—and the Act of that year which decreed a school in every parish and stipulated that the salary of the teacher should be met by a tax on local heritors and tenants was, therefore, not as much of an innovation as it might seem. The heritors

3 Saunders, op. cit., pp. 360ff.; Smout, op. cit., pp. 472-73; Kerr, op. cit., p. 35; etc.
5 Ibid., p. 452.
were required to provide the schoolhouse, if the parish did not already have one, and the teachers were to be appointed by the ministers and heritors. In theory the Act applied throughout Scotland, but it soon became evident that its effectiveness varied considerably between three basic divisions: the rural Lowlands and small burghs; the Highlands and Islands; and the large towns.

It was in the Lowlands, in the rural areas and small burghs, that the Scottish educational system bore its finest fruit during the 18th and early 19th centuries. Most of the parishes probably had schools by 1700 and almost certainly by 1760, but beyond that, in an effort to cope with the size of some of the parishes and the rapidly increasing population, "adventure schools"¹ and charity schools appeared to supplement existing facilities. Furthermore, the Disruption of 1843 had at least two beneficial results: it promoted the creation of some 500 additional elementary schools which were set up by the new Free Church and they, in turn, helped to focus attention on the chaotic condition of the Scottish educational system.²

The Free Church schools were particularly welcome in the Highlands where, because the parishes were so large (Ardnamurchan was 90 miles long) and the population so diffused, the educational system lagged far behind the rural Lowlands. As early as 1709 the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had been founded and had begun, with the enthusiastic backing of the General Assembly, to tackle the problem of bringing education to the Highlands—"which needed education as it needed bread".³

Lowland-sponsored education in the Highlands and 

¹ private schools that existed entirely off fees paid by the pupils.
³ Saunders, op. cit., p. 261.
Islands often meant English teaching\(^1\) but in 1811 the Gaelic Society of Edinburgh was formed and soon after Glasgow and Inverness established their own societies, part of whose aim was to maintain the culture of the Highlands and to educate the people in their own language. They attempted, with some success, to cope with the problems of distance and scattered population by providing "ambulatory" schools.

In 1824 Parliament created new parishes in the Highlands and Islands called *quoad sacra* parishes; they were originally ecclesiastic divisions only, but an Act of 1838 extended the parochial system of schools to the *quoad sacra* parishes; the schools thus created were called "parliamentary schools". Another advancement of 1824 was the establishment of a permanent Education Committee by the Church of Scotland and the decision of the General Assembly to finance some 200 "assembly schools" offering similar instruction to the parish schools. Although originally for Presbyterians, the schools were opened to Catholics in 1829.

In the large towns like Edinburgh education faced an entirely different challenge. Paradoxically the problem was a quest for academic renown. Legally the education was bound up with the Church, but in practice it was a "local concern" and in the burghs the schools were usually controlled directly by the town council—not by the Church—and in terms of national reputation a town profited most from one or two outstanding schools...

Edinburgh became nationally famous for its educational facilities but a survey of 1820 showed that among the poor at least one-third and sometimes one-half could not even read.\(^2\) (Figures and statistics about "literacy" are, at best, shaky as definitions of the term varied,

\(^1\)Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands..., Inverness, 1826, pp. xi-xxxv; *err*, *op. cit.*, p. 188; they were, in fact, called "English schools", Sir Robert Rait and G.S. Pryde, *Scotland*, London, 1954, p. 291.

In some cases it might involve interpreting a difficult passage from the New Testament; moreover, most people over 15 who could not read did not want to admit it.1) School attendance was not made legally compulsory in Scotland until the Education Act of 1872. Moral pressure from the Church along with the general respect for education which pervaded the country was expected to be sufficient and, up to a point, it probably was—at least throughout the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. However, local ministers and kirk-sessions often did not see fit to encourage more than four years of school attendance and not even that for girls. The Scottish girls, unlike the English, normally attended the same schools as boys. To some "reformers" this was unfortunate, not only because the girls tended to get less "practical training"—sewing, knitting, weaving, etc.—but also because "girls educated along with boys under a master to the age of 13 or 14 must unavoidably become rough and unfeminine in their habits."2 The charity schools sometimes provided a cheap education for girls in the basics of reading and writing and also in the more practical skills of spinning, sewing, and knitting.3

Fees varied considerably. The survey of 1872 found that an average fee of 2½d. per week was charged4 but the amount also depended in some cases on how many courses the child was following. It is interesting to note that the Commissioners in 1872 felt that some of the fees charged by the Church of Scotland were too high, but that they were against the abolition of fees on principle: it was felt that without fees education would be reduced to the level of charity and its value to those who received

1For a discussion of this problem in early nineteenth-century Scotland, see Webb, op. cit., pp. 104-5.
3Simpson, Ian, Education in Aberdeenshire before 1872, London, 1947, p. 152; he also mentions "sewing schools" in Aberdeen, p. 197; see also Smout, op. cit., pp. 454-55.
it would thus be diminished. There was, however, a
genuine concern for "poor scholars" and there were
various ways in which the children of working class
families could attend school without paying. There were
charity schools where those who could afford it paid
a penny a week and those who could not rode free, and
bursaries, private charities and kirk-sessions all bore
their share of the burden if necessary. There is evi-
dence that in many, if not most, schools children of the
very poor were educated free. Increasingly, however,
in the nineteenth century there was also the problem of
parents who objected not only to the fees they had to
pay for their children's education, but also to being
deprieved of the minute wages which could be earned from
the ages of 7 and 8 upwards in the textile mills of the
western industrial areas. The Factory Acts of the 1830s
and '40s which made it an offence to employ children
under 9 were widely evaded.

Physically the parish schools were mostly one-room
affairs with one "dominie" teaching all subjects to all
pupils. In spite of new non-parochial schools, the mush-
rooming population was creating severe strains by the
second and third decades of the nineteenth century. In
Ayrshire, for example, by the 1830s one half of the
schools had 100 or more pupils (still taught by one
person). Parliamentary returns of 1820 and 1834 show
averages of around 50 pupils per school in most counties,
but many schools were probably very small, bringing the
average down—most seem to have been taught by one teacher.
The "dominies" were, as a rule—especially in the parish
schools—well-qualified, being in many cases graduates

1 Ibid., p. 57; Capt. Hall accused the American free
schools of having the onus of charity, Travels in North
America, 1829, II, p. 166.
2 Boyd, William, Education in Ayrshire through Seven
3 Kerr, op. cit., p. 176; Simpson, op. cit., p. 118.
4 Scotland, James, The History of Scottish Education,
5 Boyd, op. cit., p. 96.
6 PP, 1829, XVII; PP, 1837, XLVII.
of colleges or former university students but there was a limit to what one man could accomplish when faced with 100 children.

The curriculum varied but generally comprised some combination of the four Rs: reading, writing, arithmetic and religion; Latin was often offered in the parochial schools—though rarely in the "adventure schools"—but was usually the preserve of the more gifted pupils. Religious and moral instruction remained a central part of the education of Scottish children and the kirk-session continued to examine pupils in their catechism well into the twentieth century.

In spite of the possibilities which existed for talented pupils to proceed to further education, there is evidence that secondary and university education in Scotland was largely reserved for the middle and upper classes; furthermore, the upper classes of Scotland had fallen into the habit of sending their progeny south to the English schools. The "social mixing" which was sometimes referred to would, in that case, indicate a "mixing" of the sons of merchants and tradesmen with the sons of the gentry and occasionally of the aristocracy rather than a social levelling which embraced the lower order as well. Although the emphasis in the secondary schools was usually on the classics, an interesting innovation crept north from England towards the end of the eighteenth century; between 1780 and 1810 "academies" were founded in some of the Scottish burghs which were not large enough to boast universities: viz. Perth, Dundee, Inverness, Elgin, Fortrose, Ayr, Annan, Dumfries and Tain. The curriculum in these new institutions

1 Mann, op. cit., p. 60.
4 Ferguson, op. cit., p. 203.
tended to slight the classics in favour of more "practical" subjects like mathematics, natural science, astronomy, physics, history, chemistry, drawing, painting and sometimes geography and French.

For the adult who wished to continue or commence his education there were facilities in many parts of Scotland. In some cases the parish schools offered special instruction to adults in classics, mathematics or "practical" subjects. Thomas Dick was an early organiser of this type of education and he established classes for teaching sciences in Methven near Perth. By the 1840s and '50s it was not uncommon for adults to attend evening classes, especially in the mining districts. The Edinburgh School of Arts was founded in 1821 to educate mechanics "in such branches of physical sciences as are of practical advantage in their several trades"; it was followed two years later by the Mechanics Institute in Glasgow and thereafter by others in many parts of the country.

There were also libraries; one ambitious philanthropic enterprise was the "itinerating library" of Samuel Brown which perambulated through the rich farming country of East Lothian from 1817 and created a progeny of "Libraries of Useful Books" available to the educated population. There were also libraries for the working men, e.g. the Perth Mechanics' Library and the Edinburgh Mechanics' Subscription Library, both founded in 1823. At first the choice of books was controlled by the (upper and middle class) patrons and consisted almost exclusively of technical books and religious tracts: "In short, let the working man read his Bible and his homely text-book and all would be well both with him and with society."

1 Saunders, op. cit., pp. 251, 256-57.
2 Scotland, op. cit., p. 502.
3 Ibid., pp. 304-5.
But as the workers themselves gained control there was a gradual infiltration of fiction, "imaginative literature" and books concerning political and religious controversies.

Significantly, libraries were "thinner on the ground" in the industrial belts; the new "feckless" labourers had little interest in reading. It was workers of the old trades, the artisans, mechanics, and skilled labourers, who banded together to form libraries. It has been suggested that factory workers were not interested in reading because of 1) the dehumanising nature of their jobs and 2) lack of opportunity to discuss politics and religion during their work as had been traditional— one old weaver in Kirkintilloch, when asked what they had talked about in the old days during the long hours at the loom, replied gravely, "Church and State!".

Finally some of the cities and the more "advanced" counties like East Lothian boasted reading societies, newspaper and book clubs and discussion groups.

The success of any system of education is obviously difficult to assess in objective terms. Some comment can be made, however, based on an evaluation of the literacy produced. It would appear that the parochial and adventure schools of the rural Lowlands of Scotland produced a society in which "almost everyone" could both read and write. This was indeed an enviable accomplishment "parallelled in very few societies anywhere in the world, except for Prussia, parts of Switzerland and a few Puritan areas in the United States."1

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1Ibid., p. 29; see also Webb, op. cit., pp. 106-9, 114. quoted by Mr. W.T. Stirling in a letter to me, Feb. 6, 1969.

2Saunders, op. cit., p. 251.

3PP, 1837, XLVII, most of the returns from rural Lowland parishes—with the exception of a few in the West where immigrant population had upset the balance—reported "almost all can read, most can write." See also Webb, op. cit., p. 100; and Smout, op. cit., p. 455.

4Smout, op. cit., p. 455.
Elsewhere in Scotland, however, the picture was grimmer. A survey in the 1820s by the Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands indicated that only about one half of the population of the Highlands and Islands over the age of 8 could read and that over one third of the population lived more than two miles from the nearest schools.\(^1\) George Lewis of Dundee in his controversial *Scotland a Half-Educated Nation* (1834) provided statistics regarding the percentage of people actually enrolled in day schools, shocking a country which had grown complacent about the high standard of its education.\(^2\) In Edinburgh probably one third of the population were for all practical purposes illiterate and in the industrial West, in Glasgow, Greenock and Paisley, there were the additional problems of potential markets for child labour, and a large population of Irish immigrants "who set no premium on education" and whose religion created many barriers.\(^3\) Although the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 opened public schools, not all Catholics were prepared to allow their children to attend Presbyterian schools and not all Presbyterian teachers were willing to teach Catholics.\(^4\) In 1833 a survey of Scottish mill-workers showed that, although almost all could read (96% of 28,000), only half could write (53%).\(^5\) Webb has pointed out, however, that in spite of this generally low rate of literacy "the crucial elements of the working classes—the artisans, mechanics, and skilled labourers—were almost universally literate and of a fairly high degree of attainment."\(^6\)

In a chapter tellingly headed "Past Fame of Scotland

\(^1\) Moral Statistics, op. cit., p. 27.
\(^2\) Lewis, op. cit., pp. 21-44.
\(^3\) PP, 1837, XLVII, especially in Ayrshire and Lanarkshire where the adverse effect on educational and moral standards of the migrant Irishmen and Highlanders was bitterly resented; see, for example, the report of the Minister of Carluke, Lanarkshire.
\(^4\) Scotland, op. cit., p. 183.
\(^5\) Smout, op. cit., p. 472.
\(^6\) Webb, op. cit., p. 114.
as an Educated Nation" George Lewis lamented the decline of Scottish education and compared it with the United States:

The western States of North America are preceding us in the cause of national instruction; but Scotland, which long held the precedence, and might have easily and cheaply maintained it, is still dreaming of abundance, in the midst of destitution.1

The Scottish Chartist Circular published an exposé of the deficiencies of Scottish education in 1839:

In Glasgow there are 20,000 individuals reported without education; and in Paisley, (once so famed for intelligence,) there are 3000 reported in the same state.2

The very next issue significantly included an article praising education in America: "the children of the highest and lowest rank enjoying the privilege, altogether invaluable in a free state, of being educated together." Even before 1840, then, there were signs of a growing awareness of deficiencies in the Scottish educational system and, apparently, a corresponding growth in respect for the American system.

Horace Mann was from one of the Puritan areas of the United States which had a reputation for one of the very best educational systems in the world. His reactions to the Scottish schools are, therefore, highly revealing. He found that the class-rooms in Scotland were alive with mental activity and intellectual competition:

I do not exaggerate when I say that the most active and lively schools I have ever seen in the United States, must be regarded almost as dormitories, if compared with the fervid life of the Scottish schools.3

There were six times as many questions and answers in a given time as there would have been in a comparable American school. Mann was, however, a bit concerned

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1Lewis, op. cit., p. 21.
2Oct. 26, 1839.
3Mann, op. cit., p. 61.
about the depth of knowledge in Scotland; in one Edinburgh school he found that the pupils knew the four Gospels by heart but could not answer him when he asked them questions on "points of common morals, or social, every-day duties and obligations". One of the questions which perplexed them was "What is honesty?" He also noted that some of the schools "for the poorer classes" were crowded beyond anything which he could conceive of in America.

B. Education in the United States (I)

1. British Opinions

We were too young and full of hope for fear or regret, but not too young to look forward with eager enthusiasm to the wonderful schoolless bookless American wilderness. --John Muir

British travellers in the United States recorded for posterity widely differing opinions on, among other things, the American educational system. Dickens admired the self-sufficiency and the multiplicity of opportunities afforded to those who sought knowledge; George Combe, an Edinburgh lawyer, educationalist and phrenologist of note, was, on the whole, unimpressed—he declared on one occasion that in Pennsylvania "education is deficient not only in quantity, but still more in quality", but he did note with some optimism signs of considerable mental activity; Frances "Fanny" Wright, a well-educated young Scots girl who toured the United States with her sister in 1818-19, wove paens of praise to American education into her letters to Mrs. Millar in Scotland.

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1 Ibid., pp. 228-31.
2 Ibid., p. 43.
3 Muir, op. cit., p. 55.
and was particularly impressed by the "scrupulous regard to the education of her citizens" in New England;¹ Capt. Basil Hall, the crusty and outspoken old sea-dog who toured the United States in 1827-28, complained about the mispronunciations in school and the dearth of classical study;² J.S. Buckingham, an English journalist, lecturer and Whig politician, in his encyclopaedic work on America commended the educational system, from primary school through university, and asserted that in many respects it was surpassed by no other on the globe (with the possible exception of the Prussian);³ Alexander MacKay, at once the most scholarly and readable of the Scottish travellers, praised American schools and particularly the distinction between secular and religious education;⁴ and William Chambers, publisher of the most influential emigrant literature in Scotland, referred to "their admirable educational systems, their many excellent libraries and universal fondness for reading".⁵

2. The American Approach

I then was about 20 years and my mother pursuing me and my own inclinations urging me I left them to obtain an education. —Adam Fergusson⁶

If the concept of education for all was traditional in Scotland, it was no less deeply-rooted in the American soil. Thomas Jefferson wrote that the only safe depositories for the government of the country were the people, "And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree...An amendment of our constitution must here come in aid of the public education."⁷

¹Views of Society and Manners in America, Cambridge, Mass., 1853, p. 158.
²Travels in North America, 1829, pp. 167-69.
³America, Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive, London, 1841, III, p. 329.
⁵In The Scotsman, Dec. 31, 1853.
⁶Ms. Letter, Carthage, Tenn., April 2, 1836.
For the government of the new country to work, it was necessary for the people to have at least enough education to understand the democratic institutions; they should also be able to read and write. Elementary education for all was generally accepted as a basic necessity, though some rural areas where children were needed on the farms formed an interesting parallel with the Scottish urban classes who wanted their children to stay out of school and work in the mills.¹

Two fundamental questions faced by American educators in the early nineteenth century were how many years were required to provide education to that "certain degree" and to whom should the bill be presented. Thomas Jefferson recommended three years of free education for all with opportunities for further study. But the answer, of course, could not be that simple. Many schools, especially in the rural areas, were only in session for 2 or 3 months a year. During the first three decades of the century most elementary schools were private and what public schools there were confined themselves to mediocre teaching of "reading, writing and simple calculation"; they were generally assumed to be schools for the poor; those who could afford it sent their children to private schools.²

It was the 1830s and Jacksonian Democracy that provided the boost to American public education. Widespread demands for greater equality of educational opportunity produced a considerable advance towards a state system of schools. The Jacksonian ideals were used by men like the educationalist, Horace Mann, to gain tax-supported primary and secondary education.³ New York had established the first state superintendency of schools in 1812, but it was not until the 1830s that Pennsylvania

²Ibid., p. 134.
³Best, op. cit., pp. 105-6.
(1834), Ohio (1837) and Massachusetts (1837) followed suit, while other states were "laying the foundations" for their future systems.

Religion never gained a foothold in the American schools. Although great emphasis was placed on instilling moral virtues, care was taken to weed out all overtones of sectarian instruction. The New York "Regulations for Common School Districts" states clearly that: "No catechism, creed, confession, or manual of faith shall be used as a schoolbook." George Combe summed up the American approach:

The State provides for all the people secular education and instruction in those moral departments of Christianity in which all sects are agreed, and it leaves to parents and pastors of every sect the duty of indoctrinating the young in their own peculiar tenets...

In defending this system against the Church-dominated educational structure in Scotland he cited it as the main reason for the lack of religious animosity in the States and asserted that the churches, so far from suffering, were supported so well by voluntary zeal that the clergy of the numerous churches were, literally, worked to death. He added spitefully that the churches were moreover "far more handsome, more comfortable in their accommodations, and much better filled than those of the Establishment in Scotland."

The nearest thing to a close Church/school relationship in the general educational system of the United States may have been the Presbyterian, Knox-inspired elementary schools in the Old South and Southwest. In many cases the Presbyterians in the Southern states deliberately copied the Scottish system, occasionally going so far as to use the church building as the schoolhouse. In fact the entire approach to education, as indeed

1 quoted in Combe, op. cit., p. 67.
2 Ibid., p. 147.
3 Posey, W.B., The Presbyterian Church in the Old Southwest 1778-1832, Richmond, 1932, p. 50.
to many other aspects of life, was basically different in the South. While the Northern states were developing their systems of public education, the status-conscious planters below the Mason-Dixon Line sent their children to local private schools or hired tutors to come to their homes. The whole way of life precluded Jacksonian equality; the privileged classes had to have a privileged education.  

Before the 1830s the American schools were supported financially by a variety of means. There were schools supported by subscription and public schools relied on tuition fees, rate bills and sale of school lands; there was virtually no school tax.  

The only states to establish free schools throughout all of their districts before 1850 were Massachusetts, Delaware and Pennsylvania. Vermont schools were made free in 1850, Ohio schools in 1853 and the schools of California, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island did not become free until the 1860s. Before the schools were made free, the fees varied considerably from state to state and even from district to district within the states.

Secondary education followed two main strains. The Academies which had crept north into Scotland during the second half of the eighteenth century also appeared in the United States where they replaced the "Latin schools" whose emphasis on the Classics was out of tune with the developing American way of life. The Academies were particularly well-suited to agrarian America, since students "lived-in" and did not have to make long trips in to school every day from out-lying farms. The curricula had a strong practical bias and helped to prepare for college, business or teacher-training. Although the "ornamental" studies like Latin,


2Good, op. cit., p. 147.
Greek and arithmetic were continued, they also offered English, modern languages, algebra, history, navigation, agriculture, surveying and pedagogy.\textsuperscript{1} They were supported primarily by tuition, although "poor but deserving scholars" were seldom turned away.\textsuperscript{2} In some instances, following the Dartmouth College case in 1819, they were granted state charters and managed to obtain some state aid. Academies spread rapidly throughout the United States. In 1855 Henry Barnard made a survey of educational facilities: there were 80,978 public schools, 6,185 Academies and 239 colleges. Even Texas had 97 Academies by 1850.

Between 1821 and 1870 the Academies were superseded by public high schools. The curricula offered were scarcely different (except that the high schools did not usually offer the more outré subjects sometimes available in Academies) but where the Academies had been run and controlled by a board of self-perpetuating trustees, the high schools were controlled by an elected body of local citizens. The new high schools were "completely public institutions."\textsuperscript{3}

It is unlikely that emigrants seriously considered the pros and cons of American university education. Most of the university-bound traffic was in the other direction. David Livingstone's younger brother, Charles, was probably an exception to the general rule. Charles was born in Blantyre, Lanarkshire, in 1821; he attended the local school, worked with David in a cotton factory and later in a lace factory at Hamilton. He became a Sunday-school teacher and aspired to further education. His financial position being insecure, he was advised by his brother David to go to a college in America where he could "work his way through".\textsuperscript{4} He was accepted by Oberlin and in

\textsuperscript{2}Best, op. cit., p. 101.
\textsuperscript{3}Sizer, op. cit., p. 5.
1840 he emigrated to Ohio to take up his studies at the newly-formed college which was primarily a training-school for missionaries and which had, following the 1833 "purge" at the Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, become the "chief center of abolitionism in the West".  

After he had been in Oberlin for a short while, he wrote a long letter to his family in Hamilton describing his journey over and his initial experiences and impressions of Oberlin. The letter, which is preserved in the Oberlin Library, is an exceptionally interesting one: he found the College an unusual place for "all are so loving, so kind, so much brother by love. All with whom I am acquainted [sic] take a deep interest in my welfare." A fellow-Scot, from Elgin, looked him up and told him that if he needed money or anything else there were several students including himself who would provide it. Livingstone described a typical day:

We rise in the morning now at 4 mostly, all up at 5, then you may hear the voice of prayer in every room. At 6 we assemble in the Chapel for prayers, a chapter is read by some one of the professors, a hymn sung by the Choir, and prayer...Then when we come out of the Chapel Breakfast bell tolls. This is about half past six...then—my recitation of Arithmetic at 7, Geography at 8 & Grammar at 11, all large classes, dinner Bell at ten minutes past 12. Go to work at 2 till 6 when we all assemble in the chapel for evening prayers, half past six Supper Bell tolls. After supper Mr. Benham and I read a chapter and pray to our heavenly Father then we study till 9 or ten then go to bed.

Caught up in his enthusiasm for his new home, Charles recommended that his family emigrate en masse to Ohio where his sisters could join him at College: "There are 133 young ladies students some of them far taller and fatter than you Janet."  

2Ms. Letter, Colonial Hall, Oberlin, Ohio, May 22, 1840 to his family, Almada St., Hamilton, Scotland.  
3Ibid.; Oberlin was the first co-educational college in the United States.
C. Education in the United States (II)

Our government and habits are republican; they cherish equal rights and tend to an equal distribution of property. Our mode of education has the same tendency to promote an equal distribution of knowledge...We are all scholars in the useful; and employed in improving the works of nature, rather than in imitating them.¹

One of the earliest manifestations of a distinct American "character" was the veneration of utility. Living on the harsh frontier of civilisation, the inhabitants of the North American colonies had little time for the finer aspects of their inherited culture; they sought rather to distil that which they could use in their battle for survival or, as was more often the case, to modify or adapt the fruits of European learning to their own practical needs. This love of the Real (in Dickens' time-worn phrase) became, quite naturally, mirrored in their educational system.

As has been already mentioned above, the Latin schools which stressed the Classical education gave way before the end of the eighteenth century to the Academies where courses offered included not only Classical subjects but also less esoteric fields of endeavour with a decidedly practical bent: agriculture, navigation, surveying, algebra, etc. The utilitarian philosophy was taught, if not from the cradle, at least from the earliest school days as is reflected in the early school books. Ruth Miller Elson in her survey of nineteenth-century school books and "culture" commented:

The primary intellectual value embodied in these books is that the only important knowledge is that which is "useful." The word "knowledge" is so often preceded by the word "useful" that it is clear only such knowledge is approved, and it is this kind of

knowledge that is provided by a sound education. Useful knowledge is presumed to be uniquely characteristic of American education.¹

The 1764 Charter of what was to become Brown University boasted in part:

Institutions of liberal education are highly beneficial to society, by forming the rising generation to virtue, knowledge and useful literature; and thus preserving in the community a succession of men duly qualified for discharging the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.²

Life was a business for which education was the vocational training.

Horace Mann had been surprised to find that pupils in Edinburgh were incapable of answering his question "What is honesty?" This reflects another aspect of the American educational system, perhaps unique in the world: the preoccupation with teaching morals. There was, admittedly, a reaction in some quarters of Scotland against what were seen as mechanical aspects of the learning process and teachers like David Stowe of Glasgow sought to educate the characters and morals of his pupils as well as their minds.³ In America, however, the feeling was ingrained; the young pupils were the civic leaders of tomorrow and it was essential that they learn not only the fundamentals of republican government, but also the morality necessary for good leadership. There was a distrust of "pure" knowledge but a profound belief that education could lead to the improvement of men's rational and moral capacities. It was the triumph of man's innate morality through discipline and education that led to the creation of "useful" members of society.⁴

The underlying theme of the American schoolbooks was that virtue was superior to knowledge and pupils

were urged toward "thrift, hard work, and the rejection of frivolity".\(^1\) The American heroes—men like George Washington and Daniel Boone—were distinguished, in legend at least, for their virtue and for their grasp of useful knowledge. Apart from Washington's brief stint at surveying, they found formal education unnecessary. And it was Benjamin Franklin who embodied the self-made, thrifty man who worked hard and prospered through common sense. George Combe noticed a substantial Franklin cult during his visit to the United States:

In America, Franklin holds the same rank in public estimation that Saint John of Nepomuk does in Bohemia: he is their saint and prophet.\(^2\)

The virtues of hard work, honesty and frugality were instilled in young Americans through the books they read. Henry Ward Beecher in his influential Lectures to Young Men published in 1844 said, "I never knew an early-rising, hard-working, prudent man, careful of his earnings, and strictly honest who complained of bad luck."\(^3\)

Earning money became a virtue in itself and that most "virtuous" of all Scottish emigrants, Andrew Carnegie, was able to assure students at Cornell:

I can confidently recommend to you the business career as one in which there is abundant room for the exercise of man's highest power, and of every good quality in human nature...The business career is...a stern school of all the virtues.\(^4\)

It is interesting to note in passing that, if Horace Mann was surprised at the Edinburgh pupil's lack of understanding of morality, he was shocked by some of the schoolbooks which fell under his scrutiny in England.

I saw text-books for schools, on no single page of which should a child ever be allowed to look,—books for the young, filled with vile caricatures and low ribaldry, at once degrading to the taste and fatal to the moral sensibilities...\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Elson, op. cit., p. 416.
\(^2\) Combe, op. cit., p. 13.
\(^3\) Quoted in Jones, op. cit., p. 216.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 217.
\(^5\) Mann, op. cit., p. 40.
Fanny Wright was impressed by the simplicity and morality of the American education. She found that the young pupils learned "from the page of truth and embrace principles often unknown to the most finished scholar in Europe".¹ British travellers were, in fact, more or less unanimous in according America a high moral standard—with the significant exceptions of business dealings, politics and tendencies towards violence.²

It was during the period of Jacksonian Democracy that the American educational system finally hacked away the last remaining vestiges of the European concepts of the virtue of intellectual knowledge. The "knowledge" of a farmer or merchant became truly equal in the eyes of the people to the knowledge of a classically-educated scholar.³

The over-all result of this emphasis on primary education for the good of the nation and the disdain of high scholarship was a nation of moderately-educated individuals:

I do not believe that there is a country in the world where, in proportion to the population, there are so few uninstructed and at the same time so few learned individuals.⁴ Americans were proud of this result. It showed that their education was democratically apportioned among the people and not the exclusive privilege of the few. Fanny Wright summed up for the defence when she stated that there were not many universities in the United States because the object of their educators was "not to raise a few very learned citizens but a well-informed and liberal-minded community".⁵ The paradox of the lack of respect for "book learning" and the widespread support for education was happily resolved by the need to foster morality, virtue and a basic knowledge (a useful knowledge)

¹Wright, Frances, op. cit., p. 217.
²Nevins, Allan, American Social History as Recorded by British Travellers, New York, 1932, pp. 8-9.
³Best, op. cit., p. 105.
⁴Tocqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America, New York, 1956, p. 53.
⁵Wright, Frances, op. cit., p. 216.
of the principles of good government in the rising generations. Thomas Jefferson's famous Ordinance of 1787 expressed the cornerstone of American education:

Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.1

D. Self-Help

It is a matter of wonderment...to witness the youthful workmen, the over-tired artisan, the worn-out factory girl...rushing...after the toil of the day is over, into the hot atmosphere of a crowded lecture room.2

Formal education apart, there were many other paths by which Americans could strive to improve themselves. In the early decades of the nineteenth century the somewhat pretentiously-named Lyceums were popular forms of education. A Lyceum was a group of people who met regularly and took turns imparting what knowledge they had to the rest. As their funds of knowledge became exhausted, their meetings often became the nuclei for lecture circuits. Lectures rapidly emerged as one of the most popular forms of "extra-curricular" education in the mid-nineteenth-century United States. British travellers reported with considerable amazement that every small town and village in New England had its lecture hall and the institution spread rapidly throughout the land. A Scottish emigrant living in a small, up-state New York town boasted to his friend in Edinburgh,

What would you think if one of your country villages was to invite a lecturer upon chemistry and botany to come and deliver their courses upon these sciences, instead of a dancing and singing master? Would you not say it was the doing of a people who stood pretty high in the scale of civilisation? Well, Sir, such was the case in our neighbourhood last summer...3

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1 quoted in Best, op. cit., p. 127.
3 Letter in The Scotsman, April 7, 1824.
Combe, though generally disparaging in his opinion of American education, found much to praise in the custom of popular lectures, perhaps because his own lectures in phrenology were so well received. In Boston he thought there was a lecture every night, somewhere, by "men of talent" and though he admitted that there were rarely more than three lectures on any one subject he felt it was a "striking indication of mental activity" which would, he trusted, "lead to important consequences". 1

Dickens (though his lectures were equally well received) was more sarcastic about the value of public lectures. His grim, humourless Americans—especially the ladies—resorted to the lecture hall only as an alternative to the other two means of acceptable entertainment: the church and the chapel. As for their edificatory qualities, he sneered,

One lecture treads so quickly on the heels of another, that none are remembered; and the course of this month may be safely repeated next, with its charm of novelty unbroken, and its interest unabated. 2

Dickens was, however, sincerely impressed by the factory girls of Lowell, Massachusetts. Nearly all of them belonged to circulating libraries and furthermore they printed, published and sold their own periodical: The Lowell Offering, "'A repository of original articles, written exclusively by females actively employed in the mills.'" He hastened to defend their actions as meritorious and not at all "rising above their station". 3

Newspapers were extremely popular in America; most emigrants commented on the prolific number of papers and periodicals and many of them regularly sent copies to their friends and relations in Scotland, begging for Scottish newspapers in return. (The Scotsman was once

1Combe, op. cit., pp. 15-16, 39.
2Dickens, op. cit., pp. 56, 57.
3Ibid., p. 68; Chambers also noted that the women produced Mind among the Spinners; Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1874, p. 222.
immodest enough to print a letter from a Scottish emigrant which included a request for *The Scotsman* 

"It is much thought about here, and our friends in New York are most anxious to get it despatched to them regularly."^{1} Although impressed with the amount of newspapers consumed by the American public, the emigrant seems to have been unimpressed by their quality; few, however, went as far in their condemnation as Dickens who referred to the American newspaper industry as "this frightful engine" and postulated that no great moral improvement could take place in the United States until the content of the newspapers was improved from its "present abject state".\(^2\)

Americans believed in man's capacity to improve himself whether it be economically or spiritually and they believed in giving him the chance to do so through equality of opportunity. It is hardly surprising then that the custom of working one's way through college became firmly entrenched.\(^3\) It was an early feature of some of the Western colleges and was one of the attractions which drew young Charles Livingstone to Oberlin. The "work" he performed there was diverse:

The first work I did was on tuesday. I wrought about one hour in [Mr. Burns?] garden. On Wednesday about 2 hours sawing wood for fire. Thursday 2 hours in the garden delving[?]. We have a printing office here. A paper is published fortnightly named the Oberlin Evangelist has an Extensive[?] circulation about. Mr. Bristol thought that would be a con[venient?] place for me to work. Mr. Steel the head printer was just needing one to assist him in finishing. The publish small books so I got to work on Friday at 2 pasting green [—?] on small Books. Wrought 4 hours same time on Saturday.\(^4\)

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3. Thistlethwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 119. It was also possible to "work one's way through" university in Scotland, but very difficult. Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-8.
4. Ms. letter, Colonial Hall, Oberlin, May 22, 1840 to his family in Hamilton.
E. Schools on the Frontier

They are but middling off in regard to schooling here yet, but an improvement is expected to take place in that apartment soon... —Hugh Rose

Prospective emigrants concerned about their children's education in the New World would have been encouraged by Archibald Russell's Account of the Eleven Thousand Schools in the State of New York published in 1847. Those who wondered uneasily how far their children might have to walk could therein find comforting statistics showing that in New York "thinline settled though it is" there was one school for every four miles of territory "bringing the remotest inhabitants of the respective districts within a little more than one mile of the schoolhouse"; furthermore, there was one school for every 62 children between the ages of 5 and 16. The pamphlet was an open letter to Sir William Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh University and Archibald Russell was a native of Edinburgh "well known here as a man of integrity and talent" who had settled in New York State. The Scotsman reviewed his work and compared the American educational system favourably with the Scottish.

