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CROFT CULTIVATION.

BY

AN OLD CROFTER

WITH A GAELIC TRANSLATION BY

JOHN WHYTE.

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ON CROFT CULTIVATION.

Most of my long life having been spent as a farmer and friend of crofters, I am asked to write some practical advice for their use, hoping thus to help them towards greater prosperity in their farming affairs than is usually the case.

I must, however, touch on some points in which my readers who have not studied agriculture, may hesitate to agree with me.

The crofter's first mistake, is, asking for more arable land than an average family can really "cultivate," without hired, or horse labour. But those who keep a horse, or pay wages for labour, are not crofters, or cottars, but farmers. Now I write only for crofters and cottars. And every intelligent, educated farmer knows, that keeping a horse for which its owner has not daily work, while it needs daily food and attention, is a good deal worse than mere folly.

Then it is a positive fact, that no crofter with an average family, has ever, without hired labour, "*cultivated,*" yearly, more than five arable acres. And wise persons only care to possess as much land, for which rent is to be paid, as they can cultivate.

Especially as it is certain, that five acres of land well cultivated, will almost everywhere in the North of

MU AITEACH CHROITEAN,

A chionn gun do chaith mi a' chuid mhor de m' bheatha fhaide am thuathnach agus am charaid do na croitearan, chaidh iarraidh orm earailean freagarrach a sgriobhadh air an son, a chum an cuideachadh gu ruigsinn air tuilleadh soirbheachaidh na 'n cuisean tuathnachais na tha aca gu coitcheann.

Feumaidh mi, ge ta, buintinn ri cuid a phuincean anns am bi mo leughadairean nach d' ionnsaich tuathnachas, an teagamh an urrainn daibh aontachadh leam.

Is e a' chiad mhearachd a tha an croitear a' deanamh, a bhi ag iarraidh tuilleadh fearann-àitich na is urrainn do theaghlach cuimseach fhior "oibreachadh," gun saothair luchd-tuarasdail, no obair each. Ach iadsan a tha a' cumail eich, no a' paidheadh tuarasdail air son seirbheis, cha chroitearan no coitearan a tha annta, ach tuathnaich. A nis is ann air son chroitearean agus choitearan a mhain a tha mi a' sgriobhadh. Tho fios aig a' h-uile tuathnach tuigseach, eolach, gur nì e is miosa na amaideachd a bhi a' cumail eich far nach 'eil gu leoir a dh-obair air a shon, agus gum feum e biadh agus aire gach là.

Is gnothach gun teagamh e, ma ta, nach d' "oibrich" croitear, le teaghlach cuimseach, riamh os cionn coig acraichean fearainn anns a' bhliadhna, gun chuideachadh luchd-tuarasdail. Agus cha mhiann le daoine glice tuilleadh fearainn a bhi aca air son am feum iad mal a phaidheadh, na is urrainn daibh oibreachadh.

Gu sonraichte bho 'n is gnothach cinnteach e, gun cum coig acraichean de thalamh air dheagh oibreach-

Scotland, support an average family in all moderate requirements.

It is also an agricultural truth, that heavy crops need never be expected unless the soil is deeply cultivated; and this can only be done by pick, and spade or graip.

An *appearance* of cultivation is often given to land by plough and harrow, or the ancient, loved, Celtic *cas-chrom* (crooked foot), but the crops on such land will be miserable, compared with those following the spade, or graip, in diligent, intelligent hands.

Crofters and their advisers put great value on "hill pasture;" meaning thereby, heather, ferns, and coarse wild grass of less real value than many weeds.

These plants, of course, contain *some* nourishment, yet no animal except a goat, and grouse, would ever use such "pasture," but from sheer hunger, while living in hope of being offered in due time, cultivated food; till when, the crofter has more than enough trouble to drive away his stock from his arable land, as they are always craving for a bite of nourishing, better stuff, without which, they are too often seen returning from market, without an offer.

The true value of the crofter's "hill pasture," consists in his mind being tolerably easy (although he knows his beast is merely kept alive there on heather and weeds), because generally it is *not seen* from the croft, and thus craving his pity.

