

It was formerly customary in Scotland, as well as other countries in Europe, for gentlemen of landed property to make provision for their sons by settling them, in some character and situation or other, on their own estates; so that the same tracts, and even districts of land, came, in the natural course of things, to be occupied by people of the same name and kindred, who lived together like one great family, drawn together by mutual sympathy, and often more strongly united by antipathy to some common enemy. Sometimes an estate was parcelled out among several brothers, whether in equal or unequal divisions; sometimes large and advantageous farms were let to the younger sons, who, at an easy rent paid to the elder branch and representative of the family, enjoyed their possessions under the name of tacksmen: and these possessions, subdivided and sub-let to inferior tenants, passed by a kind of hereditary right, which it would have been deemed a species of impiety to violate, in the families of the original tacksmen, from generation to generation. As the tacksmen were often the immediate

descendents