Other reports filtered through from the "thinly settled" districts of America in emigrant letters published in The Scotsman. A former pupil of George Combe's wrote from the "fairly new town" of Virginia in Cass County, Illinois to inform him that they had 600 inhabitants, 5 churches-cum-meeting houses, 4 schools and 1 tavern and twenty-six years before that a Scottish emigrant in Geneva, up-state New York, boasted of that town's refined and elegant society, pointing out that it even had a college.

1MS. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
2Edinburgh, 1847, pp. 14, 29.
3The Scotsman, March 13, 1847.
4Letter in The Scotsman, Sept. 29, 1852 (also MS. letter in Combe papers).
5Letter in The Scotsman, March 8, 1826.
In 1834 John Prentice's letter assured prospective emigrants in Edinburgh that "Most cities and villages have good seminaries for the education of children" but went on to admit that "the want of schools is severely felt in the thinly-settled districts." \(^1\) Fanny Wright also admitted that the "more scattered population" of the new states might suffer from temporary deprivation of educational facilities. \(^2\) In Ohio in 1834 Shirreff found to his surprise that Cincinnati, with a population of only 30,000, had a college, eighteen public schools and a great number of private schools and Academies; \(^3\) the West was not entirely devoid of learning. Apart from the occasional mention of a school "next house to mine", the manuscript letters remain oddly taciturn about the schools in their new country.

It seems reasonable to suppose that education in the more thinly-settled districts of the United States would leave much to be desired; however, this is reckoning without the love of educational opportunities characteristic of the West. Berger, in his survey of British travellers' accounts, found that although the lack of schools was seen as a serious drawback on the frontier, it did not always indicate a lack of schooling and that even the outlying areas compared well with any area in Europe. \(^4\) Merle Curti in his path-finding work on Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, showed that elementary schooling did not lag far behind settlement. In the first school report for that county there were 3 school districts with one "school" (in a rented room) and 13 out of 75 school-age children attended for an average of two months. One year later there were three schools (one frame, two log) and 77 out of 141 children were enrolled.

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1 Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
2 Wright, Frances, op. cit., p. 216.
3 Shirreff, Patrick, A Tour through North America, Edinburgh, 1835, p. 282.
Examination of such early records gives one the impression that from the earliest years of settlement a school was highly valued by citizens who at the start were quite willing not only to be taxed but to go right to work to help build a school house... There was often local bickering about the amount to be spent for schools but little question about the need to have them, right away. There was, however, some indication that once the minimum facilities had been supplied, enthusiasm waned.

The history of the Scottish settlement of Argyle in Winnebago County, Illinois, would seem to support these findings. The first settlers arrived in 1836 and more families arrived every spring until by 1841 there were seventeen families from Kintyre beginning their new life in America and more relatives preparing to come the next year. In 1842 the log schoolhouse was built on Robert Howie's farm and the children were taught by the older daughters of one of the emigrants. "The seats or benches were slabs hewn from logs, each family providing a seat. This building was used for a day school, Sunday school, and church services for a number of years." This use of the same building for school and church was, as noted above, common among Presbyterians in the South and it was also a typical pattern among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

Part of the explanation for the lack of communication about schools in the letters could, then, have been the simple fact that the facilities were by and large good and even on the frontier the lack of schools was not as great a drawback as might at first appear. Another reason was probably that the emigrants were concerned mainly with adjusting to the differences they found in America; few of them were of the social class that worried about the quality of their children's education—it was enough that there was a school and/or a

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2 Harvey, Daniel, The Argyle Settlement in History and Story, Rockford, Ill., 1924, p. 38.
teacher and that their children were learning to read and write. Those who did worry about the quality of the teaching were apt to settle in the East where the schools did, in fact, compare favourably with the Scottish ones.

Basically the emigrants were more concerned with material, practical matters—with "useful" knowledge; and many were probably, like John Prentice, more worried about finding employment for their children, on their farm or in the city, than in finding schools for them. But that is not to say that they did not take advantage of the facilities when they were offered, nor should the fact be overlooked that Scots played a significant role in the promotion of American education. From the earliest Colonial days many Scots had won renown in the field: James Blair, Francis Alison and William Smith made important contributions in the Colonial Period and John Witherspoon, while President of Princeton (1768-1794), made that distinguished college virtually a foster-child of Scotland. Witherspoon's "Scotch-American realism", derived from Hutcheson and Reid, achieved virtual dominance of American philosophy and was an important element in the derivation of American concepts of human nature well into the nineteenth century—especially through the teaching of Thomas C. Upham, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Vermont from 1824.

At a grass-roots level the Scottish emigrants usually brought education with them wherever they settled. Robert Pollock wrote to his niece in Scotland giving news of his two daughters: "Agnes is going to Teach school this summer and sarah is at school." And Alexander Allison's sister, Marion, was teaching at Springfield.

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1 Wright, Esmond, op. cit., p. 27.
3 Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 16, 1858 to his niece in Ayr.
4 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to his uncle in Bathgate.
There was a great need for "schoolmarms" and it is likely that Agnes and Marion were typical of many other Scottish daughters, sisters and wives.

Scotland also had an influence on American education through the Presbyterian Church which, like the democratic government of the United States, was founded on the education of its members. From the earliest days of the American Presbyterian Church ministers were required to have a minimum of the Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent in formal religious studies. It was in the Presbyterian interest to promote education and the records bear eloquent testimony to their endeavours:

hundreds of private schools and academies organised and taught by Presbyterian ministers in this great valley [the Mississippi] bear complete evidence of their consuming interest in the cause of education.¹

There can be no doubt that the Presbyterian influence helped to spread education out to the very fringes of settlement. Of the 40 colleges and universities founded in the United States between 1780 and 1829, 13 were Presbyterian in origin. Needless to say, many of the ministers responsible for this spread of education were Scotsmen or sons of Scotsmen.

F. Conclusions

There were striking similarities between the educational systems of the two countries. Both nations regarded education as "a matter of public obligation", though it might be argued that the origins of the respective philosophies were different: religious in the one case and political in the other. Both Scotland and the United States were moving, groping one could almost say, towards a state-controlled, free, public system of education. By the 1830s several states had virtually achieved these goals and such tangible progress may well have led emigrants to believe that the educational system

¹Posey, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
in the United States was more advanced than the one they had left in Scotland.

Both countries valued education for its potential to improve man's character for his own and society's benefit, but in Scotland learning had an intrinsic value of its own which was, for the most part, lacking in the United States. Americans tended to rank "book learning" a distinct second behind experience of a more practical nature.

Both nations faced problems with their outlying districts; the Scottish Highlands presented an obstacle to education which was not successfully overcome during the first half of the nineteenth century and in America the Frontier and, to a lesser extent, the South posed similar problems. As far as the emigrants were concerned, it was unlikely that those who settled on or near the Frontier would have expected to find good schools just around the corner. Most of them would have known—from letters, oral reports, newspapers and guides—at least roughly what conditions they would be facing in the thinly settled areas. Furthermore, and perhaps most to the point, an emigrant faced with clearing land, building a home and planting crops would not be able to spare any of his children for the school, even had there been one. When he and his neighbours had established a toe-hold they would find time to look around for a teacher; perhaps the emigrant's wife, sister or eldest daughter could fill in the gap until the "school-line" caught up with the settlement.

In Scotland a more crucial problem than that facing the outlying areas was the breakdown of the educational system in the big cities and the industrial belts. There was probably no parallel in the settled parts of the United States (apart from dense congregations of Irish immigrants) to the illiteracy rates in Edinburgh and the Industrial West of Scotland; it would seem, in fact, that by the late 1830s the United States had become more
effective in producing widespread literacy, however much that literacy may have lacked in depth and quality. Certainly British travellers were impressed by the general level of intelligence of the "lower classes" in America.

The conversation of those whom you would call the lower orders, shows that they have a very considerable knowledge of the institutions of their country, and that they set a high value on them.¹

Small fees were paid in both countries up until the 1850s when the United States began to move more decisively towards free schools. However, there is evidence that facilities were not barred to impecunious pupils in either country.

Elementary school curricula were basically the same in Scotland and the United States with one important exception: the fourth "r" in the Scottish curriculum, religion, was strictly prohibited in the American public schools. It was replaced in the United States by "common ethics" and "morality". This was, of course, the result of separating religious and secular teaching and it is possible that some Scots, members of the Established Church in Scotland, resented this division. It is also probable many Scots who had been Dissenters in Scotland welcomed it.

The American emphasis on "morality" and "useful" knowledge (directly applicable to vocation and citizenship duties) was characteristic; the emphasis on "equality of knowledge" was probably unique. A Scottish blacksmith in Auchtermuchty might not presume to compare his "knowledge" with that of the village dominie, but in America he could "wash his hands and be the equal of any man"—socially, politically or intellectually. Many emigrants would have savoured such a position.

There were opportunities for "further education" in both countries, but there was a mental "aliveness" ²

¹Flint, James, Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 263.
and a joy in reading in America which was, by all accounts, dying out in the rural areas of Scotland. The lecture as an institute of learning may have deserved Dickens' sarcasm, but it was, as Combe pointed out, an indication of this "aliveness" and mental curiosity which pervaded all classes of American society. One emigrant wrote to a friend in Edinburgh and said that when the farm work was done for the day he could employ his head, implying that this was the generally accepted pastime. Wits were periodically sharpened in political debates and woe to the man who could not read at least one newspaper to keep abreast of the times. Emigrants recorded surprise that their opinions were taken seriously—farmers, mechanics and labourers were expected to think and have opinions.¹

Finally it should be pointed out that the American schools had another unique purpose: they were the "melting pots" that created "Americans" out of second generation immigrants. In the remoter districts where schools were "thin on the ground" it might be argued that the Frontier itself was the "school" in which the emigrants (first and second generation) were educated and "Americanised."² And by extension the entire process of settling in a new country was an education where the classes were difficult and the stakes so high that there was little time left over for thinking about the refinements of the more formal education of the children.

To some extent this may explain the paucity of references to education in the emigrant letters, but the primary reason was in all likelihood a simpler one. The systems of education in the two countries were similar and there was no language or culture barrier to overcome. The seeming lack of interest on the part of the emigrants could indicate, quite simply, that

¹See letters in The Scotsman, April 7, 1824 and January 5, 1825.
²See Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Hypothesis".
good educational facilities were taken for granted. Throughout the period under review the American schools had a good "press" in Scotland and by the 1830s they were eliciting favourable comparisons with Scottish schools. There was far too much "news" to report to the family left in Scotland and no room left for the obvious. Like David Livingstone, most prospective emigrants would have confidence that their children's minds would be well received and nourished in the United States.
Chapter VI: Mind and Soul (II)—Religion

The Scotch have always been regarded as a peculiarly religious people. This is partly to be ascribed to the national character. There is a native earnestness in the Scottish mind. It is serious, almost solemn...But it is also partly to be ascribed to national history. For the last three hundred years, the national history has been almost exclusively ecclesiastical. The old feuds with England were gone; more bitter feuds arose among the Scots themselves. Since Knox lifted up his voice at St. Andrews, there has been a constant struggle with Popery, with Prelacy, with patronage...For the space of three centuries, the Scotch have had little to speak of, little to think of, but ecclesiastical occurrences...

The religious struggles of the country were entirely about church-government and church-discipline, not about the inner truths of the faith...Scotchmen certainly talk much more about church disputes than about religious duty...

But it has been frequently remarked that Scotch piety is intellectual rather than devotional; and the remark is based upon truth... The Calvinistic creed, too, is purely intellectual; the Shorter Catechism is purely intellectual; and these have done much to mould the national character.

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A. Scottish Background

Without some understanding of the Church there can be no true understanding of Scottish history or of the nature of the Scottish people.¹

By the Revolution Settlement of 1690 the Presbyterian Church became the Established Church of Scotland and the Confession of Faith became statute law. From its inception the Church was faced with dissent and controversy and during the eighteenth century schism after schism rent the Presbyterians almost literally limb from limb: the "Erskines" established a secession Church in 1733; further schisms resulted (in the end) in the division of this "Original Secession" into four bodies: the Old Licht Burghers, the New Licht Burghers, the Old Licht Anti-Burghers and the New Licht Anti-Burghers. In 1761 the comparatively liberal Relief Church of Thomas Gillespie seceded from the Church; and the old Covenanters, dissatisfied since 1690 because the Covenant had not been written into the Revolution Settlement, reorganised their Cameronian congregations into the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In spite, however, of this overwhelming evidence of dissension within the Church, there were forces striving towards unity at the beginning of the nineteenth century²—though, somewhat paradoxically, these forces seem to have been concentrated in the seceded Churches. In 1820 the two New Licht groups marked the tendency towards union by joining together to form the United Secession Church. Meanwhile, however, the Established Church in a final, convulsive eruption rent itself in twain in the most formidable schism of them all—the Disruption of 1843 and the formation of the Free Church. The non-established congregations were, if anything, encouraged

²Donaldson, Gordon, Scotland: Church and Nation through Sixteen Centuries, London, 1950, p. 100.
by this split to continue resolving their differences and in 1847 the Secession and Relief Churches joined in the United Presbyterian Church. By 1852 most of the Original Seceders had joined the Free Church.

Obviously many Scots were not satisfied with the Established Church and in the first half of the nineteenth century this dissatisfaction found growing expression in the "voluntaryism" movement, especially following the Reform Bill of 1831. In 1832 voluntary associations appeared all over Scotland and two years later Duncan McLaren—later Lord Provost of Edinburgh—was elected chairman of the newly-formed Central Board of Scottish Dissenters, pledged to oppose establishment. In 1851 the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, William Johnston, testified to a Select Committee that the population of Edinburgh could be divided into "three very nearly equal proportions": 1) members of the Church of Scotland, 2) Dissenters who were not voluntaries and 3) Voluntaries.¹ This is of particular interest in any study of emigration to the United States, because voluntaryism was practised in America and comparisons were inevitable. It does not imply, however, that the non-established Churches were uniformly opposed to establishment; in fact, many of the Dissenters, including the Free Church, were in favour of a State support of religion.² There were, on the other hand, growing numbers of Dissenters, organised by able writers and speakers like Duncan McLaren, Wardlaw and Marshall, who objected vociferously to the privileges of the Established Church. Quakers and Independents (Congregationalists) had always been opposed to the alliance of Church and State³ and after 1831 "a great majority" of the United Secession Church and almost all Congre-

¹P.F., 1851, VII, p. 24.
²Buchan, op. cit., p. 80.
³Cunningham, op. cit., II, p. 448.
gationalists were lined up against the establishment. ¹

The objectors, particularly as a political force, tended
to concentrate their attack on two aspects of the establish¬
ment. ²

Patronage had been abolished by the Revolution
Settlement but it was re-established in 1712 and for
more than a century and a half it provoked bitter con¬
troversy, being in no small way responsible for the
Disruption of 1843. ² In the eighteenth century it was
not uncommon for congregations to reject the ministers
thrust upon them by their patrons and the supreme eccles¬
liastical court was kept busy with such cases. During
the 1780s the Synods of Perth and Stirling, Glasgow
and Ayr, Dumfries, Fife, Galloway, Lothian and Tweeddale
all made attempts to question the practices of patronage,
but to no avail. The problem was inextricably bound
up with the whole question of self-government of the
Church and further complicated by political involvement,
for, needless to say, patronage had great possibilities
as a political lever. Many Dissenters objected to
patronage in principle and they had furthermore committed
themselves through the Scottish Central Board of Dis¬
senters to "an immediate, total, and eternal separation
of Church and State". ³ It was the members of the Church
of Scotland, however, who suffered most from having
their ministers appointed by landlords. From the turn
of the century, increasingly, congregations who opposed
the minister forced upon them simply "abandoned the parish
church for the meeting-house" ⁴ and a great number of
staunch church-members expressed their dissatisfaction
by walking out of the Auld Kirk in 1843 to join the
Free Church.

¹Grub, George, The Ecclesiastical History of Scotland,
Edinburgh, 1861, IV, pp. 200-201.
²there was also general fear resulting from the
threat of Papist establishment in Ireland after the
Emancipation Act of 1829; see Ferguson, William, Scotland
³Mackie, J.B., The Life and Work of Duncan McLaren,
⁴Cunningham, op. cit., II, p. 414.
Some looked with envious eyes across the Atlantic and George Combe expressed the thoughts of many when he wrote,

> If the endowments were provided to support the religion of the people, then the election of the ministers in Scotland, as in Massachusetts, should be given to the inhabitants of the parish. This would at least ensure progress in religious opinions...In short, in my humble opinion, religion will never flourish in its full vigour in Scotland until the example of Massachusetts be entirely followed out, and all endowments be abrogated.\(^1\)

Although many objected to patronage and the Church split asunder over the issue, it was not until the Act of 1874 that "communicants and adherents" of parish congregations in Scotland were given the right to elect their ministers.

Dissenters objected most of all to having to support ministers of a church to which they did not belong. Although Scotland did not have the ill-famed tithes system which aroused so much abuse in England, there was an equivalent, albeit less oppressive, system of tithe levied on land and property owners, the burden of which could filter down to tenants.\(^2\) Dissenters did not like this enforced support of the establishment and from the 1830s onward their protests found a target in a tax peculiar to Edinburgh and Montrose—the Annuity Tax.

The Annuity Tax controversy formed a focus for the fledgling political forces of the Dissenters in Edinburgh and under the leadership of Duncan McLaren and others they became a dominating factor in Scottish politics—"the backbone of Liberalism".\(^3\) The Annuity Tax originated under Charles I and consisted quite simply of a personal tax of 6% "levied on the occupiers of houses and warehouses to provide salaries for the city clergy". It came to represent to the Dissenters

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\(^3\) Mackie, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
of Edinburgh a "badge of servitude" to the Established Church. The tax was made even more onerous in the eyes of its liberal opponents by the numerous exemptions which included the entire legal profession and, hence, many of the city's richest men. (John Dick, a Scottish merchant in Brooklyn, boasted to a friend in Edinburgh that American gentlemen had to pay the same rent as poor men while in Edinburgh the poor man might have to pay an extra £5 on his £20 rent—probably a reference to the Annuity Tax and its exemptions.1) The agitation began in earnest in 1834 and soon after McLaren published a pamphlet entitled: History of the Resistance to the Annuity-Tax under Each of the Four Church Establishments for Which It Has Been Levied, with a Statement of its Annual Produce Since 1690.2 It rapidly became a Dissenter's text-book.

It was not simply a trumped-up issue; in 1833, for example, 846 people were prosecuted for non-payment of the tax. Many Dissenters were prepared to go to prison because paying the (usually) trifling sum was against their principles. William Johnston, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, testified in 1851 before the Parliamentary Commission investigating the Annuity Tax that "we have had many respectable citizens imprisoned for not paying the tax". He went on to cite a case in 1848 when troops had to be used to remove furniture from the home of a man who refused to pay; so strong was public feeling that a troop of dragoons had to escort the furniture to the railway station whence it was sent to Glasgow for auctioning.3 In 1850 an engraver, John Tod, was sent to prison for refusing, on principle, to pay the tax. Not only was a subscription raised to pay his fine, but he was elected a member of the Town Council while still

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1 Ms. letter, Feb. 7, 1836 to Wm Kerr, Cannongate, Edinburgh.
2 Edinburgh, 1836 (3rd edition).
3 PP, 1851, VII, pp. 2-3.
in prison. Public opinion asserted itself again the following year when a petition sent to Parliament requesting the abolition of the tax was signed by 49,000 people.

Nearly everyone who testified before the Commission of 1851, including ministers of the Established Church, agreed that the Annuity Tax was causing much public agitation and unrest and that the controversy was harmful to the image of the Church of Scotland. A former Lord Provost of Edinburgh, John Learmonth, admitted, "It certainly is a very obnoxious tax, and one which is so felt generally throughout the city." Most of the witnesses agreed. It was felt that the agitation came mostly from Dissenters, but there were also many members of the Established Church who were incensed by the various inequalities of the tax (e.g. people who lived in certain suburbs did not have to pay the tax though they used churches within the city which were supported by it). The Select Committee reached the conclusion that immediate action was needed to settle the dispute "both on account of the interests of religion, and for the sake of the peace and good government of the city of Edinburgh". Provision for the abolition of the tax, however, was not made for another twenty years.

The first half of the nineteenth century, then, was not without its religious turmoil in Scotland. Many members of dissenting Churches objected to the privileges of the Established Church and within the State Church there was enough dissatisfaction to cause 474 ministers to leave the fold "for a matter of conscience" and to establish a new Church for liberal opponents to lay patronage and parliamentary powers over the Church. Scottish emigrants' reactions to American churches must,  

1PP, 1851, VII, p. 111.  
2Ibid., p. 1.  
3Ibid., p. 5.  
4Ibid., p. iv.
therefore, be judged in the light of their possible dissatisfaction with the system of Establishment which they had left behind.

B. The United States

--This is a poor place for Parsons, their [sic] is no patronages, they make an agreement with a minister for twelve months, & if he does not please the[y] turn him off[?] at the expiration of the time agreed upon: every man subscribes as much as he can afford, or thinks proper.1

The United States was widely known in the nineteenth century as the land of political, economic and religious freedom. Complete religious freedom, however, was later coming to some states than is generally realised and even as late as the Civil War there were vestiges of religious intolerance written into some state constitutions. Interestingly enough, there were in the early years of the nineteenth century even remnants of established Churches. The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 (which was not substantially changed as regards religion until 1833) provided through public taxation a "virtual establishment" of the Congregational Church.2 Unlike the teinds and Annuity Taxes of Scotland, however, the Massachusetts tax made concessions to Dissenters and those who could prove that they were supporting religious services of other denominations could claim exemption. New England maintained the Colonial tradition of compulsory church support longer than the rest of the country and although Massachusetts was the last to change its constitution Connecticut, for example, did not change until 1818. By and large it is true, however, that emigrants in the first half of the nineteenth century would not have had to support any Church in the United States if they did not want to.

1Ms. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother, John Rose, near Inverness.
Although some emigrants complained that the Constitution did not admit the existence of God and that there was no religious test for the highest office in the land, many state constitutions did specifically mention "Almighty God" and many states retained religious tests for the holding of public office right up to the Civil War. The tests were generally vague, in some cases requiring the applicant to be Protestant, in some Christian and in others simply demanding "acknowledgment of God and a future state of rewards and punishments", but they did exist and were a factor to be reckoned with especially south of the Mason-Dixon Line (in Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas).

The only discrimination, therefore, was against avowed non-Christians (in a few cases non-Protestants) and in the newer states even this deterrent was absent. The Illinois constitution of 1818 is probably typical of the first half of the nineteenth century:

That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent; that no human authority can in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; and that no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship.¹

New England also lagged behind the rest of the country in the exclusion of sectarian schoolbooks, but in 1827 the last states, Massachusetts and New Hampshire passed laws against their use. The emphasis in schools was on morality² and "Christian" principles in their broadest definition. Presbyterian ministers who taught schools in their spare time often had to sign contracts similar to that accepted by Robert Marshall of Kentucky.

¹ quoted in Greene, op. cit., p. 94.
² see above, Part II, Chapter V.
in 1808: "no undue influence shall be used to alter the religious opinions of any student, but morality shall be strictly inculcated by precept, example & penalty."1

C. The American Presbyterian Church

I am verey happy John to think that you are still seeking the Almighty as he can only support you in all your trayles and that you will not forgat to instruct your Son in the fear of God.

--Isabell Marshall2

At the end of the Revolution, the Presbyterian Church was the strongest and best organised Protestant Church in the United States;3 among Protestant faiths it was second only to the Congregationalists in numerical strength. The missionary character of the Presbyterian Church and the strength of local churches seemed naturally adapted to the needs of an expanding nation and it is therefore somewhat surprising to find that by 1855 the Methodists and Baptists respectively had become the most numerous and that the Presbyterians had dropped to third place. The key probably lies in the nature of the religious demands on the Frontier and in particular in the waves of "revivalism" which swept the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.4

The Presbyterian Church had always based its teachings on a sound foundation of knowledge, thought and education; it insisted on a high standard of education for its ministers and rejected the emotionalism and lay-preaching of the revivalists. The Methodists and Baptists took every advantage of the frontiersman's desire for "the miraculous and the spontaneous" and, although the Presbyterians could boast the best educated ministers and congregations on the Frontier, they conceded many

2 Ms. letter, Linlithgow, Sept. 30, 1820 to her son, John W. Williams, merchant, Wilmington, North Carolina.
3 Posey, op. cit., p. 124.
thousands of souls to the "go-getting" sects. Nor was the Presbyterian Church itself immune to the tremors that were shaking the country. A "revivalist" faction appeared within the Church and in 1803 several prominent members abandoned their straight-laced Presbyteries to become Shakers. The acute need for more ministers on the Frontier also had its effects on the structure of the Church; appeals to Scotland and Ulster met with little success. These problems produced two important actions at the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the Plan of Union of 1801 the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches agreed to pool their resources with particular reference to missionary endeavours in the West. And in the same year some of the Western churches took the reins in their own hands and lowered their educational requirements; following opposition from the Presbyterian Church, they seceded in 1810 to form the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. A true child of the Frontier, the Cumberland Church rejected the idea of predestination in the Confession of Faith, adopted revival methods and attempted to solve the problem of too much country and too few ministers by borrowing the idea of "circuit riders" from the Methodists.

The good intentions of the Plan of Union were to bear bitter fruit during the controversies which split the Church during the 1830s—at the same time when controversies in Scotland were leading to the Disruption—and the Church began to divide into two "armed" camps: the Old School and the New School. The conservatives of the Old School felt their Calvinistic doctrines increasingly threatened by the union with the Congregationalists and, as slavery and abolition entered the picture, the split in the Presbyterian Church began to show signs of following the Mason-Dixon Line. Presbyterian clergymen in the South used Calvinistic theology to defend

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slavery, with such success, it might be added, that during the Civil War they could claim in all sincerity to have "done more than any people on earth, for the Christianization of the African race". 1

The Old School gained control of the General Assembly of 1837, abrogated the Plan of Union and "exscinded" four New School (anti-slavery) synods. This split alienated an estimated four-ninths of the ministry and members of the Presbyterian Church (as compared with the one-third who walked out in the Scottish Disruption) and in 1838 the schism splitting the Church almost down the middle was made official.

Scotsmen who emigrated to the States before the Disruption in Scotland often retained a lively interest in the affairs of "Church and State" in their native land. Colin McIver, a son of Lewis who became a minister and pillar of the Old School Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, wrote to Thomas Chalmers in 1843 enquiring about the progress of the Secession in the Highlands and asking many other questions about the state of Presbyterianism in Scotland. 2 James Matheson had lived in the United States since before 1815 but had obviously been given a full account of the Disruption by his brother in Dornoch. He replied to what was probably an enthusiastic description with some misgivings:

I am glad to understand the Free Church are getting Sites for Building from Land Proprietors and there is provisions making for their Support and Maintenance but it is to be lamented that such a Disruption ever took place and I am afraid that both Ministers and people will have cause to deplore the change. It will create a heavy Burden on the People, and a Spirit of hatred, envy, Jealousy and ill feelings towards one another will undoubtedly be exited thereby, and it is to be feared that neither Clergy, Laity, or the


2 Ms. letter, Oct. 2, 1843 in the Chalmers Collection at the New College Library, Edinburgh; many other letters in this collection both from the U.S. and other parts of the world express deep interest in the progress of the Free Church.
Common people will be any better than they were under the Old System. Though there was reason to Complain, yet I believe the cause of Complaint might and probably would be removed by Perseverance and Patience before going to such extremes.  

Robert Crawford left Paisley for Canada in 1821 "when but a lad" and after five years drifted down to the United States where he studied for the ministry at Princeton and New York and eventually was called to the Congregational church in North Adams, Massachusetts. After the Scottish Disruption he was moved to write to Thomas Chalmers,voicing his approval of the Free Church; he closed his letter with nostalgic reverence: "May the Church of my Father-land ever be free, pure, & powerful in the might of the gospel."  

Although Scottish emigrants retained an interest in the controversies of their Homeland, they also sometimes became involved in the controversies which they encountered in the United States. Towards the end of the eighteenth century heated arguments and bitter feelings were aroused over the question of psalms. Many preferred Watts' version to the generally accepted and more literal rendition of Rouse. In spite of spirited opposition, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States had decided in 1787 to permit the use of Watts' Psalms and in 1802 they further accepted Dwight's enlarged revision of Watts' work, giving congregations the freedom to choose whichever version they thought fit. This inevitably caused trouble and some churches went so far as to bar from Communion anyone who favoured Watts' Psalms. Hugh Rose, shortly after his emigration to Ohio, explained the situation to his brother John in Inverness:  

--Those that do hold [ms.blurred] themselves of the established church of Scotland in this country, has done away with the Psalms of David, as they are in Rouse's version, as entirely unfit for the new Testament dispensation, and have adopted Dr. Watt's psalms  

1Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844.  
& hymns in their stead, as more fit and suitable to the Gospel dispensation, than any think hither-to di[s]covered or invented...

He then went on with some vehemence to condemn this rejection of Rouse's version:

if it be a sin to condemn this piece of divine inspiration, which has been allotted for the instruction and edification of Christians to the end of time; here is a church, a church that says that she is founded on the Apostolic foundation, that is guilty of this heinous sin.

After having entered into a lengthy discussion of the relative divine merits of the two versions, he summed up in a slightly more judicious tone:

(I think it will be admitted by every unprejudiced person that Dr. Watt's composition is an excellent one, but I do not think that he is to be compared to "the sweet Psalmist of Israel".)

He observed that the Scots in his neighbourhood and probably the majority of those elsewhere rejected Watts' Psalms and would not admit anyone who favoured them to their congregations, but he admitted that many churches accepted both.¹ The same controversy had existed in Scotland since the 45 metrical paraphrases by Dr. Watts and others had been presented to the Assembly for approval in 1731. They were then recommended for private worship and the enlarged, revised version was accepted "temporarily" in 1781. Many of the clergy and congregations rejected them for another 50 years and remained faithful to Rouse's Psalter alone.²

One second generation Scot in the Argyle settlement in Illinois recalled a controversy in which his father had been involved:

when some one proposed a cabinet organ for the church, the air grew lurid and there was thunder and lightning all around the sky. I remember hearing my father and John Caldwell discuss the subject one day and they concluded it was surely the "de'il" who was putting these notions into the heads of the young people: and father said he would be one of a committee to go and pitch

¹ Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.  
² Cunningham, op. cit., pp. 426-29.
the organ into the middle of the road, if it was ever put in the church.¹

It is noteworthy that both of the Scots just quoted belonged to Presbyterian churches founded and dominated by fellow-Scots. It was natural for emigrants from the land of John Knox to congregate in the nearest "church of their fathers" and often the sobriquet "the Scotch Church" would stick. George Lewis mentioned going to a service in Pittsburgh where the sermon was preached by an old Scottish Anti-Burgher minister; the congregation was mostly Scottish and Scotch-Irish and the sermon was "wondrous dry and dreigh":

The old folks that have Scotland in their hearts, and that cling with fondness even to her dry bones, will bear this sort of thing; but to their children as they grow up, such services will prove intolerable.²

Another such church was mentioned by Mitchell King, a native Scot, who wrote to Thomas Chalmers from Charleston, South Carolina:

Our Church was originally founded by Scotchmen. It is incorporated by the name of the Presbyterian Church of the City of Charleston, but it is generally called the Scotch Church.³

King said that in earlier years almost every Scotsman in Charleston had belonged to the one church, but ruefully admitted that the Scottish genius for schism had created two rival groups in 1831. His original purpose in writing to Thomas Chalmers was to ask him to provide Charleston with a Scottish minister,

I consider it very important to conciliate the regard of our countrymen—to recall[sic] if possible those of them who have left us—and to offer to those who may arrive among us, a church called by their name, which they may be induced to attend and find themselves at home. This I am confident can best be done by an acceptable Pastor from Scotland and that with the blessing of Heaven you may obtain this great object for us is my fervent prayer.⁴

¹Harvey, Daniel, The Argyle Settlement in History and Story, Rockford, Ill., 1924, p. 56-57.
²Lewis, George, Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845, p. 323.
³Ms. letter, May 28, 1831.
⁴Ibid.
One of the qualifications which he listed for their prospective minister was "of liberal sentiments" and he was horrified to learn that Chalmers had misinterpreted this to mean one who would "relax the discipline of the church as to 'give no offence to persons living in open immorality'". He had used the term, as he hurried to point out, in the sense of a liberal respect for opposing doctrines (especially Irish Catholic).

This request for a minister of "liberal sentiments" is perhaps indicative of a Frontier influence on religion in the United States. On the Frontier scarcity of ministers and religious facilities could often breed strange bedfellows. Frontier needs led to the Plan of Union in which Presbyterians and Congregationalists pooled their resources and laboured shoulder to shoulder in the wilderness and in some Frontier areas Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists all worshipped together.

Sometimes Scottish emigrants were forced by circumstances more or less beyond their control to sample different forms of religion. James Ferguson, though a staunch Presbyterian, attended Unitarian services when he lived in the state of New York, but he found that the more he heard of their services the more convinced he became of the error of their ways; he did generously allow, however, that there were many sincere Christians among them. In western New York climate and distance produced an even stranger union as recorded by a Scottish emigrant in a letter printed in The Scotsman:

We have public worship within a few minutes walk almost every Sabbath; we attend Friends or Quakers meetings, there being a great many settled near us, and good neighbours they are; we attend there as it is near, and when they do speak it is sound sense.

Scottish emigrants could be "liberal" towards other

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1 Ms. letter, Dec. 24, 1831.
3 Ms. letter, Centralia, Ill., Nov. 6, 1864.
4 March 8, 1826.
sects in the face of necessity, but there were many who showed less tolerance. The Scotsman also published a letter from an early settler in Ohio who had formed a less congenial opinion of his Quaker neighbours: he found them to be a "plodding, pains taking[sic] race of mortals, that want to know every man's affairs, in order to take advantage of them." And another young Scot in New York State visited a Shaker village at New Lenity; he commented on the handsomeness of the town and complimented the Shakers on their neatness, order and harmony but was less impressed with their philosophy:

We had considerable conversation with one of their Elders, whom we found to be a man of astonishing liberality. He defended and explained their principles with much ingenuity and some eloquence. They separated themselves from the world, he said, from a belief that they could live a purer and happier life out of it—and they enjoyed all things in common, so that all jarring and bad blood, which the clashing of individual interest is apt to foment, might be obviated.***In a word, the good Shakers seem to want nothing but hearts—but hearts they certainly want, "and all the pleasures o' the heart, the Lover, an' the Frien!"

