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Pork in the Rural Diet of Scotland

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A study of the diet of rural Scotland over the last two hundred years, down to the period between the two World Wars, makes it abundantly clear that oatmeal in its several prepared forms was the basic food[1], along with milk and milk products. The introduction of the potato in the mid-eighteenth century had a profound effect on patterns of eating, with regional variations that remain to be worked out in detail, the fullest study to date being that of Salaman[2]. The use of meat, however, was rare amongst the rural population in the 1790s, and though by the 1840s it had become more widespread, it was still far from being an everyday item in the diet[3].

The following notes examine the techniques of killing pigs and curing pork on the farms from the nineteenth century till very recent times. An enquiry made early in 1970 about pig killing and pork curing produced a good deal of detailed information about the practice as it survived until official regulations regarding the home killing of animals, combined with the ready availability of butcher meat, made it no longer economic or necessary. The answers come mainly from southern and east central Scotland, but also from Caithness and the northern Isles.

Feeding the Pig. Since a pig could give bacon for a family of four to six, it was a valuable addition to the year's supplies. It provided not only fresh meat at killing time, but also cured pork for the rest of the year.

The common practice was to buy a piglet about April and feed it for slaughter the following winter. Just after the first World War, in Dumfriesshire, a piglet of 40–55 lbs cost £ 5–7, about 2/6 a lb. About 1 cwt. of pig-meal at 36/– a cwt. was consumed each month, along with household scraps. Indian corn was also used as pig-feed.

Before pig-meal was in vogue, or where it was little used, the food was mainly potatoes boiled in the "pig's pot" over the kitchen fire in the afternoon. They were mashed when cooked, along with maize meal and parings, and fed to the pig when cold, with skimmed milk if this was available.

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[1] A. Fenton, Hafer- und Gerstenmehl als Hauptgegenstand der schottischen Nahrungsforschung. Ethnologia Scandinavica (1971) 149–157.

[2] R. N. Salaman, The History and Social Influence of the Potato. Cambridge 1970 (reprint), 344–408.

[3] R. H. Campbell, Diet in Scotland. An Example of Regional Variation, in: Our Changing Fare, ed. J. C. Mackenzie and J. Yudkin. London 1966, 48.

About 1920–30 the favourite kind of pig was the short, deep, very fat Cumberland type. In more recent times there has been a preference for a pig with a longer, leaner body[4], a reflection of the modern housewife's taste.

In Ayrshire where bacon-curing became commercialised in the nineteenth century, home-feeding remained the basis of the business. Craig and Edgar's ham curing establishment in Ardrossan, for example, bought litters of piglets at Kilmarnock Market and put them out to local farmers at Ardrossan, West Kilbride, and on the island of Arran. When they were big enough for killing, members of the firm would go to the farms, kill and bleed the pigs, and bring them back with a horse and cart for processing. The farmers who had reared the pigs called once a year to be paid, and were always given a dram of whisky, along with home-baked oatcakes and lumps of Dunlop cheese[5]. The fame of Ayrshire bacon became so great, in fact, that the firm of Walter Mitchell & Sons Ltd., established in Ayr in 1848, were by 1903 selling a variety of different cuts of pork not only in Scotland and England, but also in Boulogne, Brussels, Le Havre, Lyons, Paris, Lausanne, Nancy, Alexandria, Malta, Las Palmas, Capetown, Constantinople, Interlaken, Genoa, Barcelona, Bombay, Beirut, Madeira and Tunis[6].

Killing generally took place on the farms from October till April, when the pigs were between six months and a year old. A good diet of milk and potatoes, supplemented with pig-meal, would bring them on fast. If a farm-worker did not have a cow, however, no surplus milk would be available, and the potatoes he got as part-wages would not be freely fed to the pig, which would often have to rest content with peelings and what it could forage for itself. The condition and quality of the pig, therefore, was sometimes related to the farm-worker's conditions of service.

Killing the Pig. Two methods of killing the pig were in use. The most primitive was to tether it, stun it, cut its throat, and leave it to run around till it had bled to death. Throat cutting has been recorded in Shetland, and in the upland parts of Inverness, Aberdeen, Angus, and Perth. It was the standard technique for slaughtering sheep, and this may well have had an effect on the method of killing pigs. It had the advantage, as far as bleeding was concerned, that the heart was

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[4] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish, Dumfries, MS Archive No. 1970–3.
[5] Information from Mrs. I. C. G. Stewart, Ayr, MS Archive No. 1970–2.
[6] W. Mitchell & Sons, of Ayr, MS Account Book, 1903–1926.

left undamaged to pump out as much of the blood as possible—an important factor in ensuring that the pork kept well.

