

AUTUMNAL RAMBLES
AMONG THE
SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS

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AUTUMNAL RAMBLES

AMONG THE

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINS:

OR,

PEDESTRIAN TOURIST'S FRIEND.

BY THE REV. THOMAS GRIERSON, A.M.

MINISTER OF KIRKBEAN.

"Interpone tuis interdum gaudia curis,
Ut possis animo quemvis sufferre laborem."

"With cares mix joys, that you may meet
The rubs of life with temper sweet."

Second Edition, greatly enlarged.

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DEDICATION.

TO

PROFESSOR CHRISTISON, M.D., V.P.R.S.E., &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

As one of my oldest, steadiest, and most valued friends, I beg leave to inscribe to you this little volume.

Identity of tastes, in so far as *recreation* is concerned, has prompted me to take this liberty; as, had we been otherwise placed in similar circumstances, I am convinced I should in you have found a formidable rival among the cairns and corries of the Grampians, and the thunder-split peaks of Arran and Skye.

Your ambition, however, has instigated you to soar still higher, and has now placed you on the pinnacle of professional and scientific eminence.

That you may long be spared as one of the brightest ornaments of that University in which your excellent father also laboured—whose memory as a man and a scholar I shall never cease to revere—is the ardent wish of,

MY DEAR SIR,

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

THOMAS GRIERSON.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THIS little volume principally consists of accounts carefully extended from notes which I took while exploring the scenery described. I was indebted to Mr Aird, Editor of the "Dumfries and Galloway Herald," well known as a poet and an ardent admirer of Nature, for their first introduction to public notice. They were perused with much interest by my friends and others, many of whom requested me to publish them in a collective form, for the instruction and encouragement of pedestrians, as well as the amusement of the public at large. With this view, I corrected them as accurately as I could; and, in certain cases, when not quite sure of my ground, I wrote to friends at a distance, that my doubts might be removed; so that it will considerably surprise me if any important inaccuracies be detected.

The "Three Days in Arran" letters were composed in the autumn of 1840. The "Morning Ramble in Glen Rosa" was written in July, 1844; "Merrick, Loch Enoch," &c., in autumn, 1846. "A Few Days of Recreation" was the production of September, 1848; while "The Ochils, Alva," &c., and "A Week in Skye," were written in the summer and autumn of 1849. The following anecdote and subsequent remarks may amuse my readers, and prove my fitness for this undertaking:—

Many years ago, a celebrated and expert female phrenologist came to exercise her calling in Dumfries. Being somewhat sceptical as to the science, I rather furtively repaired to her dwelling, that I might test its pretensions in my own case. She soon commenced a careful manipulation of my *cranium*, and certainly made some wonderful hits. At length, however, she pronounced me "*very ambitious.*" "You are out at last, Mrs H.," said I, "for that is by no means the case. My station in life is not generally reckoned a high one, and I never had the least desire to rise above it. I would not change places with the Archbishop of Canterbury." At first she seemed rather taken aback; but, as phrenologists have many resources, she asked, among other things, which it is unnecessary here to particularise, if I was not fond of climbing hills, and never satisfied till I reached their tops? These remarks certainly confounded me not a little, and I asked if she did not know who I was? She assured me she had not the least suspicion, and I am certain she spoke the truth.

Mountain climbing, and wandering among their dark recesses, have unquestionably all along constituted a marked feature of my idiosyncrasy. While a young boy, roaming alone among the hills of Nithsdale was one of my chief gratifications, and this taste has continued to increase ever since. Even now, when many may allege that a *Pisgah* view of another and a better land should engross my attention, there is to me nothing more exhilarating than the mountain air, and the view of distant

peaks on which I have already stood, or which I still hope to surmount; so that Mrs H., in this respect, was fully justified in the exultation she expressed; for she seemed quite as conscious of victory as was the phoca in the "Antiquary," when it waddled off to its native element with the choleric captain's cane, as the *spolia opima* resulting from their contest.

