SELKIRK, a lowland county of Scotland, of tortuous outline, is bounded by Midlothian on the N., by Peebles on the N. and W., by Dumfries on the S., and by Roxburgh on the E. Its extreme length from south-west to north­east is 28 miles, its greatest breadth from east to west 17, and its total area 260 square miles or 166,524 acres, of which 1997 are water. This includes two detached portions, one to the north-west, surrounded by Peebles, and another on the east, the estate and barony of Sinton, separated from Roxburgh in the reign of William the Lion on the appoint­ment of Andrew de Synton to the sheriffship of Selkirk. From its lowest altitude (300 feet) at the junction of the Gala and the Tweed the surface rises to 2433 feet at Dun Rig, a wild and desolate summit on the western boundary. Level haughs, beds of ancient lakes, occur in the courses of the rivers ; but the county is otherwise wholly mountainous and only a small proportion of it arable. Of its prin­cipal summits, Ettrick Pen (2269), Capel Fell (2223), Deer Law (2064), Herman Law (2014), are in the south, and Windlestrae Law (2161) in the north, about a mile from the borders of Midlothian. Broadly speaking, Selkirk may be said to consist of the two entire valleys of Ettrick and Yarrow and a section of the valley of Tweed, the first two sloping from the south until they merge in the last, which forms the northern portion of the county. Besides St Mary’s Loch and its adjunct the Loch of the Lowes, together about 4 1/2 miles long, there are several others of considerable size, mostly in the eastern uplands between Ettrick and Teviotdale—the two lochs of Shaws, Clearburn Loch, Kingside Loch, Hellmuir Loch, Alemuir Loch, and Akermuir Loch. These, with the larger rivers and the mountain “burns,” attract anglers to Selkirk from all parts of the kingdom.

Geologically, the Selkirk rocks are a portion of that great Silurian mass which occupies the south of Scotland from Wigtown to the north-east coast of Berwick. At no part are they known to be covered by rocks of later forma­tion ; but here and there (at Windlestrae Law and Priest- hope, for example) igneous rocks protrude in massive out­crops, almost granitic, one measuring over 100 feet in thickness. The hillsides yield inexhaustible supplies of blue-grey whinstone, suitable for building; but repeated efforts to establish slate-quarries and lead-mines have ended in failure. According to records of the 16 th century, gold was found at Mount Benger, Douglas Craig, and Linglie Burn,—“an ingenious gentleman” named Bevis Bulmer having been “ most successful upon Henderland Moor in Ettrick Forest, where he got the greatest gold—the like to it in no other place before of Scotland.”

Corresponding with the high average altitude, the pre­vailing climate is cold and wet, and, as the soil is mostly thin, over a close subsoil of clayey “till,” agriculture is carried on at a disadvantage. About the middle of the 19th century large areas of virgin soil were brought under tillage ; but the prudence of the “ improvement ” is now greatly doubted, in regard to a large proportion at least, —its restoration to permanent pasture being now found almost impracticable.

In 1884 23,263 acres, or nearly a seventh of the whole, were under cultivation and 3228 under wood. The rotation of crops most commonly followed is a six-course shift of (1) turnips, (2) barley or oats, (3), (4), (5) grass or pasture, and (6) oats. Horses in 1884 numbered 580, cattle 2657, sheep 165,061; Till about a century ago the upper farms of the county were stocked exclusively with sheep of the blackfaced breed, and in high heathery tracts these still predominate. But as altitude diminishes sheep improve in quality, from pure Cheviot to half-bred and three-quarters-bred Leicester-Cheviot Upwards of 60,000 acres, more than a third of the county, belong to the duke of Buccleuch, whose title is derived from an ancient possession of his family in the vale of Rankleburn. Other principal landowners are Mr Maxwell-Stuart of Traquair (9765 acres) and Lord Napier and Ettrick (6988 acres).

*Manufactures.—*So early as the beginning of the 17th century

the village of Galashiels did a considerable local trade in woollen cloth, then or shortly afterwards known as “ Galashiels grey,” and towards the end of the 18th century this industry was greatly stimulated by judicious grants from “the equivalent” paid by England at the Union. About the end of the first quarter of the 19th century a few novelties in pattern (mostly accidental) led to the opening up of what has now become a vast industry—the Tweed trade, which still has its acknowledged centre in Selkirk.