In the words of an Aberdeenshire farmer:

"My late Father killed Pigs for about 10 Miles around us every Winter. He was what you would say an Expert at the Job.

1st the Sow or Pig was kept with Clean Bedding for a few days before.

2 His Methed in those days were a Bowl of Bruised corn just in front of its Door and he Stood Just Back a little when It was at the Bowl he aimed a blow in the Centre of its scull with a 2 lbs. Pin Hammer he used it for Breaking metal for roads. The next thing was cut its throat to get all Blood out".[7]

Any suitable implement was used for stunning—a felling axe, a pickaxe, a hammer, even a mallet made of a bowling-green bowl attached to a shaft—and as a preliminary to take up the pig's attention, a rope with a slip-knot was sometimes put about its snout, or an enticing bowl of food was offered.

Where pigs were being handled on a commerial scale, they were often slung upsides down from a pulley after being stunned, and "when in this position a sharp knife is inserted into the throat of the animal, and the blood is let out and may be caught so as to be used for blood-puddings, or it may be allowed to run to waste, or thrown on the manure-heap".[8] Hanging up to bleed could also take place on the farm.

It seems to have been much more common to *stick* the pig, however, especially in the Borders and Lowland districts. A former Border shepherd, now a drystone-dyker and molecatcher, explained that the shepherd was usually the slaughterman on the farms, killing pigs both for the farmer's own household, and for the men. The men worked as a team, dealing with each one's pig in turn. Killing was done in the forenoon or at midday. The pig was taken from the *soo-cruives* (sow-pens), stood on straw, stunned, and turned on its back. One man straddled it, holding down its forelegs (Plate I), whilst the shepherd *stuck* the pig by thrusting a sharp butcher's knife or *gully* (fig. 1a) through the break in its collar bone down to its heart. The blood gushed out, and the pig was left on its side till quite dead, after which its feet were folded tight underneath it to make the least possible bulk

[7] Information from Mr. V. M. N. Smith, Aberdeen, MS Archive No. 1970–18.

[8] L. M. Douglas, Bacon Curing on the Farm. Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland 24 (1912) BVk III.

for the next stage[9]. Sometimes killing was done on a killing stool (fig. 5).

Preparing the Carcase. Whilst the men were killing the pig, the women were boiling water for scalding or *plotting* the carcase. The water, just off the boil, could be ladled over the pig, a bit at a time, as it lay on the straw with its feet folded under it, or could be used to fill a *plotting tub* in which the carcase was immersed. This could be an oval tub or a half-barrel, or sometimes a specially made wooden trough about 6 feet long by 2½ feet deep, with lifting handles at each end. As a rule, in the crofting districts, the plotting tub was kept by one crofter and went the round of the crofts as required.

The process of scalding softened and loosened the *birse* or bristles which could then be removed with a scraper, such as a knife, hoe-blade, or, in one instance, a bull's hoof shed with an iron blade (Figs. 2, 3). Scraping was done against the lie of the bristles, with the scraper held fairly upright, an outer layer of skin, the *scruff*, being removed at the same time. The carcase was then splashed down with clean, cold water and dried off. A well plotted carcase would have a nice white clean skin, but if the water was too hot the skin would be reddened. In Lochaber, after cleaning, the pig was cut in half down the back and only then were the pieces put in a boiler to soften the bristles before scraping them off[10].

The next stage was to slit open the brisket. The back passage was also cut out. Then the hind legs were splayed and the hooked ends of a *gambrel*, *camrell* or *hangerel* of wood or iron (fig. 4) inserted through slits under the sinews and muscles so that the pig could be hoisted upsides down by a pulley block and tackle from the couples of the barn or grain-loft roof, or from a ladder.

In this position, the pig was slit down the middle and disembowelled. First the sheet of fat, or *net*, was stripped from the intestines which were either thrown away or kept to be washed and cleaned by the women for making mealy puddings. According to an account from Dumfriesshire, "the entrails [were] gently removed into a bath or an apron tied round the waist of the man doing the job. The puddings were brought into the house, dumped in the kitchen sink, and had to be 'sorted' whilst warm. This meant 'reddin' the puddings, or gently separating the fat and tissue which held them together, till there were long lengths of pudding, and the fat was kept to be rendered, later.