Of late years, it has been very customary for British subjects to resort to the Rhine, Switzerland, Italy, &c., in quest of similar gratification; and I must confess that, did circumstances permit, I would gladly be of their number. At the same time, I am quite of opinion, that there is very much that is interesting at home, with which many of these travellers are entirely unacquainted. Besides, few of them are sufficiently conversant with the Continental languages, to admit of their being duly edified; and the time they have at their disposal is in many instances so limited, that it is questionable if they are, in any respect, much improved by these hurried trips; whereas, the same time spent among our North or West Highlands might have sufficed for their complete investigation, and been, upon the whole, far more satisfactory.

Be this as it may, it has been my fate to roam, to a very great extent, among the mountains and lakes of my native land; insomuch, that I question if there are many who have seen more of that description of scenery; at all events, more thoroughly than I have done. Being always a pedestrian, it was in my power to investigate minutely the most

sequestered and singular objects to be found among our mountain solitudes. For many years, while my corporeal energies were at their height, it was my privilege to have several weeks in autumn to devote entirely to my favourite pursuits; and I never enjoyed myself more than when, entirely alone, or sometimes with a favourite terrier, I have jogged on from dawn till dusk, occasionally spending an hour or two angling in burn, river, or loch; for a staff-rod, and fishing-basket, in which I carried my scanty wardrobe, constituted the whole of my travelling apparatus.

Though in these times of rapid journeying, pedestrianism is much at discount, still there are some, chiefly young Englishmen, to be found among our Highland glens, not ashamed to *pad the hoof* in that humble guise which I have now been describing. It is truly refreshing for an old campaigner to meet with such enterprising youths, and pleasant to have it in one's power to give them any useful hint as to the objects most deserving of their attention, and the best modes of reaching them. It is chiefly for behoof of such gentlemen that I have been induced to publish this little volume. Had I kept notes of all my earlier rambles, it would have been of a much more enlarged and interesting character; but, as I never did so till of late, and cannot depend on my memory for strict accuracy, I have resolved to confine myself to a few recent excursions.

It may be amusing to some to know the principal mountains and hills on whose summits I have stood, and rouse young men to similar enterprise.

Owing to particular circumstances, my ambition was first principally fired among the mountains of Perthshire. Besides many others in and near Rannoch, I have been on the tops of Ben Alder, Ben-a-Hallader, Ben Molloch, Ben Oudleman, Garraval, Carey, Craig Calliach, near Killin, and no less than five times on the top of Schihallion; twice on the top of Ben Lawers; on Ben More, Ben Voirlich at Loch Earne, Ben Ledi, Ben Venu, Ben Chochan, Ben-y-Vracky, Faragon twice; Ben-y-gloe, with many others of inferior note in all parts of that county. I have also been on the tops of Cairngorm, Belrinnes, Craig Phadrig, Ben Wyvis, Ben Nevis, Ben Cruachan, Duniquaigh, Ben Lomond twice; Ben Cleuch, Dummyat, the Lomonds in Fife repeatedly; Carnethy, and many of the Pentlands; Walston Black Mount, North-Berwick Law, and Traprain Law, Goatfell in Arran twice; Barone Hill in Bute; the Storr and Quirang in Skye; Tinto, the Lowthers, and several of its neighbours, Queensberry, Cairnkinnow, Hartfell, White Coomb, Tinnis, Mellenwood, the highest in Liddesdale, Ruberslaw, Scrape, and many on the Tweed; the Eildons, Cairnsmuir of Carsphairn, Cairnsmuir of Fleet, Merrick, Ben Ghairn, Screel, Lotus, and Criffell, oftener than for my credibility I dare mention. I have also climbed Skiddaw, Helvellyn, and Sca Fell in England, with several others among the lakes there, and Snowdon in Wales.] These, so far as I recollect, are the principal mountains and hills whose summits I have visited, being thwarted as to many more by mist and rain; so that the gifted

*Pass on to page 22 but without
any break in the printing*

lady who charged me with a desire to *rise in the world*, has by no means forfeited her professional character, in so far as I am concerned.

