

**GENERAL VIEW OF THE
AGRICULTURE OF THE ISLE OF
MAN, WITH OBSERVATIONS ON
THE MEANS OF ITS
IMPROVEMENT**

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General View of the Agriculture of the Isle of Man, with Observations on the Means of its Improvement by Basil Quayle

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BASIL QUAYLE

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GENERAL VIEW
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AGRICULTURE
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ISLE OF MAN,

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE MEANS OF ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY
MR. BASIL QUAYLE,

FARMER AT THE CRIGGAINS, NEAR CASTLETOWN, IN THE ISLE OF MAN.

DRAWN UP FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE
AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT.

LONDON:

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Bt from Kyle Gletch

TO THE READER.

IT is requested that this paper, may be returned to the Board of Agriculture, at its Office in London, with any additional remarks and observations which may occur on the perusal, *written on the margin*, as soon as may be convenient.

It is hardly necessary to add, that this Report is, at present, printed and circulated, for the purpose merely, of procuring farther information respecting the Husbandry of this district, and of enabling every one, to contribute his mite to the improvement of the country.

The Board has adopted the same plan, in regard to all the other districts in the united kingdom; and will be happy to give every assistance in its power, to any person, who may be desirous of improving his breed of cattle, sheep, &c. or of trying any useful experiment in husbandry.

LONDON, FEB. 1794.

SITUATION AND EXTENT.

THE Isle of Man is nearly centrally situated between Great Britain and Ireland. The middle of the island is in 54 deg. 46 min. north latitude, and is computed to be 32 miles long, and 12 broad in the widest part. Five twelfths are heathy mountains, and moorish ground; and the remainder arable, pasture, and meadow land.

HILLS.

A CHAIN of hills and mountains run nearly the length of the island, and occupy a very considerable part of the center: these are pastured with sheep, colts, and young black cattle, and afford fuel, from the peat mosses, for the greater part of the inhabitants. The right of pasture belongs to the public. The prospect from Snefield or Snowfield, the highest mountain (computed to be 580 yards above the level of the sea) is very extensive; as from thence on a clear day, not alone the whole island, but also the three neighbouring kingdoms, and the principality of Wales, may be distinctly seen.

LOW LANDS.

THE two extremities of the island are of this description, and abound with good arable and pasture land. The south end is composed of many different soils, of which the greater part is loam. Stiff clays, which are difficult to till, prevail in some places, and sand in others. Lime-stone bottom lays under a very considerable tract; the expence of raising it, prevents its being used as a manure so generally as it ought.

Great quantities of sea wrack, or alga marina, are driven ashore by the winter storms, which prove a valuable acquisition to the cultivators of barley within two miles of the shore; it has also been tried for potatoes, and answers extremely well as to quantity, but inferior in quality to what is raised on farm yard dung. This manure is found to be of a volatile nature, as to be totally expended the second crop. The extremity of the island, to the northward of the mountains, is a plain containing about 48 square miles of valuable improvable land, and mostly consists of a sandy loam, on a bottom of clay or marl; it also contains an extensive moor, which, within these ten years, has been improved by means of a large open drain. Another tract of 500 acres of flat clay is dedicated to hay, and appertains to different estates in the neighbourhood which have no other meadowing.

RIVERS.

RIVERS, or more properly streams, (as none run a course of above six miles, and few above half that distance) are numerous. The four principal streams take their rise in the mountains, and have their exit at the four towns, where they form harbours. In their course they are essentially useful for the several corn and flax mills, and abound with trout and salmon in the season of the year.

CLIMATE.

THE climate is rather milder than in the neighbouring parts of Great Britain and Ireland, particularly in winter, the frost and snow being slight and of short continuance: on the other hand, a disadvantage arises from the want of that heat in summer.

summer so friendly to vegetation, which causes late harvests, and of course prevents the grain from arriving at its full size and weight, and reduces the value of the straw for fodder.

Frost and snow seldom appear here before Christmas, and within these few years have been so slight as to be little impediment to cultivation.

The island being much exposed by its situation in the middle of the Channel, suffers much from gales of wind and falls of rain, which are frequent, and of long continuance. In the spring months easterly winds often prevail, and render the seeding of the land more difficult, and less complete; they likewise prove very prejudicial to the tender shoots of corn.

TOWNS AND POPULATION.

THE island is divided into seventeen parishes, and has four towns. Castletown is the chief, and seat of government, situated near the southern extremity; and contains about 500 houses; on an average of five to a family, the number of inhabitants amounts to 2500. In the center of the town stands an old castle, which, although built seven hundred years, is in a high state of preservation; and gives the name to the town.

Douglas is considerably larger, and is the chief place of trade, being the best dry harbour in this part of St. George's Channel; it has 900 houses, and at five to a house, makes the number of inhabitants 4500.

Ramfay has not above 300 houses, and 1500 inhabitants; although an indifferent harbour, it has a good roadstead, where outward bound ships often shelter in gales of westerly wind.