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[9] Information from Mr. T. Arres, Roxburgh, MS Archive No. 1970–19.
[10] Information from Mrs. Hutcheon, Inverness, MS Archive No. 1970–13.

These puddings were rather smelly, so were taken to running water, such as a small burn or a tap outside and thoroughly washed and emptied of their contents. They were turned outside in, and soaked in salt water, then turned every day in fresh salted water till required for mealie puddings ete."[11]

The diaphragm was cut out next, then the *lights*, liver, and heart, all of which were hanging on the wind-pipe or *strap*. One or two sharp pointed *belly-sticks* were used to keep the carcase open.

In some places it was left hanging for three days or more, but in the Borders it was common to cut up the carcase in the evening of the same day, or the day after. It was cut in two up the backbone, the feet were cut off, the layer of fat stripped off the kidneys, and the ribs cut out, the knife being kept close to the bone. The *shanks* or thighs were also cut off, leaving the bacon parts which were sliced through where the back-bone took a bend, to give the *hind-hams*. The middle cuts were the *flakes*, and then came the *shoulder cuts*, which were generally halved at the joint—at which point the bacon could go bad—to make a *shoulder* and *shoulder end*. This resulted in eight pieces for curing: two hind hams, two flakes, two shoulders, two shoulder ends (fig. 6). The cheeks were also cut off the head, for salting. The brains were discarded, but the tongue, along with all usable offal, the heart, and odd pieces cut off the hind hams and flakes, were used for making potted head (Arres MS 1970, 19)[12].

Curing the Pork. Curing could be either wet or dry. In dry-curing, the pork was first rubbed with salt-petre to take out any bloodiness that was left, and it was then rubbed with salt. It was piled on boards in the milkhouse, and turned over and rubbed again every three or four days. The sides were taken out soonest, done with Jamaica pepper, rolled and tied, and hung from *cleeks* or hooks on the kitchen ceiling till required for use. The fore and hind quarters remained in salt for a little longer. Muslin bags were put over them before they were hung up. Three or four stones of salt, 2 oz. saltpetre, and 1 lb. soft brown sugar was enough for one pig. The salt petre was rubbed well into the joints—where the ham and shoulders were most liable to go bad—and then sugar was sprinkled over. Each piece was then rubbed with salt before being laid in a barrel, an old porcelain sink, a special earthenware container, or merely on a stone shelf or floor in the milkhouse. This was always men's work and women were rarely allowed

[11] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish (see note 4 above).
[12] Information from Mr. T. Arres (see note 9 above).

to touch the meat before it was cured. There was a suspicion that the bacon might not cure properly if women had a hand in the curing. That belief may have sprung from old superstitions, but the women had enough to keep them occupied when there was a pig-killing[13].

The usual container, however, was a half-barrel, a specially made tub, or the washing tub. Salt was sprinkled like snow on the bottom. The hind hams were laid in first, since they had to stay in longest, and were covered with half an inch of salt. More salt was sprinkled, the flakes were laid over the shoulders, and finally the cheeks at the top.

The cheeks came out after a week, and the flakes after two weeks, when they were rolled with special ham twine, bought at the ironmongers, in a spiral at 1½″ intervals. The rest of the pork came out a week later. The length of the curing period varied according to individual taste. The pieces were dripped for a day outside, before being hung up in the house.

The salt was mixed with the salt petre and in some households brown sugar was also added. No liquid was added, though the mixture did liquefy to some extent.

The spare ribs were not cured, but were eaten fresh, and it was the custom to give the shepherd who did the slaughtering a piece of spare-rib about 8 inches square, with four or five lengths of rib in it. Pieces were also distributed to friends and neighbours, who returned the compliment when the time came to kill their pig. The feet could also be boiled and eaten fresh. They were normally cut off at a length of 6–8 inches, and since they did not scrape well the hairs were singed off with a hot poker. The toes or *cleets* were sprung off with the sharp end of the poker. Though the shoulder ends could be used as roasts instead of being cured, this was regarded as an extravagant way to use pork.

Wet curing involved a brine keg, often part of an oak treacle barrel, in which some kept the cuts of pork all the time, taking them out when a slice was required[14]. The system in Glenesk, Angus, was to rub the hams with salt and place them skin side down in the barrel. After two days they were taken out and replaced skin side up, and left to sit for another day. This drained any blood out of them. Again they were removed from the barrel, which was now wiped clean, and put back skin side down, except for the top ham which was skin side up. The brine, to which 6 oz. of salpetre (said to give the hams a nice colour)

[13] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish (see note 4 above).
[14] Information from Mr. V. M. N. Smith (see note 7 above).

had been added, was then poured on. It was made strong enough to float a 2 oz. fresh egg or a small potato. White stones were used to hold the hams down, though they were lifted periodically to allow the hams to swim. In such a mixture, sides were cured in 5–7 days, and hams took 3–5 weeks[15].