These things are admitted by all thoroughbred farmers, and gardeners, and apply to nearly all crofter or cottar lands in Scotland.

adh, ann an aite sa bith an Taobh Tuath na h-Alba, a suas teaghlach cuimseach, anns gach ni iomchuidh a dh' fheumas iad.

Is firinn thuathnachais e cuideachd, nach ruigear leas duil a bhi ri barr trom am feasda, mur oibrichear gu domhain an talamh ; agus is ann le piocaid, agus le caibe no gràpa (gobhlag) a mhain a nithear so.

Tha *coltas* àitich gu tric air a chur air an fhearann le crann-treabhaidh agus le cliath-chliata, no leis an t-seann innleachd annsail, Ghaidhealaich, a' chas-chrom, ach cha bhi am barr air an fhearann sin ach bochd an coimeas ris a' bharr a thig as deigh a' chaibe, no a' ghrapa, ann an laimh dhichiollaich, eolaich.

Tha croitearan agus an luchd-seòlaidh a' cur mor mheas air "feurach-monaidh;" a' ciallachadh le sin fraoch, raineach, agus feur garbh, fiadhaich, is lugha luach na iomadh gne luibheannaich.

Gheobhar gun teagamh rud-eigin de bheathachadh anns na lusan sin, ach cha lugha na gobhar no cearc-fhraoich a dh' itheadh iad, mur tugadh am fior acras orra, agus an duil gum faigh iad, aig àm iomchuidh, biadh brioghmhor, freagarrach. Gus a sin, tha gu leoir r'a dheanamh aig a' chroitear m' an cum e a spreidh air falbh as a thalamh-aitich, a chionn gu bheil iad gun tamh an geall air lan beoil de bhiadh is fearr agus is buannachdoire, agus le cion sin, is tric a chithear iad a' tilleadh as a' mhargadh gun tairgse.

Is e fior bhuannachd "feurach-monaidh" a' chroit-eir, gu bheil inntinn rud-eigin sona aige (ged tha fhios aige gu bheil 'ainmhidh ga chumail beo air an fhior eiginn air fraoch agus luibheannach) a chionn gu coitcheann nach 'eil e *ri fhaicinn* bho 'n chroit, agus mar so nach 'eil e na dhiol-truais follaiseach.

Tha na nithean so air an aideachadh leis na h-uile thuathnaich agus gharadairean eolach agus fogh-luimte, agus tha iad fior mu fhearainn chroitearan agus choitearan ach beag ann an Albainn gu leir.

There are some other matters of importance to crofters, according to their locality, &c.—

1*st*, To remember, that, in Britain no crop repays the farmer so poorly as grain of all kinds, when labour, and seed, and in the North, sunshine, are deducted.

2*nd*, That no cultivation pays so well in the North, as growing green food, for feeding stock, or producing milk. In dry sunny lands, where grain grows well, green crops for stock cannot be grown to compare with what most of our crofters can grow every year, *if they choose.*

And the valued oat meal, in their unwise attempt to grow which our crofters yearly sacrifice much, is at command everywhere.

These are maxims, needing attention from every Highland crofter and cottar who cares to thrive, with good crops and fine stock.

Most of our crofter's "arable land," is only so in name; and, ere it will give good crops, requires to be trenched, cleared, drained, and limed. In most peaty crofts, soon after they have been drained, gravel or clay is generally found pretty near the surface; and this subsoil, mixed with the peat, in trenching, will, when limed, grow excellent crops. In applying lime to any land, care should be taken to lay it on dry (say ten bolls to the acre), in such fine powder that it soon becomes invisible.

If the lime is scattered over the land when damp, too much falls here and too little there, the plant roots being burnt in the one place, and in the other finding no lime. Moreover, most of our Highland

Tha cuid a nithean eile ann a tha cudthromach do na croitearan a reir an aite anns am bi iad, &c.—

1. A chuimhneachadh nach 'eil, am Breatunn, barr ann a phaidheas an tuathnach cho bochd ri gràn de gach gnè, an uair a bheirear dheth cosdas oibre, agus siol-cuir, agus, anns an Taobh Tuath, blàths na greine.