"Better to rot below the earth, Than live a heartless thing upon it."  

John W. Williams, a Scottish merchant in Wilmington, North Carolina, showed that distrust of Irish Catholics which Mitchell King seemed to fear in Scottish ministers. In a letter to his sister he declared,

if your good Quin & Sir Rob* Peel would cause a Nooss to be put round Daniel O'Connuls [ms. smudged] neck & his friends it would be just what all the good disposed[?] people in this cuntrey would be glad to see, and Expell the Pop from Irland & all Roman Catholic Members from Parliment. The Quin forgets her coronation Oath when she admits them there (Greate Britton is a Protestant Cuntry & ought to be governed by Protestants only).  

Those emigrants who ventured into the Far West often stopped in Salt Lake City and witnessed Mormon life and

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1 July 9, 1823.
2 The Scotsman, Sept. 10, 1823.
3 Wilmington, North Carolina, "about 1840".

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religion at first hand. Robert Pollock and his friends broke their journey to the California Gold Fields by resting for a week among the Mormons. He viewed them tolerantly but made no comment on their doctrines or mode of worship—"the Mormons seem to go a head well. The[y] have a fine healthy countrey. There is a great number of Scot[c]h English and Walsh among them."¹

Not so tolerant was young Thomas Johnstone who, in his epic trek across the continent, fell in with a wagon-train of Mormons with whom he had many misadventures and heated arguments. He was appalled to find that they took more than one wife and asked indignantly why God had not made more than one wife for Adam. The Mormons made determined efforts to convert and "save" him, but he resisted nobly—even when he fell in love with one of their "unchaste" women. He spent an unpleasant winter in Salt Lake City and formed a decidedly unfavourable opinion of the Latter Day Saints and their religion. "I do not like how they speak about God; they say he is but man with powers a little higher than we and make him littl alse then a good chimest..." He went on in a self-righteous vein:

they beleave that God has parts and pass[i]ons like them and has wive[s], that angles has wives, that they will have wives and all live in the greatest plusher that lust can bring forth, but we beleave in nobler things. Thinks to my friends for there care and there breading that larned me better things.²

He ignored the heavy penalties incurred under Mormon law for seduction and adultery³ and his judgment was probably highly coloured by his horror of polygamy, but his reactions to their making God "littl alse then a good chimest" were understandable for someone raised in the Church of Scotland.

Some Scots in America founded their own churches

¹Cambridge (Wisconsin or Illinois), March 7, 1854 to his brother in Ayr. (Ms. letter)
²Ms. letter, Cooks Bar, Upper California, July 20, 1851 to his father and mother in Denny.
and never strayed far from the path of Presbyterianism while others sampled the "wares" of other sects, but all seemed impressed by the bewildering variety of religions in the United States.

There is a variety of denominations in this country. I believe, a sect that calls themselves Wesleyan Methodists are the most numerous, they are rank Arminians in principle. They are different from the Wesleyans that I have been conversant with, they are exactly the same as those called Jumpers, or Ranter, in England—Their are other sects, called Universalists, Unitarians, Bible Christians, New Testament Law, Roman Catholics, two sorts of Quakers, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Covenanters, Unionists, Burgers & Anti-Burgers, &c &c.

It is interesting to note Hugh Rose's reaction to the revivalist character of the American Methodist Church. The census of church attendance taken in Scotland on Sunday, March 30, 1851 listed 33 Protestant sects and four others, viz. Roman Catholic, Catholic and Apostolic, Mormon and Jewish. However, only 11 of them registered over 10,000 in attendance, of which only 5 were over 50,000 and only 3 were over 100,000 (Church of Scotland, Free Church and United Presbyterian Church); 6 were under 1000.

The multiplicity of sects in America was often attributed to the voluntary system by both its defenders and opponents. George Combe, for example, used the great number of churches in America as a refutation of Thomas Chalmers' assertion that an Established Church was necessary because men left to themselves had no appetite for religion but on the other hand he admitted that in America the multiplication of churches sometimes over-reached the need with a consequent "languishing".

The few emigrants who commented in their letters on the provision of religious facilities in America agreed that whatever ill effects voluntaryism might have

1 Ms. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother John in Inverness.
2 Pp. 1854, LIX, "Religious Worship and Education (Scotland)", p. 517.
3 Combe, op. cit., p. 17.
4 Ibid., pp. 13, 16.
in the United States it did not hinder the spread of churches. Mrs. Munger lived in Chicago in 1846 when it had a population of 13,000 and she was gratified to find that there were 15 churches "all well filled". She did not mention it in her letter, but in 1839 there had been only 6 churches and it was largely due to revivals which swept the city in 1839 and 1841—and to a lesser extent in 1843, 1844 and 1845—that the number had increased to 19 by 1847. Archibald Campbell in a letter to his former school-master, George Combe, said that the town where he had settled in Illinois had a population of about 600 and boasted four churches and a Catholic "meeting-house". Combe himself reckoned that there was one church for every thousand inhabitants in the cities throughout the Union and asserted, moreover, that the American churches were "far more handsome, more comfortable in their accommodations, and much better filled than those of the Establishment in Scotland". Even as early as 1826 The Scotsman had compared the church facilities of Philadelphia and Edinburgh, finding that the American city with a population of 63,000 had 77 congregations while Edinburgh with well over twice the population had 63 "including sectaries great and small". And on a more authoritative plane, J.S. Buckingham recorded in his exhaustive America, Historical, Statistic, and Descriptive that a comparison of the number of churches per capita in the United States with Scotland (which had the highest rate in Great Britain) showed a substantially higher number of both churches and members in the United States not only on the East Coast but in the interior.

1 Ms. letter, June 27, 1846 to her grandmother and uncle.
3Ms. letter, Virginia, Cass County, Ill., April 18, 1852.
4Combe, op. cit., p. 147; it should, however, be borne in mind that Combe, for personal as well as philosophical reasons, was no lover of the Established Church.
5June 10, 1826.
The opponents of voluntaryism in Scotland conceded that there were a great number of popularly supported churches in America and even agreed that there was a spirit of tolerance there which might or might not stem from voluntaryism. But they then pointed out the effects of short-term election of ministers, i.e. the obligation on the part of the minister to "please" his congregation in order to retain his job, and to the duplication of church facilities. Finally they produced their trump: "If voluntaryism is so beneficial, how can the violence and moral depravity which exist in the United States be explained?" This argument is pursued in a pamphlet with the intriguing title: The Past and Present Condition of Religion and Morality in the United States of America, an Argument not for Voluntary, but for Established Churches: Showing, on the Testimony of Americans Themselves, the Deplorable Destitution of the Means of Grace, the Immense Progress of Error, and the Extensive Prevalence of Other Great Moral and Religious Evils, which Obtain in the United States.  

D. Emigrant Reactions

The want of Church and School accommodation in the country parts is a great evil and certainly checks many from advising their fellow countrymen to come out here.  

So wrote James Murdoch in a letter to his father who lived on a farm near Blairgowrie in Perthshire. He was writing from Australia in the 1840s. His statement indicates a) that the supply of religious facilities was cause for concern and b) that this concern could be important enough to influence the direction of emigration and possibly even the decision to emigrate. If a person believed that his future salvation depended on regular

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1Glasgow, 1833.
2Cawura, Marulan, Australia, early 1840s; extracts from the letter were published in Library Notes of the Royal Commonwealth Society, New Series, No. 148, April, 1969.
church attendance, he would be loath to leave a land of churches for a wilderness, no matter how strong the other reasons for going were. It is therefore important to determine what kind of news the prospective emigrant in Scotland was receiving from the United States about the existence of churches.

Predictably, facilities for worship on the comparatively populous East Coast met with general approval. As noted in the letters of Mitchell King to Thomas Chalmers, Charleston was well-provided with three predominantly Scottish churches; and what would sound sweeter to the ears of a staunch Presbyterian than the eulogy delivered by Allen Shaw in a letter designed to entice some of his kinsmen from the island of Jura to North Carolina:

and what more shall I say to encourage you to come to this favoured land. It is a land of Sabbaths and of bibles. It is a land abounding with ministers and churches and church ordinances...Our neighborhood [sic] is entirely Presbyterian. There are three churches within eight miles of us. There is a Sabbath School within a mile of us conducted by one of the elders of the church. We attend it regularly.1

Another Scottish emigrant in North Carolina had also indicated favourable conditions in a letter published in The Scotsman twenty years earlier. He declared that in North Carolina churches were convenient to almost every farm and included several different denominations, though the writer slyly pointed out that Presbyterians were the most numerous.2

One of the most common complaints from emigrants on the East Coast was about the severity of the weather which at times was bad enough to keep them from church. From Pennsylvania William Arnott complained to his parents, "the Presbyterian church is about two miles off. Walking is out of the question it being so sloppy. So I defer going to church untill[sic] the better weather prevails."3 And in New York City James Ferguson's brother,

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1 Typescript copy of letter, March 15, 1840.
2 Sept. 25, 1819.
3 Ms. letter, Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, March 6, 1865 to father and mother in Fife.
Robert, moaned about the coldest winter in many years and confessed to his niece in Scotland, "I am Sitting like a Slanger\textsuperscript{1} beside a red hot Stove, and has not gone to church to day, but I think you would excuse me if you only felt how cold it is."\textsuperscript{2}

Distance was another problem, even on the East Coast. In the rural areas some of the emigrants were separated by at least two miles from their churches and this was occasionally mentioned as one of the "privations" of life in the New World. An emigrant in Newbury wrote that there was no settled minister where he lived, but he was glad to say that in Ryegate, "only" five or six miles distant, there was a meeting-house presided over by an "able speaker of the Cameronian church". There were other meeting-houses only four miles away, but the implication was that any man worth his salt would travel the extra two to hear a decent sermon.\textsuperscript{3} Robert McIntyre reported from the backwoods of Pennsylvania that his farm was three and a half miles from "Shugergrove" where there were "tow larg Stors...and 4 Black Smith Shops and 2 metten hauses". He was not complaining, but, rather, seemed to think it was more than could be expected of a part of the country where the first settlers had only arrived 30 years before.\textsuperscript{4}

Farther west in the more thinly-settled states, one would expect the reports to be less encouraging or even positively discouraging—in the manner of James Murdoch's letter from Australia. It comes as somewhat of a surprise, therefore, to find reports like that of John Rutherford who wrote from a farm in Wisconsin in 1848: "I must say we live in a Christian country. My land goes within a few yards of the church door and we

\textsuperscript{1}probably from the verb "to slanger" meaning to linger; Chambers's Scots Dictionary, Edinburgh, 1955, p. 526.
\textsuperscript{2}Ms. letter, New York, Feb. 17, 1856.
\textsuperscript{3}Letter in The Scotsman, April 15, 1820.
\textsuperscript{4}Ms. letter, "Firehould", Sugargrove, Warren County, Pennsylvania, November 27, 1845 to his brother (in-law?) in Dumbarton.
have another about two miles distant." And Hugh Rose, writing from Ohio in 1830, implied not only that he belonged to a predominantly Scottish church but that there were several other Presbyterian congregations in the vicinity. In both cases, however, the letters were written from 'Scotch Settlements' and it would be misleading to accept their evidence outwith that context. It is unlikely that isolated farmsteads throughout the Middle West were all within hailing distance of 'Scotch' churches. Another Scottish settlement, Argyle in Illinois, also wasted little time in establishing their own Presbyterian church, meeting first in homes and then building a combined church/Sunday school/school house, although in the early years they were served by two Methodist circuit riders.3

David Whyte is an example of the Scots who pushed to the outer fringes of 'civilisation' in spite of trepidation about the quantity and quality of the spiritual amenities. He was a Dissenter and a Voluntary and may possibly have been influenced by these convictions when he made his decision to emigrate—certainly he was no friend of the Established Church in Scotland. After settling in Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1855, he immediately sought out the Congregational Church:

When coming up here I felt a good deal how we might be situated with regard to Christian privilege[sic]. This thought [weighed?] heavy on my Mind. In this my fears has been in a good measure happily removed. The first Church I entered in America and the first hymn given out to be sung was Behold the Mountain of the Lord...I cannot describe the sensations that I felt. I thought on the pure [ms. illegible] spirit of the Author also of him who had brought his works out of obscurity and what would have been his feeling on composing these lays that they were to be chanted by generations then unborn in the fare west where the Buffaloes and the Woolf and the Red Skin roamd un-

1Ms. letter, Verona, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 1848 to his brother in Renfrewshire.
2Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
3Harvey, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
molested and in the Evening Service there was sung There is a land of pure delight. I says to Magt you se we are not so fare from home. He found the mode of adoration in his new church "of the strictest order" and his new Pastor "a young man of the first talent. A most able and consistent minister of the Gosple. For points and decisions in his discourses I have seldom or never heard [better?]. I felt deeply leaving our dear pastor at home but in this above respect we have lost nothing." The facilities for worship were also highly satisfactory: "The appearance in our churches here fare excels those at home for elegance and respectability both in person and dress."¹ When it came to persuading Scots that American religion was not in a state of destitution, such letters would be worth their weight—and one hundred times their weight—in emigrant manuals and statistics.

There were some complaints. An emigrant in Indiana wrote a predominantly favourable letter about life in the thinly-settled new state but confided that they were not strangers to privation:

The only thing I do not like about this country is, that owing to its newness we are at a loss for many things you have in the old country. We have no school in this place, which is a great want, and have been but poorly supplied with preachers.

The situation, though bad, was not hopeless and he admitted seeing good prospects for more ministers in the future.² There is evidence that, where several Scottish families settled and found no church to their liking, they soon established one. Merle Curti in his study of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin, made a point of mentioning that the Scots founded regular Presbyterian worship within a very short time of settling.³

In the Far West, of course, the difficulties were multiplied by the extreme scarcity of ministers and

¹Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855 to his brother.
²Letter in The Scotsman, May 4, 1822 (Indiana became a state in 1820).
the diffuseness of the population. Reports from Oregon were gloomy enough. Soon after crossing the Oregon Trail with her family, Allison Smillie wrote to Scotland, "We have no Church to go to nearby, but we will have horses before long, and that will enable us to go." The horses, if they were forthcoming, did not do much to remedy the situation, for seven years later her mother complained, "We live so far from Church that I have heard but few sermons since we came here." 2

The emigrants sometimes commented on the differences they encountered in forms of worship. William Anderson found a Scotch Kirk in Boston complete with Scottish minister—"a Mr. Muir from Paisley a very nice man"—but could hardly suppress a chuckle at the congregation's method of coping with the summer heat:

They use fans in all the churches here in every pew. There is a number of fans for the use of the sitters. I am sure if you saw them here in the hours of worship it would amuse you very much. 3

A "gentleman lately resident in Edinburgh" wrote from New York in 1835 to describe a visit to one of the churches "which belong to the black people". The congregation were all well-dressed and used fans to keep cool and, in spite of the heat, there was "no smell whatever". "The Man of Colour preached a sound and most impressive sermon, equal in fluency to any minister in Edinburgh." 4 Hugh Rose noted a serious divergence from Scottish usage in Ohio:

They deny baptism[sic] to all, but communicants, & they hold that none are members of the visible church, except those that are communicants, which is contrary to the opinion of the great Rutherford, that made the point so clear, both from reason & scripture.

He also commented that their marriage laws were the same as the English and found that the laws against Sabbath-

1 Typescript copy of letter, Eugene City, Lane County, Oregon Territory, Jan. 1854.
2 Typescript copy of letter, Eugene City, May 7, 1861.
3 Typescript copy of letter, Boston, Mass., June 25, 1834 to his parents.
4 The Scotsman, July 11, 1835.
breaking were "placed in very slack harness", but admitted that the same was true in many other countries.  

James Flint told of an amusing incident which occurred when he was sailing on the Sabbath in the United States:

A boatman commenced a song, and was interrupted by a Scots rustic. The American alleged that he was in a "land of liberty" and that no one had a right to interfere. The other affirmed that it was against the law, and threatened to prevent the violation in the most summary way. The boatman, perceiving that he was to be assailed by a stronger man than himself, gave up the contest. Every one present seemed well pleased with the termination of the affair.  

John Ronaldson was aware of a different Sabbath atmosphere in Massachusetts which he attempted to describe to his wife:

This is Sunday and to give you an idea of things the factory girls are dancing and singing. Still they are all very moral and religious at least in appearance. Sunday is not so gloomy here as in Scotland.  

The Sundays may not have been so gloomy in America, but judging from the lack of further comment by emigrants it would seem that sermons and modes of worship must have been remarkably similar to those they left in the Old Country.

E. Conclusions

I am now in my 65 year and ame Blissed with grand children all happy and well off, highly respected & my son a usefull member in Church & State, & what is more all I think devoted devote members of the Church.  

--John Williams

I have been often asked by the most inteligent of our Christian congregation [?] that if Scotland with all her religious inteligence do not se the evil of the connection between Church & State (O yes) a great many of them do I am sure.  

--David Whyte

1Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
2Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 85.
3Typescript copy of letter, East Braintree, May 1854.
4Ms. letter, Wilmington, North Carolina, "about 1840" to his sister.
5Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.
Judging by the letters which have survived, the prospective emigrants in Scotland who relied on their friends and family in America for information must have been rather encouraged about the state of religion in the United States. Those who fully expected any land beyond the pale of the Church of Scotland establishment to languish in a state of spiritual wilderness would have been surprised to learn how strong and prolific the Presbyterian Church was across the Atlantic.

It is true that some would sincerely regret the absence of establishment and would fear the consequences of a government that did not protect and favour Christians. Hugh Rose pointed out that many natives of Britain refused to be naturalised for the simple reason that they did not wish to be citizens of a country whose Constitution did not "admit of the existence of a God, & that their is no provision made in it for the maintainance[sic] of any religious sect whatever". He was also extremely indignant about the lack of religious tests for holding important government positions whereby "a Christian has no pre-eminence over an Infidel, (of which, their are a great many in this country,) and that they hold office of importance, to the great danger of the Christians."¹

The much-vaunted religious freedom in the United States and the general spirit of tolerance between sects would not necessarily impress the Scottish emigrants, especially those who had been members of the Established Church in Scotland. Those who had never (in their lifetimes at least) been oppressed would find it difficult to appreciate the new "freedom" and Scottish Presbyterians would be likely to view the toleration—especially when it involved temporary amalgamation with other sects—as a laxness of discipline and doctrinal purity. It was no accident that Scotch Churches like the one in Argyle, Illinois, chose to affiliate with the Old School Presbyterians in spite of their objections to slavery. The

¹Ms. letter, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830.
Old School was the most conservative in doctrine and rejected the Union with the Congregationalists.

On the other hand, there were many Scots who were dissatisfied with the establishment in Scotland and, although some of them simply favoured the establishment of a different sect, there was a growing desire for "freedom" among Dissenters during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some agitated for a voluntary system of church support and a number too large to ignore voiced particular grievances against having to support an established church to which they did not belong. Still others objected to not being able to elect their own ministers. Catholics had been persecuted in Scotland since the Reformation and even after the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 they were still barred from almost every public office and were forbidden to teach. They also had to publish their banns in the parish church, be married by a parish minister and pay baptism dues to parish officials. It was not until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 that they were "raised to the position of citizens". Non-Christians were, and continued to be, discriminated against. It is tempting to suppose that many of the emigrants would have fallen into the class of those who objected in one way or another to the Established Church; after all, according to the spot census of Sunday, March 30, 1851, there were more than three times as many Dissenters as members of the Church of Scotland. However, there is little evidence to support this assumption beyond the fact that some of the emigrants like David Whyte and Robert Crawford were Dissenters.

The great diversification of sects in the United States would be unlikely to impress anyone who had been

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2 Cunningham, *op. cit.*, II, p. 448.
3 PP, 1854, LIX, p. 317; the Church of Scotland mustered 566,409 which was the largest attendance of a single sect; the Dissenters numbered 1,178,237.
raised to believe that the Presbyterian Faith was the only true road to salvation, but it did have the effect of producing a high per capita rate of churches which might, paradoxically, impress someone who expected a paucity of churches in America. The actual reports concerning the provision and convenience of Presbyterian facilities tended to indicate that those who settled on the East Coast would have little difficulty in finding churches to suit their taste, although those who lived in rural areas might have to travel several miles. Merchants, weavers, labourers and others who moved to the towns of the interior would also find no lack of Presbyterian churches (though they would find themselves outnumbered by revivalist Methodists and Baptists) while those who settled on the farming frontiers might have to make do for a few years with make-shift churches, small congregations and, even, Methodist circuit-riders. Within a comparatively short time, however, regular Presbyterian worship was sure to be established wherever Scots settled. The real problem was in the Far West, in Oregon and California, but few Scots emigrated with plans of moving that far. The letters indicate that it was the Scots who had settled previously in the States who eventually "pulled up stakes" and re-emigrated farther west. On the whole, therefore, it seems unlikely that lack of church facilities was a serious deterrent to prospective emigrants from Scotland.

Scots who were particularly anxious about their spiritual accommodation in the United States could, after enquiry, direct their settlement to the neighbourhood of an established "Scotch Church". These churches acted not only as a means of continuing the services and sermons to which the emigrants had been accustomed, but were also community centres, "homes away from home" where the Scots could congregate and form St. Andrews' Societies and organise Burns Suppers.
Many young Scots crossed the Ocean with recommendations from their parish minister to serve as introductions to their new congregation:

Closeburn Dumfriesshire
June 10th, 1834.

We do hereby certify that George Irving and Jean McDonald his wife were residing in this parish immediately previous to their departure for the United States, that they maintained irreproachable characters, were regular in their attendance on divine ordinances and in full communion with the Church of Scotland.

Andrew Bennet Min: of Closeburn
Rob. Mundell J.P. Elder

Those Scots who ventured in some spiritual trepidation across the Atlantic must have rejoiced to find the Church of their Fathers—complete with schisms—so firmly planted in the soil of the New World; and to some at least the lack of government support to religion would have been compensated for by the government support to education.

1 from the McDonald-Irving Papers in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina.
Chapter VII: Success and Failure

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.  
Prov. xxv. 25.

Nothing was more likely to encourage a prospective emigrant than a tale of success from the far side of the Atlantic. Here the emigrant letters truly came into their own, for, though a man might be inclined to doubt the integrity of a newspaper account of "rags to riches" in the United States, he would think twice about mistrusting his own brother or close friend—especially when he was encouraged to come on over and see for himself. By the same token it would seem to follow that discouraging reports from the States would have an equally telling reverse effect.

The emigrants in America were well aware of the power their letters might exercise; mention has already been made of their reticence and scrupulous efforts to report only facts. But the plain facts were often inducement enough. The letters were also supplemented by the return of many emigrants with first-hand accounts of life in America. Sometimes the writer of a letter, barraged by questions from his relatives and friends in Scotland, would simply refer them to a returning emigrant of their acquaintance: "He will answer all your questions." Some returned because they failed or were disappointed with the prospects in America; some returned to pick up a "guid Scottish wife" before going back to their new homes or to guide parents and relatives across; and many successful emigrants made nostalgic visits to their native land, renewing old acquaintances, singing the old songs, visiting the old kirk and the graves of their fathers and all the while maintaining that they would never "stop" there for more than two or three months—their farm or store in America was calling and there were dollars to be earned. "Tell al may frinds that they
may see me in Scotland yet but not to stop for I leak America better then Scotland."

Any analysis of success or failure reports in emigrant letters must take into account the possibility that such letters, by their very nature, might have a bias towards chronicling success. There are at least three reasons for suspecting disproportionate representation: 1) emigrants well-educated enough to write letters would have a natural advantage over illiterate fellow-countrymen; those who could not write could not leave their comments for posterity; 2) families in Scotland would be more likely to save letters reporting success; this was partly because success was better news and represented an achievement of which the family could be proud and partly because those who succeeded might never be seen again while those who failed might be home the next summer; and 3) the emigrants themselves would probably prefer to write cheerful news: as John Ronaldson said to his wife, "I would rather give you cheery news than gloomy ones, still I must tell the truth." Those who failed might prefer simply to remain silent.

However, these assumptions are not as relevant as they might first appear. In Scotland even the lowest classes could often read and write and furthermore economic conditions in the United States during most of the period 1815-1861 favoured unskilled labour. It is true that families would probably be most likely to save the letters which reported success, but the emigrants in America had one very good reason for not revealing an increase in prosperity or, at least, for stressing that their gains were not financial. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

The fact remains that many of the emigrants did

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1 Ms. letter, Robert McIntyre, "Firehauld", Sugargrove, Warren County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1845.
2 Typescript copy of letter, East Braintree, Mass., Feb. 6, 1854 to his wife, Eliza, in Balerno.
3 See Chapter V (Part II).
4 See Chapter III (Part II).
write home telling of booming business and bountiful crops and a few wrote gloomy letters listing their losses and misfortunes. In this chapter some examples of success and failure will be analysed and an attempt will be made to assess the reasons for each and the likely effect on prospective emigrants.

A. Success: Patterns of Prosperity

we were all remarkably glad that you had fallen in with such a good situation & in so short a time after your arrival[ sic] in that land of free doom. If it be as good as what your[ sic] represent you have certainly made a good exchange, between this clod[ sic] clay soil of ours, and that fine deep, warm, loamy soil of yours.

--Andrew Robertson

Scottish emigrants had a good reputation in the States for hard work, frugality and, ultimately, success. In 1782 Crèvecoeur reckoned that seven out of twelve families of Scottish emigrants would succeed (compared to nine out of twelve German and four out of twelve Irish) and he was speaking primarily about farming on uncleared forest-land at that—where it was ignorance of American methods that were holding them back. The Germans were more successful only because their wives laboured in the fields with them. Another Frenchman, writing eighty years later, ranked the Scots very highly:

Active, enterprising, hardworking, persevering, honest, incomparably more sober and temperate than the Irish, the English-Scotch are welcomed everywhere and find employment without difficulty.

Robert McIntyre told his brother-in-law that his Pennsylvania farm was surrounded by "Engleest Ieresh and Duch Prenshs and yankes" but that the Scots were "the most Resptbel". And David Whyte assured his brother that

1Ms. letter, Dalganven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843 to his brother James Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
the Scots in Watertown, Wisconsin, were "uneversally respected". ¹ In a letter published in The Scotsman an emigrant in New York State commented,

Three towns here are mostly settled with Scottish and Irish families. They have all farms, and I do not know any who are not doing well. I have neither known, nor heard of any Scottish settlers that have become bankrupt since I came here. The farmers don't make rapid fortunes, but farming is a steady and sure business.²

And there is finally the comforting assurance of Peter Ross that an "instance is not on record of a Scotsman being tried by Lynch law, or, with a single exception, of one being tarred and feathered".³

Scots had a good reputation and, if the emigrant letters can be taken as an indication of relative Scottish success in different fields of endeavour, it would seem that farming offered the best opportunities. Letters from thirteen different farmers in the United States all record at least moderate success (independence and subsistence agriculture) and none mentions even the possibility of failure or return to Scotland; "newspaper letters" from emigrant farmers are also uniformly encouraging.

1. Farmers

The emigrants all agreed that farming was not an occupation for ambitious people who wanted to make a lot of money—though land was cheap and readily available, the high wages demanded by farm-labourers made expansion difficult and because of the dearth of cash, especially in the West, much of the business was done by bartering. The attractions of agriculture lay rather in land ownership, independence and security of the necessities of life for the whole family far from the vacillations of the labour market.

¹Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.
²Letter from a native of Greenock, June 13, 1813.
Some of the farmers, however, did surprisingly well. James Robertson, probably a native of Strathmore, had no doubt followed his own advice and brought enough money with him to buy a decent cleared farm outright. Eventually, "by a singular combination of circumstances" he traded his farm and one hundred dollars for "a princely establishment" of 300 acres (twice as large as his first farm) with

one of the best houses in this County having been built by the celebrated General Schuyler for his son who spent all his wives money and was obliged to sell the concern.

In 1830 when he wrote to a friend in Scotland his "establishment" included barn, overseer's house, granaries, carriage house, "more horses and carriages than I know what to do with", and a flock of Saxony sheep. He had also nearly finished building a brewery on his farm and was so optimistic about its financial success that he prophesied a visit to Scotland on the profits in the near future.¹

Probably more typical of the successful emigrant farmer in the United States at this time was John Rutherford who emigrated from near Johnstone in 1843. He left Mill o' Cart, the family farm, partly because it was not big enough for both him and his brother and partly because of difficulties with his fiancée's parents, and bought a farm in a predominantly Scottish area of Wisconsin.² His 160-acre farm was uncleared but within the year he had planted 12 acres of wheat and 8 acres of potatoes and other vegetables—enough to keep them going; he had also erected a two-story log house and a byre and was working on a barn. He owed no one as much as a half-penny.³ About ten years later his wife wrote to her brother and was glad to inform him "I have bettered my circumstances A good deall by coming to america." At

¹Still Water Village, Washington County, New York, Jan. 17, 1830 to Patrick Kirkaldy (Ms. letter).
²Verona was the site of the John Proud Settlement.
³Ms. letter, Verona, Wisc., Dec. 1, 1848 to his brother, Tom, Mill o' Cart Farm near Johnstone, Renfrewshire.
that time they could boast "A pair of five year old mares with colt and A pair of colts, six cows nine young ones and pretty well stocket in farm implements" which included a two-horse reaping machine. During that first ten years the value of the land had risen from $1000 to $2400. Their crops were so successful that John Rutherford won prizes at the County Fair..."and I am proud to tell you James we have gott[sic] no debt." A few years later, during the Civil War, a direct railway line from New York to Madison, the state capital, was completed and doubled the value of the land again.

Not only did John Rutherford become a prosperous farmer, but he must have earned the respect of his neighbours in the process, for he was elected Justice of the Peace at a later (unspecified) date.

Many members of the Robertson family of Dalgarven in Scotland emigrated to the United States and settled on farms in Illinois. James Robertson was among the first to leave the old country and he bought a farm near Union Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois in 1842; it was a narrow escape from the "hungry forties" of British agriculture for him and his family. James' son Robert wrote a cheerful letter to his relations in Scotland in 1845 describing the good crops he and his family had raised in Illinois; in reply Thomas Boyd told him about the potato crop on his farm, Fairlie Bog, near Kilwinning:

there is a disease which seems from the Newspapers to be prevalent in almost the whole of Scotland & Ireland in the Potatoes which is called the Murrain—indeed ours are so much infected that...they more resembled manure than Meat for either man or beast. I could compare them to nothing but black soap & I am informed that our neighbours are no better.

1United States Agricultural Census, 1850, Wisconsin, Adams County and 1860, Wisconsin, Dane County.
2Ms. letter, Jean Rutherford to her brother, Verona, Wisconsin (undated but definitely pre-March 21, 1859).
3Ms. letter, John Rutherford, Verona, July 17 (no year but during Civil War) to brother-in-law, Andrew Kesson.
4Ms. letter, Nov. 28, 1845.
The success of his American cousin's crops must have seemed doubly tantalising. By 1848 the Robertsons of Union Grove had been successful enough to buy more land; James' sister in Scotland was incredulous: "we cannot understand what you men by purchasing more land as you have a large farm already." As a final measure of their opulence, they provided a feather bed for Robert and his newly-wed wife, Mary Boyd, which she would have had a long wait for in Scotland. Materially the Illinois Robertsons seemed to want nothing, but they were to see their share of trouble: of the twelve children born in that feather bed only four reached maturity.

Alexander Allison was another typical emigrant farmer who left West Lothian to settle on a farm near Middletown, Logan County, Illinois in the early 1840s. He bought 280 acres of uncleared land and was soon busy building a frame house and sowing his first crops. By 1847 he had acquired a wife of Dutch and Irish descent—a local farmer's daughter—and was bringing in 55 acres of corn, 12 acres of oats and peaches by the wagon load. He hired a "hand" for five months of the year, which, considering the wages demanded, was a fair indication of his prosperity.

Robert McIntyre was making a subsistence living for his family on his 120-acre farm in Pennsylvania. He wrote to his brother-in-law in Dumbarton to tell him that they now had 20 to 30 acres cleared and that the crops "came in well"; they had seven head of cattle, 12 sheep, 4 hogs and innumerable poultry. After several years of back-breaking work, clearing the stubborn forests and breaking new ground, he was beginning to

1 Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, Ayrshire, June 21, 1848 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
2 Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, Ayrshire, March 5, 1850 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
3 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 to his uncle in Bathgate.
4 Ms. letter, Middletown, Illinois, Jan. 3, 1847 to his uncle in Bathgate.
taste the first sweet fruits of his labour:

winter appears to have set in this day but I Cane
Set at May Eas to it is over. This is the first
year I Could Say so and if I had Stopt in Scotlan
it was ten to one if ever I Could Sead so.1

There was pride between the labouriously-written lines.

In the South it was more difficult to secure land
for farms, but nevertheless Andrew Allison's uncle,
Alexander Young, "made good" in Louisiana and his cotton
plantation near New Orleans paid for his three nephews'
education in Stevenston, Ayrshire, and later for their
passage over to join him.2 And there is the unusual
case of Randal MacDonald who wrote to his "Honored Son
and Daughter" in Dumfries from Leaksville, North Carolina,
offering them a fine house with an elegant potato garden
and 1000 acres.3 Adam Ferguson's father and mother
emigrated from Argyll to North Carolina around the turn
of the century and in 1804 pushed 700 miles farther
west to Carthage, Tennessee, which at that time was still
a wilderness.4 His father, Duncan, died a scant four
years after settling his family there, leaving a widow
and four young children. The widow must have been a
resourceful woman, however, for they rapidly accumulated
property and raised cattle on it. Before she died in
1832, she saw her daughter well-married, her two oldest
boys with 8 to 900 acres apiece (and slaves) at the head
of Goose Creek in Smith County, Tennessee, and her
youngest son, Adam, with 150 acres and 8 slaves. The
oldest brother, Alexander, became Deputy Surveyor of
the County; Patrick became Justice of the Peace and had
13 children and Adam became an attorney and counsellor
at law. She died "Pleased...that She and father had

1Ms. letter, "Firehauld", Sugargrove, Warren County,
Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1845.
2typescript copy of letter, Andrew Allison, New Orleans,
1837 to his parents; and correspondence with a descendant,
Miss Mary A. Aitken, Dalry, Ayrshire.
3typescript copy of letter, June 17, 1833 to Mrs. Jane
King, c/o George Allenton, Dumfries.
4Ms. letter, Adam Ferguson, Carthage, Tennessee,
April 3, 1838 to Robert Macnab, Glenorchy, Argyll.
come to this country and gave by so doing an opport-
unity[sic] to her children of living upon their own
land."

