

mium of twenty marks Scots for the first barrel of herrings caught every season in the Moray Frith. The sum was small; but as money at the time was very valuable, it proved a sufficient inducement to the fishermen and tradespeople of the place to fit out a few boats, about the beginning of autumn every year, to sweep over the various fishing-banks for the herrings; and there were few seasons in which some one crew or other did not catch enough to entitle them to the premium. At length, however, their tackle wore out; and Mr. Forsyth, in pursuance of his scheme, provided himself, at some little expense, with a complete drift of nets, which were carried to sea each season by his boatmen, and the search kept up. His exertions, however, could only merit success, without securing it. The fish returned for a few seasons in considerable bodies, and several thousand barrels were caught; but they soon deserted the Frith as entirely as before; and more than a century elapsed from their first disappearance ere they revisited their old haunts with such regularity and in such numbers as to render the trade remunerative to either the curers or the fishermen.

Unlike the herring speculation, however, the general trade of William Forsyth was eminently successful. It was of a miscellaneous character, as became the state of a country so poor and so thinly peopled, and in which, as there was scarce any division of labor, one merchant had to perform the work of many. He supplied the proprietors with teas and wines and spiceries, with broadcloths, glass, delft-ware, Flemish tiles, and pieces of japanned cabinet-work; he furnished the blacksmith with iron from Sweden, the carpenter with tar and spars from Norway, and the farmer with flaxseed from Holland. He found, too, in other countries markets for the produce of our own. The