More laborious but more sophisticated was a method of mixing salt, brown sugar, saltpetre, cloves, cinnamon, and spices, and putting it in the tub to liquefy. The hams were lifted out daily and the liquid rubbed in by hand, this process continuing for several weeks until all the liquid was absorbed. After this came the drying out of the hams, which were hung from the wall of the house on a sunny day. When properly dry the four hams were brought inside and hung from four hooks on the kitchen ceiling. "This method of curing, prolonged though it was, has been claimed to equal what was then Finest Wiltshire Bacon."[16]

A Border recipe for a similar mixture, to cure 16 lbs. of pork, is 1 lb. salt, ½ lb. brown sugar, ½ oz. saltpetre, 1 dessert spoonful cloves, 1 teaspoonful ginger, 1 teaspoonful cinnamon. The resulting taste was said to be very different from hams steeped simply in brine[17].

In Shetland the same recipe was known and noted down in the early nineteenth century, with the injunction to "mix all well together and rub thoroughly on the meat and pack down closely into an oak cask, filling up the holes or spaces between the lumps of meat with clean hard stones, and cover with a cloth. Let it stand for 6 weeks, then take up and wash the pieces and hang up to smoke for 12 weeks or more."[18] Such a combination of curing and smoking over an open peat fire must have given peculiarly long lasting qualities to the Shetland pork.

Sage or bay leaves also formed part of some recipes.

A method of mild curing the sides or flitches has been recorded from Selkirkshire. Six walking sticks were laid across the top of an old washing tub, which was filled with water to within an inch of the sticks. The sides were rubbed with dry salt on the skin side, and one was placed on the sticks, and covered with an inch of salt and a little brown sugar. The other side was laid on top, again covered by an inch of salt. After 24 hours they were changed top to bottom for

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[15] Information from Miss L. Davidson, Angus, MS Archive No. 1970–5.

[16] Information from M. J. Smith, Aberdeen, MS Archive No. 1970–10.

[17] Information from G. & H. Clark, Aberdeen, MS Archive No. 1970–11.

[18] Information from Lt. Col. L. D. Edmundston, Shetland, MS Archive No. 1970–9.

another day, then washed and hung up to dry. Even with such a mild cure, the sides would keep indefinitely in a dry place[19].

On a commercial scale, at the business of a Hamcurer, Cheese and Egg Merchant in Ardrossan, Ayrshire, that started in the 1860s and ran till the 1930s, curing was done in a *pickle-bine* (pickle tub), a huge cask about 8 feet across by about 4 or 5 feet deep, containing brine and saltpetre. After a few days in this pickle, the pieces were removed and the men *cinched* and rolled them into hams with twine, for sale to grocers and merchants in Ardrossan and surrounding towns and villages[20].

As a rule, hams and shoulders were hung without being boned, on the cleeks or hooks on the kitchen ceiling. They could be boned if desired, but this made them drier. To keep flies off, they were covered with newspaper and enclosed in white bags. In the words of a Dumfries informant, "the housewife had always to be vigilant as, if flies get at the bacon it would, and often did, get maggots in it. These soon ate away the meat into the bone and were difficult to get rid of. This usually happened to the ham, as it was not so salty, or perhaps the flies knew which was the most tasty to eat!"[21]

Uses as Food. When the men's work of killing, cutting up, and curing was over, the women's still went on. There was little of the pig that could not be used by them in some way or other. Even the bladder would be cleaned, filled with the rendered fat or lard, known as *sem*, and hung from the kitchen roof beside the hams or else it would be inflated with air and given to the children to play with as a football[22]. The tail might be sent by the farm lad or maidservant to a friend, as a rather doubtful joke[23].

The women had a big task to do, for since nothing was wasted in Lowland Scotland, all the cleaning and cooking had to be concentrated into a period af two or three days. Even in a cool milkhouse or pantry, the pork would not keep fresh very long.

The *liver* could be thinly sliced and fried, or stewed with onions and gravy. In parts of Highland Scotland, for example Lochaber, this was the only part of the entrails that was eaten[24].