The Fergussons had first settled on the East Coast
and then crossed the Appalachians and moved towards the
Frontier where they could find more cheap land. This
was the "traditional" American process and it was far
from unusual among the Scottish emigrants. James
Ferguson left Netherholm Farm in Dumfriesshire in 1848
and worked, probably as a farm labourer, in New York
State before eventually buying a farm there. After
three years, he moved on to Dundee, Illinois and from
there went in 1857 to Centralia, Illinois where he
was one of the first settlers.² He worked hard all of
his life—"We have very little enjoyment. Our whole
thoughts are on Dollars & Cents. We have no time for
any thing but work, work..."³—with little to show for
it in the end but a farm of his own and the respect of
his neighbours.⁴ Many a Scottish tenant-farmer would
have called that success. After his death in 1876,
three of his six children continued the process of family
expansion and moved west to settle in Custer County,
Montana Territory where the oldest son, Robert, was
killed by marauding Cheyennes in 1890—42 years and some
6,000 miles from the peaceful family seat of Netherholm
in Dumfriesshire.⁵

Another Scottish family which left its marks(and
bones) across the American continent were the Smillies
and Stewarts. David and Allison Smillie, along with

¹Ms. letter, Adam Ferguson, Carthage, Tennessee, May 4, 1838 to his cousin, Robert Macnab, Glenorchy, Argyll.
²Photocopy of Margaret Ferguson's Obituary Notice from unidentified American newspaper (1836) in the family
papers of Miss J.M.Henderson, Dumfries.
³Ms. letter, James Ferguson, Centralia, Illinois, Nov. 6, 1864 to his sister, Janet.
⁴Miss Sadie Ferguson's Obituary Notice in 1886 Centralia newspaper; also Margaret Ferguson's Obituary Notice, op. cit.
⁵Various newspaper accounts including one in the Boston Herald datelined Helena, Montana, June 11, 1890.
their in-laws, John and Jannet Stewart, left Lochee near Dundee and settled on farms in Wayne, Ohio in the 1840s. Partly because they heard "extravagant descriptions" of Oregon Territory, partly because of trouble with a tenant on one of their farms and partly because their children were growing up and wanted land of their own, both families crossed the Oregon Trail in 1853—three generations of Smillies and Stewarts crossing 4,000 miles of prairie and mountains to find the land they needed. They all settled near Eugene City in Lane County and became successful farmers there. The success of these two families is mirrored in the number of relatives who left Lochee to follow them over: James Dalziel went first to Pittsburgh and then settled in Ohio, fighting for his new country in the Civil War; his sister Agnes Donaldson and her husband and family followed as did another sister's family, Ann and George McMahon; and another relative John Johnstone, worked in Ohio for many years before returning to Scotland. All of them farmed and most of them were successful enough to pay periodic visits to Lochee throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.  

2. Mechanics, Merchants and Labourers

Sometimes emigrants would first become successful in some other business before turning their attention to farming and the possibilities of land-ownership. Typical of this type of person was William Johnstone, the skilled mason and sculptor whose career is sketched in Part II, Chapter III. John Prentice in his valuable "Letter to the Working Classes of Edinburgh" cited another example:

In harvest last I had the pleasure of spending a couple of days with an old acquaintance, Mr. T.

1typescript copy of letter, Jannet Stewart, Eugene City, Oregon, Dec. 27, 1861 to her sister in Scotland.
Purdie, who owns a fine farm of one hundred and sixty acres, in the state of Indiana, ten miles from this city Louisville, Kentucky. His is a fertile farm, and I was proud to see it so well cultivated—he being a native of the same parish with myself, and I having given him his first agricultural instructions. He left Scotland in 1817 with nothing but good health and industrious habits. Though bred to a country life he went to work at a foundry, paid attention to what was going on around him, became a competent engineer, made money, and bought his farm; and it is worth, with stock, about $3,000 dollars.¹

Sometimes emigrants who were struggling to make ends meet in their own trades turned to farming as a haven from the storms and fluctuations of the labour-market and the economic situation. James Matheson, though a successful merchant, lamented his choice of vocation and wished he had chosen farming.² Robert Pollock was less successful as a merchant. He emigrated to Wisconsin sometime before 1848 and set up shop in a small farming community where business was brisk for the first three years—until the crops failed; as he lost business, his original optimism soon became almost as dull as the trade. In 1848 he and his family were not making their board.³ He was obliged to accept crops in payment for debts and when the bottom fell out of the market he lost all he had gained "and something More". It was only by joining the Gold Rush that he was able to recoup his losses, but his luck in California was so good that in nine weeks he was able to pay his debts and buy a fine, uncleared farm of 137 acres.⁴ There may have been a little of the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" in his decision to turn to farming, but at least when the market prices fell he would still have plenty to eat.

¹Letter in The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
²Ms. letter, New York, Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother Angus in Dornoch, Sutherland.
³Ms. letter, Lake Mills, Wisconsin, Jan. 29, 1848 to his brother and niece in Ayr.
⁴Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 7, 1854 to his brother and niece in Ayr.
Many Scots in the United States were tempted to try their hands in the merchant line. It was generally regarded as a less dependable occupation than farming (though many farmers might have disagreed), but if the risks were greater so was the chance of gain. An emigrant who succeeded as a farmer might secure independence and even a comfortable income but the merchant who succeeded could make a fortune.

George Armour was the classical example of a poor Scottish emigrant who became one of America's "merchant princes" around the middle of the nineteenth century. A wheelwright to trade, he left his native Kintyre in the early 1830s and worked his way across the Atlantic as a cooper or ship's carpenter. He and his brother John and cousin James were the original pioneers and founders of the Argyle settlement in Winnebago County, Illinois. After taking over their cousin's claim (amicably), he and his brother returned to Kintyre and "like Caleb and Joshua of old...reported a goodly land in America"; thus began an exodus which for the next 30 years was to populate the counties of Winnebago and Boone with sturdy Covenanting stock from Argyll.¹

George Armour returned to the States with one of the first groups of families but, being a mechanic and having little inclination to farm, he turned his hand to skilled labour on the Illinois and Michigan Canal and on the railroads, thus accumulating enough capital to go into the grain elevator and warehouse business. He became a millionaire.²

Alexander Allison's sister, Marion Munger, wrote to her grandmother in Bathgate and, after describing the flourishing young town of Chicago, mentioned casually that her husband was in the dry goods and grocery business.³ Just over a year later she wrote to say that

¹Following the plague of 1665, the Earl of Argyll had populated Kintyre with Covenanters from Renfrewshire, Ayrshire and Galloway.
³Ms. letter, Chicago, Jan. 27, 1846.
they had removed a short distance to Little Fort in Lake County and that Mr. Munger had bought a warehouse and pier; prospects were encouraging: "it is at present one of the most profitable on the Lakes." 1 Eight years later a mammoth warehouse with a capacity of three hundred thousand bushels was built in Chicago—it was owned by Munger and Armour. 2 The Armour was, of course, George Armour and the Scottish coalition was one of the most powerful concerns in northern Illinois. In 1868 Munger, allied then with a man named Wheeler, was still one of the five dominant companies. They had successfully weathered the Civil War, but they were to suffer great loss in the Chicago Fire of 1871. 3

James Ferguson's young brother, Robert, followed him from Dumfriesshire to the States and enjoyed great success as a merchant in New York and Boston. He arrived in New York at the age of 21 in 1851 and found employment with a firm owned by another Dumfriessian (an old acquaintance), James Beck; later he joined the "colossal establishment" of A.T. Stewart and achieved the highly responsible position of being one of their chief buyers for Europe—a job which carried with it the fringe benefit of periodic visits to his relatives in Scotland. Ultimately he removed to Boston and the firm of Shepard, Norwell & Co. which "in great measure owing to his outstanding capacity, has developed a business taking rank with the first in a land of large commercial concerns". He became very wealthy, but never forgot his homeland or his humble origins and "not a few" Dumfrissians were to be numbered among his employees. 4

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1 Ms. letter, Little Fort, March 7, 1847 to her uncle in Bathgate.
3 Ms. letter, Ottawa, Illinois, Oct. 21, 1871 (no signature) to Alexander Wark, Bathgate.
4 Ms. letter, Robert Ferguson, New York, Feb. 17, 1856 to his niece, Jane Maxwell; Ms. letter, James Ferguson, Centralia, Illinois, Nov. 6, 1864 to his sister, Janet; Obituary Notice of Robert Ferguson from unidentified (probably Scottish) newspaper in the family papers of Miss J.M. Henderson, Dumfries.
James Matheson, in spite of his unceasing complaints, his vitriolic invective against America, Americans and everything American, and his lamentations over the crumbling and corrupt economy of the United States, was successful enough as a merchant to have bought 1400 acres of land in New York State "on speculation" and to be worried about what would happen to all of his money when he died in that land of thieves. Relatives in Sutherland might have been more impressed with his earnings than his criticism.

John Dick had been a merchant in Edinburgh. For unspecified reasons—perhaps not unconnected with his outspoken dislike of the Edinburgh gentry—he transferred his business to the City of Brooklyn just across the river from New York and within one year he was comfortably settled with all his family.

I have now a most excellent business[ sic] and has got more work than what we can do or has any conveiences[ sic] to do it with. My Shop is a great deal larger than the one I had in Edin[2]!

It was a promising start and his love for the republican society of his adopted country would have helped him to make the most of it.

Many of the skilled and semi-skilled Scottish emigrants found lucrative outlets for their talents and wrote encouraging letters to their relatives in Scotland. William Johnstone built up a very successful business in masonry before retiring to his farm in Ohio and George Armour used his carpentering skills to good advantage on the canals and railroads. William Garrioach (or Garrick as it became in America) was a native of Orkney born in 1818; like George Armour he was a skilled wood-worker, having been trained as a ship's carpenter, and, again like Armour, he worked for the railroads when he settled in

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1 Ms. letters, New York, March 19, 1842 and Aug. 30, 1844 to his brother Angus in Dornoch.  
2 the date on the letter announcing his arrival is probably 1835, but it could be 1833.  
3 Ms. letter, City of Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836 to Wm. Kerr, Edinburgh.
America. He originally emigrated to Ontario, but moved down to Michigan in 1858 where he turned to bridge-building and eventually became Superintendent of Bridges and Railways on the Detroit, Grand Haven and Milwaukee Line, a post which he held until his death in 1883. He was successful in his profession and was also a highly-respected member of the community and an Elder in the First Presbyterian Church; when he died the annual picnic was postponed as a mark of respect.1

Robert Jack was trained as a wheelwright in Townhead, Ayrshire and emigrated to America in 1845. He was beset with personal disasters from the very beginning. After a bare few weeks in the United States, he watched all of his worldly possessions sink to the bottom of the Mississippi in a snagged river-boat and could, like Francis I, inform his mother that he had lost all but his honour. He lost his wife in childbirth and his baby son seven months later and saw his father die two weeks after arriving in St. Louis to join him. He was, however, highly successful at his trade. He first worked on steam-boats along the Mississippi, but later bought a farm and turned his joining skill to good use as a wagon-maker in which line he was an instant success, getting enough commissions to keep him busy for at least a year. He was also considering an offer to make wagons for the owner of two saw-mills in Missouri where he would pay only half as much for the wood and be able to sell the wagons for 25 to 30 dollars more.2

David Whyte was a skilled weaver with experience working power-looms who emigrated in 1854 from Bridgend in Strathearn to Wisconsin. He found immediate employment weaving "Cassimer Cloth" at double the wages he had had

1 Typescript copy of letter, William Garrick, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Feb. 29, 1862 to his brother David in Perth; and correspondence with a distant relative, Miss Mary Borwick, Kirkwall, Orkney, June 30, 1969.
2 Series of Ms. letters from Robert Jack to his brother-in-law, Robert Robertson, Union Grove, especially one from Eden (where his farm was), May 25, 1851.
at home and he assured his brother in Scotland that there was no want of food or employment in Watertown, Wisconsin. Only three and a half months after landing at New York he was already planning to buy government land for a farm.¹

Woodworking was apt to be well-rewarded in the States as is shown by the success of George Armour, William Garrioch and Robert Jack; another skill which seemed to be equally in demand was blacksmithing. Adam Fergusson wrote to his cousin Robert Macnab in Glenorchy and gave a cameo description of success at that trade:

There is a Blacksmith a Mr. James Gray who came from thirty or forty miles north of you to Nashville and has made a fortune by his hammer and now walks the streets as fine as anyone and has his shop going on too.²

And "an honest and industrious Smith, who lately emigrated from the Upper Ward of Clydesdale" wrote a letter from Louisville, Kentucky, which was printed in The Scotsman in 1819 outlining his initial success:

I began to work at the smith work, and my boy James my hammer man. I soon got piece work, and we made 18 dollars a-week; and we have since made 20 dollars a-week, over all expenses...You know that from a combination of circumstances we were sore reduced with you, yet Providence has provided us with good friends, in health and good employ, by which we are now enabled freely to reimburse, and are now making money as fast as ever we lost it.³

He, too, was already planning to buy land. As was a mason whose letter appeared in The Scotsman in the same year. The mason had lately emigrated from Ayrshire and was writing to relations in Galston from Cambridge, Edgefield County, South Carolina: "My sons are both at the mason trade, and have more work than they can do, and making money fast."⁴ They had already bought 100 acres of "best quality" land.⁵

¹Ms. letter, Watertown, Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855.
²Ms. letter, Carthage, Tennessee, April 3, 1838.
³July 3, 1819.
⁴August 7, 1819.
⁵For further descriptions of mechanics and labourers who bought land, see Part II, Chapters II and III.
3. The Professions

Fewer letters have survived from the emigrants who entered into professions—teachers, lawyers, doctors, ministers, politicians, etc. They are mentioned in the other emigrant letters; they figure largely in local histories, and they move briefly through the footnotes in the textbooks of national history, but their correspondence is conspicuous by its absence. Perhaps various professional societies have bundles of their letters lying yellow and forgotten in their archives. The Scotsman printed a letter from a Greenock orphan who emigrated to North Carolina while young and rose to such eminence that he was elected to the National House of Representatives¹ and some years later they laid before the public a letter from a former resident of Edinburgh (who would not return there for 1000 guineas):

I sent a young Edinburgh writer to Cincinnati a few years ago...where the practice is, for young men to serve for three years with lawyers before being permitted to practice on their own account. This young man fully confides that he will be able in a short time to send for his brothers to join him.²

There was at least some room for budding professional talent in the United States.

Success in the ministry is more difficult to measure, but certainly Colin Mclver left his mark, not only on his Gaelic-speaking congregation in North Carolina, but on the entire South and the question of Christianity v. slavery. A native of Stornoway on Lewis, he emigrated at the age of nineteen and spent at least forty years "labouring among the Scottish Highlanders, & their descendants, residing in the neighbourhood of this place [Fayetteville]".³ He wrote The Southern Preacher and The Marriage Question and published the Family Psalmody.

¹ Sept. 25, 1819.
² The Scotsman, Sept. 18, 1833.
David Livingstone's younger brother, Charles, was born in Blantyre, Lanarkshire in 1821 and emigrated to the United States at the age of 19. He studied at Oberlin College in Ohio and eventually got his degree from the Union Theological College in New York in 1850. A letter written to his parents soon after his arrival in Oberlin shows him to have been an idealistic and hard-working young man with a mild sense of humour and an underlying desire to be a missionary like his big brother. Somewhat surprisingly, he accepted a pastoral charge in Massachusetts after his graduation, but this could be partly explained by his marriage to an Oberlin graduate, Miss Harriet Ingraham—a Massachusetts Yankee. However, he was not thwarted; he accompanied David on the Zambesi expedition and in 1864 he accepted the Consulship of Fernando Po and died a missionaries' death of "African fever".

Robert Crawford was another Scot who was destined to preach in Massachusetts. He was born in Paisley, but emigrated "when but a lad" in 1821, spending five years in Canada before moving down to the States for his education which he received at Williams College, Princeton Theological Seminary and "in New York". He settled over the "established" Congregational church of North Adams, Massachusetts. Many Scottish clergymen pursued their "labours" on the far side of the Atlantic and there was an ever-present demand for more as is indicated by the letters of Mitchell King to Thomas Chalmers. King was himself a "native Scotchman" who had become President of the Corporation of the Presbyterian Church of Charleston, South Carolina.

1. Ms. letter, Room No. 5, Colonial Hall, Oberlin, May 22, 1840 to Neil Livingstone, Tea Dealer, Almada St., Hamilton, Scotland.
3. Three Ms. letters from Charleston, May 28, 1831; May 14, 1831; and Dec. 24, 1831 all to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh.
4. The Followers

It is difficult to estimate the reception of the "success stories" in Scotland. The emigrants tended to be guarded in their comments and boasting was rare; furthermore, there was a heavy emphasis on the importance of hard work and little play, not to mention strict sobriety, as key ingredients in even the most moderate success. Relations in Scotland were often told that it was necessary to work much harder in the States than at home and that the Americans had no amusements other than earning money. But prospective emigrants were also assured that if a man were industrious and sober and avoided speculation he would be certain to succeed—the farmers would have land of their own and independence and the mechanics would have higher wages and a higher standard of living as well as equality.

Perhaps one indication of the success of success in luring emigrants across the Atlantic lies in the number of relatives and friends who followed the letter-writers to America. The evidence, of course, is fragmentary. In some cases the emigrant has left only one letter behind to mark his passing with no indication as to whether brother, cousin, uncle or parents followed him over.

John Rutherford proceeded directly to the farm of William Young whom he had apparently known in Scotland and Young helped him to find a farm near his. Later Rutherford mentioned that George Young, an old workmate from Scotland and presumably a relative of William Young, had arrived and settled nearby. He also mentioned the arrival of another "brother in trade", William Dixon, "which brought old things new to mind". There is at least the possibility that a network of letters connected the arrival and settlement of these four acquaintances and that the news of fertile Wisconsin soil hastened their departures.
Millhill May 15 1859

Dear Robert,

I take the pleasure of writing you a few lines to inform you that your two Cousins, Margaret and Mary, sailed from Glasgow on the 8 of May along with William Frances and his wife and two children. The name of the ship is the Harmonia bound for new York. I am very happy to think they have got. William Frances's journey up the country along with them. It was a very hard trial for us to part, but we still live in the hopes that we will meet again. I recommend to you to write to us as soon as they land at your dwelling and let us know how they get on with the Yankees.

Gone up the country going there has a letter with his to your father from your uncle John Vorpest in your last letter I was very sorry to hear that your mother had got a bad cold. But I think when I heard the letter that Uncle Andrew received from you...
The Robertsons of Dalgarven in Ayrshire represent the classical example of a family with half of its members on each side of the Ocean. After James Robertson and his family removed to Union Grove in Whiteside County, Illinois, they were followed by various relatives including James' sister Mary and her husband William Boyd and another Mary Boyd (every woman in the two families seems to have been named either Mary or Margaret) who married Robert Robertson, James' oldest surviving son. Other, more distant, relations and friends wrote letters to Robert implying that their arrival could be expected in the near future, but whether or not they fulfilled their threats has not been established.  

Alexander Allison was part of a fairly large family group who probably emigrated at the same time from West Lothian; there are references to parents and several adult sisters of whom Marion Munger was one. They all settled in northern Illinois. He did mention several friends from home who were in the States, but they were not in Illinois and there is no indication that they followed him over.

The three Allison brothers who emigrated to New Orleans were brought over as a direct result of their uncle's success and Adam Ferguson also helped his cousin, Robert Macnab, to emigrate from Glenorchy and join him in Tennessee. Macnab complained in his letters about the miserable conditions in Scotland, the lack of incentive in farming someone else's land and the harshness of the landowners; he went so far as to say that the country was "going to the D---l".  

James Ferguson's younger brother Robert followed a series of 35 Ms. letters mostly from relatives in Scotland to James and Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois, 1843-1853; see Bibliography.

Ms. letter, Glenorchy, Argyll, Dec. 1, 1838 to Adam Ferguson, Carthage, Tennessee.
him over and, although he did not settle near him or turn farmer, he did consider it ("James...wants me to go West, and take a situation, or turn Farmer. I do not know what I shall do yet."\(^1\)) and it is fair to assume that letters from his brother helped him to decide to try America.

William Johnstone was the first of many who emigrated from Lochee to Ohio as has already been mentioned. David and Allison Smillie, John and Janet Stewart, James Dalziel, Agnes Donaldson and family, Ann and George McMahon and John Johnstone all followed. Many of them took up farms near William Johnstone's at Little Hooking Creek and one is tempted to surmise that a steady flow of letters made Little Hooking Creek seem more familiar in the parlours of Lochee than Edinburgh.

Robert Pollock's brother, niece and father all planned or hoped to join him in Wisconsin, but he claimed to be unable to help them financially and it is not certain that they ever made it. George Armour, on the other hand, did not just write about America, he went back to Kintyre and told people about it and led some of them back himself. The town of Argyle in Winnebago County, Illinois, is a testimony to the eloquence of his descriptions.

Various other letters recorded the arrival of close relatives following in the family pioneer's footsteps. William Carrioch's brother, David, came over at a later date and settled on a farm in Muskegon County, Michigan; and Charles Rose was one of the first of many Roses to emigrate from Inverness to the Scotch Settlement in Ohio. Hugh Rose, a nephew (?), who went over later mentioned a David Rose and another Hugh Rose who were there in Ohio and relayed greetings from various other families to their kin in Inverness. He said that his uncle was over-whelmed at seeing so many of his old friends coming

\(^1\) Ms. letter, Robert Ferguson, New York, Feb. 17, 1856 to his niece, Jane Maxwell.
over. The letters were obviously an important link between the two communities; Hugh Rose's letter, for example, could pass for an emigrant guide, so much information has been included in it.\(^1\)

In a word, then, incomplete evidence makes the definite linking of successful reports from America with subsequent emigration haphazard. There is, however, obviously a connection in the case of large family groups who emigrate, and continue to emigrate, to the same locality over a period of half a century (e.g. the Dalgarven Robertsons/Boys and the Lochee Johnstones/Smillies/Stewarts) and also in the case of Scottish towns or areas which establish "sister communities" in America and maintain a constant flow of emigration over the years (e.g. Argyle in Illinois with Kintyre and the Scotch Settlement in Ohio with Inverness). It must also be significant that almost every emigrant letter-writer mentioned friends from home who were in the States, often settled nearby, and in many cases close relatives followed over soon after the successful settlement of the original emigrant.

B. Failure: Reasons and Excuses

A few persons who went out last Spring have not thought so much of America as you have done, for they have returned to the Mother Country again, viz. Mr. William Alexander & the Love's and Mr. James Ramsay of Amous Vale[?] Kilwinning and one John White Wright and likewise Andrew Roger is on his way home...\(^2\)

It is difficult to pinpoint the causes of success with reference to any given emigrant; if the emigrants' own testimonies are to be believed, it all boiled down to the exercising of simple virtues as summed up by John Prentice in his "Letter to the Working Classes of Edinburgh":

\(^1\) Ms. letter, Hugh Rose, Scotch Settlement, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to his brother, John Rose, Kirktown of Aird, Inverness.

\(^2\) Ms. letter, Andrew Robertson, Dalgarven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843 to his brother, James, Union Grove, Ill.
"To beware of speculation, to be industrious and sober, is all that is wanted to insure success."¹ As is often the case, however, an analysis of the pitfalls and failures can yield a greater appreciation of the well-run course and the victor's achievement.

The pitfalls which awaited the unwary emigrant in America were many and they fall into two general classifications: reasons given by successful emigrants for the failure of others and excuses offered by those who failed.

1. John Barleycorn

Rye whisky, rye whisky, an' I know you of old,
You've robbed my poor pockets of silver and gold.
--folk song "Jack of Diamonds"

Foremost among the reasons given (and hindmost among the excuses offered) was the Demon Drink. Many of the authors of emigrant guides and travellogues reckoned that the greatest single cause of failure among the Scots lay in looking too often upon the wine when it was red (or, as was more the case in America, of looking at the rye whisky when it was too cheap).

Emigrants often quoted the ridiculous prices of hard liquor in the States. John Prentice informed the Working Classes of Edinburgh that they could buy 128 gills of whisky for the same price that they paid for 5 in Edinburgh and his brother Archibald mentioned, as one of the misfortunes of America, that whisky cost only a shilling a gallon. Farther west, in Wisconsin, it was slightly more expensive; John Rutherford told his brother that it cost one shilling and eight pence a gallon with brandy at three shillings and rum at two. A "young friend" of The Scotsman quoted slightly higher prices for brandy and rum in 1832, but exulted in the fact that rye whisky cost only 1 shilling and 3 pence a gallon: "Only think

¹In The Scotsman, April 16, 1834.
what a 'land of promise' for an Irishman!"  

The fatigue of heavy labor demanded a stimulant; 
fever and ague required an antidote; homesickness 
had to be dispelled. For all these ailments whisky 
provided a universal remedy.2

When the Scots moved from the country into the industrial 
centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh, the old ethical and 
moral ties of village life were severed and one of the 
results was a marked increase in alcoholism which became 
a major problem. Sheriff Alison reported to a Royal 
Commission in 1838:

there are 10,000 men in Glasgow who get drunk on 
Saturday night, who are drunk all Sunday, and are 
in a state of intoxication or half-intoxication 
all Monday and go to work on Tuesday.3

With the restraints of village morality or family ties 
further removed, young, single emigrants were particularly 
susceptible to consoling their failure, celebrating 
their success and new high wages or simply "cutting 
loose" with the cheap and potent American whisky. "Here 
was American liberty with a vengeance."4 It was a 
weapon that cut down the successful and the unsuccessful 
alike. A correspondent of the Morning Chronicle found 
that emigrants in New York "who had a little and only 
a little money, for want of employment became dissolute 
drunkards, disgracing themselves and their country in 
a foreign land."5 And George Lewis on his tour to 
America in 1844 with the Free Church Deputation was 
similarly unimpressed with the successful Scottish emi-
grants in New York:

The new emigrants from Scotland, with the dissipa-
ted habits of so many of the present race of 
Scottish workmen, finding themselves in possession 
of large wages, and the means of intoxication cheap, 
rug to excesses that dishonour the name of Scotch-
men, and cut short their career.6

1July 21, 1832.  
2Hansen, Marcus Lee, The Immigrant in American 
3FP, 1837/8, VIII, p. 186, quoted in T.C.Smout, 
4Hansen, op. cit., p. 113.  
5quoted in The Scotsman, Oct. 11, 1837.  
6Impressions of America and the American Churches, 
Edinburgh, 1843, p. 36.
David Smillie earnestly advised prospective emigrants to "put on a resolution to drink no liquor of any kind for I beleive[sic] there are more of our countrymen destroyed by drinking than by any other thing." And Andrew Allison, on his voyage to New Orleans, was told by a Natchez merchant "that more bring on diseas[sic] by intemperance in eating and drinking than anything else." And John Dick roundly declared that if any emigrants failed in America "you may just say they are drunkards."

John Ronaldson must have been aware that failure was often equated with drunkenness, for he made a point of assuring his wife that it was not the cause of his failure to send for her: "Since we parted in Edinburgh intoxicating liquor has only passed my lips twice and one of these occasions saved me from a stroke of the sun last summer." Robert McIntyre casually pointed out to his brother-in-law that he did not turn to whisky as a relief from the back-breaking labour of clearing his Pennsylvania farm: "I fed well and Cleds well and Drinks but lettel and in the Place of Snuff I tak may Smok." Of all the emigrants mentioned in the letters, the only one who was clearly indicted for drunkenness was James Aitchison and he fell prey to most of the other pitfalls as well. It is highly unlikely that any emigrant would admit that drink was the cause of his failure, but the strong evidence offered by contemporary writers, observers and successful emigrants must be accepted.

2. Speculation

There was another kind of drunkenness which could prove equally fatal to the emigrants' hopes. Many succumbed to the heady promises of riches in the air and

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1 Typescript copy of letter, Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850.
2 Typescript copy of letter, New Orleans, 1837 to parents.
3 Ms. letter, Brooklyn, Feb. 7, 1836.
4 Typescript copy of letter, East Braintree, Mass., (undated but probably May 1854) to his wife in Balerno.
5 Ms. letter, "Firehauld", Sugargrove, Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1845.
became intoxicated with the possibilities of speculation. The temptation to gamble on a "double or nothing" basis wiped out more than one optimistic emigrant. James Aitchison is again the best example from the letters of the "pilgrim" who fell to "schemes, intemperances and follies", but there were many otherwise industrious and frugal Scots who trusted the wrong man or backed the wrong scheme.

Robert Pollock lost a good deal of money as a merchant, partly through accepting wheat and other crops in payment and partly through trusting people who never paid off their debts. His big gamble, however, paid off and he returned from the Gold Fields with enough money to start anew.

William Arnott was doing well in the paper-making business when he accepted the challenge of running his own mill with dire results: "from my getting poor men to work they spoilt more than they were worth and from various other causes I burst up and had not a cent to bless myself with." He did not despair, however, and was soon back at work as a paper machinery maker in Philadelphia with a decent wage and two-storey house and garden rent-free.

John Williams was a merchant who emigrated from around Glasgow to Wilmington, North Carolina, sometime before 1818. His mother in Glasgow (and later Linlithgow) wrote a long series of begging letters to him, first implying, then telling him how badly she needed money for her support, and finally lamenting that he had forgotten her. He, in the fulness of time, replied:

No Misfortune distance or time will Erase from my mind the Mother that gave me birth and it is only dire poverty & Misfortune which is the reason that I have not contributed more to your support & Comfort than I have done.

1 see also Part II, Chapter III, D.
2 Ms. letter, Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, March 6, 1865 to his parents.
3 Ms. letter, Wilmington, North Carolina, May 11, 1825 to his mother in Linlithgow.
Some years later he explained the causes of his misfortunes to his brother in a letter which is so faded as to be almost illegible:

I have since my arraival in this country had many up & down & a greate resenblance of my Father's Life & troubles. I was well of[f] untill 1808 when I was ruined by signing a bond...I commenced again & made money by going to Sea untill 1818 than I was clear of all debts & had something [ms illegible] in 1820 I again lost by bad speculation & Endorsing 2500$ & since then the distress that my family has suffered is unaccountable.¹

In 1840 he was still having trouble keeping his head above water, but admitted grudgingly that times were getting better and the "evel days are about departing". He owned at that time "6 Blackieys" and was at least well enough off to offer to take in a niece and provide for her handsomely.

James Flint recorded a case history which may well have been tragically typical. During his tour of the States, he met an old acquaintance who had bought an excellent farm, paying two-thirds of the price in cash. He settled on the land and was persuaded to lend the money which was to have paid the other third to a neighbour; the neighbour could not or would not repay it and Flint's friend was forced to sell the land and found, in so doing, that he had been charged double its worth. He lost nearly all of his money.²

3. Climate

Bad speculation was an acceptable and even respectable excuse for financial reverses; another equally acceptable excuse was bad health. A pamphlet published in 1851 voiced a popular opinion of the American climate:

America is the grave of our European constitution; where individual life is of the briefest span, and

¹ Ms. letter, Wilmington, North Carolina, probably Oct. 4, 1827, to his brother in England.
² Flint, James, Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 129.
families usually die out within a few short generations. Who would expatriate himself there, could he hope by honest industry to secure a home in his own more healthy land?¹

That the American climate was popularly held to be imical to the Scottish constitution is readily substantiated by the many protests to the contrary in the emigrant letters. Adam Fergusson, for example, was quick to point out to his cousin, Robert Macnab, that "it is a very healthy country here and Scotsmen enjoy as good health as the native born Americans."²

Mitchell King, in his plea to Thomas Chalmers for a Scottish minister, thought the problem important enough to deserve nearly a full page of eloquent argument. He assured the reverend doctor that Charleston was one of the healthiest cities on the continent and, as for the epidemics of Yellow Fever, well, it was true that most strangers succumbed, but only if they stayed in the city instead of retreating to certain healthy parts of the countryside—and they would, of course, take it as their bounden duty to protect the minister's health in any way they could. He concluded with great earnestness, it is a matter of universal observation that a native of the North of Europe when once acclimated here generally enjoys excellent health and lives to a good old age. We do not believe that a Clergyman coming from Scotland to be with us would run more risk, that if he were removed from a healthy country Parish to the city of London—indeed on the score of health we think that the removal to this place would be preferable.³

George Lewis found Charleston reasonably healthy, but he was told that any traveller who spent the night more than one mile outside of town would invariably contract "country fever" which was almost as fatal as Yellow Fever.⁴ Andrew Allison and his family retreated from New Orleans every summer, along with everyone else who

¹Every Man His Own Landlord by Rev. James Begg of Edinburgh, 1851; quoted in Occupying Ownership (Ireland) Vincent Scully, London, 1881.
²Ms. letter, Carthage, Tenn., April 3, 1838.
³Ms. letter, Charleston, S.C., May 14, 1831.
⁴Lewis, op. cit., p. 112.
could afford to do so, to a summer home on the Gulf Coast to avoid the Yellow Fever epidemics.¹

Reports varied considerably depending largely on where the particular writer had settled and, probably, on whether or not he personally had suffered from the climate. William Anderson told his parents that consumption prevailed in Boston "to a fearful extent"; Hugh Rose found rheumatism and the flux common in the Scotch Settlement in Ohio and mentioned that the fever and ague were prevalent in other parts of the country; a letter from an emigrant in New York reported terrible epidemics of cholera in New York as well as the "summer complaint", a "common cholera" of annual occurrence.² John Rutherford roundly declared from Wisconsin that it was a healthy country with no fever or fatal diseases and other emigrants said that it was healthy enough except in the summer months.

