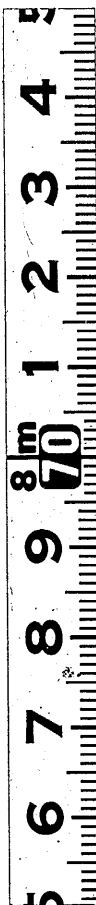


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A
RETROSPECTIVE VIEW
OF THE
SCOTS FISHERIES;
WITH
OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS,
HUMBLY SUGGESTING THE
PROBABLE MEANS OF PRESERVING
AND IMPROVING THEM.

BY
GEORGE PITCAIRN,
Captain of the City Guard of *Edinburgh*, and
late Merchant there.

*Sma' is our need to toil on foreign shores,
Whan we hae baith the Indies at our doors.*
ALLAN RAMSAY.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED IN THE YEAR M,DCC,LXXXV.

A

RETROSPECTIVE VIEW, &c.

THE early state of the Scots Fishery, can best be ascertained from the laws regarding it. By these it appears, that, owing to the frequent interference of the Legislature, the Fishery was often materially injured; laws being enacted, which tended to obstruct the natural course of that trade, and to promote only a narrow and confined monopoly.

It will answer the present purpose, to state the progress of the Fisheries, from the year 1707, the happy æra of the Union, to this day.

In the Treaty of Union, particular attention was paid to the Scots Fisheries.—By it, the same premiums or drawbacks were allowed in Scotland, upon all fish exported, as in England; and a particular specification was made, of an allowance of 10 s. 5 d. *per* barrel of White Herrings exported from Scotland, under this restriction,

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tion, That all such fish were to be cured with foreign salt only. At that time, too, Scotland enjoyed an exemption, for seven years, of all duties on Scots salt, and was afterwards to pay only a fixed proportion of the duties payable in England; a measure highly reasonable.

The allowance specified in the Union Treaty, of 10s. 5d. *per* barrel, on herrings exported from Scotland, being more, nay almost double, of what was allowed in England, an act was soon after passed, raising it to the same there.

The funds allotted for payment of these allowances on fish exported, were the duties on salt. These were called drawbacks, being considered as equal to, or in lieu of the duties paid, or secured, of the salt with which the fish were cured. It very soon appeared, that there was either an error in the establishment, or some latent malpractices existed; the duties paid or secured on the salt in Scotland, being greatly short of the debentures claimed on the fish, whereas the former should have compensated the latter. For relief of the holders of such debentures, an act was passed, about the year 1719, allowing such as were then unpaid, or that should become due, to be paid out of the Excise in Scotland.

The Fisheries were carried on, with these allowances on exportation, until about the 1721, when the continued frauds on debentures excited public attention, in so far as concerned the Revenue; and the great discredit of the British fish abroad, in consequence of these frauds, call-

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ed loudly for redress, to recover their reputation. Accordingly, an act passed, discontinuing the large allowance on fish exported, and permitting the importation of foreign salt into Britain, free of duty, for curing fish for exportation, and British salt to be taken for the same purpose, duty-free; and bounties upon exportation were then fixed, at the rate of 2s. 8d. *per* barrel of white herrings, being the same as at this day.

The great discredit of the British fish abroad, at this time, as it was a severe blow to the Fisheries of this country, occasioned a proportional increase of that trade to other nations. It was not till this period, that the Herring Fisheries in Norway were ever heard of, they being hitherto esteemed a market for our herrings, as they had till then confined themselves solely to the fishing of Cod and Ling.—It does not appear, whether the Norway Herring Fishery happened in consequence of the fish shifting to that shore, thereby inviting the Norwegians to follow out that trade, or if the disrepute of the British herrings in the Baltic markets had encouraged them to try it.

About this time, the free burghes of the Royal Burghs opened a subscription for the Herring Fishery, probably in the view of wiping off the odium which the Scots Herring Fishery had incurred abroad, thereby aiding the act for recovering the credit of the British Fisheries in foreign parts, and diverting the trade out of the course it had occupied for some years.—This undertaking, it is believed, did much public good;

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but though in so far highly commendable, yet, as it was gone into singly with that view, without any regard to the Fisheries becoming a sole object of business for individuals, the fishers, in a few years, lost most part of their small capital, and dropped the Fishery, but with the satisfaction indeed of instructing other fishers to cure and dress their herrings in a proper manner, for foreign markets, as well as for home sale.

