

which has been explained in this work, so little change should have taken place in the actual numbers, and that, in so many parts of the district, they should even be increased. The explanation of this fact is to be found partly in the extension of the fisheries on the western coast and isles; but much more in the cultivation of potatoes, which, though scarcely known at the period of Dr Webster's enumeration, are now in universal use. From some recent investigations, it appears probable, that the population of Ireland has at least been doubled in consequence of the introduction of potatoes as the principal food of the people. The same circumstance would probably have had as remarkable an effect in augmenting the population of the Highlands; if this cause had not been counteracted by the change that has taken place in the state of landed occupancy. On the other hand, if the effects of the grazing system had not been modified by such a cause of increase, the depopulation of the Highlands must have proceeded with much more rapidity.

The general result arising from the combination of these opposite tendencies, has been different in different parts of the Highlands, as will be observed on an examination of the Table. On the western coast, and in the isles, the increase of population is considerable; this seems to be owing to the fisheries, as well as to the circumstance that, in a great part of this tract, the new system of management has not made so much progress, as in the Highland districts lying farther south and east. On the other hand, the diminution in the Highlands of Perthshire, an inland district adjoining to the Lowlands, appears to be uniform, though not perhaps so great as from general reasonings might have been expected.