John Prentice, as usual, made a thoughtful and worthwhile contribution which helped to make sense of the conflicting information. He pointed out that new settlements were expected to be unhealthy "from the presence of vast masses of decomposing vegetable matter and stagnant water pools", but reassured the Working Classes of Edinburgh that the dangers receded as the woods were cut and the water drained. Hugh Rose also commented that the diseases seemed to follow "level and swampy places where there is much stagnate water"; and an emigrant wrote from the Scots Settlement in Indiana to say that the reports about the healthiness of Indiana were conflicting because there was a considerable amount of sickness near marshes and on the sides of rivers.³

Many of the emigrants were plagued by ill-health during their first years in the United States. John

¹ Correspondence with a descendant, M.M.Allison, Feb. 1967.
² The Scotsman, Sept. 1, 1832.
³ Ibid., May 4; 1822.
Ronaldson told his wife that "change of climate has been sore against me in health and money affairs" and later he mentioned having "fever of the cold" and dysentry, all of which conspired against his success. Alexander Allison was made of sterner stuff; he shrugged off attacks of bilious fever, pleurisy, inflammation of the stomach and liver and the ague during his first year in Illinois and became a successful farmer. Emigrants who settled near or worked on the Mississippi suffered a great deal from the climate. Thomas Johnstone was kept off work for many weeks with recurrent attacks of bilious fever and ague. William Dundas of Ochtertyre toured the United States in 1842 and a letter from St. Louis to his brother contained genteel complaints about the heat and attacks of dysentry; less than one month later he wrote from Niagara Falls to say that the hour of his death was at hand.¹

Most tragic of all was the suffering of Robert Jack and his family. He and his newly-wed wife (the sister of Robert Robertson's wife) settled in St. Louis where he worked on the steamboats for a while. Both of them suffered intermittently from sickness and he described a cholera epidemic where 60 to 100 people a day were dying with the suddenness of snuffing out a candle:

I was at church and Margaret and me shook hands with a young man a scotchman who was in good health and on Monday night following we were told he had been buried that afternoon.²

Thus ended the emigrant trail for one young Scot. Their own luck ran out eight days after the birth of their first son; his beloved Margaret died of "mortification" and seven months later the baby followed her. Soon after this double-blow, his father and sister arrived from Scotland, but the heat was too severe for the old man and within two weeks he, too, was dead. "It seems as if I was fated never to have a circle of relatives around me..."³

¹Ms. letter, St. Louis, Missouri, July 25, 1842 and Niagara Falls, Aug. 17, 1842 to David Dundas Esq. M.P.
²Ms. letter, St. Louis, July 29, 1850 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Illinois.
³Ms. letter, Eden, Oct. 17, 1851 to Robert Robertson.
Margaret's sister, Mary Boyd, who married Robert Robertson lived to be 58, but most of her children did not reach their teens; in the year 1863 she lost her father-in-law and five of her six children. The cause of death is not recorded, but it was probably an epidemic of cholera or typhoid. A high rate of child-death was not uncommon in Scotland at that time,¹ but it would have taken a hard-hearted mother to look at the Robertson genealogical chart without a shudder:

Robert: Jul. 22, 1821; Dec. 14, 1890; m. Mary Boyd (b. Apr. 12, 1829, Stevenston, Ayrshire, d. Dec. 4, 1887) Ch: William Boyd (Jan. 8, 1851; Apr. 27, 1863), Jean (Feb. 1, 1852; Aug. 24, 1852), James (Feb. 18, 1853; Oct. 17, 1854), James (Sept. 6, 1854; Apr. 20, 1863), Mary Jane (June 10, 1856; Mar. 28, 1863), Robertson DuBois (Aug. 25, 1858; Mar. 28, 1863), Thomas (May 11, 1860, --?), Wallace (Feb. 12, 1862, May 2, 1863), Margaret Boyd (Feb. 5, 1864; Feb. 17, 1924), George Paull (Oct. 1865, --?), Elizabeth (July 7, 1867, --?), Robert Chambers (Dec. 17, 1874; Sept. 7, 1875).²

Illinois claimed a high price from the Robertsons for its land.

John Muir and his family were among the first farmers to settle near Kingston, Wisconsin, in 1849. Although he and his family maintained good health, he frequently noted the disastrous effects of the summer months on "bloods nurtured in a cooler clime" and gave the example of a small Edinburgh family who settled within half a mile of the Muir farm. There was only the father, son and daughter and after three years the daughter died of consumption and the son and father soon followed. "Thus sadly ended bright hopes and dreams of a happy home in rich and free America."³

William Tannahill Stirling came from the small weaving village of Waterside near Kirkintilloch in Dunbartonshire. He emigrated in 1850 and worked as a farm labourer in New Jersey. He was successful enough to send

¹see Part I, Chapter I.
for his wife, but in 1853 he returned to Scotland; according to family tradition, he returned because of his health. Three years later he died of consumption in Scotland.¹

There can be little doubt that the change of climate had distressing effects on a large proportion of the Scottish emigrants during the first two or three years of their residence in the States. For some, like Alexander Allison and Robert Jack, it was an inconvenience; for others, like Thomas Johnstone and John Ronaldson, it was a setback which may have contributed to failure; and for a few it meant ruin or death.

4. Misfortune

Another "valid" excuse used by emigrants and closely allied to both speculation and bad health was misfortune. John Prentice reckoned that most emigrants who failed did so because they lacked prudence, but he admitted that some were victims of circumstances beyond their control. Robert Jack, for example, lost all of his belongings when the boat he was on sank in the Mississippi and James Matheson's untenanted land in New York State was visited regularly by timber-robbers. Robert Pollock's finest and most expensive mare died at an awkward time and Robert Macnab got lost on his way to Carthage, Tennessee to join his cousin, Adam Ferguson, and wasted a good deal of time and money (though the latter was mostly Adam Ferguson's). William Johnstone's business was burned to the ground and it took him several years to get started again; James McKellar broke his leg on his way home from posting a letter to his brother and had to languish several weeks in a Boston hospital; and the Mungers lost a great deal in the Chicago Fire. There were also, of course, treacherous fluctuations in market prices and labour-demand which affected most of the emigrants to a greater or lesser extent, though none more than John Ronaldson.

¹ Typescript copy of letter, New Jersey, 1850 (?) to his father, Robert Stirling, Weaver, Waterside, Dunbartonshire; and correspondence with his grandson, W.T. Stirling, Paisley, Renfrewshire, Feb. 6 and 28, 1859.
5. Great Expectations

There were a variety of reasons for failure which, like drink, were never mentioned by the emigrants themselves but which can be inferred from the comments of other emigrants. Of these, probably the greatest toll was exacted by the attitude of mind which might be termed Great Expectations. Many emigrants either had little information about actual conditions in the States or were sufficiently blinded by optimism to ignore the facts which were presented to them. In spite of cautions from emigrant guides, newspapers and emigrant letters, they went to America with the firm conviction that they would strike it rich in a few months and live like lords for the rest of their natural lives. Shiploads of such people returned every year to the countries they had left. The 350 emigrants who returned on the Elize Warwick and the Orpheus were not isolated examples.

John Clarkson is an example of the emigrant deluded by optimism.

he was some years a foreman to a Master Tailor in Edin named Cameron. At length he tried to do business for himself, and for some years did tolerably well, but at length his trade came so low that he formed the very foolish notion of going to America thinking to make it better. Accordingly he sold all that he had and got the loan of some money from some friends to enable him to pay his passage. So he, his wife, and five children embarked in April 1819 and saild for Philadelphia in North America, but he was disappointed of all his hopes, for he found things there very different from what he expected on account of which he was obliged to return to this country again, very much disappointed and reduced in circumstances to such a degree as he will never recover again.²

When he got back to Edinburgh "he seemed heartily tir'd of America", but he found the business and country he had left little more to his liking. A year or two after his return he was again talking about emigrating to

¹See Part II, Chapter III.
²Ms. letter, Robert Clarkson, Millhill, Musselburgh, April 23, 1822 to his brother-in-law, James Guthrie.
America and by 1831 he was back, living on a farm owned by his son, Robert, about 60 miles from New York City; another son, James, was in the printing business in New York and a cousin (?), Robert, worked there as a tin smith. One of his daughters, Ann, and her husband hoped to emigrate to New York in the spring of 1832 to join them.2

6. Shiftlessness

John Clarkson also illustrates another reason for failure. Broadly speaking, it might be called shiftlessness; more specifically, people who failed at home seemed likely to fail in America. A lot would depend, of course, on their reasons for failing in Scotland. Those who failed because the rents were too high, or the ground too poor, or the opportunities for employment too meagre had an excellent chance to succeed in America. Those who failed because they were lazy, unrealistic or irresponsible might as well have saved themselves the expense of crossing the Atlantic. James Aitchison had been a spendthrift, gambler and drunkard in Edinburgh, so his family sent him to Canada in hopes that they could make a farmer out of him. Sending him to London to make a king out of him would have been as realistic. James McKellar gives a strong impression in his letters of having been a ne'er-do-well in Britain (among other things, he skipped out on a "wife" in Yorkshire) and in the United States he ran away from debts, collected his post under an assumed name and drifted about from job to job and from state to state—Boston to New York, New York to Cuba, Cuba to St. Louis. He was obviously a person of some personal charm, for people trusted him with money and jobs (and love) and usually regretted it.3

1 Ms. letter, Robert Clarkson, Millhill, Musselburgh, Sept. 11, 1823 to James Guthrie.
2 Ms. letter, Robert Clarkson (Jr.), Leith, Nov. 4, 1831 to his uncle, James Guthrie.
3 Three Ms. letters from James McKellar, Boston, 1841; New York, 1841 and St. Louis, 1842 to his brother, Peter, Partick by Glasgow.
Inflexibility could also have adverse effects. Those who, like John Ronaldson, stuck to their own trade through thick and thin were likely to encounter a lot of "thin"; most of the advice which flowed across the Atlantic from America urged flexibility and stressed the importance of adapting to whatever came to hand.¹

7. Toryism

Allied to this problem of rigidness of approach was a general malaise, a homesickness gone sour. It often manifested itself in a James Matheson-type of contempt for American institutions, American democracy, the American economy and Americans in general. In some cases, the complaints came from staunch Tories like James Matheson and John Williams—men who venerated the British monarchy and aristocracy, who resented their "equality" with beggars, who spoke of Britain as "the Happy Islands" and longed to return there for their final few years. John Williams wrote disparagingly about American democracy, but it is interesting to note that his son, born and bred in North America, wrote glowingly of "this fine republican country". Malcolm Shaw was another Scottish emigrant in North Carolina who, in his old age, expressed the desire to return to Jura; his son, Allen, replied scornfully, "He says Jura is better than N. Carolina. Why did he never go back there. He was able to go."²

Homesickness in itself was natural and probably appreciated by the Americans. James Ferguson sang the old songs to his family at night around his Illinois fireside and his brother Robert in New York longed for familiar faces and a good bowl of "porritch"; Marion Munger attended a Burns Night Supper in Chicago and Scots all over the United States formed St. Andrew's

¹see also Chapter III (Part II).
²typescript copy of letter, North Carolina, March 15, 1840 to Malcolm McBachern, Jura.
Dear Brother,

I would have wrote to you long before now, but I have waited for an opportunity to hear from you, as I have wrote in May 1812 to Lord Washington, and I have been going to Paris by the way of Scotland, to arrive there and return to Philadelphia the next Spring. I address this to you at home, as I understand that you are settled in a place where you have not heard from your father since the War. I sent the news to the same place that I have this time, and I have been surprised that you have not returned to the United States for myself before now. The War has been very unfavorable for a season of your past; and I concluded I should write by continuing to the United States, until a change should take place, as my Delays are greater and my expenses greater than formerly. It is now the season of next Spring, at which time I calculate to go to sea about the affairs of war, and to settle in some part of that country, but I am not certain as I am not certain of that yet. I hope we shall expect much to settle in this country as it is greatly đổi, and they began their Embargo very properly, and the Government of this country since they have taken part with Bonaparte for the destruction of Britain, have been rearranging their own system and are now under a load of debt that the United States, as now will not be able to pay. And every article that is sold, or every article that sold, or every article that is sold, is taxed. Every silver watch has to pay one dollar and every gold watch has to pay one dollar and a half, and every article imported into the country has to pay sixty-three and three cents duty on every $100. a dollar, and every storekeeper has to pay thirty-five dollars and fifty cents for license yearly, besides their State Tax which is considerable. A hundred cents is a dollar. The people of this country are divided into two great parties; one called Federalists and the other Democrats. The Federalists charge the Democrats of being partial to France, and the Democrats charge the Federalists of being partial to Britain, but I do not think that this party is very friendly to Britain, for the Federalists to become and to change against going to war with Britain. But this was because they feared they had not the means of carrying on the war with advantage against Britain, but the Democrats were governed by the fear of losing their trade, and they are now ready to go to war with Britain, and the people are ready to go to war with Britain, and the people are ready to go to war with Britain. But this was because they feared they had not the means of carrying on the war with advantage against Britain, but the Democrats were governed by the fear of losing their trade, and they are now ready to go to war with Britain, and the people are ready to go to war with Britain.
Societies, congregated in the nearest Presbyterian Church and wrote letters to each other in affected Scottish dialect. But when the homesickness turned rancid, when it took the form of stringent (and often jaundiced) criticism, the Americans would be quick to take offence and their hostility would produce a vicious circle of resentment and discontent. Such "unhealthy" homesickness was probably an indication of a more deep-seated maladjustment, perhaps even a product rather than a cause of failure.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the successful emigrants were often scornful of those who failed. They were quick to say that anyone who failed did so by his own fault. Even the judicious John Prentice implied that most of those who failed did so through lack of prudence; John Dick simply relegated them to the category of drunkards. Such assertions imply that the more "preventable" reasons for failure, viz. drink, speculation, laziness and inflexibility, were assumed to be the most applicable.

A pattern of success emerges from the causes of failure. In order to stand the best chance of success, the emigrant should 1) be well-informed about conditions in the United States and more particularly in the state he intends to make his home; 2) he should avoid strong drink and 3) speculation; 4) he should be willing to try any job, however menial, that might come his way; 5) he should be industrious and 6) avoid unhealthy parts of the country; 7) he should not criticise too much and 8) he should be lucky.

It has been shown that, although the evidence is fragmentary, there are a significant number of instances showing links between success and the arrival of more emigrants. It would, therefore, be logical to assume that the reverse would apply in the case of failures—that the letters from unsuccessful emigrants would discourage others from following. A close scrutiny of the
letters, however, yields some surprising results.

John Clarkson was discouraged with his experiences in America and returned to Edinburgh in disgust; yet not only did he return to the United States, but so did most of his family and another daughter and her husband were hoping to better their prospects there in the near future. James McKellar's reports from America could hardly be termed optimistic ("I would advise you to stay at home. You will be better and happyer then to come out here.") but the brother to whom his negative advice was so freely given settled, some ten years later, on a farm in Iowa.

Robert Jack, in spite of continual suffering from ill-health and the tragic loss of his wife and son, was joined by his father and sister, the former succumbing almost immediately to the climate. John Williams complained unceasingly of misfortunes and losses and woefully predicted that there was nothing left for him "but POVERTY a' my Days"; he spoke scornfully of the United States and said that many Scots of his acquaintance wanted nothing better than to return to Scotland again: "Citizens of Great Britain & Ireland do not know the goodness of the British goveryment Laws Counry[?] & manners until they have resided out of it Some years." But his young brother, undeterred, tried to join him and died on the way in Jamaica.

The examples are scattered and few, but it would seem that discouraging letters did not always have as great an effect as the encouraging ones. Which is simply a way of saying that the emigrant was an optimist by nature; refusing to believe that he would fail just because his brother or cousin had fallen victim to temptation, laziness or accident.

1 Ms. letter, John Williams, Merchant, Wilmington, North Carolina (probably Oct. 4, 1827), to his brother.
C. Caution

It has been repeatedly remarked that even letters from successful emigrants were apt to be cautiously rather than enthusiastically phrased and the letters from emigrants who were struggling to maintain a precarious footing tended to be very gloomy indeed. As intimated, part of the reason for this was no doubt a fear of being blamed for any consequent failure of relatives enticed over by exaggerated promises of riches. Those who were having difficulties may also have overstressed their troubles as a warning to those who contemplated following in their footsteps; some, like John Ronaldson and James McKellar, went so far as to advise their kinsmen to stay at home.

There was conceivably another reason for "soft-pedalling" success in the States—a less noble, but entirely human reason. Families in nineteenth-century Scotland were large units. In the Highlands the "family" might include the most distant relatives imaginable and even in the Lowlands the family circle would extend not only to parents and grandparents, but to married sisters and brothers, their husbands and wives and children and perhaps to an ever-widening circle of in-laws and cousins two or three times removed. It would appear to be not unusual for this "family" to look upon their successful cousin or uncle or brother-in-law in America as a source of financial support. The best excuse for requesting assistance was emigration; members of the family often assumed that their kinsman would be glad to help them to join him.

My Mother in her old peculiar manner says that you should send home as much money as would take them all out as really people like them having each a large family would not do well to take such a journey upon their heads with empty pockets.1

A necessary corollary to this assumption was that he

1Ms. letter, Thomas Boyd, Fairlie Bog by Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Nov. 28, 1845 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove.
would also help them to find a farm and/or job of their own close to him and that he would put them up as long as necessary. Nor was it unusual for relatives and friends to ask for money to help them through some crisis at home. John Williams' mother wrote a series of pathetic letters (Glasgow, Feb. 21, 1818; Oct. 12, 1818; Linlithgow, June 27, 1819; Sept. 30, 1820; Oct. 27, 1820; May 28, 1821) where her pleas for money grew progressively less subtle until finally she accused him of forgetting her and remarked testily that he would not have her on his conscience much longer anyway.

One Andrew Galloway wrote an appeal to Robert Pollock saying he had hurt himself and was "very bad off"; Pollock dispatched the requested £6 and got no thanks or even acknowledgement of his generosity for nearly a year.¹

Many emigrants gave willingly to their relations; the vast sums of money which flowed yearly eastward across the Atlantic bear sufficient testimony to their devotion and generosity. Adam Ferguson helped his cousin, Robert Macnab, to reach Tennessee; Alexander Young paid for his nephews' education in Scotland and then brought them over to join him in Louisiana; Robert Robertson helped bring over William Boyd and his family; Randal Macdonald sent his daughter and son-in-law a bill of exchange to allow them to emigrate to North Carolina; and Henry Arnott, Robert Ferguson, and James McGowan all sent money home.

Others, however, were more reluctant to send money and some, like John Williams, refused. John Ronaldson was aggressively defensive in a letter to his wife:

You next tell me of Mary receiving £2 from Andrew and also that is more than I ever sent you and that I might have done it by this time. What would you be at. I could never see the sense of sending money unless you needed it.²

¹Ms. letter, Cambridge, April 16, 1858 to his niece.
²typescript copy of letter, Schaghticoke, New York, Sunday, Dec. 4, 1853 to his wife, Eliza, Balerno.
Eliza Rutherford was obviously beginning to wonder, after a year and a half, when her husband was going to send for her. John Thomson explained to his brother that it was out of his power to help him to come over because all of his money went into his land; he did, however, offer to let him sell the house which he still owned in Scotland and to use the proceeds to transport himself to America. Many emphasised that there was a great dearth of currency in the States and that all of their "wealth", such as it was, was in property and goods.

It cannot, of course, be maintained on such scanty evidence that there were consistent attempts by the emigrants to belittle their achievements in America simply to avoid having to support free-loading relatives. It is worth suggesting, however, that 1) there might have been several reasons for writing cautiously and that 2) emigrants who failed, or at least did not prosper, may have had less reason to avoid writing than might be supposed.

D. Re-emigration: The Acceptance of Failure

There are thousands in this country would be better at home but then them at home won't believe it, so before they would submit to jeering at home they stop still. — John Ronaldson

In any study of emigration, some research must be devoted to those emigrants who, for one reason or another, decided to return to their home country. The student of nineteenth-century British-American emigration broaches the subject reluctantly for the paths of knowledge are largely untrodden and hostile while the statistics which might have guided him through do not exist. By and large it is fair to say that no reliable figures exist on the British side prior to 1895 and on the United States side not before 1908. It is true that from 1854 to 1870

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1 Mis. letter, Wingville, Wisc., Jan. 24, 1850.
March 13, 1843

I received your letter upon the 17th of December last and we were all remarkably pleased with it. You have fallen in with such a good situation since your arrival in that land of free birth and that fierce deep, warm, country soil of yours. A few persons who came out last spring have not thought so much of America as you have. Some have returned to their home, others have returned to their own county.

Mr. Alexander and Mrs. Jeffreys and Mr. James Breton of Detroit, Mr. Waddell, and Mr. Edward Wright and likewise Andrew Rogers are on their way home too, that went and along with you. At least he left Boston upon the 20th of June 1843 to come home and he is doing expect.

Trade is much about the same state as when you left. Notwithstanding although at present there is a small of fine prospect of its revival prices are remarkable low. In short at the sitting point, the work we are pretty employed in, at present is tobacco, flax, and hemp. All other trade are in as bad a state.

Any message, for Malon's wages are down to about 10 to 12 per cent and cannot get work even at that. Wages miserable as it is, rates miserable as it is. Barrels are pretty low or reasonable here. Meat is selling for 65 per cent. Good country meat, cheese, 10 per stone, beef 10 per stone, barley 5 per bushel.
unofficial, voluntary counts were kept of passengers arriving in Britain from non-European ports, but there was no law which required returns to be made and no distinction was made between nationality, country of embarkation, length of stay, etc. Any statistics shaped from these figures would be seriously defective.\(^1\) There are, therefore, for all practical purposes, no reliable figures for the period under study.

It would also be extremely difficult to extrapolate figures from later statistics; conditions in the United States had changed considerably by the end of the Civil War, as they had, indeed, in Scotland. At any rate, the statistics from the turn of the century varied considerably from year to year (except for the years 1895-1900, they rose consistently from 1876 to 1915 according to British sources\(^2\)) and also from country to country. The British figures for the period 1895 to 1918 indicate an average of 46% as many Scots returned to Britain as left it every year (giving a net emigration of 54% of the total) while the United States figures for 1908-1918 indicate 14%\(^3\). Part of this discrepancy could be accounted for by the difference in method: the British listed all travellers, but the United States omitted naturalised citizens.

Emigrants who failed in the United States or who were disappointed in the prospects there could always return to their families in Scotland and take up where they left off. But there were natural barriers which discouraged emigrants from choosing this way out: they had gone through the traumatic experience of tearing up their lifetime roots and bidding farewell for ever to their family and friends; if they went back, it would have to be with their tails between their legs, admitting

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 197.
\(^3\)Berthoff, op. cit., p. 10.
defeat. It would mean facing jeers from those they had left behind and, besides, prospects in Scotland were not likely to be good enough to make it all seem worthwhile.

But return many of them did, and who is to say that theirs was not the most courageous course? Certainly one of the alternatives was to drown one's sorrows in the cheap American whisky and that was perhaps easier for some of them. John Ronaldson returned to Scotland and, in spite of his gloomy predictions about prospects there, became a highly successful "whitesmith" with the Currie Shipbuilding Company. William Tannahill Stirling returned, probably for reasons of health, and died a few years later. Henry Arnott returned and eventually became the manager of a paper mill in Linlithgow; his reasons for returning are unrecorded, but judging from his letters it might have been because he was dissatisfied with his wages and chances of promotion in the States. John Clarkson returned after failing in America, but, finding prospects no better in Scotland, emigrated again. There is a temptation to think of the returning emigrant as a perennial failure, but of these four random examples, only one could possibly fit into that category and that would probably be doing him an injustice. It is perhaps more likely that the perennial failures would, like James Aitchison, skip their bail and disappear without a trace.

The return to Scotland was not necessarily linked with material failure; there are many examples of emigrants well on their way to success who gave up and went home, though they are often submerged and lost in the waves of emigrants who returned during the depressions when they could not readily find jobs in America. The deciding factor separating the truly successful emigrants from those who returned to Britain was probably more a general failure to adapt to the new culture, a lack of sympathy for America and an inability to put down new
roots inherent in the character of those who "failed".\(^1\)

But whatever the nature of the emigrants who returned to Scotland, the central problem remains: how many renounced permanently their hopes of succeeding in America? What proportion must be subtracted from the emigration statistics to reveal the net emigration? Guesses range from 14% of the annual total to 50%.

Prospective emigrants were not unaware that many of their countrymen were returning. Newspapers would occasionally print articles about the return of distressed emigrants. In 1816 two articles in The Gentleman's Magazine\(^2\) presented a bleak picture of conditions in New York City, claiming that 3000 emigrants there had applied to the British Consul for passage home. "This is, to our indigent poor, an impressive lesson of the prudence of enduring their state of occasional adversity at home..." Excerpts from a letter written by James Buchanan, the British Consul at New York, reported somewhat hysterically that thousands must starve if the British Government did not offer them assistance. In one week, he said, ten Englishmen, eight Scots and seventy-six Irishmen had applied to him for passage home. During the depression of 1816-1819 thousands returned and there was another major re-emigration movement during the depressions of the late thirties—it was estimated that as many as 10,000 returned to Britain in 1836.\(^3\)

In 1837 The Scotsman reported that 350 deluded emigrants had returned on the Orpheus and Elize Warwick\(^4\) and in 1842 two ships entered Liverpool only hours apart bearing 550 returning Britons between them.\(^5\)

These reports were bound to affect the decisions of

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\(^1\) Shepperson, Wilbur S., "British Backtrailers: Working-Class Immigrants Return", in O. Fritof Ander, ed., In the Trek of the Immigrants, Rock Island, Ill., 1964, p. 193. This article is one of the few attempts to probe pre-1861 re-emigration and makes many valuable suggestions.  
\(^3\) Shepperson, Wilbur, op. cit., p. 182.  
\(^4\) Oct. 11, 1837; see also Part II, Chapter III.  
\(^5\) Shepperson, Wilbur, op. cit., p. 183.
prospective emigrants. If they did not see them in the newspapers, they would hear about them in their own neighbourhoods. Dalgarven in Ayrshire would not have been exceptional in reporting five of its native sons returning to the family bosom in 1843. But, faced with the potato famine in Ayrshire, how many of them would stay? Once a man had emigrated, it was much easier the second time. John Clarkson was no exception, nor was Archibald Robertson: "he could not stop in America when he was ther[sic] first and now he left Glasgow on the first of jun for mont [pelier?] vermont again to work with the sam mastar he was with first."¹ A significant proportion of the re-emigrants must have been "repeaters" who moved back and forth with surprising alacrity.²

There were many reasons for returning without staying. Robert Ferguson came back on business trips and combined them with pleasure; John Williams, Sandy Bowers and his wife,³ Alexander Thomson Jr. and his cronies⁴ and members of the Smillie/Stewart family all returned on nostalgic visits and Alexander Allison, Robert McIntyre, James McKellar and James Robertson talked about doing the same. The Armstrongs returned to guide people across and John Boyd wanted to return to find a Scottish wife for his Illinois farm.⁵

At this late date and with no reliable statistics it is impossible to say how many returned to stay and how many to visit—it is not even possible to say how many went home. Of the letter-writers, the great majority went simply to visit, but it is fair to admit that those who returned for good would be less likely to write about it. There are as usual far too few letters to allow any conclusions, however tentative, to be made, but the letters do show that there were a variety of reasons for going back to Scotland, and that even those who had given up sometimes changed their minds.

¹Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, Aug. 25, 1852.
⁴Ms. letter, Charleston, S.C., May 5, 1823.
⁵Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, June 23, 1852.
Conclusion

Emigration like any other human activity defies simple explanations. It is extremely difficult to say that a given person or group of people emigrated for certain specific reasons. Every person who decided to leave Scotland between the years 1815 and 1861 was influenced by a variety of forces which, in their total complexity, comprised every aspect of Scottish social, political, agricultural, industrial, demographical and ecclesiastical history. It is probably true, however, that for each emigrant certain factors weighed more heavily than others and it is in some cases possible to assess the relative importance of the different factors, in terms of specific groups and individuals, by examination of the early nineteenth-century milieu and, wherever possible, records left by the emigrants themselves.

Because of the cultural and economic differences between Highlands and Lowlands, the causes of emigration in each area need to be considered separately. In the Lowlands the Industrial Revolution and the Agricultural Revolution coupled with a "Social Revolution" produced a society subject to periodic economic depressions and widespread unemployment. There was a certain amount of displacement, especially in rural areas, where machines were replacing men and farms were being enlarged, and in the handloom weaving industry; in both cases the situation was aggravated by crop failures and the influx of cheap Irish labour. There was also a tremendous growth and concentration of population as thousands migrated from the rural areas into the industrial centres.

The Agricultural and Social Revolutions severed many of the roots which had traditionally tied rural Scots to the soil of their birth and those who migrated to the cities found themselves cut adrift from the restrictions imposed by small village society and, all too
often, from the guidance of the parish minister. Many failed to make the necessary psychological adjustment to the impersonality and machine-oriented discipline of factory work. The picture which often emerges is of people who see the society they have known crumbling about their ears and who can imagine no hope in the future for themselves or their children.

The emigration from the Lowlands was largely economic and urban during this period, but it is well to remember that many of the "urban" emigrants were in fact rural migrants who had tried life in the cities and found it unsatisfactory. This would help to explain why so many of the "urban" emigrants took up farms when they arrived in America. The Government did not, as a matter of policy, encourage emigration to the United States; assisted emigrants were sent primarily to Canada, the Cape or Australia and comparatively few of the paupers and victims of industrial destitution emigrated to the United States.

In the Highlands the Social Revolution was even more devastating than in the Lowlands; the entire way of life began to change in the early and mid-eighteenth century. There were relatively few repercussions from the Industrial Revolution, but the Agricultural Revolution took the particularly virulent shape of converting crofts and small farms into sheep-walks. Thousands were evicted or coerced into leaving their homes. Some of the displaced emigrated, often with the assistance of their former landlord, while many others moved into coastal villages or drifted south. The Clearances were often a direct cause of emigration--the "push" factor in one of its purest forms--but it is reasonably certain that with or without them the overpopulation problem in the Highlands would have resulted in a mass exodus.

Other contributory factors of Highland emigration were dependence on the potato--an unreliable crop at best and disastrous in the late '40s--for subsistence and the
raising of rents which were also converted from service and kind to money. There was not enough employment in the Highlands to pay the rents demanded by the new landlords. The result was that the Highlanders were cut off from their old way of life and, in many cases, forcibly uprooted and dispossessed. Faced with the alternatives of migrating south to the industrial centres and emigrating they often chose the latter. Almost all of the Highlanders who emigrated went either to Canada or Australia. Canada was chosen in preference to the United States because 1) Highlanders in the Colonies had by and large remained loyal during the American War of Independence and had moved north to Canada after the American victory and 2) many Highlanders travelled with assistance either from their proprietors, emigration societies or the Government. There is evidence, however, that many Highlanders did settle, eventually, in the United States.

Conditions in Scotland, then, created a suitable climate for emigration and from the other side of the Atlantic various forces exerted an increasingly strong pull. The "pull" factors were in many ways direct answers to the "push" factors: it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain a small farm in Scotland—in America there was land enough for all; in Scotland there was a lack of employment and low wages—in America there was plenty of work and wages were high; in Scotland the future might seem uncertain, but in America the sky was the limit.

As far as emigration to the United States was concerned, emigrant agents probably had a negligible effect before 1861. But emigrant guides, newspapers and letters from friends and relations in America poured information about the United States into Scotland and the receptive ears of restless people. Of these sources, it seems likely that the emigrant letters were the most effective in promoting further emigration and there is substantial contemporary evidence to support this conclusion. Coming
as the letters did from people who were known to the reader, they could, within their limits, be trusted and they provided a link between the known and the unknown. Eventually, it was assumed, the writers would provide a toehold for the new arrivals.

The emigrant letters are valuable sources for many reasons, but not least because they represent the thoughts, hopes and fears of a class of people who would never write books or otherwise express themselves to posterity; the letters represent true "grass roots" history. They are also valuable because they show which forces were considered important when people were deciding whether or not to emigrate; they answered questions posed by the prospective emigrants and they supplied the information which they themselves had found important when they made the great step.

The letters indicate that the voyage over was a traumatic experience. Stories written home about it were hair-raising, but, given the natural optimism of the emigrant, unlikely to deter anyone seriously committed (though some might have changed their minds if they had had it to do over). The crossing was an experience to be remembered for a lifetime.

Not surprisingly, the letter-writers emphasised the land as the greatest attraction—it was fertile, easily available and cheap and the climate was good. The letters show that many urban workers took up farms in the States either directly upon arrival or, more likely, after working at their trade long enough to earn the wherewithal. This could indicate that the "urban" characteristics of the Scottish labourers were still superficial and deep down they still cherished the notion to become "lairds". It was also an opportunity to escape from the fluctuations of the labour market, to keep the family together and to build for the future. More surprisingly, the letters show that a great many Scots bought uncleared land on the "farming frontier"—often directly after their arrival in the States and sometimes after first
farming cleared or partially cleared land. This is opposed to the "traditional" view of immigrants as "fillers-in" who bought cleared farms while the native American pushed west and supports the more recent evidence of Erickson, Bogue, Curti and others.

Next to the land, the letters indicate that the greatest attractions of the United States were work for all and high wages. Time and again America was proclaimed to be the "land for the poor/working man" though it was emphasised that the labouring man must be willing to turn his hand to anything. The letters show that unskilled labourers gained most, by and large, by their emigration, earning more than double the wages they would have earned in Scotland.

The letter-writers were impressed by equality in America and boasted to their relatives and friends in Scotland that hard work earned respect. Chartists and other radicals aside, it is unlikely that the quest for freedom played a predominant role in the decision of many emigrants, but it was undeniably a commodity much cherished and respected by those who settled in the States—more so, it would appear, than by their English counterparts—and it would have represented an added attraction to "oppressed" Scots. Few of the writers seemed strongly concerned with slavery, though the vast majority did settle in the North (possibly a moral, but more likely an economic, decision).

Religion and education both seem to have been taken largely for granted; that is to say, prospective emigrants were apparently confident that the provisions would be adequate and few comments were made in the letters about facilities. The American educational system in particular was widely respected and compared favourably to Scotland's own high standards. It was notably better than that of Canada or Australia.