For twenty years preceding the 1740, the Fisheries in Scotland seem to have been carried on nearly in their natural channel, as much reformation being made as could well be expected, after such malpractices. The quantities of fish exported in this period, appear from the bounties paid, being at a medium, *per annum*, 5448 l., at 2 s. 8 d. *per barrel*.

The home markets have always been supplied; to what extent, cannot be so well ascertained.—It may suffice to observe in general, that, as the people came to live better, the consumpt of salt herring was proportionally less than for forty years before.

From the best information that can be got, the prices of herrings, during the above-mentioned space, ran from 12 s. to 15 s. *per barrel*, to the merchant for exportation; and the best West-country Lewis herrings were brought to Leith, and there sold, for inland consumpt, at from 18 s. to 21 s. *per barrel*.

From the 1740 to the 1750, the Legislature did not much meddle with the Fishery; no new laws

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laws being made, regarding either it or the salt-duty, with which it has an immediate connection. During this period, there appears a very remarkable decrease in the exportation, the bounties being only, at a medium *per annum*, 3406 l., at 2 s. 8 d. *per barrel*.

There were, in this period, circumstances very unfavourable to the Fisheries.—A rebellion in the country.—Officers were hindered from doing their duty, and the offices shut.—Every merchant kept what money he had, being afraid to risk it in trade.—This convulsion, however, Providence made the means of establishing a degree of personal liberty, little known before in the remote parts of the country; property having been thereby secured, and protection granted, from the unjust and illegal exactions of the chiefs, landlords, and their factors, by an act of Parliament, made about this time, throwing the heritable jurisdictions into the hands of the Crown.

From the last-mentioned period down to the 1760, the Fisheries seem to have been successful, many salutary laws relative thereto being passed about this time, to be afterwards more particularly noticed.—The bounties on exportation, during this period, amount, at a medium *per annum*, to 7738 l., at 2 s. 8 d. *per barrel*.

A new opening in the Herring Fishery happened in this period.—In 1754, a shoal of Herrings appeared at Gottenburgh, which has ever since continued to be uniformly the case there, though a thing formerly quite unknown. This

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Swedes did not for some years avail themselves properly of this advantage.—In the course of this tract, the consequences of their negligence, so far as respect the British Herring Fisheries, will be noticed.

The two acts of Geo. II., ch. 24th, and Geo. II., ch. 30th, both giving bounties on the tonnage of vessels employed in the Herring Fishery, being quite a new mode of encouragement, will be attended to.—Under these acts, vessels were fitted out, which, in ten years time, caught 2419 barrels of herrings, called Sea Sticks, that is, unpacked, or only packed at sea; of which 18 barrels go to the last, or equal to 12 barrels of sufficient packed herrings; making 1613 barrels of proper packed herrings, fit for home sale, or for exportation; and, if they had all been exported, the bounty would, at 2 s. 8 d. *per* barrel, have been 215 l. 3 s. 4 d.; or, taking an annual part of the above number, being 161 barrels, the bounty would have amounted to 21 l. 10 s. yearly.—Such a trifling quantity hardly deserves notice, either for home sale or for exportation. At this time, too, the Fishing was very little benefited by the busses; though, for this experiment, a bounty on the tonnage, for the first ten years, was paid, of no less than 3459 l. 16 s., which is at the rate of 2 l. 2 s. 3½ d. for every barrel of proper packed herrings they brought to market, being double their value.

The laws which tended to do permanent good to the Fisheries, were, 20th of Geo. II., ch. 43d,

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(1747) abolishing heritable jurisdictions, and giving security to property; and act 20th Geo. II., ch. 23d, effectually suppressing the barbarous and unjust exactions of the last night's fishing in the week, by the ground owners, or their factors, denominated *Saturday night's fishing*; as also, of 16 s. 8 d., for the privilege of wetting their nets, called *size-money*.

