

exports of the north of Scotland at this period were mostly malt, wool, and salmon. Almost all rents were paid in kind or in labor; the proprietors retaining in their own hands a portion of their estates, termed demesnes or mains, which was cultivated mostly by their tacksmen and feuars, as part of their proper service. Each proprietor, too, had his storehouse or girnel, — a tall, narrow building, the strong-box of the time, which at the Martinmas of every year was filled from gable to gable with the grain-rents paid to him by his tenants, and the produce of his own farm. His surplus cattle found their way south, under charge of the drovers of the period; but it proved a more difficult matter to dispose to advantage of his surplus corn, mostly barley, until some one, more skilful in speculation than the others, originated the scheme of converting it into malt, and exporting it into England and Flanders. And to so great an extent was this trade carried on about the middle of the last century, that, in the town of Inverness, the English under Cumberland, in the long-remembered year of Culloden, found almost every second building a malt-barn.

The town of Cromarty suffered much at this period, in at least the severer winters, from scarcity of fuel. The mosses of the district were just exhausted; and as our proprietors had not yet betaken themselves to planting, there were no woods, except in some of the remoter recesses of the country, where the remains of some of the ancient forests were still suffered to survive. Peats were occasionally brought to the town in boats from the opposite side of the Frith; but the supply was precarious and insufficient, and the inhabitants were content at times to purchase the heath of the neighboring hill, in patches of an hundred square yards, and at times even to use for fuel the dried dung of their cattle. "A Cromarty fire" was a