2. Nach 'eil gne àitich ann a phaidheas cho math anns an Taobh Tuath ri barr uaine air son beathachadh stuic, no air son bainne. Ann an duthchannan grianach, tioram, far an cinn gràn gu math, chan urrainn daibh barr gorm air son stuic a thogail an coimeas ris a' bharr a dh' fhaodas a' chuid mhor d' ar croitearan a thogail gach bliadhna, *ma thogras iad.*

Agus a' mhin choirce mhiadhor, a tha na croitearan gu h-amaideach a' caitheamh moran d' an cuid gach bliadhna ga togail, tha i ri fhaighinn anns gach aite.

Is firinnean iad so d' am bu choir do gach croitear agus gach coitear Gaidhealach an aire a thoirt, ma tha toil aige soirbheachadh le barr trom agus stoc math.

Tha moran de dh-fhearann nan croitearan nach 'eil na "fhearann-àitich" ach mar ainm ; agus m' an toir e seachad barr math, feumar a chlaiseadh, a ghlanadh, a thiormachadh, agus aoladh. Ann am moran chroitean mòintich, goirid an deigh an clais-thiormachadh, tha grinneal, no criadh, gu coitcheann ri fhaighinn dluth air uachdar an talaimh; agus bheir am fo-thalamh so seachad barr anabarrach, an uair a theid aoladh, an deigh a mheasgachadh leis a' mhointich an àm a chlaisidh. Ann an cur aoil air fearann sa bith, feumar an aire thoirt gun sgaoilear tioram e (abraibh deich bolla air an acair) na dhus cho mìn 's gun teid e gu grad as an t-sealladh.

Ma sgapar an t-aol thairis air an talamh gun bhi tioram, tha tuilleadh 's a' choir a' tuiteam an sud agus tuilleadh 's beag an so, agus tha freumhan nan lus air an losgadh ann an aon aite, agus ann an aite eile chan fhaigh iad aol idir. A bharr air so, leis gu bheil

lime containing magnesia, injures land, while that from England, and from Larne in Ireland, being very pure, is of great value towards crop growing. Fine shell sand, found in places on the West Coast at low tides, answers well, if lightly laid on.

So, when the arable land of the croft is trenched, drained, and limed, it is ready for any ordinary crop; but too frequently, the crofter's cow, calving early, finds nothing to eat but dry food, which seriously injures the milk supply for all that season.

Therefore to remedy this, as soon as in autumn the land for the next year's potatoes is clear of crop, an intelligent crofter will have that plot well manured, and will line out on it, his potato drills for next year. Then, between each of these drills, he will run a line of rye, which will soon be above ground, and after being frequently watered with stable and house soup (*i.e.* liquid manure), will grow so vigorously in spring, that it will soon meet across the drills marked out for potatoes (they being the usual distance apart), and which will be dibbled in by March.

Ere the potato shoots are a few inches above ground, the rye will be a luxuriant, thick, green sward over the whole land, ready to be cut three times, and there will be no need to ask the cow if she likes it.

After the last cut, each rye drill is to be delved into the soil, forming thus good manure for the potatoes.

Then about the first week in April, the crofter, if wise, may turn to his plot of Prickly Comfrey, which

magnesia ann am moran de dh-aol na Gaidhealtachd, tha e a' milleadh na talmhainn, am feadh a tha aol a thig a Sasunn, agus a Làrn an Eirinn, leis gu bheil e fior-ghlan, ro luachmhor gu cur air aghaidh cinneas a' bhàrra. Tha gainmheach mhin, shligeach, ri fhaighinn an cuid a dh-aiteachan anns an Airde-an-Iar, a fhreagras gu ro-mhath, ma sgaoilear gu tana air an talamh i.