These laws have done more good than any sums that can be given in busses bounties, and are a real service done the Fishery.—Besides, Britons, without distinction, are allowed the privilege of Scotsmen in the Fishing, which is attended with many good effects.—By these laws, protection is afforded from injuries; and the benefit of the common beach, with a few yards of waste ground, are granted, which are strong incitements to this branch of industry, and occasion great success to the Fishery.

By act 29th Geo. II., ch. 30th, (1756) the privilege of taking British salt, duty free, for curing fish for exportation, was likewise extended to Scotland; with an option of entering, for home use, herrings so cured, upon payment of 1 s. *per* barrel of duty, in lieu of the duty upon the salt used in curing them.—A most important advantage to the Fishery.

We have formerly seen the home markets supplied with herrings, the export trade not at all inconsiderable, and yet the poor laborious boat-fishers, who are the source of the whole, in no manner of way encouraged, but, on the contrary,

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trary, harassed and oppressed. Indeed, since 1756, they have been protected; but they have no public encouragement for their industry, nay the reverse, owing to the partial distinction made between them and the fishers in decked vessels, who also fish with boats themselves, and in the same lochs and grounds with them: besides, though most of their cargoes are caught by the boat-fishers, who have only a small price for them, yet the owners of these decked vessels have been paid by Government, during the space of ten years, from 1760 to 1770, at the rate of 17 s. 5½ d. for every barrel they brought to market.

The boat-fishers, however, still continue; and, though it is to them that the country owes the requisite supply, and by their means that the foreign trade is mostly furnished, yet they have no public allowance for it, not having any agent to plead for them.

The fishers on the bounty have never brought the necessary supply for either the home or foreign markets, though they have effectually drained the Commissioners of the Customs, of every shilling under their management.

During the ten years preceding the 1770, the most remarkable matter relating to the Herring Fishery is, that the funds in Scotland, allotted for payment of the bounty on tonnage, fell short of the demands; and no wonder, as the experiment sometimes ran so high, as to demand above 30,000 l. *per annum*.

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The adventurers who followed after the bounty where it was to be had, found their way to an English port, Whitehaven, as will afterwards be more particularly noticed.—The quantities of fish exported do not increase in this period, notwithstanding of the very large sums claimed as bounties on the tonnage of vessels employed in the Herring Fishery, the bounties on fish exported being only, at a medium, *per annum*, 6026 l., at 2 s. 8 d. *per barrel*.

These vessels, in this period, caught 102,886 barrels of proper packed herrings, fit either for home sale or for exportation, which is, *per annum*, 10,288 barrels; and, if they had all been exported, the bounty, at 2 s. 8 d. *per barrel*, would have been 1371 l. 14 s. 8 d. yearly, which is but a small part of the above 6026 l., and shows moreover the inconsiderable service they did, in furnishing herrings for the foreign markets: besides, had there been no other fishers for the home markets, the people in Scotland would not have been supplied with one third of what was necessary for their use. These vessels, however, received a bounty on the tonnage, out of the customs, of no less a sum than 143,020 l. 17 s. 10 d., being at the rate of 1 l. 7 s. 9½ d. for every barrel they brought to market.—This occasioning a failure of the funds for payment of the bounties in Scotland, these fishers on bounties went to Whitehaven, where they fitted out, and got licensed, which entitled them to payment in England, although they discharged in Scotland. Accordingly, they obtained

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obtained payment in England, in the years 1768
and 1769, of no less than — L. 16,398 15 0
Which, with the foresaid sum in
Scotland, of — — 143,020 17 10

In these ten years makes in all L. 159,419 12 10

Such immense sums, given to one set of men, in preference to the boat-fishers, is absurd, especially as they fish in the same lochs together. Some of these lochs are so narrow at the entrance, that a net may shut them up, as Loch Broom, Loch Sunart, &c. being only about 20 fathoms broad, but widen within. At these places, and indeed on all the west coast of Scotland, it is well known, that the fishing can be better and cheaper done by the natives, who fish for their own behoof with their open boats, than by hirelings, or by any other method whatsoever. It is therefore not to be wondered at, if this great public bounty, and the parade these bounty-fishers made, discouraged the poor industrious natives, who had no friend to act for them, nor any person to state their case properly before Parliament in making that law.