*Administration and Population.—*Selkirkshire with Peeblesshire forms one parliamentary constituency. Of entire civil parishes it contains only two, with parts of nine others ; there are also, taken from these, three *quoad sacra* parishes and part of a fourth. The population, 4937 in 1755 and 9809 in 1851, was in 1881 returned at 25,564,—an increase partly due to the annexation of a portion of Galashiels formerly reckoned in Roxburgh. Outside the two towns of Galashiels (population 9140 in 1881) and Selkirk population has been almost stationary for more than a century, that of the landward parishes in 1755 and 1881 being respectively as follows :—Ashkirk, 200 and 138 ; Innerleithen, 60 and 61 ; Ettrick, 397 and 397 ; Stow, 260 and 441 ; Yarrow, 1180 and 611 ; Roberton, 250 and 250.

*Antiquities and History.—*The shire is not rich in antiquities, although its hillsides here and there reveal earthen enclosures known as “British camps,” as well as tumuli yielding human remains and the usual fragments of rude pottery. A mysterious ditch, known as “the Catrail,” beginning at the north end of the county, traverses its entire extent before entering Roxburgh on its way to the English border. Besides smaller redoubts, there is on its line, at Rink in Galashiels parish, a well-preserved circular fort of formidable strength and dimensions. Near Minchmoor the Catrail is crossed by “Wallace's trench.” where, according to an historical document recently published, the Scottish patriot defied for a while the generals of Edward I. Close by is the hill-track by which Montrose escaped from the disastrous field of Philiphaugh in 1645. Newark Castle, built by James II., still stands in fair preservation, notable enough historically, but more familiar as the recital-hall of the “last minstrel’s” immortal lay. The county is dotted over with other towers of smaller size, in various stages of decay. Around them cluster those traditions which, sung in ballads full of simple force and tenderness, have made Selkirk the poet’s chosen haunt. Yarrow, “garlanded with rhyme,” has, without hyperbole, been termed “ the Tempe of the West.” Selkirk was long known officially as the “shire of the Forest,” an appellation its famous sheriff Sir Walter Scott loved to recall. Except the burgh of Selkirk, its lands, and a large tract in upper Ettrick be­longing to Melrose Abbey, the county remained long under the jurisdiction of a forest court, and its forest-steadings were held by tack from the crown till the time of Queen Mary. It was a favourite hunting-ground of Scottish monarchs and formed the dowry-land of at least two foreign princesses who became queens of Scotland. See T. Craig-Brown, *Hist. of Selkirkshire.*

SELKIRK, the county town of Selkirkshire, is on the river Ettrick, between its absorption of the Yarrow and its junction with the Tweed, and is connected by a branch railway with the Waverley line from Scotland to Eng­land. Although almost entirely a manufacturing town, having several large mills for woollen cloth and yarn, it is not without importance as the centre of an extensive pastoral area. The county offices and prison excepted, the public buildings of Selkirk are not striking. The popula­tion of the burgh was 1053 in 1735, 1800 in 1831, and 6090 in 1881.

From the charter by which David I., while prince of North­umbria, established in Selkirk the Benedictine abbey afterwards removed to Kelso, it appears that even at that remote period (1119- 24) it was an old town and the prince’s residence. David’s castle continued to be a frequent resort of his successors on the throne, particularly of William the Lion, many of whose charters were signed “ in plena curia apud Scelchircham.” Enlarged and strength­ened by Edward I., the fortress was captured by the patriotic party soon after Wallace’s return from France. Nothing now remains of it but green mounds and the name “Peel Hill.” It is significant of the destruction wrought by repeated conquests and reconquests that Selkirk, notwithstanding its antiquity and early importance, boasts not one building a century and a half old. As its early name (Scheleschyrche) implies, it was originally a collection of forest “ shiels ” beside which an early church was planted, probably by the Culdees of Old Melrose. Clear light is thrown upon the manners and customs of old border towns by the ancient records of this burgh, still extant (with gaps) from 1503. A minute of 1513 mentions the steps taken to comply with the king’s letter ordering the levy before Flodden, where, according to tradition, the burgesses of Selkirk fought with stubborn valour. James V. granted the community right to enclose 1000 acres from the common and gave them leave to elect a provost, the first to fill that office being slain