It may well be supposed that much fatigue, and even danger, was encountered in these chiefly solitary excursions. A broken, or even a sprained limb, would, in all probability, in many cases, have made me food for the ravens; but, through caution and a kind Providence, I never sustained any serious injury. While in Skye, a gentleman recounted an incident which came in his way, of which I should like much to hear the ultimate consequences. In going from Portree to Stenscholl, he heard cries at no great distance; and, on proceeding to the place from which they came, he found a solitary tourist who had sprained his ankle in descending the Storr, and could not walk any farther. They deliberated some time on what should be done for his relief; when it was agreed by both, that, as it was impossible the lame gentleman could be removed by his new friend, who had enough to do to get on himself, the latter should inform any shepherd he might see, or give notice of the disaster at the first cottage in his way. This was done, but the result had not transpired when we left the island. The weather being fortunately fine, it is probable that no serious consequence would ensue, even though he should have spent the night on a heather bed.

As the very best advice I can give pedestrians, I would recommend early rising, and always turning over a good long stage before breakfast. This

I never failed to do when a young man; and even now I like walking before breakfast best when on a journey. Fifteen or twenty miles before nine o'clock was my ordinary arrangement. This made the remainder of my journey comparatively easy; and, after being fairly on the road, I generally enjoyed this part of my work most. Breakfast in such circumstances is doubly welcome, and is seldom much of a remuneration to the provider. Upon the strength of it, I always finished my day's work before partaking of a second meal, which was all I required or cared for in the twenty-four hours. These terms, combined with my long journeys, prevented others from being anxious to accompany me in my Highland expeditions.

On reading over what has been written, I find my preface has been not a little egotistical; but, from the nature of the case, this could not well have been otherwise. At the risk of incurring this charge, and also of being tedious, I shall narrate two or three of my numerous rambles when in the prime of life, to prove what may be done by patience and perseverance, for I never was a quick walker.

In the autumn of 1811, the year of the great comet, I left Glasgow early, breakfasted at Dumbarton, went up Loch Lomond side, crossed at Rowardennan, went over the shoulder of Ben Lomond to Blairhulichan, and stayed all night at Ledard, on the north side of Loch Ard. Next morning started at four, crossed the mountains to Loch Katrine, where I was boated over by a shepherd; over the mountains again, through the Forest

of Glen Finglas and its deep bogs, to Balquhidder; over the mountains again to Glen Dochart and Killin; over the mountains again to Glen Lyon; and once more across the mountains to Loch Rannoch side, which I reached before twelve o'clock at night—as severe a mountain fag as perhaps ever was performed in one day.

Upon another occasion, I left Edinburgh for Meggerny Castle, near the head of Glen Lyon, which I reached on the evening of the second day; spent three days there in almost constant severe exercise, and returned to Edinburgh on the eighth day, after having spent the whole of the Sabbath in Perth on my return. This was performed in broiling hot weather, which made it doubly fatiguing.

The next expedition I shall mention, was crossing the Clyde at Greenock, starting early from Roseneath, proceeding by the Gare-loch and Loch Long to Arroquhar, where I breakfasted; thence to Tarbert; up Glen Falloch to the top of Ben More, where I saw the sun set magnificently in the ocean; was benighted in descending the mountain, and slept that night in a barn among delicious new hay, after partaking of a plentiful repast of porridge and milk, handed to me through a window, as the good folk would not open their door to a stranger at such a late hour. Next morning, very early, I passed the inns of Crianlarich and Tyndrum, and breakfasted at Inveroran; on again by Kingshouse and Glencoe to Ballachulish, where I slept. Next morning crossed Loch Leven, breakfasted at Fort-William, climbed Ben Nevis, descended on the

south-east side of its awful precipices, scrambling occasionally over snow as hard as ice; crossed a vast extent of horrid morass, and slept at a shepherd's house on the Spean. Next morning visited the Parallel Roads, as they are called, of Glen Roy; then by Loch Treague and Loch Ossian, to another shepherd's house at Carrowar, where I again found quarters; from which, next day, I easily reached Rannoch—the end of that trip.