Patrick Lindsay, Esq; some years ago Lord Provost, and Member of Parliament for the city of Edinburgh, who wrote a treatise on the Scots Fisheries, says, That 2000 boats were usually employed on the West Coast fishing annually, when the fish were on that coast; and that it is a seminary for breeding and employing from 12,000 to 14,000 seamen yearly. He also mentions the fishing

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fishing on the East Coast of Scotland, and that of herrings in particular. He says, that, when successful, there were from 600 to 800 boats, with eight or nine men in each, employed in the Frith of Forth, (Edinburgh); and that there were in the Murray Frith from 500 to 700 boats, with six or seven men in each: and adds, That the coast fishing in these two friths employs above 3000 fishermen and sailors, for more than two months in the year, and is a source of breeding above 7000 seamen annually, who earn their bread by their labour on shore near ten months in the year, being all working artificers, carpenters, coopers, net-makers, day-labourers, and farmers servants, that live near the coast, and make it a condition with their masters, to be allowed the drave to themselves, when the herrings are on the coast. In this trade, he says, a body of above 20,000 seamen may be raised yearly, at no expence to the State; which is infinitely beyond what any trade can do that is forced by bounties.

The law, granting 2l. 10s. of bounty on the ton of vessels fitted out for the Herring Fishery, expired in 1771; and a new law was made, allowing 1l. 10s. *per* ton of bounty upon vessels fitted out for that purpose, which commenced 22d October that year. It shortened the time required for the vessels to continue at the fishing, admitted of carrying a less quantity of nets, and allowed, for payment of the bounty, all the money under the management of the Commissioners of the Customs in Scotland; which falling short, then the whole under

under the Commissioners of Excise to be subject in payment of the said bounty; and, in future, vessels, the property of persons residing in Scotland, are to proceed from Scotland only.

The fishers on the bounty, continued, until the existence of this act, to fit out chiefly from Whitehaven, and to discharge in Scotland; by which means, they received, in the years 1770 and 1771, from the English customs, 40,001 12s. 6d. of tonnage bounty. The bounties paid in Scotland from 1770 to 1779, amount to 109,069 l. 17s. 10d. In this period, the vessels caught 188,151 barrels of proper packed herrings, making, at a medium, 20,905 barrels per annum; a quantity greatly short of what the home consumpt required in Scotland, and which, had they all been exported, would, at 2s. 8d. per barrel, have amounted only to 2787 l. 6s. 8d.; a very trifling proportion of the export trade.—The bounties paid at this time on the tonnage of vessels, were at the rate of 11s. 7d. for every barrel of herrings they brought to market.

The bounties on fish exported during this period, were, at a medium, 7836 l. per annum, at 2s. 8d. per barrel.

During the last nine years, the tonnage bounty fishers were paid in Scotland L. 119,323 0 2
And in England — — 40,900 12 6

L. 160,223 12 8
being at the rate of above 17s. 5½d. for every barrel brought to market.

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The whole bounties on tonnage paid out of the Scots revenue, from 1750, the time of their commencement, to the 1779, were L. 255,550 6 6
Those in England — — 67,598 15 0

Total L. 323,149 1 6

Notwithstanding the payment of these great sums, the markets were no better supplied than formerly, nor more fish exported, and the prices as high as they used to be.

Thus having given a short narrative of the Scots Herring Fishery since the Union, it is obvious what laws obstructed, and what promoted that most useful and valuable branch of trade.

It appears, that the laws made about the Union, tended to obstruct the trade and industry of many, being solely calculated to serve the purpose of a narrow and confined monopoly.—In the Treaty of Union, the Scots Parliament were very zealous in favour of the Scots Fisheries. Their zeal and success, however, in obtaining an exorbitant bounty of 10s. 5d. upon the barrel of herrings exported, tempted many to commit frauds, and, in the space of 12 years, brought reproach and discredit upon the country and the British fish abroad, to the inexpressible hurt thereof, and great decrease of the revenue.

It appears, that the large bounty on the tonnage of vessels fitted out for the Herring Fishery, had likewise occasioned a greater diminution of the revenue, than was ever before known, and has done no good, as these vessels have neither
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brought better fish, lowered the price, nor increased the quantities at market.