The majority of letters reported success and the effect of this news on prospective emigrants in Scotland was reflected in the number of relatives and friends who
came over to join the letter-writers and by the frequent references to other Scots who visited or lived in the neighbourhood. Some families developed extensive ties with America as generation after generation contributed emigrants, often to the same area. The reports of failure, on the other hand, probably did not have a comparable dampening effect; there were usually excuses and there would be a human tendency to think "It will not happen to me."

The reticence shown by emigrants writing home is indicative of the importance attached to the letters. The writers were well aware of the "pulling" strength of their letters and did not wish to encourage people indiscriminately who would turn around and blame them for any failure. The letters home were scrupulously objective, but still the relatives and friends flocked over to join in the great adventure.

The letters were the most potent means of bringing the attractions of America "home" to prospective emigrants in Scotland and for that reason alone they deserve our attention. But they have in addition a far deeper value. They voice for posterity the thoughts and motives of a rare breed of people: common people with the unique courage to tear themselves and their families from the land of their childhood and risk all in a foreign country thousands of miles across the sea.

The letters offer us a vivid glimpse into the hustling, bustling America of the early nineteenth century through the eyes of the adventurous spirits who helped to build it into the greatest nation on earth; men who adopted the country as their own, built its bridges and roads, dug its canals, laid its track, ran its machinery, fed its growing cities and fertilized its soil with their sweat and, ultimately, their bones; men who cared enough to build a heritage for their children.

Most of all, the letters remind us that the emigrants were men and women who laughed and worried, sang
and cursed, loved and hated. And they have left us a treasure-trove of pictures crystallised into words: intimate self-portraits which sometimes surpass intellectual communication and strike an atavistic memory buried within us—deep calling to deep. The pictures are not all heroic; they span the width and breadth of human activity:

Robert McIntyre, "happy and content" on his uncleared farm in the Pennsylvania backwoods, boasting of his independence and contemptuous of his sons who find the woods too hard and drift to the cities...

Young Thomas Johnstone following his dreams of riches across the great continent, peddling wares, driving cattle and fending off Mormons only to disappear forever in the Gold Fields of California...

Alexander Allison hunting wolves on the Illinois prairie...

John Rutherford, J.P., sitting gravely in his black coat judging the Yankee boys...

James Matheson lamenting the British defeat at New Orleans and testily criticising everything American...

Robert Ferguson sitting "like a Slanger" in front of a hot stove on a snow-bound Sabbath in New York City...

Robert Jack watching his earthly possessions sink into the Mississippi mud and burying first his beloved wife, then his baby son and finally his father...

David Whyte sitting down confidently at a power loom in Wisconsin and being hired on the spot; and, with his wife, listening to "Behold the Mountain of the Lord" in his new church, suffused with emotion: "you se, we are not so fare from home..."

The Smillies trekking over the Rocky Mountains to build a new home on the West Coast and burying young Stewart deep (to protect him from the wolves) on a hillock along the Oregon Trail, 5000 miles from his birthplace in Lochee, near Dundee...
Robert Pollock on the Mormon Trail, sleeping under his wagon, rolled in a blanket fully clothed and booted, hoping that the Indians would not choose his particular camp to raid...

John Ronaldson writing to his newly-wed wife in Scotland telling her of his diligent though unsuccessful attempts to build a life for them in the States and signing his letter, much to her annoyance, "yours, etc."...

John Clarkson's strangely moving, indecisive wandering back and forth across the Atlantic...

And James Ferguson cheering himself in the fields of his Illinois farm by singing the old Scottish songs and singing them again at night around the fireside to his Irish wife and American children.
Appendix A: Typical "Reverse" Letter

To: Mr. Robert Robertson
Union Grove
Whiteside County
North America
Montgrogen near Kilwinning,
Ayrshire Scotland N.B.
12th September, 1843.

My Dear Sir,

It is with much pleasure that I now sit down to write you a few lines anxiously enquiring after your welfare in this weary wilderness thro' which we are all sojourning. And to solicit your advice in reference to my emigrating to America "that land of the brave and the free". I have been making all the preparations within the limits of my power in order to enable me to take my departure with comfort, and should you give me encouragement I will leave this in about two years from this date. It will afford me much delight and satisfaction to see you on the other side of the Atlantic. Please give me a particular account of yourselves since you left Scotland and of your success in the land of your adoption. I do not expect but that I will have many difficulties to surmount and obstacles to overcome, the prominent advantages however which are held out to settlers in America induce me to venture on undergoing some few years temporary hardships with the view of bettering my condition.

I am given to understand that the soil is not ungrateful for the care bestowed upon it, nor is its produce absorbed by oppressive taxes, rates, and assessments; a little labour, it is said, and a little care, multiply its fruits to a degree of abundance unknown in many parts of the world. I however beg you to give me your opinion with respect to the land and every thing connected with America which you think will be interesting to me. I most earnestly request your especial attention to the following Queries, What would £150— do with respect to purchasing land in America? Whether would you advise me to take land, or follow the Cabinet and joiner business? What kinds of timber grow in your vicinity? What is the price of land per acre when cleared? What is the price of land in its natural state? Are there many agricultural settlements near your residence? What are the spontaneous productions of the soil? What kinds of fruit trees are cultivated in your neighbourhood? Are the chase and fishing much followed? Would it be advisable to take out farming implements such as a cheese press &c.&c.? Are clothes and implements higher in price with you than in this country? Are joiner's tools high in price? Are there any navigable rivers near you? Are there any rivers in your
immediate locality with falls of water adapted for driving machinery? Are there any good stations for the sale of merchandise near your place? Can labourers be had, and what is the expense at which their services are to be obtained? How much money would it require to keep a man and his wife the first year if they should happen to settle down on an uncleared farm?

I entreat you to have the kindness to present my affectionate regards to your Father, Mother, and Sisters.

I am sorry to inform you that James Craig Wright Dalgarven died on 31st ult. after a short illness.

I saw your Uncle Andrew in the beginning of this month and was telling him of my intention of sending you a letter at this time, he is quite well and like many of the Ayrshire folks fond of a sweet home. I am intimately acquainted with a Schoolmaster who has often expressed to me a wish to emigrate to America. I would take it kind, if you would give me your opinion of his doing so, as I would like very much to have his company out.

Fervently hoping that you will be so very kind as answer this communication at your earliest possible convenience. And wishing you yourself, and every member of your Father's family all manner of worldly comfort, and happiness, and that blessing which enriches, and adds no sorrow.

I am,

My Dear Sir,

with much respect,

Yours most sincerely,

WILLIAM FERGUSSON
Appendix B:

PROBLEMS WITH STATISTICS

Any study of emigration in modern times must revolve around a basic core of hard statistics. These are the facts on which suppositions, interpolations and theories are to be hung. It goes without saying that the figures must be carefully assembled and diligently reproduced, but there is also another consideration of prime importance which is all too easy to overlook: statistics in general, and most especially nineteenth-century emigration statistics, are not infallible.

There are two inherent dangers in the use of statistics: one is the temptation to let statistics obscure the "human element" and the other is to be unaware of the methods of collecting statistics and the weaknesses thereof. The first can be combatted by a constant conscious effort on the part of the historian and the second by research into the history of the relevant statistics.

Methods and efficiency in collecting emigration figures differed widely from year to year and from one side of the Atlantic to the other. In Britain 1803 was the birthday of emigration data, though there had been "informed estimates" prior to that year. Following the 1802 survey of the coasts and central Highlands of Scotland by Thomas Telford for the Commissioners of the Treasury, the Passenger Vessel Act of 1803 was passed. This was, in fact, a rather feeble attempt on the part of the Government to check emigration (one of the sections of Telford's report was titled: "The Causes of Emigration and the means of preventing it.") but it had several beneficial results. The number of passengers a ship could carry was to be determined by the size (weight) of the ship and the limit was set at one passenger per two tons. This served in effect to raise the cost of the passage, but it had another very important side-issue, viz. a much closer check was kept by the Government on the number of passengers leaving Britain. For the first time we see the emergence of comparatively reliable statistics on emigration.
However, the rudimentary controls set up in the principal harbours following the Act of 1803 proved easy to avoid. Ships holding the regulation number of passengers would leave Greenock, for example, and slip up to the Western Isles, where, in a secluded bay, they could load on more emigrants before making the crossing to America. There is no way of telling how many ships sailed from the firths and islands of Western Scotland during the first few decades of the nineteenth century or how many desperate emigrants braved the horrors of the nameless "black holds" of overcrowded ships in order to save a few shillings. Obviously all returns for the first half of the century are under-estimations.

Statistics, like the passage over, became more reliable as steam became the common mode of transportation. The steam ships made scheduled runs from one port in Britain to another port in America and thus a much closer check could be made by the Government officials in key ports. As the second half of the century began, there was still a good deal of emigration by sailing ship, but by 1863 it is estimated that 45.9% of the passengers from Britain to the United States and Canada were travelling by steam. By 1865 the figure had risen to 73.5%; by 1867 it was up to 92.9% and by 1872 it was 98.0%. Although this made passenger figures more accurate, it created new difficulties for emigration statistics. Because Britain was the first European country to feature steam ships, emigrants from all over Europe came to Britain to sail for America and no distinction was made in the records between British citizens and aliens until 1853. Even after 1853 cabin passengers on mail steam ships and some others were lumped together roughly under the heading of "not distinguished" (an unkind classification) and until 1864 they averaged about 20,000 a year. In 1863 provisions were made for counting them and the average fell to around 6,000.

In 1870 a new series of statistics was opened in an effort to make the figures more complete. Ship masters were required to turn in lists of the steerage passengers
and in practice they often supplied lists of the cabin passengers as well. However, up until 1912 British figures include travellers as well as emigrants and make little or no distinction. The British figures for the second half of the century, therefore, are probably too high.

Emigration figures for Britain can be found in H.M. Customs records for the principal ports and from 1840 the annual report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners contained statistics based on the lists prepared by masters of ships. In 1873 the Thirty-third General Report of the Emigration Commissioners (PP, 1873, XVIII, C. 768, App. 1) summarised the returns for 1815–1872. A few more scattered facts concerning British emigration statistics: normally children under the age of one were not recorded, but in the period 1853–76 they were; before 1856 everyone was classified "adult" who was over 14 years old, but after that the age of majority was lowered to 12 and this was not changed again until 1908.

For a study of Scottish emigration to the United States, it is naturally the United States records which are of primary importance as they theoretically record those who completed their journey. Official records began in 1820 when, by an Act of March 2, it was provided that lists of foreign passengers should be given to the local customs collectors. From that time on records were kept, but the actual duty of keeping them occasionally changed hands. From 1820 until 1874 it was the Department of State which, generally speaking, was the "responsible authority". However, beginning in 1867 the Bureau of Statistics of the Treasury Department collected a more improved and accurate version of the figures though they were still based on the returns of the customs collectors. This was changed in 1892 when the Bureau of Immigration placed officials in the ports and began to publish annual reports.

Methods of classifying incoming passengers also differed over the years and at first no distinction was made between alien travellers and alien immigrants.
More important to the overall figures, until 1904 the term "immigrant" applied only to steerage and third-class passengers. Immigrants rich enough to travel by cabin-class escaped statistical classification entirely which means that, even allowing for the "travellers" who were erroneously classified as "immigrants" the American returns for the nineteenth century must tend to be low. From 1820 to 1867 no distinction at all was made among alien passengers—all were "immigrants". From 1868-1891 some attempt was made to separate travellers and a category of "immigrant aliens" was established but the boundaries were still very elastic. A more determined effort was made from 1892-94 with "aliens declaring their intention to reside permanently in the United States", and, except for a setback to "immigrant aliens" in 1895-1897, that was the terminology that was to continue into the twentieth century.

It was, however, not until 1906 that a definite distinction was made between "immigrant" and "non-immigrant" aliens to eliminate the re-counting of an alien every time he entered the United States. In 1908 the somewhat ambiguous term "permanent residence" was fixed at one year or more. For those years prior to 1868 when no attempt was made to separate travellers, the total of the immigrants which were actually "non-immigrant aliens" has been estimated by the Bureau of Statistics to be 2% for the period 1820-1855 and 1 1/2% for 1856-67.

Somewhat more confusing was the difference in time units used for the calculations. Any attempt to compare records with comparable ones in Britain must take into account the fact that the British records are based on calendar years while the American records vary considerably. The statistical "years" were as follows:

1820-31..................12 months ending Sept. 30
1832......................15 months ending Dec. 31
1833-42...................calendar years
1843......................9 months ending Sept. 30
1844-49..................12 months ending Sept. 30
1850......................15 months ending Dec. 31
1851-67...................calendar years
1868......................6 months ending June 30
1869-......................fiscal year ending June 30
Information for more detailed classification did not begin to appear until the second half of the century. There is no reliable record of the immigrants' sex prior to 1867. Figures for 1820-67 are estimates given for fiscal years and made by the Immigration Commission in 1911. Immigrants were generally classified by age "groupings"; there were three groups: 1) -- to 15, 2) 15 to 40 and 3) 41 to --. It was not until 1945 that the immigrants were separated into 5-year age groups.

An important classification which did not appear until the last quarter of the century was Occupational Distribution. The United States began to analyze occupations in 1875 and the British followed suit in 1876. These figures reveal several interesting facts. Two out of every three British farmers who emigrated went to the United States and, except for the years 1876-85 when Australia and New Zealand were popular, almost all of the farm labourers. Of the unskilled labourers and servants, three out of every four went to the United States and one out of every five to Canada. It is fairly obvious that the United States was favoured by the farmers and aspiring farmers because of its generous land policies. America was not as popular among the merchant class; they generally found the Empire more congenial as did the professional men, but the United States drew over 60% of the skilled labour. Scotland maintained the highest average of skilled workers emigrating to the United States—about one half of the total number of emigrants each year. Brinley Thomas pointed out that there was generally a higher proportion of skilled emigrants during "hard times" in the United States since they were always relatively sure of getting jobs. It would be dangerous to assume that the occupational distribution in the first half of the century followed that of the post-1875 years, but the results are nonetheless interesting.

Finally, one enormous and complicated problem facing the student of British emigration to the United States is the whole syndrome of traffic to and from Canada.

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1 Thomas, op. cit., p. 64.
There is nothing separating the two countries but a three thousand-mile unguarded border (frontier) and in some cases farther west settlers were probably unsure of which country they were in. Certainly there has always been a considerable movement between the two countries, especially since the close of the American War of Independence when the defeated "Tories" poured over the border into British territory. British emigrants would often emigrate to the United States via Canada: before 1824 skilled artisans chose that route to avoid the Act prohibiting them access to non-British lands and, in any case, passage to Canada was often cheaper or more convenient or both.

Estimates of emigration/immigration between Canada and the United States for the years prior to 1893 are, for all practical purposes, useless. As an example, it need only be mentioned that in 1888 there were 15 official immigrants who arrived in the United States from British North America.
Appendix C: Business Cycles

1815
U.S. prosperity; panic; recession
Eng. boom; recession

1816
U.S. depression
Eng. deep depression

1817
U.S. mild depression
Eng. depression; revival

1818
U.S. mild depression
Eng. prosperity

1819
U.S. severe depression; financial panic
Eng. recession; depression

1820
U.S. depression
Eng. depression; slight revival

1821
U.S. depression; revival
Eng. slow revival

1822
U.S. mild recession
Eng. revival; prosperity

1823
U.S. revival
Eng. prosperity

1824
U.S. prosperity
Eng. prosperity

1825
U.S. prosperity; panic; recession
Eng. prosperity; recession; panic

1826
U.S. depression; revival
Eng. depression

1827
U.S. moderate prosperity
Eng. revival

1828
U.S. prosperity; recession
Eng. prosperity

1829
U.S. depression; revival
Eng. recession; depression
1830
U.S. moderate prosperity
Eng. slow revival
1831
U.S. prosperity
Eng. recession; depression
1832
U.S. moderate prosperity
Eng. depression
1833
U.S. prosperity; panic; recession
Eng. revival
1834
U.S. mild depression
Eng. prosperity
1835
U.S. revival; prosperity
Eng. prosperity; stock exchange panic
1836
U.S. prosperity
Eng. prosperity; financial panic
1837
U.S. prosperity; panic; recession; depression
Eng. recession; panic; depression
1838
U.S. depression; slight revival
Eng. depression
1839
U.S. revival; panic; recession
Eng. depression
1840
U.S. depression
Eng. depression
1841
U.S. depression
Eng. depression
1842
U.S. depression
Eng. depression
1843
U.S. depression; revival
Eng. revival
1844
U.S. revival; prosperity
Eng. mild prosperity
1845
U.S. prosperity; brief recession
Eng. prosperity

1846
U.S. recession; mild depression
Eng. prosperity

1847
U.S. revival; prosperity; panic; recession
Eng. prosperity; panic; recession

1848
U.S. mild depression; revival
Eng. depression

1849
U.S. prosperity
Eng. depression; revival

1850
U.S. prosperity
Eng. prosperity

1851
U.S. prosperity
Eng. prosperity

1852
U.S. prosperity
Eng. prosperity

1853
U.S. prosperity; recession
Eng. prosperity

1854
U.S. recession; depression
Eng. recession

1855
U.S. depression; revival
Eng. mild depression

1856
U.S. prosperity
Eng. revival; prosperity

1857
U.S. prosperity; panic; recession; depression
Eng. prosperity; panic; recession

1858
U.S. depression
Eng. depression

1859
U.S. revival
Eng. revival

1860
U.S. prosperity; recession
Eng. prosperity

1861
U.S. mild depression; revival
Eng. uneven prosperity
Appendix D: Emigration Figures

1) Scottish emigration to the United States from British records:¹

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>1831-40</td>
<td>2,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841-50</td>
<td>3,712</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851-60</td>
<td>38,333</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861-70</td>
<td>38,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-80</td>
<td>87,564</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881-90</td>
<td>149,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1900</td>
<td>44,188</td>
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2) Scottish immigration to the United States from American records:²

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<th>Year ending Sept. 30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>293</td>
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<td>1822</td>
<td>198</td>
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<td>1823</td>
<td>180</td>
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<td>1824</td>
<td>257</td>
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<td>1825</td>
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<td>1826</td>
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<td>460</td>
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<td>1830</td>
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<td>1831</td>
<td>226</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 months ending Dec. 31, 1832</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending Dec. 31</th>
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<td>1840</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>1841</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months ending Sept. 30, 1843</td>
<td>41</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ending Sept. 30</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>368</td>
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<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>305</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>337</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
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<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months ending Dec. 31, 1850</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year ending Dec. 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>8,148</td>
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<td>3,297</td>
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<td>1857</td>
<td>4,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>1,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>2,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: The Evictions

O, chan eil ach sgiala bronach! sgiala bronach! (Oh, only sad news, sad news!)—woman of Strathnaver

I therefore, very reluctantly, resolved to promote the removal of the crofters. —Francis Clark, proprietor of Ulva

The inhabitants were literally burnt out, and every contrivance and ingenious and unrelenting cruelty was eagerly adopted for extirpating the race.

—Mackenzie on the Sutherland Clearances

Hear the sobbing, sighing, and throbings of their guileless, warm Highland hearts, taking their last look, and bidding a final adieu to their romantic mountains and valleys, the fertile straths, dales, and glens, which their forefathers from time immemorial inhabited...

—Donald Macleod on Col. Gordon’s evictions

Reading the literature of the Clearances produces a variety of emotions—even in the desiccated breast of the academic researcher. Mackenzie’s flowery Victorian anathemas and eulogies are strongly mindful of the extravagant Irish lament of the twelfth century:

In a word, although there were an hundred hard steeled iron heads on one neck, and an hundred sharp, ready, cool, never-rusting, brazen tongues in each head, and an hundred garrulous, loud, unceasing voices from each tongue, they could not recount, or narrate, or enumerate, or tell, what all the Gaedhil suffered in common, both men and women, laity and clergy, old and young, noble and ignoble, of hardship, and of injury, and of oppression, in every house...

But behind the flowery phrases there is real suffering and no study of the period can afford to overlook it.

There were two major periods of sheep-clearances: 1782-1820 and 1840-1854. It all started in 1762 when Sir John Lockhart-Ross inherited Balnagowan and moved north, bringing his sheep with him. It was at first feared that the sheep would not fare well in a Highland winter, but the Great Cheviot seemed to thrive in the

3 Mackenzie (II), op. cit., p. 20.
5 From the Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh quoted in P.H. Sawyer, The Age of the Vikings, p. 27.
harsh conditions and by 1790 it had been introduced as far north as Ross and Cromarty. In 1792 they invaded (if such a term can be used with reference to sheep) the North in such numbers that the year has gone down in local history as the Year of the Sheep. And where sheep came in, men went out.

There were extensive evictions on the Glengarry estates before the turn of the century, but the Sutherland Clearances did not begin until 1800. It would be impossible to say how many people were forced to remove and make way for sheep; Hugh Miller estimated that 15,000 people had been ejected in Sutherland between 1811 and 1820 "by means for which we would in vain seek a precedent, except, perchance, in the history of the Irish massacre" and, though this is quite likely to be an exaggeration, the numbers involved must have been quite impressive. Many of the homeless people would have been relocated in the fishing settlements along the coast, so it is not very surprising that the census figures show an actual increase of two hundred souls for that decade. Certain areas suffered more than others; one of the most notorious examples is Kildonan where, out of 2000 inhabitants, all but three families were cleared with "intense suffering". Kildonan is one of the few parishes that showed a definite decrease in population. Strathnaver was also cleared almost to a man, as were many other parts of Sutherland, but it is pointless to detail the old grievances other than to observe that thousands of people were forcibly, and sometimes brutally, removed from their homes and glens to make way for sheep. Houses were burned literally over people's heads (1814 is referred to as the Year of the Burnings) and there were several scuffles between police and recalcitrant tenants who did not understand that the removals were for their own good.

Although the Sutherland Clearances have received the most publicity, there were many other less-famous

1Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 178-79.
"improvements" which were equally effective in the process of depopulating the glens. In the early years of the century Strathglass was cleared of many hundreds of tenants by the Chisholms and in 1830 the young Chisholm and "his cruel mother" determined to evict those that remained. These particular tenants were very fortunate for one of their near-by neighbours was a laird of the Old School, Lord Lovat. He heard of the evictions and settled the homeless crofters on a sheep-farm which he bought for the purpose in 1831. They were dispossessed again fifteen years later to make way for deer, but Lord Lovat once again found place for them on other parts of his property.

In 1820 a letter from "Invernessicus" informed The Scotsman that Mr. Munro of Novar, in Ross-shire, had determined to clear the tenants off of a part of his estates:

On notice being given to these poor creatures to remove, they remonstrated, and stated unequivocally, that as they neither had money to transport them to America, nor the prospect of another situation to retire to, they neither could nor would remove, and that if force was to be used, they would rather die on the spot that gave them birth than elsewhere.1 The sheriff's party was accordingly ambushed in a narrow pass by "a determined body of females" and routed with stones and other missiles. But their victory was short-lived.

During the famines of the forties, few people could make ends meet and there were large-scale evictions throughout the North. In 1845 the Glencalvie evictions attracted nation-wide publicity through a series of articles in the Times. Colonel Gordon cleared 1500 people from South Uist in 1851 and similar incidents took place elsewhere in the Highlands and Islands. When the kelp industry collapsed after 1825 many of the proprietors of the Islands were forced to sell their property and some of the new owners had little interest in their tenants.

1March 11, 1820.
Alexander Macalister ("who styled himself") of Torrisdale Castle in Argyll, bought the district of Strathaird in Skye and decided to put it to sheep. He evicted 500 people. The "arch-tyrant" Lord Macdonald evicted 6 to 700 people from Sollas in North Uist in 1849; the inhabitants were given a reprieve of one year by agreeing to emigrate and in 1850 "the district was completely and mercilessly cleared of all its remaining inhabitants."¹

It will be remembered that North and South Uist were two of the areas most affected by the population explosion during the kelp boom.

The list is long and dismal--Glenelg in 1849, Strathconan in 1850, Boreraig and Suishnigh in the early 50s, Knoydart and the "massacre of the Rosses" in the mid-50s--no one would deny that the methods and circumstances were unfortunate. That many of the proprietors found the process an extremely painful one cannot be doubted.

Thousands of pounds were spent in efforts to make the transition as painless as possible; but it is unlikely that the Gael, torn from his ancestral home and redeposited in a new district or a strange land, appreciated the fact that his arrears had been cancelled and his transportation paid from the pocket of his erstwhile landlord.

Dr. Norman Macleod, speaking of Morvern in Argyll, summed up the pathos which surrounds the Clearances:

"There is not a smoke there now," he used to say with pathos, of the glens which he had known tenanted by a manly and loyal peasantry, among whom lived song and story and the elevating influence of brave traditions. All are gone, and the place that once knew them, knows them no more! The hill-side, which had once borne a happy people, and echoed the voices of joyous children, is now a silent sheep-walk!²

What had happened to the "happy people"? Many were settled in different parts of the estates. The new lots were, by most accounts, less desirable and less productive. In the case of Sutherland, an earnest effort

¹Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 232.
²Ibid., p. 359.
to resettle the evictees along the coasts in fishing villages met with mixed success. Patrick Sellar compared the newly-installed fishermen to the former crofter. He painted a cheery picture of the families sitting around their winter fires, weaving their nets and compared it to "the sloth, and poverty, and filth, and sleep of an unremoved tenant's turf hut in the interior". He challenged anyone to "believe, if he can, that men are injured by civilization, and that during the last ten years a most important benefit has not been conferred on this country".\(^1\) The minister of Farr, one of the parishes affected, had other views on the matter: "It is a well authenticated fact in this country, that the herring fishing is not conducive to the improvement of the morals of those engaged in it."\(^2\) Sellar also neglected to mention the fact that most of the tenants removed from the interior had never been in a boat before in their lives and knew nothing about hunting the elusive herring. Some were drowned as they learned their lessons in the harsh school of experience and women were swept away to sea when they strayed too near the unfamiliar cliffs. But it is perhaps more significant that Stewart of Garth quoted an Inverness newspaper which in an article referring to the new fishing settlements stated that "a decided preference will be given to strangers."\(^3\) Where would that leave the less desirable element of the evicted tenants?

On other estates the evicted tenants were sometimes offered small plots of moor-land which seldom could produce even subsistence crops.\(^4\) Probably the only places where such "reclamation" was successful to any extent were Lewis and South Uist, but even there it was carried out in conjunction with extensive emigration. Stewart of Garth claimed that the new lots were so miserable

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\(^2\) NZA, XV, 80-81.

\(^3\) quoted in Grimble, op. cit., p. 43.

that the removed crofters had "overcome all their scruples about leaving their native land, and possess the most ardent desire to emigrate, in order to avoid more intolerable evils of starvation".¹

Emigration was certainly one answer to the problems facing the evicted crofters.

¹Quoted in Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 166.
Appendix F: Statement of Colonel Gordon's Evictees

We, the undersigned passengers per Admiral, from Stornoway, in the Highlands of Scotland, do solemnly depose to the following facts:—that Colonel Gordon is proprietor of estates in South Uist and Barra; that among many hundreds of tenants and cottars whom he has sent this season from his estates to Canada, he gave directions to his factor, Mr. Fleming of Cluny Castle, Aberdeenshire, to ship on board of the above-named vessel a number of nearly 450 of said tenants and cottars, from the estate in Barra; that accordingly, a great majority of these people, among whom were the undersigned, proceeded voluntarily to embark on board the Admiral, at Loch Boisdale, on or about the 11th August, 1851; but that several of the people who were intended to be shipped for this port, Quebec, refused to proceed on board, and, in fact, absconded from their homes to avoid the embarkation. Whereupon Mr. Fleming gave orders to a policeman, who was accompanied by the ground-officer of the estate in Barra, and some constables, to pursue the people, who had run away, among the mountains; which they did, and succeeded in capturing about twenty from the mountains and islands in the neighbourhood; but only came with the officers on an attempt being made to handcuff them; and that some who ran away were not brought back, in consequence of which four families at least have been divided, some having come in the ships to Quebec, while the other members of the same families are left in the Highlands.

The undersigned further declare, that those who voluntarily embarked, did so under promises to the effect, that Colonel Gordon would defray their passage to Quebec; that the Government Emigration Agent there would send the whole party free to Upper Canada, where, on arrival, the Government agents would give them work, and furthermore, grant them land on certain conditions.

The undersigned finally declare, that they are now landed in Quebec so destitute, that if immediate relief be not afforded them, and continued until they are settled in employment, the whole will be liable to perish with want.

(Signed) Hector Lamont and 70 others.

Appendix G: Extracts from a Writ of Removal¹

SUMMONS OF REMOVAL

Major Charles Robertson of Kindeace
vs
Donald Macleod, Esquire & Others

...the Pursuer is desirous that the said Donald Macleod, Esquire, David Ross alias Geisich Senior, David Ross alias Geisich Junior, and Alexander Ross alias Greisich, shall remove from the said Possessions respectively occupied by them at the terms above mentioned, and to obtain Decree of Removal against them accordingly in order that the Pursuer or others in his name may enter thereto and possess the same.

Therefore the said Defenders ought and should be declared and ordained by Decree and Sentence of me or my Substitute,

1. To flit and Remove themselves, Bairns, Family, servants, subtenants, cottars and dependants, Cattle, Goods and gear, forth and from the possession of the said Subjects above described with the pertinents respectively occupied by them, as aforesaid, and to leave the same void, redd and patent, at the respective terms of Removal above specified, that the Pursuer or others in his name may then enter thereto and peaceably possess, occupy and enjoy the same in time coming. And

2. In the event of their opposing this action to make payment to the pursuer of the sum of Ten pounds Sterling, or such other Sum as shall be modified at the Expenses of Process, besides the Expense of Extracting and Recording the Decree to follow thereon.

All in terms of the Act of Sederunt and the laws and daily practice of Scotland, used and observed in the like cases in all points as if alleged...

Appendix H: Emigrant Letters—The Search for Ancestors

There was a particular type of correspondence from Scottish emigrants and their descendants which was a foreshadowing of the thousands of Americans who, in the next century, would descend like the wolf on the fold on the public records of Scotland: the ancestor-seekers.

As early as 1818 Allan Melvill of Boston, Massachusetts, wrote to the Earl of Leven and Melville announcing that he had traced his ancestry back (Douglas's Baronage in hand) to the noble family of Melvill and notably to Sir John of Cambee who was killed at the battle of "Floudon" in 1513. "...thus I believe is unequivocally established the lineage of our family." He went on apologetically to try to explain the inexplicable feeling which Americans in general cherish for their Mother Country and which the Mother Country can never understand:

...but in America as your Lordship must be aware, from the nature of our constitution and system of education, we have much less regard for birth than in Europe, but it is always interesting to the Individual to trace back his ancestry to a noble source, & I assure you it is with no little pride of heart & elevation of sentiment, that I consider myself a Descendant of the ancient & honourable House of Melvill, & shall always entertain for your Lordship as its legitimate Head, the most profound respect & consideration.1

A decade and a half later an Episcopal clergyman in Waukesha, Wisconsin made a far more determined and aggressive effort to trace his lineage:

My Lord [he erroneously addressed Sir Robert Abercromby], Having determined, if possible to trace my connexion with some of those of the same name in Old Scotland... I have thought that you might be pleased to look into this matter, and if we really are of the same blood afford me the satisfaction of certainty. He went on the trace the family's history in America and ended optimistically,

1Ms. letter, July 5, 1818. In the Register House, Edinburgh.
In the hope of becoming better acquainted, I am very Respectfully,

Yr obdr Serv
d.

JAMES ABERCROMBIE

Sir Robert apparently managed to stave off this invasion of his privacy with some diplomatic information about the family, but the clergyman was not easily daunted and returned to the attack (beginning his letter in a more correct manner):

My Dear Sir,

I am indeed exceedingly obliged to you for your very kind reception of my letter, and especially for the no small trouble taken by you for my information--But still, not yet being fully certified with which of the Three Branches I may be immediately connected, your information, to me most interesting, has only served even more to increase my desire, from boyhood cherished, of some day, if possible, with all certainty tracing out the parentage of my Greatgrandfather.

After listing some more genealogical data, he produced almost the selfsame excuse as that written by Allan Melvill,

To very many Americans, whatever their origin, high or low, there is great pleasure in being able to trace the same back into the country of their forefathers, and, for my troubling you again, this, I flatter myself, will readily be admitted by you as a fully sufficient apology.

It is uncertain whether or not the Rev. James Abercrombie ever determined with certainty his lineage, but he did finally manage to enveigle an invitation to the Ancestral Home.

It is a logical extension of this preoccupation that some of the emigrants or sons of emigrants returned to Scotland to reclaim family property. Sometimes they were not very successful and such was the case with James Fullarton, the misguided emigrant's son from Bedford, New Hampshire. At the end of his long journey, it was probably with considerable bewilderment that he found not only a closer claimant to the property (the younger sister of the deceased), but also that his name was not really

1Ms. letter to Robert Abercrombie, Bart., January 12, 1832. In the Register House, Edinburgh.
2Ms. letter to Robert Abercrombie, Bart., 1832.
Fullarton at all. The tale is told in the following excerpts.

DEPOSITION by Alexander Fullarton, Farmer, East Knowe, Brodick, Arran  Dated 1889

1st copy:  I have seen James Fullarton from Manchester, Hampshire, America. He said he was a claimant from America for the Kilmichael estates, and that he had come over the water. He said his father was a blacksmith. He also said his father had been staying about Kilmichael. I told him it was not true that his father had stayed at Kilmichael, and that the only time he had been there was when he went after the servant lasses.

2nd copy:  I told him he had no claim whatsoever to the property, as he was one of the Percivals, a family who had come from Ireland a long time ago, and who had thereafter changed their name to Fullarton. They and their descendants are always quite easily known from the Fullartons by the darkness of their complexion. That of the Fullartons was always fair and they had also a very clear skin. The Percivals...were never recognized about Brodick as being Fullartons. My mother used to be very angry when she heard of them being called Fullarton.