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[19] Information from Mr. R. A. Johnstone, Selkirk, MS Archive No. 1970–15.
[20] Information from Mrs. I. C. G. Stewart (see note 5 above).
[21] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish (see note 4 above).
[22] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish (see note 4 above) and Mr. R. A. Johnstone (see note 19 above).
[23] Information from Mrs. E. R. Dalgleish (see note 4 above).
[24] Information from Mrs. Hutcheon (see note 10 above).

The *kidneys* and the *heart* could be chopped into pieces and put in a stew, or else used in making potted meat. The heart might also be boiled and eaten cold, in the same way as the *tongue*. The lungs or *lichts* were not used for human consumption, but could be boiled and fed to the hens.

The *fat* from inside the carcase and around the intestines was cut into 1 inch squares and heated over the fire or in the oven until all the liquid fat could be poured off. This operation could take two or three hours. The crisp brown pieces of *crackling* or *scrouting* that remained were kept for use in making mealy puddings. Another way of melting the inner fat was to strip off the skin, put it in a stone jar or other suitable container, and place it in a saucepan of boiling water. It simmered gently and as it melted the clear fat could be carefully poured from the sediment. It should be put into small jars or bladders, and kept in a cool place.

The inside fat of the pig before it was melted, known as the *flead* in the Pitlochry area of Perthshire, "makes exceedingly light crust for pastry and is particularly wholesome. It may be preserved a length of time by salting it well, and is then good for all kinds of cooking and takes the place of lard."[25]

The *pig's feet* were considered to be a delicacy by some when cooked. Quite often they were boiled in the pot for the potted meat and helped to make the meat *jell*. The *ears* were treated much in the same way. The feet could also be kept for use in making potato or lentil soup.

The *head* was cut into four pieces and the *cheeks* removed. A week's curing made them ready to slice and fry as bacon. Alternatively, they could be scored and roasted and eaten cold. Sometimes *brain cakes* were made by cooking the brains, then mincing them and mixing them with egg, bread crumbs, and seasoning. The mixture was made into flat cakes and fried. In some areas, such as Caithness, the head was salted, and bits taken off and made into soup.

Fresh pieces of meat, *collops* taken from the back, were stewed or fried.

The *spare ribs* could be roasted or made into *stovies*, stoved potatoes. For this, the rib and a chopped onion were put into a pan with a little water and cooked for about an hour. Potatoes were then added, with a little salt, and everything simmered together for an hour or more. As a main dish, this was on the table every day till the spare ribs were used up.

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[25] Information from Miss J. Dow, Perth, MS Archive No. 1970–4.

Potted meat or brawn (also called *potted head* or *potted hough*, depending on whether the head or the thigh, which has a lot of soft gristle in it, was a main element) was made from pieces of the head, feet, kidneys and heart, boiled for 2 or 3 hours till the flesh was soft. They were then removed and the liquid or stock strained and left to set. The meat was stripped from the bones and minced. It was boiled up again with the stock, from which most of the fat had been removed, seasoned with salt and black pepper, and put into bowls or moulds to set. The making of potted head could take a lot of time. The head had to be scraped and cleaned, and the brains had to be removed. This was usually done by the slaughterman. It was steeped for two or three days in salt and water, and then boiled for a whole day, along with some rib bones and the feet.

Potted meat can still be readily bought in butchers' shops.

Sausages and *mealy-* and *black-puddings* were made in quantities in Lowland Scotland from pig's intestines. In the Highlands, however, it was primarily the intestines of sheep that were used for this purpose. The meat used in the sausages was fresh pork trimmed from the bacon before it was salted, and any odd pieces, which could amount to 8 or 10 lbs. in all. This was minced and formed into 1 lb. handfuls. For each pound, a teaspoonful each of salt and pepper was added. Two or three slices or bread were soaked in water and squeezed dry before being mixed with the meat.

The small intestines were used for sausages. They were cleaned by being laid on a wooden board and scraped with a blunt knife, then blown up and washed again before being filled, through a funnel.

The small intestines were also used for *white puddings*, made of flour, lard, currants, and a little sugar and salt. They were cooked gently for half an hour, and kept for later consumption, either fried with bacon, or fried by themselves in butter.