It appears, that, by giving a bounty on a native commodity brought to market by one set of men, and no bounty on the same article, though of equal goodness, brought by the boat-fishers, the poor, industrious, and laborious set of men, is a distinction never before known in the revenue laws, and has certainly been overlooked in making out that law, as these men are the most numerous, and the strength of the Fishing. — *They ought to be encouraged in a very particular manner, and the bounties on fish should be upon exportation only, making no distinction who are the fishers, or how they are caught, if only by British or Irish subjects. The fishers of both nations ought to be allowed to fish upon each other's coast, without interruption, seeing they are the subjects of the same Monarch, and may be useful to each other, by learning them to catch, cure, or dress their fish, better than they did formerly.* — But these advantages ought only to be enjoyed by those who are at pains to cure and pack their fish properly, a circumstance that ought to be most carefully attended to, as the reputation and credit of the country depends upon it. With this view, it is here proper to mention the Scots act 1693, directing every burgh to appoint a man of judgment and skill to inspect all fish exported out of his precincts, and to affix the burgh's mark upon all casks that are sufficiently cured and packed. — This law is still in force; but the act, called the
Freedom

Freedom or Communication of Trade for Export and Import, extended to other places besides the Royal Burghs. In 1698, of course, no burning iron or mark was used at many places; and that measure is now much in disuse; though, in the few towns where it is continued, it is of great service, such as Aberdeen, where the custom still prevails, causing their salmon to give 8 or 10 shillings per barrel more than any others, at several of the foreign markets: besides, it excites a laudable emulation to preserve reputation once acquired, and is the means of directly detecting frauds where committed. This plain and simple regulation, tends more to keep up the reputation of fish exported, than any other; and the omission of it, has been an inlet to fraud, to the great discredit of the Fisheries in foreign parts. It has a similar effect to the Sterling mark upon plate, the stamp upon Scots and Irish linens, &c. &c.

With respect to the Gottenburgh Herring Fishery, already mentioned, the immense quantities imported from thence into Cork, and other ports in Ireland, were very properly attended to some years ago by the Irish Parliament. — These herrings were mostly reshipped to the British West Indies; and the duty at importation was paid, after retaining only 1 s. 6 d. per barrel. But, by an Irish act, 17th and 18th Geo. III., ch. 8th, § 33d, it is enacted, That, after the 21st June 1779, no drawback of any duties shall be allowed upon exportation of fish imported into that kingdom. — The duty is 4 s. per barrel, which be-
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ing retained at exportation, will be in favour of the British fishers, in sending their herrings to the West Indies, as they can afford to sell their fish that much cheaper than the Gottenburgh herrings.

It is with pleasure we now proceed to enumerate the useful acts, and their good effects.

The act abolishing the heritable jurisdictions, in 1747, secured property and personal liberty; and the act in 1756, gave fishers protection from oppression, and granted every indulgence the salt laws could admit of.—By it, Englishmen (who were before forbid) were admitted; and men of skill and property have thereby been induced to settle at Isle Martin in Loch Broom, in the heart of the Fishery. They have erected red herring houses, and buy their herrings from the boat-fishers there, which is of great service to the poor people, and to the country in general: And in all this, they are followed by Scotsmen at the same place; and there are, besides, fishers with open boats, who, finding their advantage in it, come from Northumberland to the Frith of Forth in the time of the herring fishing, and should be encouraged.

The Scots act directing the burgh mark, if it could be extended to all ports from whence fish are exported, would surely be of great service, and is truly worthy the notice of the Legislature.

The proper regulations mentioned by Mr. Lindsay, of the herring drave*, which are the same

* See his Book in the Advocates Library at Edinburgh.

same with those observed at this day, and exceed every thing yet devised, for promoting attention, care, and success in the Fishing, it is humbly thought, deserve the attention of the Legislature, and ought to be kept in force.

The merchants and monied men, some years ago, were in use to fit out vessels from 40 to 100 tons burden, with salt, and casks, coopers, money, meal, spirits, snuff, tobacco, &c. and sent them to the lochs and fishing grounds where the boat-fishers were, and purchased from them their cargoes at very low prices. It has been reported, that some of the vessels on the tonnage bounty did no more;—thus adding perjury to fraud, which high bounties often tempt.