An uair a tha talamh-àitich na croite air a chlaiseadh, air a thiormachadh, agus air aoladh, tha e ullamh air son bàrra choitchinn sa bith ; ach mar is trice chan fhaigh bo a' chroitear, a bheireas toiseach na bliadhna, nì ri itheadh ach biadh tioram, rud a tha a' fagail a' bhainne gann.

A chum so a sheachnadh, ma ta, cho luath 's a bhios an talamh air son buntata na h-ath bhliadhna lom gun bharr anns an fhoghar, ni an croitear glic an talamh a dheagh mhathachadh, agus comharraichidh e a mach air, sreathan buntata na h-ath bhliadhna. An sin, eadar na sreathan sin, cuiridh e sreath de sheagal, a bhios gu goirid troimh 'n talamh, agus an deigh uisgeachadh gu minic a lub-an-dùnain, cinnidh e cho bras anns an earrach, 's gun coinnich e tarsaing air na sreathan a chaidh a chomharrachadh air son a' bhuntata (a bhios an t-asdar cumanta bho cheile) agus a theid a chur le pleadhaig anns a' Mhàrt.

M' am bi coilleagan a' bhuntata ach beagan oirlich os cionn na h-ùrach, bidh an seagal na rùsg reachdmhor, tiugh, gorm, thairis air an talamh gu leir, deas air son a ghearradh tri uairean, agus cha ruigear a leas fheoraich de'n bhòin an toigh leatha e.

An deigh a' ghearraidh mu dheireadh theid gach sreath sheagail a ruamhar anns an talamh, agus ni e mar so mathachadh ciatach do 'n bhuntata.

An sin mu 'n chiad seachdain ann an April, ma tha an croitear glic, teannaidh e ris an leaba de 'n *Phrickly Comfrey*, a bu choir a bhi a nis mu choig oirlich dheug

should by that time be about 15 inches high, affording first-rate food for stock of all kinds.

This Comfrey is planted in rows, from slips of old clumps torn asunder. If the land is strong, and the climate not too dry, it never fails to grow well, and in its second and following years, to give, in about four cuts between April and October, from 80 to 100 tons per acre of famous green food; while it can hardly be injured or extirpated by any ill usage.

The next green crop for the scythe after the Comfrey, and very little later, should be the crofter's Lucern, a plant somewhat between clover and wild pea.

Cattle are devoted to it, and it never harms them as clover sometimes does; while it sends its roots down so deep, that the greatest drought hardly affects it, and in warm climates it has given eight heavy cuts in a year, and for twenty years in succession, although here we are content with four cuts yearly, each from two to three feet long!

And as this is the usual Lucern crop, its superiority to ryegrass and clover is easily seen. Its seed should be sown on finely dressed land, and rolled in, as early in March as the weather permits, and it will soon form a fine green coat, which, if the land is in good condition, will allow of two scythe cuts before winter, each about eighteen inches high. And next, and following years, between May and October, the plot will allow four heavy cuts, and continue the same for years.

But, as cattle require some dry as well as green food, the crofter should lay down a plot for oat hay,

air airde, agus a tha na bhiadh anabarrach math do gach gne stuic.

Tha an Comfrey air a chur na shreathan, de mhirean air an srachdadh as na seana phluic. Ma tha an talamh laidir, agus nach 'eil an t-aite ro thioram, cinnidh e gu ciatach; agus anns an dara bliadhna agus na bliadhnaichean a leanas, le a bhuain ceithir uairean eadar April agus October, bheir e seachad bho 80 gu 100 tunna an t-acair de bhiadh gorm, ciatach ; agus is gann a tha e comasach cur as da le droch ghiollachd sa bith.

Is e an ath bharr gorm a bu choir a bhuain, agus sin beagan an deigh a' Chomfrey, an *Lucern*, lus a tha mar gum b' eadh eadar an clover agus a' pheasair fhiadhaich.