The large intestines were washed, turned outsides in, washed again, and scoured with salt—a job that took two or three days. The *mealy pudding* mixture was made by adding a few pounds of oatmeal and seasoning to the crackling from the rendered fat. This was well mixed and warmed, and then the larger pieces of crackling were removed. Suet could replace the crackling, and onions, salt, and pepper were also put in. The mixture could be fed in by holding one end of the intestine open with two fingers of one hand. Some people filled the pudding by having them outsides in and then gradually turning the skin the right way round as it filled. Such mealy puddings or *mealy jimmies* were boiled gently for half an hour or a bit more after having

been tied or twisted into lengths of about a dozen. After cooling, they were stored in the meal girnel (not necessarily amongst the meal), where they remained fresh for a long time. When required for use, they were boiled again, and then roasted in front of an open fire. They could be eaten alone, or with potatoes. About seven could be made, each 7–9 inches long.

Black puddings could be made in two forms. A mixture made of the pig's blood and a few handfuls of oatmeal, with salt and pepper, could be filled into the small intestines. A crofter's wife in Caithness used the top of a clear glass bottle from which the lower half had been cut for filling black puddings, for which a finer mixture was required than for mealy puddings. The fineness of the mixture in Caithness was due to the fact that in this area, as in Orkney, bere meal and not oatmeal was mixed with the pig's blood, along with onions, pepper, salt and suet, and sometimes leeks. A good big basin of blood was used, stirred up with a tablespoonful of salt. Black puddings were first boiled, and then heated, often in the suet of the pig, in a frying pan, before eating. They were made up in lengths of about 2 feet doubled up in two links, usually tied on a stick in loops. About sixteen such puddings could be made from the intestines of one pig. Three could be boiled at a time in a big soup pot, and the juice was used as a kind of soup, with a few potatoes. The juice in which white puddings were boiled was thrown away, however. Alternatively, the black pudding mixture could be packed into a roasting tin and cooked in the oven. The puddings were simmered gently in a pot of water; the cake, when cooked, was cut into slices and fried, perhaps with bacon. The blood had to be caught and switched while it was still warm, and the oat or bere meal added.

The stomach bag of the pig was cleaned and used as a container for a *haggis*, a mixture of minced meat, rough oatmeal, suet and onions. Sometimes the stomach bag was halved and a suet haggis made, substituting raisins for onions. It could also be filled with the white pudding mixture.

The *fat* from the pig, when boiled and clarified, was put into earthenware crocks or into the pig's bladder, with a little salt added. It tasted good when spread on a slice of bread and sprinkled with salt and pepper, and was also a useful ingredient in making oatcakes. It was used, too, in making an oatmeal dish called *skirlie* or, in Perthshire Gaelic, *marach*. The method was to fry some onions in it, and then to add handfuls of oatmeal to the fat in the pan till all the fat was absorbed. This should be seasoned with salt and pepper and cooked for a minute

or two. Then a little boiling water was added, and the oatmeal mixture stirred off the fire till it thickened. It should not be left to boil too long, or it would turn out like porridge. "If the water is boiling, it should thicken itself, and that's where the secret in good marach making lies, especially the kind of dripping. Most people call it 'skirlie', and it's done without adding the water. But the old way is best. It tastes like haggis."[26]

Cured pork had to be properly prepared before it was ready to eat. The piece required for cooking should be left in water overnight to remove some of the salt and enable it to be cleaned. If it was wanted for boiling, it had to be put in a pan of cold water that was brought to the boil gradually, and all the scum was removed as it rose. The pork had to be simmered gently, not boiled fast, till it was tender, and should be left to cool in the water in which it was boiled[27].

In conclusion. This study had had the limited aim of putting on paper the first results of a survey, which remains to be intensified in the light of the historical background. The well known prejudice of the Highlanders against pork was breaking down by the end of the eighteenth century, though it has never quite abated, and indeed the sheep and mutton were to the Highlands what the pig and pork were to the Lowlands. Diffusion of the Lowland practice, however, did occur, and a writer on the rural diet of Scotland noted pork as a dietary element in Sutherland, Skye, and Argyll[28], though the people whose diets he was studying were farm servants rather than crofters, possibly from Lowland Scotland or of Lowland stock. The question of the uses of pork, therefore, can serve as a factor in studying Highland/Lowland interaction.

At the same time, it is clear that within the Highlands and Islands, there were areas where there was little or no prejudice against pigs, which were kept almost as part of the family, tethered by the house door or even in the kitchen itself (Plate II.). These were of the old, small, hairy breed. This too, is a matter for future study.

Acknowledgments. I am grateful to the many informants, listed in the Notes, who answered questions and filled in notebooks, and to the Misses Keith, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Calder, in Caithness, for providing detailed oral information. Material has also been used from tape-

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] R. Hutchinson, Report on the Dietaries of Scotch Agricultural Labourers, in: Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. 2. Series 4 (1869) 16, 17, 22.

recordings made by Miss A. Todd, Dumfries, and Miss S. Scott, Selkirk. The MS Account Book of the firm of W. Mitchell & Sons, Ayr, was lent by Mr. John Buchanan. I am also indebted to Miss I. Rae, Nairn, and to Miss M. F. Michie, Glenesk, for helping with enquiries.