The following article appeared in the Daily Mail on August 6, 1889:

CLAIMANT TO AN ARRAN ASTATE

A despatch from Bedford, New Hampshire, in the Scottish American says:--Mr. James Fullarton, of this place, has sailed for Scotland to claim an estate on the island of Arran, comprising the lands of Kilmichael and Whitefarland, which had been entailed for several yearsearly years in the Fullarton family. The lady who held the property under the Scotch law of entail has died, and there being no heirs nearer than Mr. Fullarton he decided to go to Scotland at once. This will be his first visit since he left Arran, 50 years ago, when he was a lad of seven." Mr. Fullarton has been wrongly informed. On the death of the late Miss Fullarton in June last, the estate passed to her younger sister, who is the wife of the Rev. Henry M. Robertson, minister of Bo'ness.

1In the Register House, Edinburgh.
Appendix I: Petition of the Kirkman Finlay Emigration Society

To the Rev'd Thomas Chalmers D.D.
Rev'd Sir, The petition of the Kirkman Finlay Emigration Society Humbly Sheweth

That Your humble petitioners have families and are identified as the victims of hard labour Want and Indigence in A superior degree Not withstanding the Strictest Economy and Vigilant Industry We are incapable of Procuring ourselves and Children A Consistent Supply of the Commonest Necessaries of life Rate of Maintenance house Rents &c. bear A proportion prejudicial to the Mechanic Unprecedented in any former age. But these are ills of a Temporary nature. We Shall Soon pass away Where Those Terrestrial wants are no longer held in Requisition but then our hapless Children immergeing to maturity amidst Toil indigence Want and ignorance Untaught themselves and incapable of teaching their offspring. We already anticipate A Chain of moral and physical Evils. The mantle of ignorance With all its inherent appendages already expands and will Soon envelope the land into that Vortex of Moral depravity from Whence it has previously escaped. Learning and Civilization will rest in the higher ranks and leave our poor ill fated progeny as low as the late Colonial Slaves or Helots of the antients. Impressed as we are with A deep sense of gratitude for Your Reverences liberal Exertions to diffuse Learning and Knowledge through the various shad[[-?-]s of society but yet what does it profit tho[[-?--?] man surrounded by his Numerous family Exposed to every privation of nature his property claimed by the Laird for rent and cannot avail himself of the golden opportunity. Under a sense of these painful Considerations we are resolved if possible to avail ourselves of the privilege of Government to proceed to Upper Canada under the authority of an Emigration Charter and abandon our country whose high repute amongst nations Stately Edifices and public works are indelible proofs of the bravery ingenuity and industry of us and our Mechanical Brethren. But being destitute of the Means of Conveyance we make this last appeal to the gentlemen of Glasgow whose Liberality requires no comment hoping the will assist us in procuring our passage out as early in the spring as possible we want no money at present but any gentleman that may favour us with their donations it is to be paid in to the hands of the agent conducting our shipments at A subsequent period and in compliance of which your Reverences Humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

for James Donaldson preses
James Little Secretary
No. 124 Barrack Street, Glasgow
9th Ober, 1820.

1Ms. petition in the Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.
Appendix J: A Song or poetry to A friend

Except of thes dear robin its twa or three lines from me
To let you know wer a' in strenth good health and leberty
And we have all our mind made up to sail to you like boys
And meet with you dear robin in the fair elonis [Illinois]

If wee had plenty of money wee would sail ore the sea
Wee would meet with you man robin whar er that you bie
And when wee come to union grove its there wee will rejoice
Wee will meet with you dear robin in the fair elonis

Altho tha you are far from us you dwell in union grove
Your lassey she is leven here she says to you shel rove
Sheel dress hirself in salours cloths and sail with jolly boys
And meet hir ane dear laddy in the fair elonies

You must rite to hir a letter what art that she may stear
And when shees on the open sea she says she will never fear
O when shees on the oshon wide she says she will rejoice
To meet hir ane dear laddy in the fair elonies

She will bid farwell to Scotland and all hir friends so dear
When ance you send hir out the word the art that shees to steer
She will hoise up hir main sail and then she will rejoice
When she Meets hir Ain Dear Robin in the fair elonies

I hope you will excuse My foley M.R.

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1Ms. letter, Mary Robertson, Millhill, Ayrshire, June 21, 1848 to her daughter's (?) fiancé, Robert Robertson, Union Grove, Whiteside County, Illinois.
1. AITCHISON, James, et. al.: 18 manuscript letters: Edinburgh, Scotland to London, Upper Canada and London, Upper Canada to Edinburgh, Scotland. These letters furnish a painful example of the failure's failure to change his stripes in America. The series is complete from the first broaching of Aitchison's "emigration" (transportation would be closer to the truth) to the letter from his guardian (Rev. William Proudfoot) describing his ruin and flight. Register House, Edinburgh. See also PROUDFOOT, William.

2. ALLISON, Alexander: 2 manuscript letters: Middletown[Middletown], Logan County, Illinois, Aug. 4, 1843 and Jan. 8, 1847, both to Alexander Wark, Bathgate, Scotland. These two letters present a fascinating account of establishing a farm on the "farming frontier" of Illinois: early illnesses, crops, amusements and progress from log cabin to frame house are all included. Allison presented a favourable picture of America as the land for the labouring man. In the possession of W.A. Mackenzie, Esq., 33 Overton Court, West Kilbride, Ayrshire.

3. ALLISON, Andrew: typescript of letter/diary: New Orleans, Louisiana, 1837 to parents (in Ayrshire). An interesting journal of the voyage from Scotland to New Orleans written by a young Scot with an eye for the picturesque; a lively account of a relatively trouble-free passage. The original manuscript is in the New Orleans Museum; the typescript is in the possession of Miss Mary A. Aitken, One Ash, Dalry, Ayrshire.

4. ANDERSON, William: typescript of letter/diary and letter: Boston, Massachusetts, 1834 and Turnbull Kinnonh & Co., Washington Street, Boston, Massachusetts, June 25, 1834, both to his parents (probably in Perthshire). Journal of the crossing by sail from Greenock to New York; remarkably similar to Andrew Allison's account, although Anderson's voyage was far more eventful. In the possession of F.W. Anderson, Esq., "Ardath", Bankfoot, Perthshire.

5. ANONYMOUS: manuscript letter: Great Salt Lake City, U.T. [Utah Territory], Nov. 22, 1858 to parents in Scotland. Letter from a Scottish Mormon urging his parents to join him in Utah ("I still claim the privilege of seeing my Mother in the flesh") with a brief description of his "mission" editing a Mormon paper. Utah State Historical Society, 603 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102.
6. ARNOTT, Henry: 2 manuscript letters: Coeymans Hollow, Albany County, New York, March 19, 1856 and April 6, 1856, both to his parents in Rothes, Fife. Short, chatty letters concerning the opportunities offered by the American paper-making industry; Arnott was not satisfied with his wages and eventually returned to Scotland. In the possession of Mrs. T. Fraser, 2 Lady Helen Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife.

7. ARNOTT, William: 2 manuscript letters: Greenville [Middlesex County], Connecticut, May 29, 1862 to his brother, David and Mount Holly Springs, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, March 6, 1865 to his parents in Rothes, Fife. First letter mostly family news; second letter describes moving from one part of the country to another in search of a good job in the paper mills. In the possession of Mrs. T. Fraser, 2 Lady Helen Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife.

8. BOWERS, Lemuel Saford: manuscript letter: Liverpool, Oct. 11[probably 1860] to brother-in-law, John Oram, Midlothian, Scotland. This letter was written during a European tour which in its scope (England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Germany) and brevity compares favourably with the feats of modern tourists. "Sandy" Bowers was one of the early, colourful figures in Nevada history and the chief importance of the letter is the proof it offers of his literacy (which had been questioned for many years). The contents are mostly familial and of little historical value. Nevada Historical Society, Box 1129, Reno, Nevada 89504. This letter was also published with biographical data in the Nevada State Journal, June 1, 1969.

9. BROWN, John and Elizabeth: typescript of diary: voyage by sail from Greenock, Scotland to New York City, April 26-May 28, 1856. The Browns emigrated from Craigie in Ayrshire to LaCrosse County, Wisconsin. Their diary is a lengthy (more or less daily entries) and extremely interesting account of an eventful voyage; the objectiveness is slightly marred by self-righteousness. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

10. CAMPELL, Archibald: manuscript letter: (Town of) Virginia, Cass County, Illinois, April 18, 1852 to George Combe, Edinburgh. Good description of a farming town and surrounding country in mid-century Illinois with an analysis of why the town had not grown much since it was founded about 10 years before. Combe Papers, Scottish National Library, Edinburgh. Most of this letter was also printed in The Scotsman, Sept. 29, 1852.
11. CHALMERS, David: manuscript letter: Halifax City [Halifax County], Virginia, June 12, 1847 to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. Letter written by the son of a Scottish emigrant giving details of the family connections, news of their prosperity since emigrating (one brother was elected to the United States Senate) and "enclosing" 189 bushels of corn for the "suffering Poor of old Scotland" collected by Chalmers from his neighbours. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.

12. CLARKSON, Robert (I): 2 manuscript letters: Millnill, Musselburgh, Scotland, April 23, 1822 and Sept. 11, 1823 to his brother-in-law, James Guthrie. The letters are primarily devoted to family news but also sketch in the erratic peregrinations of James Clarkson. There are also some notes made by various members of the family. In the possession of Peter Shepherd, Esq., 18 Camphill Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee.

13. CLARKSON, Robert (II): manuscript letter: Leith, Scotland, Nov. 4, 1831 to his uncle, James Guthrie. Contains a few snippets of information about the further adventures of James Clarkson. In the possession of Peter Shepherd, Esq., 18 Camphill Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee.


17. DICK, John and Robert: 2 manuscript letters: New York, Aug. 24, 1833 [or '35?] to Mr. Forbes, Edinburgh and City of Brooklyn, Longisland, Feb. 7, 1836 to Mr. Wm. Kerr, Cannongate, Edinburgh. A short letter written by Robert Dick "for" his father, John Dick, describing the crossing and the prevalence of fires in New York City. And a long, very interesting letter written by John Dick himself giving his opinion of conditions in America as they affect emigrants. His praise of America is laced with tirades against the Edinburgh aristocracy. He also mentions the frequency of fires in New York. Edinburgh University Library.
18. DUNCAN, John M.: 3 manuscript letters: Baltimore [Maryland], Nov. 5, 1828; May 21, 1832 and 1840 [?]; all to Rev. Charles G. McLean, Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania. These letters from one Scots emigrant to another are filled for the most part with theological disputes and church gossip and have little relevance to the present study. Papers of the Rev. Charles G. McLean, 1788-1899 in the Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

19. DUNDA, William of Ochtertyre: 2 manuscript letters: St. Louis, Missouri, July 25, 1842 and Niagara Falls, Aug. 17, 1842 both to his brother, David Dundas, Esq., M.P. One informative letter describing travels in the United States from Washington, D.C. to St. Louis, Missouri giving brief comments about the climate, food, people, state of progress, etc. and a pathetically scrawled note announcing his own impending death. Register House, Edinburgh.

20. FERGUSON, James: 2 manuscript letters: New York, Aug. 22, 1843 to his brother, Robert [Netherholm Farm, Dumfries] and Centralia [Marion County], Illinois, Nov. 6, 1864 to his sister, Janet. The first letter was written five days after his arrival in the United States and contains a long (5 pages) account of the voyage over with details about day-to-day life on ship-board, provisions, etc. and concludes with a brief description of New York City and the lack of opportunities there. The second letter was written 16 years later and includes a short account of his farm and of conditions in war-time Illinois, of his brother Robert's success and of his own narrow escape from "Lincoln's Lottery"; there is also a brief theological discussion. There are also Obituary Notices for Ferguson's wife, daughter and son clipped from various unidentified newspapers. In the possession of Miss J.M. Henderson, Ardgowan, 5 Lockerbie Road, Dumfries.

21. FERGUSON, Robert: manuscript letter: 62 Varick St., New York, Feb. 17, 1856 to his niece, Jane Maxwell in Scotland. Letter from James Ferguson's brother written five years after his arrival in New York; mostly family news. Also unidentified newspaper Obituary Notice. In the possession of Miss J.M. Henderson, Ardgowan, 5 Lockerbie Road, Dumfries.

22. FERGUSSON, Adam: 4 manuscript letters: Carthage [Smith County], Tennessee, April 3, 1838; May 4, 1838; Nov. 26, 1839 and Sept. 24, 1844; the first two letters are to Robert Macnab, Glen Orchy, Argyll, Scotland and the third is to the same person in Cincinnati, Ohio; the fourth is a letter-book copy with no address, but it appears to be to Robert Macnab's brother in Canada. The first two letters present favourable descriptions of the United States and outline the Ferguson family's success there. Cousin Robert is encouraged to follow suit. The
third letter is shorter and slightly testy—probably because Macnab had spent both his own money and Ferguson's and had still not managed to get farther than Cincinnati. The fourth letter gives Robert Macnab's brother some encouragement to settle on the upper Missouri and explains that his son, Dugald, who has apparently joined Macnab as Ferguson's guest, is progressing well in his study of law even though he did not pass his exams.

Manuscript Section, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville 3, Tennessee. See also MACNAB, Robert.


24. GARRICK (or Garioch), William: typescript copy of letter: Grand Rapids, Michigan, Feb. 29, 1862 to his brother, David, in Perth, Scotland. Family news, descriptions of war-time Michigan, prices and provisions and news about his job as inspector of bridges for the railway by an emigrant from Orkney who became a pillar of his community. In the possession of Miss Mary Borwick, c/o The Orcadian, Kirkwall, Orkney.

25. GUTHRIE, Isaiah: manuscript letter: Clarion, Clarion County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1844 to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. Letter written from the back-woods of Pennsylvania by a bed-ridden Scotch-Irishman whose family had settled in Delaware 100 years before (and apparently still considered themselves Scots!). Gives brief history of his family and requests information about the Guthries in Scotland and the Free Church. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.

26. JOHNSTONE, Janet: 3 manuscript letters: West Flamaris [?], Upper Canada, July 16, 1845; Bevirly, Upper Canada, Jan. 30, 1847 and Beverly, Upper Canada, April 27, 1846 all to her sister, Miss Jane Johnstone, Queen Street, Stirling. The letters are written in semi-literate scrawl—difficult to read at best and illegible in many places—but are well worth the trouble to decipher. The first letter describes a harrowing ocean crossing and all three letters present a very bleak picture indeed of a woman's lot on an uncleared Canadian farm. In the possession of Thomas Bryson, Esq., Holehouse Farm, Denny, Stirlingshire.

27. JOHNSTONE, Thomas [Sr.]: manuscript diary 1846-1885: A fascinating, laconic account of day-to-day life on a Stirlingshire farm in the middle of the nineteenth century. Johnstone was a prominent member of the community: president of the curling club and a leader in the church. He had an incredibly wide span of
interests and the entries range from "To the tryst with Jas. Norris & bot. a cow 8 years old, to calve 1st week in May for £7/10/-" to "Cholera comes to Galicia & the catholic cantons of Switzerland completely defeated." The title deeds to his farm go from 1569 down to the present owner, his great-grandson, Thomas Bryson, owner of the diary.

28. JOHNSTONE, Thomas [Jr.]: 4 manuscript letters: c/o Mr. H.W.Partridge, Smithville Post Office, Peoria County, Illinois, Nov. 25, 1849; c/o Mr. Curteneus, Wholesale Merchant, Peoria, Illinois, May 24, 1850; Cooks Bar, Anecasy[?] River, Upper California, July 20, 1851; and Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras[Calaveras] County, Alta California, Nov. 28, 1852, all to his father and mother at Holehouse Farm, Denny, Stirlingshire. The first two letters record the wanderings of a young footloose Scottish emigrant in the mid-century American Midwest, detailing his many misfortunes and illnesses, his jobs and his visits to Scottish friends. The other letters describe his epic trek over the Mormon Trail and his adventures in the lawless California of the Gold Rush days. All of the letters evince an indomitable optimism in the face of adversity and a naive acceptance of fate which often borders on the pathetic and occasionally hovers on the heroic. In the possession of Thomas Bryson, Esq., Holehouse Farm, Denny, Stirlingshire.

29. KING, Mitchell: 3 manuscript letters: Charleston, South Carolina, May 14, 1831; May 28, 1831; and Dec. 24, 1831 all to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. The first letter is an official request from the Presbyterian Church of Charleston (Mitchell King, President) to Chalmers to find them a suitable Scottish minister; it is notable for its lengthy defence of the South Carolina climate. The second letter is a personal one backing up the official request and giving a history of the "Scottish" Church in Charleston with their reasons for desiring a Scottish minister. The third letter is a reply to Thomas Chalmers' answer clarifying some of the issues raised. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.

30. KINNEAR, Mary: 3 manuscript letters: Brownsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, Jan. 12, 1828; July 29, 1829; and March [sic], 1831, all to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. A native Scot who had emigrated in her infancy, she addressed familiar, chatty letters to Chalmers covering a wide range of subjects such as the iniquities and irreligiousness of South America, the need for Sunday schools in Pennsylvania and the popularity of Britain's "present Severing". The syntax, spelling and handwriting suggest a modest education, though the contents imply a warm heart. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.
31. **LENOX, James**: 3 manuscript letters: New York, April 25, 1843; July 4, 1843; and Dec. 30, 1843 all to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. Lenox was the rich son of a native of Kirkcudbright and his three letters show a deep interest in the land of his ancestors; his interest manifested itself materially in donations of £500 for the building of a new (Free) church in Kirkcudbright, £1,000 to the Free Church and £500 to the Free Church Mission in India. He relied on Chalmers for the distribution of the money and Chalmers in turn relied heavily on Lenox's advice when he decided to accept money for the Free Church from the Southern states. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.


33. **LOCKERBIE, George**: 3 manuscript letters: Indianapolis, Indiana, Sept. 20, 1836; July 20, 1837; and March 12, 1838 all to his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Ann McQuat (later Elgin, later Butler), Georgetown, Scott County, Kentucky. The contents of these letters are confined almost entirely to family news, powdered with occasional smatterings of Burns and Scots proverbs. There is also a short biographical sketch. Indiana Historical Society Library, 140 N. Senate Avenue, Room 206, Indianapolis, Indiana 40204.

34. **MacDONALD-IRVING Papers**: 2 typescript letters: Randal Macdonald, Leaksville [Rockingham County], North Carolina, June 17, 1833 to son-in-law and daughter, Mrs. Jane King, c/o George Allenton, Dumfries, Scotland; and William and Margaret Irving, Burnside Nursery, Kirkcudbright, May, 1841 to brother and sister in America [probably North Carolina]. The first is a short letter encouraging "son and daughter" to join him in Leaksville, offering them land and other inducements and the second is a long letter giving an account of William and Margaret Irving's circumstances, news of their neighbourhood and acquaintances and lists of current prices in Scotland. The Papers also include a character reference for George Irving and Jean McDonald written on the occasion of their emigration by the minister of Closeburn, Dumfriesshire, June 10, 1834. Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
35. **McDONALD,** John: 2 manuscript letters: East Bridgewater [Plymouth County, Massachusetts], April 13, 1851 to his father and mother in Scotland [probably Glasgow]; and May 21, 1854 to his brother, George K. McDonald, Glasgow. These short letters give a brief description of the trials and tribulations of a young Scottish tack-maker in Massachusetts; he complains that an aunt is trying to draw his pay even though he has successfully run away from her home. In the possession of Miss Jessie H. McEwan, 70 Trinley Road, Knightswood, Glasgow W.3.

36. **McGOWAN** (possibly **McCO\'VAN**), James: 3 manuscript letters: Richmond, Virginia, October 3, 1818; Nov. 26, 1818; and July 27, 1819 all to John McGregor, Smith, Moniviard by Crieff, Perthshire. Naive and amusing descriptions of America with endless questions about family friends and news from Scotland. Eeister House, Edinburgh.

37. **McINTYRE,** Robert: manuscript letter: Sugargrove, Warren County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 27, 1843 to George Hirr [? possibly Kirr], Mason, Bunhill Bay, Dumbarton. An eloquent, if inarticulate, description of the hardships and rewards of frontier farming; a gripping testimony from an emigrant who had obviously had little formal education. In the possession of Miss Jessie Hamilton, 7 Kings Crescent, Elderslie, Renfrewshire.

38. **McIVER,** Colin: manuscript letter: Fayetteville [Cumberland County], North Carolina, Oct. 2, 1843 to Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh. Includes a brief autobiographical sketch of this minister from Lewis who became a leading spokesman for the Old School Presbyterians in the Ante-Bellum South and who preached in Gaelic to the descendants of the Highlanders of North Carolina; the usual requests for news of the Free Church and Presbyterianism in Scotland. Chalmers Papers, New College Library, Edinburgh.

39. **MCKELLAR,** James, Peter, Duncan and kin: 10 manuscript letters:
   1) **MCKELLAR,** James: 3 manuscript letters: Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, Jan. 19, 1841; Boston, March 15, 1841; and St. Louis, Missouri, March 20[?], 1842 all to his brother, Peter McKellar, Castals Land, Partick, Scotland. These three letters are the most useful in the McKellar Papers for the present study. They describe, in surprisingly unflattering light, the adventures of an emigrant rogue in his travels from Boston (where he broke a leg posting a letter) to New York (where he picked up his mail under a nom de guerre) to St. Louis, Missouri (via Cuba). He apparently left a trail of unpaid debts behind him.
   2) **MCKELLAR,** Duncan: 2 manuscript letters: 7th Battalion, Royal Artillery, Corfu, March 2, 1830; and May 27, 1831 both to his brother, Peter McKellar. Marginal interest.
3) PEEBLES, Jane: 4 manuscript letters: Stob-cross [?] St., Anderston, Scotland, Oct. 31 [no year]; Aug. 29 [no year]; Jan. 8, 1861; and Dec. 14, 1866 to her brother, Peter McKeallar. These letters are also of only marginal interest although they cast some light on conditions in Scotland and possible motivations for emigration.
4) McDONALD, Jane: manuscript letter: Partick, Scotland, Aug. 12, 1855 to her brother-in-law, Peter McKeallar. Marginal interest only.

The McKeallar Papers are held by the Minnesota Historical Society, Manuscripts Department, Cedar Street and Central Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

40. MCKINNON, Isabelle: manuscript diary: journey from Findhorn, Moray, Scotland to Otsego [Wisconsin?], March-June 1852. Literate and interesting with brief, daily entries chronicling a relatively uneventful voyage. If her own evidence is to be believed, Miss McKinnon was a highly self-sufficient young (19-year old) lady; though travelling alone, she coped easily with the rigours and perils of the cross-country journey. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

41. MACNAB, Robert: 3 manuscript letters: Glenorchay [Glen Orchy], Dalmal[i]y, Argyll, Oct. 1, 1838; Aug. 11, 1839; and Cincinnati, Ohio, Nov. 2, 1839 all to his cousin Adam Ferguson, Carthage, Tennessee. The two letters from Glen Orchy are particularly interesting; in them he describes the poor conditions there and the reasons for his emigration, viz. avaricious landlord, high rents, poor crops and poor prospects. The letter from Cincinnati is to excuse his money running out before reaching Tennessee and to request directions to Carthage. Manuscript Section, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville 5, Tennessee. See also FERGUSON, Adam.

42. MATHESON, James: 3 manuscript letters: Lansingburgh, June 20, 1815; New York, March 9, 1842; and Aug. 30, 1844 all to his brother, Angus Matheson, Parish of Dornoch, Sutherland. These letters give highly unfavourable accounts of emigrant prospects in the United States. The writer was a staunch Tory and despised everything American; the letters are filled with the regret that he had not settled on a farm in Canada instead of taking up shop-keeping in New York. The first letter includes a British-oriented account of the Battle of New Orleans (Matheson had relatives with the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders) and a brief, pessimistic summary of the economic situation in the United States. The other two letters, written at a considerably later date (when the sarcasm had matured to bitterness), continue the tirade against the American government, economic system and people and advise his brother and relatives to go...
to Canada if they would emigrate. The threat of war between the United States and Canada is mentioned and Matheson expresses confidence that, should the United States be so ill-advised as to send an army into Canada, the half of it would never return. In the possession of H.J. MacKay, Esq., 49 Temple Park Crescent, Edinburgh 11.

43. MUNGER, Marion: 2 manuscript letters: Chicago, Illinois, Jan. 27, 1846; and Little Fort, Lake County, Illinois, March 7, 1847 both to her uncle, Alexander Wark, Hardhill, Bathgate, Linlithgowshire [West Lothian], Scotland. These letters, which are well-written and "genteel" are mostly filled with news of the health and fortunes of the family in Scotland and the United States. Mrs. Munger was a relative of Alexander Allison. In the possession of W. A. MacKenzie, Esq., 33 Overton Court, West Kilbride, Ayrshire.

44. PERROTT, John: manuscript letter: Glasgow, Sept. 2, 1822 to William Hutchison, Merchant, Augusta, Georgia. The letter deals mainly with the King's visit to Edinburgh (there are comments on the upsurge of Scottish nationalism which ensued—"This has revived all our ideas of ancient chivalry and Scottish independence...") and a casual mention of the death of William Hutchison's father. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.

45. POLLOCK, Robert: 3 manuscript letters: Lake Mills [Jefferson County], Wisconsin, Jan. 29, 1848 to his niece and his brother, William Pollock, Gas Works, Ayr, Scotland; Cambridge [Wisconsin?], April 7, 1854 to William Pollock; and April 16, 1858 to his niece. An interesting collection of letters giving detailed advice about emigrating—especially for the journey from New York City to Wisconsin. The second letter contains a long and particularly valuable account of Pollock's trip across the Mormon Trail to the Gold Diggings in California and his adventures there. Collection of Regional History and Archives, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.

46. PROUD, John: manuscript record book of the Proud Settlement (1849-53) near Verona [Dane County], Wisconsin. An itemised account of every article bought by the settlers including curry combs, land, taxes, brooms, wages for hired help, whisky for house-raisings, etc.—an insight into the trivia that made up frontier farming life. There is a lot of room for reading between the lines of figures. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.
47. PROUDFOOT, Rev. William: manuscript letter: London, Upper Canada, Aug. 17, 1838 to John Aitchison & Co., Brewers, Edinburgh. The last letter in the series which recounts the decline and fall of James Aitchison, summing up the misfortunes which led to his precipitous flight to the United States. Register House, Edinburgh.

48. ROBERTSON, Family Papers: 35 manuscript letters.  
   1) BLAIR, William: manuscript letter: Hawkhill, Ayrshire, Jan. 24, 1832 to John Boyd, Union Grove, [Illinois?].  
   2) BOYD, John: manuscript letter: On Board the City of Glasgow, June 28, 1850 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove.  
   3) BOYD, Thomas: manuscript letter: Fairlie Bog, by Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Nov. 28, 1845 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove.  
   4) CRAWFORD, John (for Ann Hogarth): manuscript letter: Knockewart, Feb. 27, 1847 to "Aunt".  
   5) FERGUSSON, William: manuscript letter: Montgreenaw near Kilwinning, Ayrshire, Sept. 12, 1843 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove. This letter is typical of the endless flow of insatiable demands for information about emigration and prospects in America.  
   6) HOGARTH, Ann: manuscript letter. See 4)  
   7) JACK, Robert: 14 manuscript letters: Flat Prairie, Sparta, Randolph County [Illinois?], April 10, 1845 to James Robertson, Union Grove; St. Louis, Missouri, Sept. 30, 1849; Dec. 13, 1849; Dec. 28, 1849; July 13, 1850; July 29, 1850; all to Robert Robertson, Union Grove; Eden [Indiana?], Dec. 16, 1850; March 5, 1851; May 25, 1851; June 14, 1851 all to Robert Robertson, Union Grove; St. Louis, Missouri, Aug. 12, 1851 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove; Eden [Indiana?], Oct. 17, 1851 to Robert Robertson, Union Grove; St. Louis, Missouri, Easter Sunday [no year] to Robert Robertson, Union Grove with note from Margaret Jack to "Sister".  
The letters from Robert Jack paint a moving picture of the fate which befell many emigrants—loss of possessions and family.  
8) ROBERTSON, Andrew: manuscript letter: Dalgarven, Ayrshire, March 15, 1843 to James Robertson, Union Grove.  
9) ROBERTSON, Mary: 15 manuscript letters: all written from Millhill, Ayrshire, to Union Grove, Illinois: April 28, 1847 to James Robertson; March 20, 1848; June 21, 1848; Nov. 15, 1848; May 15, 1849; Aug. 8, 1849; Nov. 21, 1849; March 6, 1850 all to Robert Robertson; July 16, 1850 to John Boyd; Oct. 8, 1851 to Robert Robertson; June 23, 1852; Aug. 25, 1852; Nov. 17, 1852; Jan. 12, 1853; Jan. 18, 1853 all to John Boyd.
The Robertson Papers form the most complete series of letters in the present collection. They are especially useful for the Scottish background to emigration. Most of the letters are from Scotland to Illinois and they are written by people contemplating emigration in various stages of seriousness. Several of the letter-writers did eventually join their relatives in Illinois. All of the letters are from the collection of the Presbyterian Historical Society, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

49. ROBERTSON, James: manuscript letter: Easton County of Washington, Still Water Village [?] possibly Stillwater in Saratoga County, New York, Jan. 17, 1850 to Patrick Kirkaldy [probably in Strathmore, Scotland]. A long, detailed letter describing an eminently prosperous farm on the banks of the Hudson with lengthy information about prices, wages, availability of land, etc. with descriptions of the farm houses, offices and projected brewery. Friends in Scotland appear to range from the Laird of Drumkilbo to Peter Reid the Blacksmith at Balharry and those with money are urged to follow. Register House, Edinburgh.

50. RONALDSON, John: typescript copies of 9 letters: all addressed to his wife, Elizabeth, Mallory Mills by Balerno, Edinburghshire [Midlothian]: Greenock, May 21, 1852; Schagchticoke Point [?], Renssellaer [Rensselaer] County, New York, Oct. 13, 1852; April 10, 1853; Oct. 26 [no year; probably 1853, but possibly 1852]; Dec. 4, 1853; East Braintree [Norfolk County], Massachusetts, Feb. 5, 1854; undated [probably May, 1854]; June 12, 1854; Liverpool, The Stream, Aug. 10, 1854.

A unique set of letters tracing Ronaldson's history from shipboard at Greenock to New York and Massachusetts where he unsuccessfully plied his trade (flax heckler) and, finally, back to Liverpool on his way home to Edinburgh—the whole cycle of emigration, disappointment and re-emigration. There are interesting descriptions of economic conditions (not always accurate) and of his efforts to move around the country in search of work. Personal problems with his recent bride help reveal character. There are also some paychecks issued to John Ronaldson in 1854 by the Braintree Spinning Co. for flax dressed; all in the possession of Miss Elizabeth Macdaid, 99 St. Andrew Street, Kilmarnock.

51. ROSE, Charles: manuscript letter: Scotch Settlement, near Wellsville, Columbiana County, Ohio, Oct. 12, 1822 to John Rose, Balvraid [?] Culloden, care of William Watson, Castle Street, Inverness. A long and fascinating description of farming life in early Ohio, with details and opinions about emigration and the favourable prospects there. The Library, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus 10, Ohio.
52. ROSE, Hugh: manuscript letter: Scotch Settlement, near Wellsville, Columbiana County, Ohio, Feb. 2, 1830 to John Rose, Kirktown of Aird, Inverness. A similar letter to the one written by his kinsman, Charles, but longer, more analytical and slightly less favourable. Although he had apparently been in Ohio for a short while, Hugh Rose had made considerable efforts to obtain relevant information to send home to others who were presumably waiting for his verdict. There are long descriptions of religious worship, ploughing, fencing, climate, cost of land and equipment and a relatively weak appraisal of the political situation. A valuable letter and a typical example of the classical "emigrant letter". The Library, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus 10, Ohio.

53. RUTHERFORD, Jean and John: 5 manuscript letters: all of the letters were written from Verona [Dane County], Wisconsin; Dec. 1, 1848 to his brother, Thomas [Mill o' Cart Farm, Johnstone, Renfrewshire]; March 17 [no year given, but must have been prior to March 21, 1859], to "brother and sister"; March 21, 1859 to James Allison; July 17 [no year given—sometime during the Civil War] to Andrew Kesson, Barrhead new House ?, by Glasgow; Aug. 1 [no year given, but probably post-Civil War] to Thomas Rutherford, Mill o' Cart Farm, Johnstone, Renfrewshire. Letters from a Scottish rural emigrant who "made good" in his adopted country—an example of how success could be attained by being canny and keeping one's nose to the grindstone. The first letter is the most valuable; it was written soon after his arrival in Wisconsin and describes the crossing and the trip from New York to Wisconsin in some detail as well as sketching in the first steps of establishing a farm on his uncleared plot of land. In the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth Rutherford, Albany Cottage, Lochwinnoch, Renfrewshire.

54. SHAW, Malcolm: typescript copy of letter: North Carolina, March 15, 1840 to Malcolm McEachern, Sealsait [?], Jura. Short, non-committal note giving family news and refusing to encourage anyone to emigrate. In the possession of Mrs. Christina McLean, 43 Inchbrae Road, Bardonald, Glasgow S.W.2.

55. SHAW, Allen: typescript copy of letter: North Carolina, March 15, 1840 to Malcolm McEachern, Jura. Highly favourable account written by Malcolm Shaw's son emphasising the freedom of America and urging all oppressed relatives in Jura to emigrate as soon as possible. In the possession of Mrs. Christina McLean, 43 Inchbrae Road, Bardonald, Glasgow S.W.2.
56. **SMILLIE, David and Allison:** typescript copy of 2 letters: Wayne, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1850 to "sister and brother" in Scotland [probably in Lochee]; and Eugene City, Lane County, Oregon Territory, Jan. 1854 to "friends" in Scotland. The first letter gives details of farm-life in Ohio, opportunities for emigrants in various trades and news of other relatives in the States. The second letter gives a somewhat romantic (though probably accurate) account of their journey over the Oregon Trail and their settlement and hospitable reception in Oregon. In the possession of Mrs. Madeline D. Leishman, 26 Buckingham Terrace, Edinburgh 4.

57. **STEWART, Jannet:** typescript copy of 2 letters: Eugene City, Lane County, Oregon, May 7, 1861 and December 27, 1861 to "sister" in Scotland [probably in Lochee]. The Stewarts were relatives of the Smillies. The first letter describes, more briefly, the Oregon Trail and tells of the land grants in Oregon, the climate and the remoteness of their situation. There is also some mention of their reasons for pushing farther west from Ohio. In the possession of Mrs. Madeline D. Leishman, 26 Buckingham Terrace, Edinburgh 4.