Tha an spreidh ro thoigheach air, agus cha dean e coire dhaibh mar a ni an clover air uairibh ; cuiridh e sios a fhreumhan cho domhain 's gur gann a ruigeas an tiormachd is mò air, agus ann an duthchannan blàtha faodar a ghearradh ochd uairean anns a' bhliadhna, fad fhichead bliadhna, ged a tha sinn toilichte 's an duthaich so le ceithir gearraidhnean anns a' bhliadhna, gach aon diubh mu dha no tri throidhean air airde !

Bho 'n is e so is barr do 'n Lucern gu coitcheann, chan 'eil e doirbh ri fhaicinn a' bharrachd a tha aige air feur-cuir agus air clover. Bu choir am fras a chur air talamh air a dheagh oibreachadh, agus a roladh fodha, cho trath anns a' Mhart 's a cheadaicheas an aimsir, agus chan fhada gus an cinn e na rùsg grinn, gorm, agus ma tha an talamh ann an suidheachadh math, gheobhar uaith, m' an tig an geamhradh, dà bharr, gach aon diubh mu ochd oirlich dheug air airde. Air an ath bhliadhna agus na bliadhnaichean a leanas, eadar May agus October, bheir e seachad ceithir gearraidhnean troma, agus mairidh e mar sin fad bhliadhnaichean.

Ach bho 'n dh' fheumas spreidh biadh tioram cho math ri biadh bog, bu choir do 'n chroitear leaba a

heavily manured, and to be cut as soon as the straw is at full growth. It will dry easily into green hay, far more nourishing than straw.

Rye, Prickly Comfrey, and Lucern, then are the main summer crops for crofters to grow in the Highlands, giving them green food from March till October.

But they must also grow turnips and cabbages for their winter food.

White globe turnips are the best for milk cows, and though not so hardy in severe frost as other kinds, if lifted before winter sets in severely, and set on level ground, side by side, touching each other, their leaves and a very little straw or rushes strewn over them, will protect them from all but the severest frosts, which even then will do them little harm.

Those looking to milk as their best crop will, besides turnips, grow Drumhead cabbages for their cows' use from October till spring, and lest there may be such frost as to damage Drumheads without much trouble in protecting them, some of the more hardy Drumhead Savoys may also be grown.

The Drumhead seed requires to be sown in a garden bed in August, planted out in rows in the garden, or field, before winter, and transplanted thence, next March, to the field where they are to grow, each plant needing rather less than a square yard of land. All the cabbage tribe love plenty manure, but fresh sea-ware suits them as well as anything.

And thus, an intelligent crofter should have a full

shuidheachadh air son saidh-choirce, air a deagh inneireachadh, ri bhi air a gearradh cho luath 's a thig an t-arbhar gu lan airde. Tiormaichidh e gu bhi na choirce-gorm ciatach, agus moran na's brioghmhoire na còmlach.

Is iad Seagal, Prickly Comfrey, agus Lucern, ma ta, am priomh bharr samhraidh a bu choir do chroitearan a chinneachdainn anns a' Ghaidhealtachd, agus bheir iad dhaibh biadh gorm bho 'n Mhàirt gu October.

Ach feumaidh iad cuideachd turnips agus càl-geal a thogail air son biadh a' gheamhraidh.

Is iad na "white globe turnips" is fearr air son crodh-bainne, agus ged nach 'eil iad cho fulangach an àm reothaidh chruaidh ri seorsachan eile, ma thogar iad m' an tig an geamhradh a stigh gu teann, agus ma chuirear iad air talamh comhnard taobh ri taobh, a' beantainn ri cheile, ni an duilleach fhein agus beagan conlaich no luachrach, air a chur thairis orra, an dion ach beag bho 'n reothadh is cruaidhe, agus sin fhein cha dean e moran coire dhaibh.

Iadsan a tha ag earbsadh gu sonraichte ris a' bhainne cuiridh iad, a bharr air turnip, cal-geal "Drumhead," air son biathadh a' chruidh bho October gu earrach; agus air eagal gum bi reothadh cho cruaidh ann 's gun dean e milleadh air na "Drumheads," mur gabhar moran dragh ga 'n dion, faodar cuideachd cuid de na "Drumhead Savoys," a tha na 's cruadalaiche, a chur.