Fig. 1. A sticking knife, which should be straight, sharp, and about 10 inches (25 cm) long in the blade. After Douglas 1924. 135.

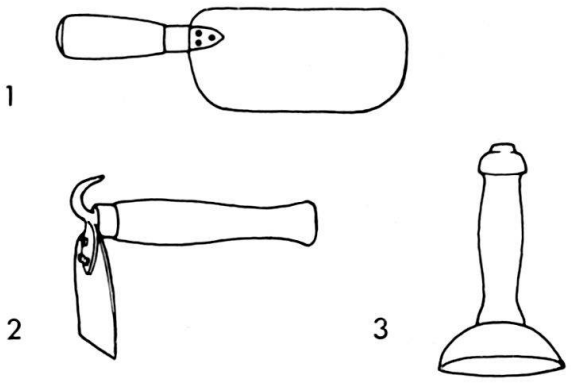

Fig. 2. Three types of pig scrapers. After Douglas 1924. 229.

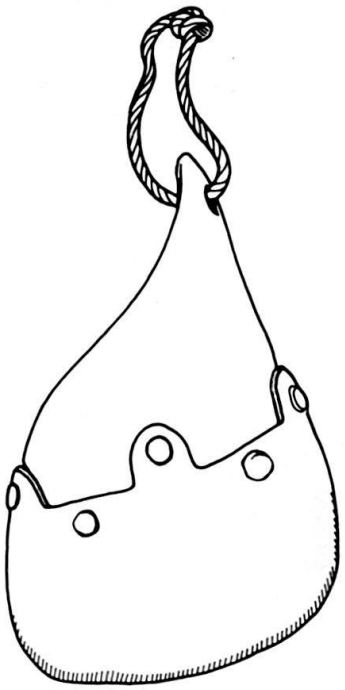

Fig. 3. A scraper made of a bull's hoof shod with an iron blade, used by four generations of the Arres family in the Scottish Borders. Now in The National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

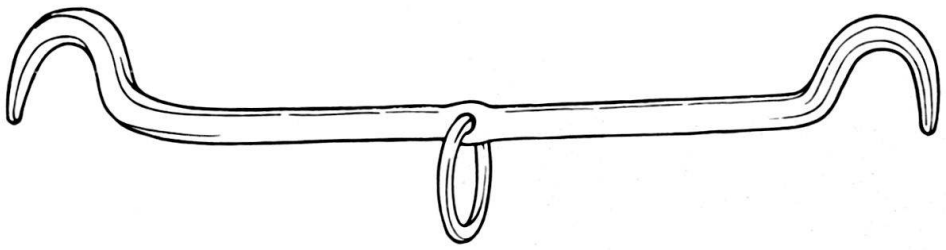

Fig. 4. An iron gambrel from Insch, Aberdeenshire. Now in The National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland.