58. **STEWART, John:** typescript copy of 2 diaries: Greenock, Scotland to Columbia [Tuolumne County], California, April-July 1855; and San Francisco, California to Perth, Scotland, March-April 1863. Description of sea voyages; random entries mostly concerned with the weather. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

59. **STIRLING, William Tannahill:** typescript copy of letter: New Jersey, U.S.A. [no date given, but probably late 1850] to his father, Robert Stirling, Weaver, Waterside near Kirkintilloch. Brief description of the passage over and requests for information about friends and wife in Scotland (he appears to have left precipitately). In the possession of William T. Stirling, Esq., 7 Strathmore Avenue, Helston, Paisley, Renfrewshire who also supplied much valuable information from family papers and recollections.

60. **THOMSON, Alexander, Jr.:** 3 manuscript letters: all dated Charleston, South Carolina and addressed to William Hutchison, Merchant, Augusta, Georgia: April 1, 1823; April 9, 1823; and May 6, 1823. The letters are from one Scottish emigrant to another and describe a trip to Scotland. Thomson appears to have been of upper middle class background and the letters, though containing little of moment, are interesting because they are written in a deliberately affected Scottish dialect, ostensibly for amusement, but perhaps from homesickness. Alabama Department of History and Archives, Montgomery, Alabama 36104.
61. THOMSON, John and Mary: manuscript letter: Wingville, Wisconsin, Jan. 24, 1850 to David Thomson, Dunshalt [Dunshelt] by Auchtermuchty, Fife. A moderately informative letter about farming conditions written to a brother who was considering emigration. Much of the letter, unfortunately, is concerned with patching up a family dispute. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.


63. WHITE (or WHYTE), David: 2 manuscript letters: New York City, Nov. 9, 1854 to his mother [Bridgend, Perthshire]; and Watertown [Dodge and Jefferson Counties], Wisconsin, Feb. 15, 1855 to his brother in Scotland. The first letter contains a description of the passage over (a stormy one) and plans for moving farther west where opportunities are greater. The second letter is very long (5 pages written across and up and down) and contains another description of the passage over; details of the trip to Milwaukee; prices, wages, etc.; lengthy discussion about the workings of the Congregational Church of Watertown. A thoughtful, analytical and very interesting letter. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

64. WILLIAMS (John W. and William A.) Papers: 17 manuscript letters:
   1) MARSHALL, "Isbell": 10 manuscript letters: all addressed to her son, John Williams, Merchant, Wilmington, North Carolina: Glasgow, Feb. 21, 1818; Oct. 13, 1818; Linlithgow, June 27, 1819; Sept. 30, 1820; Oct. 27, 1820; May 28, 1821; June 21, 1822; Jan. 28, 1823; Feb. 21, 1825; and Milton, July 23, 1827. The letters from Isabel Marshall are mostly filled with vague accounts of misfortune and pleas for financial support from her son, but also contain information about conditions in Scotland. They occasionally reflect the information she received from her son in North Carolina.
   2) WILLIAMS, John: 3 manuscript letters: all are from Wilmington, North Carolina: 11 May, 1825 to Isabell Marshall, Linlithgow; Oct. 4, 1827 to "brother" in England; and "about 1840" to "sister". The letters from John Williams rival those of James Matheson in their vitriolic attack on all things American. Like Matheson, Williams was a staunch Tory and had nothing but praise for the "young queen".
3) WILLIAMS, William A.: manuscript letter: Wilmington, North Carolina [no date given, but possibly Oct. 2, 1827] to "uncle" in England. This letter from John Williams' son gives a far more favourable account of America. Coming from the son of John Williams, it is an eloquent testimonial to the effectiveness of the "melting pot".

4) WILLIAMSON, C[harlotte?] J.: 3 manuscript letters: 19 Castle Street, Dover, Feb. 24, 1840 to her nephew [William A. Williams?], Wilmington, North Carolina; 7 Burgate Street, Canterbury, Sept. 14, 1843 to her brother [John Williams?] Wilmington, North Carolina; and 4 Bridge Street, Canterbury, Feb. 2, 1846 to her brother with a note from her daughter, Isabella Charlotte Martha Williamson. Mostly family news with little relevance to the present study.

The Williams Papers are in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
EMIGRANT LETTERS FROM THE SCOTSMAN:

1818
March 7: "Extract of a letter from a young man in Philadelphia to his Parents in Kilmarnock."
June 13: "Extract of a letter, dated Delhi, County of Delaware, State of New York, by the ship Fanny, from a person who left Greenock about fourteen years ago."
June 20: "Copy of a letter received from Morris Birkbeck, dated Princetown, Indiana, Jan. 7."

1819
July 3: "Extracts from a letter of an honest and industrious Smith, who lately emigrated from the Upper Ward of Clydesdale, dated at Louisville."
Aug. 7: "Extract of a letter from a Mason who lately emigrated from Ayrshire, addressed to his relations in Glaston, dated Cambridge, Edgefield County, South Carolina, (180 miles from the coast)."
Sept. 25: from Washington City written by a native of Greenock, now a Congressman in the United States.
Nov. 6: "Extract of a letter from an Emigrant to his friend in Calton, Glasgow, dated Penn's Neck, Salem County, State of West Jersey."

1820
April 15: "Extract from a letter from an Emigrant, dated: Newbury, Nov. 13."
May 27: "Extract from a letter of 15th February 1820, from a Merchant in New Orleans to a friend in Scotland."
Sept. 23: Extract from a letter from a "gentleman of character" then at Jeffersonville, Indiana.

1821
Sept. 15: Letter from "G.E." dated Silver Lake, Susquehanna.

1822
May 4: Extract from "two letters from Scots emigrants in Indiana", dated "the Scots Settlement in Switzerland, County Indiana, South America sic ".

1823
March 19: Letter from "an intelligent gentleman who has recently settled in America", dated "Holmesburg, 10 miles from Philadelphia".
March 25: "Extract of a letter from the United States, dated Troy, (170 miles North of New York)."
July 9: "Extracts from a letter, dated Wayne Township, Ohio."
Sept. 10: "Extracts from a letter from a Scots emigrant, dated Troy."
April 7: "Extracts from a letter addressed by a Scots emigrant, in the northern part of the State of New York, to a gentleman in Edinburgh", dated "Repose".

April 14: "Extract of a letter from the Scots settlement in Indiana (about 50 miles west of Cincinnati)"

Jan. 5: "Extracts of a letter from a Scotch Emigrant residing in the State of New York...to his friend in Edinburgh."

March 8: "Extract of a letter from a Gentleman in the western part of the State of New York, to his friend in Edinburgh, dated Wayne County, New York State."

May 20: Extract of two letters from Philadelphia.

Oct. 28: "Extract from a letter written on the 7th Sept., 1826, by a British settler in Pennsylvania, to a gentleman who, a few years ago, had travelled in America."


April 4: Extract of a letter written by Mr. Dale Owen, dated at New Harmony.

July 23: Letter from Mr. James Buchanan, New York.

April 18: From a gentleman lately arrived in New York to a friend near Edinburgh.

July 1: "from a British Gentleman, dated New York, May 20, 1829, and just received by a Gentleman in town."

July 28: From a Gentleman at New York.

Aug. 29: From "a gentleman in Philadelphia, for whose respectability and means of information we can vouch, from personal knowledge."

Feb. 5: Letter which the editor of The Scotsman found in an American paper written by "a well-known and much esteemed townsman of our own, now in the United States".

June 25: A letter received in Edinburgh from a friend in Baltimore.

July 21: From "a young friend of ours who left this country in April".

Sept. 1: From an emigrant to New York to a friend of his in Edinburgh.

Aug. 7: Written by a gentleman who lately emigrated from Edinburgh, dated Philadelphia.
Sept. 18: From a Gentleman at New York to a friend in Edinburgh.

Oct. 5: "From a Scottish gentleman now travelling in the Western Wilderness, beyond the Missouri, in parts never visited in recent times, by Englishmen", dated "Cantonment, Havensworth, on the Missouri."

1834

April 16: From John Prentice "to the Working Classes of the City of Edinburgh", dated Louisville, Kentucky.

June 14: Letter received by a gentleman in Leith from Grape Island, Tyler County, Virginia.

1835

March 8: Extract from a letter dated New York.

July 8: Extract of a letter from New York.

July 11: From a gentleman lately resident in Edinburgh, dated New York.

1837

Oct. 11: From the correspondent of the Morning Chronicle.

1839


Aug. 10: From an English gentleman to a friend in Edinburgh, dated New York.

1848

Feb. 12: "From a person who left this country in 1840 to a friend in Edinburgh", dated Waterville, Wakiesha County, Wisconsin, North America.

1849

Nov. 14: "From a young man belonging to Edinburgh to his relations here", dated Gold Diggings, California, signed "J.A."

1852

Sept. 29: "Letter received by Mr. George Combe from a boy who was a pupil at Mr. Williams's 'Secular School', and who emigrated, with his relations, to Illinois in 1850", dated (Town of) Virginia, Cass County.

1859

July 27: Letter published in the Glasgow Herald from a gentleman on his passage to New York, to a friend in Glasgow.

1860

Sept. 5: Letter from New York signed "E.J."
Bibliography, Part II:

Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books.

——Love's Labour Lost, Act i, Sc.1
I decided at an early stage of my thesis that it would be impractical to make a full bibliography of all the works I consulted during my research. Because the field was so wide—covering both Britain and the United States—and embraced so many different aspects of history—social, economic, cultural, political, etc.—I have of necessity referred to a great many books which were of only peripheral value to the central question of emigrant motivation. In the end I decided to weed out the books which were not consulted more than once or twice. The result is less impressive but more representative and, I hope, more useful to students of emigration and emigration correspondence.

I. Printed Primary Sources

Abbott, Edith, Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem, Chicago, 1926; and Immigration, Select Documents and Case Records, Chicago, 1924. These are invaluable source books and furnish an excellent introduction to the printed primary sources available for the study of American immigration.

Alison, Sir Archibald, Some Account of my Life and Writings, Edinburgh, 2 vols., 1883. The author was Sheriff of Lanarkshire for a great deal of the middle part of the century and wrote, among other things, a massive Victorian History of the World. He presents the conservative viewpoint of the labour unrest in a colourful, forceful style and is not shy about mentioning his own role.

Barron, James, The Northern Highlands in the Nineteenth Century, Inverness, 1903. History of the Highlands told through clippings from the Inverness Courier.


Boswell, James, Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., London, 2 vols., 1908. The Tour was in the 1770s but it is a colourful and literary introduction to the Highland background. Should be supplemented with Johnson's own Tour and Pennant.

Brown, Robert, Strictures and Remarks on the Earl of Selkirk's Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1805. Brown was the Sheriff-Substitute of the Western District of Inverness-shire, living in the area he wrote about. Although he thought that the Highlands needed more population, many of his points are acute and his version should be read to counter-balance Selkirk.

Bruce, James, Destitution in the Highlands, Edinburgh, 1847. Biased letters reprinted from The Scotsman justifying the Clearances and vilifying the Highlanders.

Buckingham, J.S., America, Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive, New York, 3 vols., 1841. Buckingham was a lecturer and reformer who had, in his day, been everything from the captain of a West Indiaman to an M.P. His work is exhaustive, encyclopaedic, well-informed, fact-heavy and dull, but valuable. He was sympathetic, especially to the American attempts at reform.

Burton, Wm., The Emigrants' Manual, Edinburgh, 1851. Typical of the better "guides", covering in this case Australia, New Zealand and Canada as well as the United States. With an intelligent analysis of opportunities for artisans, comparisons with the colonies and an explanation of the American Government.


Chambers, William, Things as They Are in America, Edinburgh, 1854. More of a cursory journal than an emigrant guide, this book was written by the foremost publisher of emigrant literature in Scotland. It is middle class, subjective and contains less facts than most books of its kind, but his opinions are worth noting.


Combe, George, American Notes, Edinburgh, 1894. This is an abridgement of his Notes on the United States of North America during a Phrenological Visit in 1835-40, Philadelphia, 3 vols., 1841. A sympathetic and personal report of a lecture tour by an Edinburgh lawyer, educationalist and phrenologist who was highly respected in the United States.


Counsel for Emigrants with Original Letters from Canada and the United States, Aberdeen, 1835. A very interesting book containing excerpts from other emigrant guides, articles and gazetteers and a representative collection of emigrant letters.

Crevecoeur, J. Hector St. John de, Letters from an American Farmer, New York, 1957. Well-written, literary essays from a slightly earlier period but still relevant. One of the most perceptive books written about the early period of American history.
Dawson, J.H., An Abridged Statistical History of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1853. Modelled on Sinclair's Analysis and based on the New Statistical Account, this is a survey of Scotland by county in the 1830s and '40s. Less successful than Sinclair's work and lacking the flavour of the NSA, it is still useful for those who do not have time to read through the 15 volumes.

DeToqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America, Mentor Book, New York, 1956 (an abridgment). Probably the most perceptive and incisive book ever written about America and its people by a young French aristocrat who experienced the early years of Jacksonian Democracy. Although basically unsympathetic to democracy and the "tyranny of the majority", he was scrupulously objective.

Dickens, Charles, American Notes, London, 1957. A critical, personal and literary record of his lecture tour in the United States. His criticism was resented by the Americans who had given him a warm welcome.

Flint, James, Letters from America, Edinburgh, 1822. A sympathetic interpretation of American character and institutions by an intelligent and sensitive Scottish journalist who did a great deal of travelling (much of it on foot) and mingled with the common people (unlike Combe, Dickens, Chambers, etc.). Also contains analysis of emigration and accounts of Scottish emigrants met in the United States and excerpts from letters.

Fyfe, J.C., Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1745-1843, Glasgow, 1942. An introduction to memoirs of the period.

Hall, Capt. Basil, Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828, Edinburgh, 1829. Critical and forthright account by a retired naval captain who enjoyed putting the Yankees in their places and prided himself on speaking his mind whether or not it was diplomatically advisable. A useful contrast to Combe and Chambers who rarely argued with the Americans and avoided touchy subjects.


Larkin[7], Sketch of a Tour in the Highlands of Scotland; through Perthshire, Argyleshire, and Inverness-shire, in September and October, 1818: with some Account of the Caledonian Canal, London, 1819. Scholarly and limited mainly to description but also contains some interesting snippets of local history and legend; readable.

Lewis, Rev. George, Impressions of America and the American Churches, Edinburgh, 1845. Largely favourable impressions written by a member of the Free Church Delegation who visited the United States in 1844.

Loch, James, An Account of the Improvements on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford, 1820. The title tells the story; this is a defence of the "improvements" in Scotland written by the man who was largely responsible for their implementation.

Mann, Horace, Report of an Educational Tour (1843), London, 1846. An interesting, well-written comparison of some European school-systems (including the Scottish one) with that of the United States by one of the foremost American educationalists.

Mompenny, David, *Remarks on the Poor Laws*, Edinburgh, 1834. Presents and defends the Scottish Poor Laws as they were prior to the Act of 1845.

Muir John, *The Story of my Boyhood and Youth*, New York, 1912. A very personal autobiography of a Scottish emigrant who became a world-famous naturalist; it includes an account of boyhood schooldays in Dunbar and youth on the Illinois prairies when the land was new and the farmers worked from before dawn until after dark (and he used to get up several hours early in order to have time to read!).

Mackay, Alexander, *The Western World, or Travels in the United States 1846-1847...including a chapter on California*, London, 3 vols., 1850. A fascinating, informative, humorous, personal and sensitive picture of America in the middle of the century by a Scottish lawyer and journalist. It should be a classic in its field; the author is one of the few Victorian writers who today seems warmly human.

Mackenzie, Alexander, *The History of the Highland Clearances*, Inverness, 1883 and Stirling, 1914. The Clearances from the evictees' point of the history with personal narratives including Donald Macleod's celebrated *Gloomy Memoirs*. Charged with emotion and bias, but necessary reading for anyone who would understand this period in the Highlands.


Pennant, Thomas, *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides (1772)*, London, 1776. An important early view of the Highlands and Islands containing not only unique information but much literary merit as well.


Scrope, G.P., ed., *Extracts of Letters from Poor Persons Who Emigrated Last Year to Canada and the United States*, London, 1851. The book was designed to promote emigration and all of the letters in it are favourable.


Shirreff, Patrick, *A Tour through North America*, Edinburgh, 1835. Ponderous, but well-written, account of a tour by a prominent East Lothian farmer and "improver" directed primarily to agricultural emigrants. It was one of the best "guides" for emigrant farmers published in the first half of the century and probably widely-read in Scotland.
He was impressed with the potential of the country and with the opportunities for emigrants but unimpressed by American farmers and farming methods. An interesting and readable book.

Sinclair, Sir John, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1826. An excellent distillation of the Old Statistical Account by a man who made Scottish agriculture and its statistics his "field". An invaluable source for the early years of this period though it must be remembered that it contains much opinion and prejudice as well as fact.

General Report of the Agricultural State and Political Circumstances of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1814. A summary of the Agricultural Reports carried out by the Board of Agriculture under Sir John between 1793 and 1816.


Stewart, David, of Garth, Sketches of the Character, Manners and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland, 1822. Somewhat biased presentation of the Highlands as the "cradle of soldiers" of Britain, but a good indication of what some important people felt at the time.


Wall, Hugh, The Published Writings of Thomas Chalmers, Edinburgh, 1943.

Wright, Frances, Views of Society and Manners in America, (Paul R. Baker, ed.), Cambridge, Mass., 1959. First published in 1821, this is an important collection of letters written by a well-educated and highly literate young Scotswoman who became an ardent reformer in several fields (including Negro emancipation and women's suffrage) and a leading voice among Radical Americans in later years. The letters have been "revised" for publication and can not really be considered as "emigrant letters", but as essays they are good source material.

II. Newspapers & Magazines

Chambers' Edinburgh Journal. During the '30s there were articles on emigration, excerpts from emigrant manuals and passages from gazetteers in almost every issue, as, for example, the "Description of Western States" articles Dec. 7, 1833 and Feb. 15, 1834.

The Scottish Chartist Circular, Sept. 28—Dec. 31, 1839; 1840; Jan. 1—Sept. 25, 1841. A fascinating newspaper; there is little actual encouragement of emigration, but the United States is highly praised as a working man's paradise.


The Greenock Advertiser, 1815-1817. Relatively unfruitful for emigration material.

The Scotsman, 1817-1861. There is a good deal of emigration material in The Scotsman, especially in the early years when lead articles and editorials on the subject were not uncommon (e.g. May 20, 1820). Most of the
emigrant letters also appeared in the early years and dwindled to a mere trickle by the 1850s in spite of the prodigious rise in emigration. The reviews of emigrant manuals are often significant for the reviewer's reactions. See also List of Emigrant Letters.

III. The United States Agricultural Census, Wisconsin, 1850 and 1860.

IV. Parliamentary Papers

Many of the Parliamentary Reports were consulted briefly, but the following were particularly helpful:

For the study of the Highlands, Sir John M' Neill's Report on the State of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland (PP, 1851, XXVI) was invaluable not only for his own astute comments and conclusions, but also for the interviews with people from all walks of life; the Periodic Reports of the Central Board for the Relief of Destitution in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland 1848-1852 were also occasionally useful.

For the general study of the Scottish background in the first half of the nineteenth century, the population and enumeration abstracts often contain more than the basic statistics; particularly helpful is the Population (Enumeration Abstract) Scotland (PP, 1845, XXII) which contains populations by county for 1811, 1821, 1831 and 1841 with percentages of increase or decrease. These figures coincide happily with the New Statistical Account and are useful for comparisons. This volume also has an "Abstract shewing the Country of Birth of the Persons enumerated in..."the different counties and sporadic notes about the numbers emigrating from specific counties and parishes. Although these reports are too haphazard (and probably inaccurate) to be used statistically, they are indicative of broad movements and motivations.

For the study of emigration there are the First, Second and Third Reports from the Select Committees on Emigration from the United Kingdom in PP, 1826-27, V; and the Thirty-Third General Report of the Emigration Commissioners (PP, 1873, XVIII, App. I) contains a brief, but useful, summary of the reports up to that time. A few emigrant letters from "Irish Emigrants and Others" (mostly Irish probably although they are largely unidentified) in Canada and New England are in Appendix X of PP, 1849, XI.

For the emigrant trade and conditions on board the vessels the Reports from the Select Committee Inquiring into the Operation of the Passenger Acts (PP, 1851, XIX) is fascinating and revealing and there is also Vere Foster's eye-witness account of a voyage in steerage on the Washington in Treatment of Passengers on Board the Washington (PP, 1851, XL).

For comparisons of labour conditions and opportunities in Britain and America the General Report of the British Commissioners on the New York Industrial Exhibition of 1853
(PP, 1854, XXXVI) furnishes an interesting supplement to Habakkuk's work.

For the chapter on Education, the Abstract of Education Returns (Scotland) (PP, 1837, XLVII) has revealing statistics and comments from the individual parishes; and for the chapter on Religion the Report from the Select Committee on Annuity Tax (Edinburgh) (PP, 1851, VII) gives an insight into some of the grievances of Dissenters and the Religious Worship and Education (Scotland) report (PP, 1854, LIX) gives statistics of the different denominations in Scotland.

V. The New Statistical Account

Every student of early nineteenth-century Scottish history should have to read the New Statistical Account from cover to cover—all 15 volumes. There is surely no better way to get a "feel" for the period than to read these reports from the parish ministers. However, having spent the better part of a year wading through them, I am forced to concede that they are not a fruitful source for a statistical or "scholarly" study of emigration. That is not to say that many of the entries are not very useful, for they most certainly are (many of the ministers were able scholars and sometimes local "experts" were asked to write particular sections of the report), but the quality and quantity varies so much from parish to parish that valid comparisons are extremely difficult. The subject of emigration, in particular, was one that received erratic treatment. Some of the ministers were obviously worried about the numbers leaving their parish and sought an explanation; others, less conscientious perhaps, glossed over the problem: emigration was an indication that all was not well at home and many of the ministers were anxious to present their parish in the most favourable light possible.

The following parishes contain references to emigration and the starred parishes have extended comments:

Haddingtonshire: Yester; Berwickshire: Eccles, Westruther, Whitsome and Hilton, Ladykirk, Polworth, Foulden*; Roxburghshire: Lilliesleaf, Melrose, Maxton, Linton*, Hounam, Hobkirk, Bedrule, Kelso; Peeblesshire: Kirkurd; Selkirkshire: Yarrow; Dumfriesshire: Kirkmaboe, Moffat, Applegarth and Sibbaldie, Cummertrees, Kirkpatrick-Fleming, Eskdalemuir, Hutton and Corrie*; Kirkcudbrightshire: Girthon; Wigtownshire: Whithorn*; Penninghame; Ayrshire: Dailly, Barr; Buteshire: Kilbride, Kilmore; Lanarkshire: Libberton and Quothquan, Crawfordjohn, Wandell and Lamington; Renfrewshire: Lochwinnoch, Kilbarchan*; Argyll: Ardnamurchan, Norvern*, Tiree and Coll*, Lismore and Appin, Killean and Kilchennie, Gigha and Cara, Kiloaig and Kilberry, Saddell and Skipness, Kilmartin, North Knapdale, Glassary; Stirlingshire: Airth, Balfron; Fife: Auchterderran, Kirkcaldy; Perthshire: Moneydie, Auchtergave, Kenmore*, Portingal*, Blair-Atholl, Comrie, Weem, Dull, Kinnoul, Port of Mentieth, Coupar-Angus, Aberfoyle,

VI. Secondary Sources


Bercher, E.A. and James A. Williamson, Migration Within the Empire, London, 1924. General and arbitrary; sources frequently not documented. Little use for the study of emigration from Scotland to the United States.

Berthoff, rowland Tappan, British Immigrants in Industrial America 1790-1950, Cambridge, Mass., 1955. The standard work in its field and an excellent coverage of a very wide period and subject. It is strongest on the post-Civil War years and can be misleading in a pre-1861 context if the generalisations are accepted too easily.


Black, George Fraser, Scotland's Mark on America, New York, 1921. Little more than a list of names of people who were "probably" Scottish or of Scottish descent. The Surnames of Scotland, New York, 1962. In contrast to the above, an excellent, scholarly reference work for Scottish names and their origins.


Campbell, R.H., Scotland since 1707, Oxford, 1965. The best general work on recent Scottish economic history.


Chandler, George, Liverpool Shipping, London, 1960. Only one chapter on shipping to America; mainly concerned with modern developments; not even much on Liverpool.


Cormack, A.C., Poor Relief in Scotland, Aberdeen, 1923. Unbalanced (concentrates mainly on Aberdeen); see also Saunders, Scottish Democracy, Part III, Chapter III.


Dunn, Charles W., Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia, Toronto, 1953. Concentrates on the survival of Gaelic in Canada but also contains useful material on emigration translated from the original.

Ellis, David M., James A. Frost, et al., A Short History of New York State, Ithaca, 1957. The standard work, but the maps, statistics and index are remarkably thin.


Gaskell, Philip, Morvern Transformed, Cambridge, 1968. An excellent study of the social and economic evolution in one Highland parish during the nineteenth century. Objective and scholarly with a useful introduction to Highland problems in the first chapter.


Greene, Evarts B., Religion and the State; The Making and Testing of an American Tradition, New York, 1941. Reveals that there was more religious "establishment" in the pre-Civil War United States than is commonly admitted in the schools.

Grimble, Ian, The Trial of Patrick Sellar, London, 1962. Readable but biased account of the trial of one of the most notorious factors involved in the Sutherland Clearances. The emotion of the early and mid-nineteenth century obviously still smoulders.


Guillet, Edwin C., The Great Migration: The Atlantic Crossing by Sailing Ship Since 1770, Toronto, 1963. A social history composed largely of excerpts from printed diaries, journals, emigrant manuals, newspapers and memoirs skilfully woven together. It is especially good for ship-board life, but for the conditions in Liverpool and the Passenger Acts needs to be supplemented by the more solidly-grounded MacDonagh.

Habakkuk, H.J., American and British Technology in the Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, 1967. Although too dry for enjoyable reading, this is an excellent, scholarly, copiously documented study of the relative states of the two technologies. There is, unfortunately, no bibliography.


Handlin, Oscar, Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1860, Cambridge, Mass., 1941. Primarily concerned with Irish immigrants (there were 35,287 Irish-born in Boston in 1850 compared with 397 Scots) but contains a good annotated bibliography. One of the pioneer blendings of historical and sociological methods.


Hansen, Marcus Lee, The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1850, New York (Harper Torchbooks), 1961. An excellent introduction to emigration by the "father of modern historical scholarship in migration" (Thistlethwaite); especially strong on motives for leaving Europe.

The Immigrant in American History, New York, (Harper Torchbooks), 1964. A well-written and humane introduction to the study of American immigration; however, some of his theories, notably about the role of the immigrant in frontier settlement, have been outdated.
The Mingling of the Canadian and American People, New Haven, 1946. A work which has yet to be displaced in this largely-ignored field.

Harvey, Daniel C., The Argyle Settlement in History and Story, Rockford, Illinois, 1924. An amateurish but praiseworthy attempt to rescue the reminiscences of "old-timers" from obscurity and to record the settlement of Argyle, Illinois, by emigrants from Kintyre.


Hulbert, Archer Butler, Soil. Its Influence on the History of the United States. With Special Reference to Migration and the Scientific Study of Local History, New Haven, 1930. Not as useful as the title implies. Scots are generally lumped together with Scotch-Irish and Irish and classified as "Celtic". Too general to be of much use.

Johnston, Stanley C., A History of Emigration from the United Kingdom to North America, 1763-1912, London, 1913. An important early work which is still useful for statistics and for its comprehensive bibliography of early works on emigration from Britain. It is hard to read, however, and makes few attempts to delve deeper than the official records.

Johnston, Thomas, A History of the Working Classes in Scotland, Glasgow, 1940. A compelling, imaginative, mind-boggling and slightly partisan picture of living conditions among the lower classes. Not much information on emigration as such, but good for the background.

Jones, Howard Mumford, O Strange New World; American Culture: The Formative Years, New York, 1964. From the first news of discovery to the 1840s, this book traces the development of a distinctive American culture. It is fascinating, well-written, literary, humourous, imaginative, exciting and immensely readable as well as scholarly and well-documented.


Kerr, John, Scottish Education School and University from Early Times to 1900, Cambridge, 1913.


Lebergott, Stanley, Manpower in Economic Growth, New York, 1964. Apart from being an excellent, scholarly and meticulously documented study of employment, wages and economic opportunities in the United States from 1800 to the present, this witty and urbane book is the most readable economics textbook I have ever seen. Attention is given to immigration and its effects on the economic situation and many contemporaries are quoted.


Mitchell, Wesley C., Business Cycles: The Problem and Its Setting, New York, 1927. There is no information about emigration as such, but the chapter on international relationships of business cycles is relevant.


Macdonald, D.P., Scotland's Shifting Population 1770-1850, Glasgow, 1957. Useful for the Scottish background to emigration and the general increasing mobility of the Scottish population in the early nineteenth century; little on actual emigration.


Nevins, Allan and Henry Steele Commager, America, The Story of a Free People, Boston, 1943.


Pelling, Henry, America and the British Left, from Bright to Bevan, London, 1956. Mostly concerned with a later period, but nevertheless offers many interesting comparisons.

Perloff, H.S., Edgar S. Dunn, Jr., et al., Regions, Resources, and Economic Growth, Baltimore, 1960. Mostly post-1870, but some of the background and introductory economics are relevant.


Posey, Walter Brownlow, The Presbyterian Church in the Old Southwest 1778-1838, Richmond, 1952. Good as far as it goes, but tends to be rather limited.

Prebble, John, The Highland Clearances, London, 1963. Well-written but emotional re-hashing of Mackenzie primarily for the lay-historian. As a source book it is inadequate, for the sources are rarely given, but it is a compelling excursion into the past.


Ross, Peter, The Scot in America, New York, 1896. Chauvinistic to the point of being useless for serious study, but often amusing.
Saunders, L.J., Scottish Democracy, 1815-1840. The Social and Intellectual Background, Edinburgh, 1950. A masterful, wide-ranging work invaluable for any aspect of early nineteenth-century Scottish history with a helpful and stimulating bibliography. Although it has been partly replaced by Smout's Scottish People, it remains unequalled in several fields, especially Scottish education and culture.


Scotland, James, The History of Scottish Education, London, 2 vols., 1969. Wide, carefully organised coverage, but relies heavily (for the early nineteenth century) on the NSA and secondary sources and is not as fully documented as might be desired. Should be supplemented by Saunders and some of the local histories.


Shepperson, Wilbur S., British Emigration to North America, Oxford, 1957. A loose account concentrating primarily on English emigration schemes and organised emigration. The Promotion of British Emigration by Agents for American Lands 1840-1867, Reno, Nevada, 1954. An earlier, more specific version of the above, again concentrating on English emigration. The main conclusions are that there was little actual sale of lands by states or land agencies prior to the Civil War, although there was a great deal of advertisement.


Smout, T.C., A History of the Scottish People 1560-1850, London, 1969. An excellent social history of Scotland which should be read with, rather than instead of, Saunders. Well-documented and with a very useful annotated bibliography. Its main drawback is that, like Saunders, it has a very meagre index.


Thomas, Brinley, Migration and Economic Growth, Cambridge, 1954. An excellent, though occasionally over-technical, account of the development of the Atlantic economy with due attention to emigration and business cycles.
Thomas, W.I. and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, New York, 1958. An exhaustive analysis of hundreds of letters written by Polish immigrants in the United States during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries; the information is used to assess their social and economic adjustment. A model for the statistical, "scientific" use of emigrant letters.


VII. Articles


Galley, R.A., "Mobility of Tenants on a Highland Estate in the Early Nineteenth Century", *Scottish Historical
Review, XL, pp. 136-45. A pioneering study showing that there was more mobility than had been supposed.

Galt, John, "A Letter on Emigration" and "Letter on Emigration, Number Two", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol. 15, 1824 and vol. 20, 1826 respectively. A promotion of the Canada Company under the nom de plume of "Bandana".


Shepperson, George A., "The Free Church and American Slavery", Scottish Historical Review, XXX, Oct. 1951 and "Thomas Chalmers, the Free Church of Scotland, and the South", Journal of Southern History, vol. 17. These articles trace the background and developments of the "Send Back the Money" campaign of the 1840s and the interactions between the Scottish and American abolition movements (see also under "Theses" C. Duncan Rice). They offer many leads for further study.


VIII. Pamphlets


Lewis, Rev. George, Scotland a Half-Educated Nation, Both in the Quantity and Quality of her Educational Institutions, Glasgow, 1834. An important source.


Moral Statistics of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland Compiled from Returns Received by the Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands, Inverness, 1826. An important source for the study of Scottish education.


Russell, Archibald, Account of the Eleven Thousand Schools in the State of New York, Edinburgh, 1847. The author was a native of Edinburgh.

IX. Unpublished Theses


Grant, Alastair Cameron, "George Combe and His Circle, with Particular Reference to his Relations with the United States of America", Ph.D., Edinburgh, 1960.


X. Novels and Poetry

Bené, Stephen Vincent, Western Star, Oxford, 1944. The colonisation of America in poetry.


Clark, Badger, Sun and Saddle Leather, Boston, 1942.

Galt, John, Lawrie Todd, or the Settlers in the Woods, London, 1832. The saga of an emigrant from east Lothian. Melodramatic but based on true incidents and written by a man who was deeply involved in emigration from Scotland.


Ord, John, The Bothy Songs and Ballads, Paisley, 1930.

Thomson, George, The Select Melodies of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1822.
Transportation and Settlement in the Eastern Canadian-American Region, 1815-1860
1. Niagara Falls, Niagara County
2. Saratoga County
3. Rensselaer County
4. Albany County
5. Newburgh, Orange County
6. New York City
7. Brooklyn, Long Island
8. Rochester, Monroe County
9. Buffalo, Erie County
1. Lake County
2. Chicago
3. Whiteside County
4. Peoria, Peoria, County
5. Logan County
6. Cass County
7. Centralia, Marion County
8. Randolph County
9. Winnebago County
10. Boone County
11. Springfield, Sangamon County
1. LaCrosse County
2. Watertown, Dodge and Jefferson Counties
3. Jefferson County
4. Dane County (Madison)