Feumar fras nan "Drumheads" a chur ann an leaba gàraidh ann an August, an cur a mach na 'n sreathan anns a' ghàradh no anns an achadh m'an tig an geamhradh, agus anns a' Mhàrt an togail as a sin gus an t-achadh far a bheil iad ri cinntinn, a' toirt teann air slat de fharsaingeachd do gach gas. Is math leis gach seorsa cail gu leoir a dh-inneir, agus tha ròd ur na mara gle fhreagarrach dhaibh.

Agus mar so tha aig a' chroitear ghlic gu leoir mhor de bhiadh brioghmhor deas air son a chuid spreidh

supply of the most nourishing food ready for his cattle all the year round, on every average Highland croft.

There is, however, another branch of farming, almost better suited to the crofter, or cottar, than to the farmer; I mean Poultry.

About fifty million dozens of hens' eggs are yearly imported from other countries into Britain, costing the foolish purchasers several millions of money every year.

I say foolish, because a little teaching and trouble would enable us to grow these eggs at home, as the crofters' and cottars' wives abroad are busily doing, that they may get hold of our loose money.

As a rule, the common poultry grown on our farms and crofts, have hens that seldom lay fifty eggs, before they cluck, anxious to have chickens; and then drop work for the year, thinking, poor souls, that they have done very well! Now, for the same trouble and expense in caring for such poor poultry, better kinds are easily got, that, as *they* seldom or never cluck, may be depended on, if wisely cared for, to lay even 200 or more, large eggs yearly! and it needs little arithmetic to find out which hens are the most profitable. About the most useful of these improved kinds of poultry is the "Black Hamburgh" breed, and there is no difficulty in acquiring a stock of these, their price in spring, now, being eight shillings for year old hens, and ten shillings and sixpence each for cocks, while the dozen eggs for hatching cost ten shillings. This sounds dear compared with common prices, but so does a first rate shorthorn bull, compared with a ragged

fad na bliadhna, air gach croit chumanta, Ghaidhealaich.

Tha gne thuathnachais eile ann, ge ta, a tha na 's freagarraiche do 'n chroitear agus do 'n choitear na do 'n tuathnach : is e sin Eoin-thighe agus Uibhean.

Tha mu thuairean leth chiad muillion dusan de dh-uibhean chearc air an toirt a duthchannan eile do Bhreatunn anns a' bhliadhna, agus a' cosd do 'n luchd-cheannaich amaideach aireamh mhuillionan airgid gach bliadhna.

Tha mi ag radh amaideach, a chionn dh' fhaod-amaid, le beagan teagaisg agus dragha, na h-uibhean sin a thogail againn fhein, mar tha muathan nan croit-earan agus nan coitearan anns na duthchannan sin gu dichiollach a' deanamh, a chum 's gum faigh iad greim air ar n-airgiod pronn-ne.

Mar is trice tha cearcan am measg ar n-eoin-thighe nach beir ach mu leth-chiad ubh, gus an toisich iad air gur, agus iad an geall air eoin a bhi aca ; agus an sin sguiridh iad car na bliadh-na, am beachd, na truaghain, gun do rinn iad gu gasda. A nis air son an aon dragha agus chosdais a tha air a bhuileachadh air an leithide sin de eoin thruagh, faodar seorsachan is fhearr fhaighinn — feadhain nach gabh an gur ach ainmic, ma ghabhas iad idir e, as am faodar earbsa chur, ma theid an aire thoirt orra, gum beir iad 200, no an corr, de dh-uibhean mora anns a' bhliadhna ! agus chan fheumar moran sgoilearachd gu fhaicinn co iad cearcan is buannachd-oire. Am measg na feadhain is fhearr diubh sin tha an seorsa ris an abrar "Black Hamburghs," agus chan 'eil e doirbh stoc dhiubh sin fhaighinn. Is iad na prisean a tha orra 's an earrach, a nis, ochd tasdain air seana chearcan, deich agus se sgillinn air na coilich, agus air an dusan ubh, ga'n cur fo'n chirc, deich tasdain. Tha so a' sealltainn daor an coimeas ri prisean cumanta, ach air a' cheart doigh tha a' phris aig tarbh math Gallda