The Norwegians fish their herrings in open boats; the Swedes do the same. Each of them, at present, as to quantities, do more than the Dutch, whose situation does not admit of fishing in open boats.

The Fishing on the West Coast of Scotland is reckoned more certain, constant, and uniform, than that on the East Coast; the smooth water in the lochs and bays, it is thought, inducing the herrings to come there in great shoals to spawn, in their season.

The Friths of Forth and Murray, till of late, had been for several years much deserted; but the fish have been, and are at present, in great plenty in those places, and the Fisheries are there carried on to a great extent; particularly at Dunbar, where they cure great quantities of

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both white and red herrings to a considerable value, and no bounties asked, except upon exportation.

Follows a short Account of the COD and LING FISHERIES.

THIS branch of Fishing admits of very great improvements, and may be greatly enlarged; but it has been much neglected for these many years. The greatest Fishing of this sort in Scotland, is in the islands of Shetland; and, several years ago, this branch of Fishing was also carried on to a great extent in the islands of Orkney, and in most of the Western Islands; in the Murray Frith, and all around the coasts of Scotland. At present, and indeed for these many years past, this Fishing has been confined to the islands of Shetland, at least for exportation; although there are surely both Cod and Ling in great plenty upon all the coasts of Scotland; but the fishers are not at pains to seek after them, not having any encouragement for doing so.

And as the bounties upon these fish, when exported, are by far too small, being only 3s. for every hundred weight or quintal that are quite dried, and 5s. for every 120 fish not quite dry, of a proper size; it is here humbly proposed, That an additional bounty should be given upon those fish, when exported, as afterwards to be taken notice of. And as there is another fish caught in Shetland, of which there are great plenty, called tusk

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tusk fish, which is finer than cod or ling, but smaller, there ought to be a bounty also allowed upon them, when exported; which additional bounty would encourage the fishers to follow out that trade to a much greater extent, and would likewise be the means of causing the fishers, in the different places where that trade was formerly prosecuted, to attempt it again, with more life and spirit; with this express provision, That the inspector, or shipping officer, be allowed, by law, to take samples of the fish, when he thinks them not cured or dried as the law directs, (the owners being allowed a reasonable price for the same), until he has instructions from the Commissioners, whether they are to have debenture for the one or the other bounties, *by the weight, or by the number*; which is very material, as many pernicious mistakes have often been committed in this article, the officer not knowing precisely which of the bounties should be allowed, and thereby, though perhaps unintentionally, materially hurting the revenue.

And as it often happens, that the quantities at one place are too small to export, may by a dead stock on hand, and so be liable to perish before next season, (which often happens in times of scarcity of provisions, as was the case last year), the owner should be allowed to sell them at home, upon paying the salt-duty.

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The following Hints are humbly proposed, as Regulations, for the probable means of preserving and improving the Fisheries in Scotland.

1st, That the bounty on the tonnage be abolished.

2^d, That a bounty be allowed of 5 s. per barrel of White Herrings exported, properly cured and packed, and the year, and name of the port from whence they are shipped, to be marked on each barrel with a burning iron, in capital figures and letters.

3^d, That the bounty upon Cod or Ling exported, should be 10 s. for every 120 fish of a proper size, as in the book of rates, that are not quite dried and properly cured.

4th, That a bounty of 5 s. be given for every hundred weight or quintal of Cod or Ling exported, that are *thoroughly dried*, properly cured, and of a proper size.

5th, That a bounty should be allowed upon Tusk fish exported, of 2 s. 6 d. for every hundred weight or quintal that is thoroughly dried, and 4 s. for every 120 Tusk Fish that are not dried and properly cured.

6th, That oil being made from the livers of most fish, and an article used in sundry branches of manufacture, such as making of soap, tanning of leather, greazing of wool, burning in lamps, &c. it should be encouraged, and a bounty given for the making of it, of at least 2 s. 6 d. per barrel;

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no matter whether it is exported or not, if it is good; but if it is not good, it ought to be confiscated, and the owner fined, if he claims the bounty.