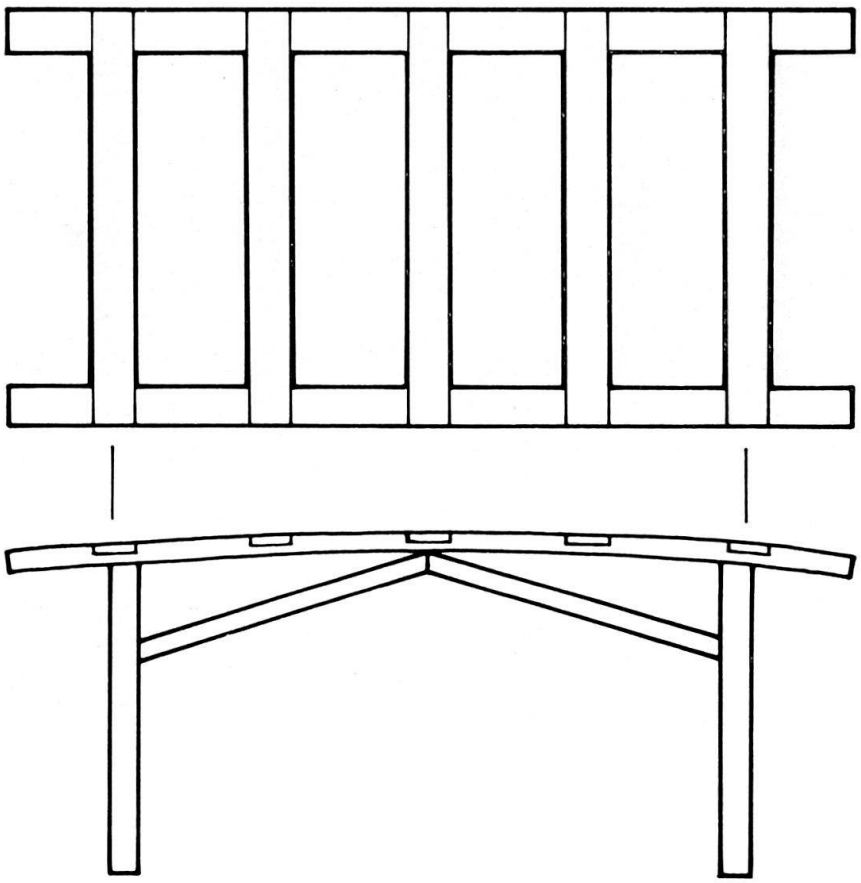

Fig. 5. A killing-stool, after a description by T. Arres, Jedburgh.

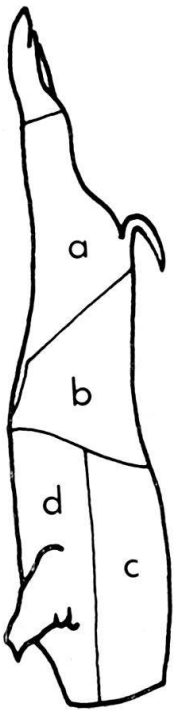

Fig. 6. "The Scotch mode of cutting up a carcass of pork."
a) the leg; b) the loin; c) the ribs; d) the breast.
After Stephens 1844. II. 239.

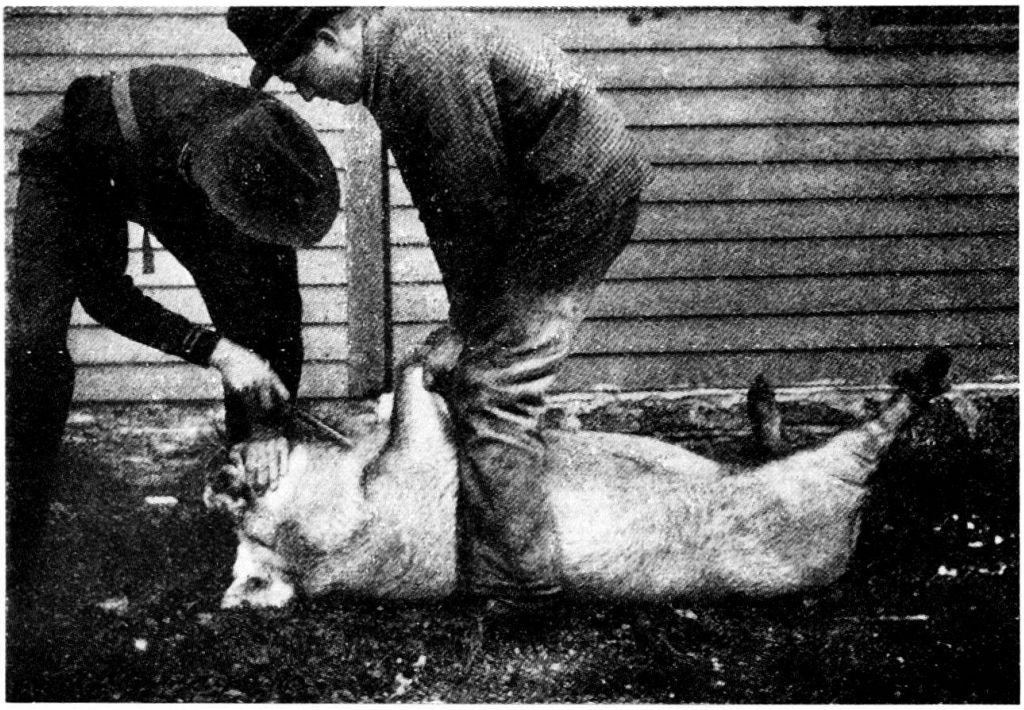

Plate I. "Sticking" the pig after it has been stunned. From Douglas 1912. III.

Plate II. A Shetland pig, tethered in the kitchen by a foreleg. From Barnard 1890. Plate IX.