Highlander off the "hill pasture"; yet such hens and eggs very soon repay the purchaser, if he is wise and careful. One of these poultry growers tells me, he has in a few years past, sold over ninety thousand eggs of such poultry for hatching. And at ten shillings the dozen, he had of course pocketed £3750. So that those who will continue to grow the common bad kinds of poultry, when they can get better kinds, will be, and deserve to be, poor, and ill off.

In order to poultry thriving well, and being both a pleasure and a profit, they need a free run over a dry grass park; 100 fowls needing an acre for exercise, which had better be enclosed by netting.

A large, dry-ware hogshead, makes a cheap, good enough henhouse for ten birds, if some tarpaulin lies on the roof to keep all dry inside, and one end having a lattice door, for safety, and air, at night. The hogshead should lie on two round logs, to keep it so high above the ground as to allow nests for eggs to be placed below. Perches, of *flat* narrow deal (and not round rollers), must be placed inside.

But, poultry never thrive well, unless their house is cleaned out daily, as soon as it is vacant.

If they are always supplied with fresh water, and regularly fed, the quantity of manure nightly dropped, will surprise the henwife; and (if she stores it up dry,) will gladden its eager purchasers, at the price of guano.

ard an coimeas ri pris fir ghreannaich, Ghaidhealaich, bharr an "fheuraich-mhonaidh;" coma co dhiubh, chan fhada gus am paidh na cearcan agus na h-uibhean ud am fear a cheannaicheas iad, ma tha e glic, curamach. Tha fear de na tuathnaich-chearc sin ag innseadh dhomhsa, gun do reic e re bheagan bhliadhnaichean air ais, os cionn deich agus ceithir fichead mile de dh-uibhean nan cearc gniomhach sin, air son an gur. Agus aig deich tasdain an dusan, chuir e na sporan £3750. Iadsan, ma ta, a leanas air togail nan seorsachan bochda, cumanta, an uair a dh' fhaodadh iad feadhain a b' fhearr a bhi aca, bidh iad, agus tha iad a' toilltinn a bhi, bochd agus gu truagh dheth.

A chum 's gun soirbhich gu math le eoin-thighe, agus gum bi iad na 'n tlachd agus na 'm buannachd, feumaidh réidhlein saor a bhi aca air achadh tioram feoir; acair fhearainn aig gach 100 eun, air son cead an cas a ghabhail, agus bu choir lìon a bhi m'a thimchioll.

Ni baraille, no togaid mhor, tigh saor, math gu leoir do dheich cearcan, ma chuirear brat-tearra thairis air g' an cumail tioram air an taobh stigh, agus ma theid dorus cailbhe a chur air dara ceann a' bharaille air son teurainteachd, agus air son analach, anns an oidhche. Bu choir do 'n bharaille laidhe air da chabar cruinn, chum a chumail cho ard os cionn an talaimh 's gun faodar nid air son uibhean a chur fodha. Bu choir sparrannan de bhuird chaola (chan iad maidean cruinne) a chur air an taobh stigh.

Ach cha shoirbhich gu brath leis an eunlaith mur glanar an tigh a' h-uile latha, cho luath 's a thig iad a mach as.

Ma chumar uisge glan riutha, agus ma bhiadhar gu riaghailteach iad, cuiridh na ni iad de dh-inneir iongantas air cailleach-nan-cearc; agus (ma chuireas i seachad tioram e) riaraichidh e an luchd-ceannaich aig prisean guano.

Their main food may consist of boiled, mashed potatoes (the small unmarketable ones costing very little), mixed with mill dust, or pron, or crushed maize, or bran, or inferior barley, or wheat. This costs less than a penny the pound, and about a pound weekly of this pudding, with what extras a hen can herself pick up, will keep her in health, and let her pay well for her board and lodgings.