7th, That the boat fishers should be encouraged in a particular manner, and some premium given them; which would be an effectual method of establishing the Fisheries for ever, and of increasing the number of fishers.—To that end, the following hint is humbly proposed:—That each boat be numbered in every district, and a bounty given to each boat for the season; or to allow them a bounty of from sixpence to a shilling, for every barrel of fresh or green herrings they bring to shore, and sell to merchants, bus-fishers, or others, who cure them and pack them, either for home sale or for exportation: this premium to be paid by the Commissioners of the Customs, upon producing a certificate upon oath, before a magistrate, minister, justice of peace, or a custom-house officer appointed for that purpose, at the different ports where fish are caught, certifying the number of barrels they have caught and sold as above, each season: Likewise, That the boat-fishers be paid a premium of 2 s. 6 d. for every 120 green cod or ling, and 1 s. for every 120 green tusk fish they bring to shore, and sell as above, to be certified as the former.—These premiums would encourage the poor boat-fishers, and increase their number to such a degree, as to render it easy, at any time, to man the greatest part of the British fleet with proper seamen, upon very short warning; the Fisheries thereby becoming a constant

a constant nursery for breeding sailors, besides increasing the quantities of fish at market.

8th, That, in every port in Scotland, where fish are entered for exportation, there should be a man of prudence, judgment and skill, appointed to examine the curing and packing the fish, and to mark with a burning iron, upon every cask, with capital figures and letters, the year, and name of the port from whence the fish are exported, if he finds them sufficient; but, if they are not so, the owners to be severely fined. These men to be appointed to their offices by Government, with suitable and decent salaries to encourage them to do their duty, so as not to be in hazard of being led into temptation; but subject to be dismissed from their office, if found taking any fees from the exporters.

The following is an exact account of the quantity of herrings caught, and of the bounties paid in Scotland, besides what were paid in England, on the tonnage of vessels from 1750 to 1779, and shows the great sums paid of bounties, for a small quantity of fish caught in that time:

	Barrels.	Bounty paid.		
		L.	s.	d.
From 1750 to 1760 -	1613	3459	16	0
From 1760 to 1770 -	102,886	143,020	17	10
From 1770 to 1779 -	188,159	109,069	12	8
Total	292,658	255,550	6	6

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These quantities of herrings were caught in twenty nine years time, for which the fore said great sums of bounty were paid on the tonnage of vessels, amounting to above 17 s. 5 1/2 d. for every barret; and neither the home nor foreign markets were any better or cheaper supplied than formerly.

9th, To prevent any future frauds, it will be proper, that a certificate be produced in a limited time, importing, That the fish exported are landed in the West Indies, or other foreign ports; and payment of part of the bounties should be delayed, until such certificate is produced.

Lastly, Agreeably to what Mr. Knox recommends in his book on the Scots Fisheries, if villages or small towns were erected in the different places of the country where fish are caught, merchants and others would resort to, and settle in them, and accommodate the fishers with habitations, and the various materials necessary for their use, by which means they would mutually serve each other, as well as the country; and if, at the same time, the landholders would build houses, or feu out their grounds on moderate terms, it would encourage people to settle in them.—But to promote this the more effectually, if Government would be pleased to contribute to it, in some such manner as the wisdom of Parliament may suggest, that would be the only sure way to render the Fishing permanent, and confirm it in all time coming.

Thus

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This has the writer of the foregoing pages, as concisely as he could, humbly presumed to offer his sentiments upon this interesting subject.—He is very sensible of his want of ability for the discussion of a matter of such vast importance; but he hopes for the indulgence of a candid Public.—By means of his intimacy with a gentleman, dead some years ago, who held an office in the Custom-house General at Edinburgh, he had access to know the exact quantities of fish caught during the periods referred to, and the sums paid both for tonnage and exportation, bounties, &c. &c.—He has only farther to mention, that the observations herein contained, are the result of long experience, and many years investigation, and being written solely with a view to the good of his country, he will be happy indeed, if any of them shall be thought worthy of notice, as anywise tending to promote the great ends presently in contemplation, respecting those truly grand objects of national wealth, strength, and utility,——
the Improvement of the British Fisheries, and the Manning of his Majesty's Navy.

F I N I S