Winter eggs are greatly promoted, by mixing with the hens' food, boiled, minced bullock's or sheep's lungs, or liver; or any kind of flesh meat, as it comes in place of the summer worms and insects in which poultry delight, and find in their park.

Many things occur to deprive a farmer or crofter of his anticipated profits from stock or crop, but what can equal the folly of starting with a breed, say of pure Black Hamburgh fowls, each hen giving him yearly say perhaps 200 or more eggs; and then allowing an enemy present him with a fine feathered dunghill cock to associate with them, none of whose kith or kin ever dreamed of laying more than 50 eggs in a year; the trouble and expense being all the same?

And now, I hope my readers will understand, that giving more "arable land" to any one than he can really "cultivate," so as to produce its *full* amount of food, is not wise.

I have examined myriads of crofts, and have only seen or heard of one (my own, here), even *tolerably*

Faodar am biadhadh, an tomhas mor, le buntata bruich air a phronnadh (cha chosd buntata meanbh ach fior bheagan) air a mheasgachadh le sadach, no pronn, no cruithneachd Innseanach air a bhruthadh, no càth, no cruithneachd no eorna bochd. Cosdaidh so rud-eigin fo aon sgillinn am punnd, agus cumaidh aon phunnd d' an taois so, anns an t-seachdain, leis na ni i a sholar air a son fhein, a' chearc ann an deagh shlainte, agus bheir e comas di paidheadh gu math air son a bidh agus a fardaich.

Tha uibhean a' gheamhraidh gu mor air an cur am feabhas, le bhi a' measgachadh le biadh nan cearc, sgamhan no grumhan mairt no caorach, air a bhruich agus air a phronnadh ; no seorsa air bith fheola ; tha so a' deanamh suas aite nan cnuimheag 's nan cuileag a gheobh na cearcan air an achadh 's an t-samhradh, agus air a bheil iad cho toigheach.

Is iomadh rud a thig eadar an tuathnach no an croitear agus a' bhuannachd ris am bi suil aige bho'n bharr, ach ciod e meud na h-amaideachd a tha ann da toiseachdh le stoc chearc, abramaid de na "Black Hamburghs," gach aon diubh a' breith dha anns a' bhliadhna, theagamh 200, no an corr, a dh-uibhean; agus an sin leigeil le a namhaid coileach-dunain rìomhach a bhuileachadh air, a chumail cuideachd riu — coileach nach do bhreithnich aon d' a shiòl no d' a ghineal riamh air tuilleadh agus leth-chiad ubh 's a' bhliadhna a bhreith ; agus sin air a' cheart urad dhragh' agus chosdais.

Agus a nis, tha dochas agam gu bheil mo leughadairean a' tuigsinn nach 'eil e glic tuilleadh "talamhaitich" a thoirt do aon air bith na tha e da-rireadh comasach air "oibreachadh," air alt's gun toir e seachad a lan dìol de thoradh.

Chaidh mi gu mion thairis air na ciadan de chroitean, agus chan fhaca, agus cha chuala mi iomradh air aon (ach mo chroit fhein an so) a bha air a h-oibreachadh

well cultivated. Except those in peat, all were a mess of stones, or, hard stuff below the mere surface, so that the roots of any useful plants, are unable to go nearly as deep as they should go, so as to grow properly.

And were crofters at all aware of their great loss from this cause, we should hear no more outcry for "more arable land, more arable land," for generations. Every crofter would really "cultivate" his land, instead of giving it a mere surface show of cultivation, and would be so astonished at the *wonderful* difference between the crops that he grew formerly on his hard and shallow old soil, and what it produces since it was cultivated deeply by the spade and pick, that he would be ashamed of the nonsense he and others have talked and printed as to needing "more arable land" than five acres.

Indeed, if what is prayed for now, were granted, most of our crofters would need to emigrate; for, if the outcry was wise and listened to, there is not half enough land in Britain for crofts to its country people; whereas, were our land really "*cultivated*," there would be no real need of emigration, for generations yet to come.

EILEANACH, Feb. 1885.