The last of these excursions I shall now notice, was crossing the Forth at Edinburgh, keeping the Fife coast to near the East Neuk; thence to St Andrews, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, Stonehaven, Aberdeen; up the Dee to Castleton of Braemar; from which, along with two gentlemen whom I casually met at the inn, I started very early, went to the top of Cairngorm, then down by Rothiemurchus to Avie More. On this occasion, it was my intention to have climbed Ben Macdhui on the same day with Cairngorm, as they are in juxtaposition; but one of my companions became so overpowered with fatigue, that his friend and I could, with the utmost difficulty, get him on to Avie More. Next morning, I passed through Cromdale to Inveraven, next to the top of Belrinnes, thence to Fochabers, Inverness, Cromarty, Beauly; back to Inverness, where I had the gratification of accompanying the present King of the Belgians and suite to the Caledonian Canal. This was soon after losing his first wife, the Princess Charlotte. From Inverness I went to Loch Ness, in which I caught some fine grilse and sea-trout; but here, as at Loch Katrine, rod-fishing

has been much injured by steam-boats; then by Inverfaragag, and General's Hut, to Fort-Augustus; thence by Corryarrack to Garviemore, Dalwhinnie, down the whole length of Loch Ericht, on whose sequestered banks I got excellent fishing, to Rannoch.

In all these expeditions I had fine weather, but very hot, which always greatly increases the fatigue. Often, however, have I been obliged to toil on from morning till night in heavy rain, when, on rising early, I could scarcely thrust my limbs into my clothes, contracted by the drenching of the previous day. This, of course, could not be endured by any one whose constitution is not vigorous, though I have reason to believe that it tended greatly to strengthen mine. In all these expeditions, I am not aware that I ever derived any assistance from conveyances of any description. There were few stage-coaches or steam-boats in the times to which I allude; the few that existed seldom lay in my route, nor would they have suited my finances, if they had. Though I have occasionally been glad of the shelter of a barn or hay-rick during night, I never was exposed to such hardship as a certain young friend of mine, who spent a wet and stormy one under a rock on the side of Loch Aven, nearly 2000 feet above the level of the sea!

In closing these prefatory remarks, which have swelled greatly beyond my original intention, I would warn pedestrian tourists against a free use of whisky, or any such deceitful means of excitement and support. No doubt a prudent and temperate use of spirits may fit a man for occasional extraor-

dinary exertion ; but, if that exertion is to be long sustained, he is much better without it. Such stimulants, frequently resorted to, always produce languor, enervate the frame, and thus do more harm than good. Often, indeed, the incautious pedestrian, without by any means having a liking for the liquor, has sacrificed his life to what he conceived was the best means of preserving it, and of invigorating his exertions.

Another caution worthy of attention is, not to indulge too much in drinking rich milk—a beverage most tempting to a hungry and thirsting pedestrian, and which is often pressed upon him by the kindly mountain dames. Oftener than once have I suffered in this way, more especially on my return from Ben-a-Hallader, at the source of the Orchy, after crossing and re-crossing the horrible Moor of Rannoch. The day was one of the hottest, and, for want of better, I had partaken largely of moss water, having scarcely tasted food since an early breakfast. The consequence was, that I verily believe the dose I got from a good woman at a shieling, near the east end of Loch Lydoch, would have finished me, had I not soon after fallen into the hands of kind and judicious friends. This huge mountain, Ben-a-Hallader, is rarely visited. The approach to it from Brae Lyon, or Loch Tulla, may be practicable enough ; but let no man try it by the Moor of Rannoch, unless he be well prepared for a *longer journey*, especially if he falls in with a *shieling* on his return.

I have committed this little volume to the press,

with a view of reviving a taste which, I lament to find, is subsiding among the Scotch. They are now becoming too luxurious for fagging among their native mountains. Many of them can talk of their glorious glimpses of the Alps and Apennines, who know no more of our own glorious Grampians than what is to be seen from Arthur Seat or Stirling Castle! Let them take advice from one who has had much experience in pedestrian exercise, and who, in sporting phrase, may still be regarded as "a good ould un," and they will find that, physically, intellectually, and morally, they will be more benefited by spending their spare time and cash among the rivers, lakes, and mountains of their native land.

There may be some inclined to find fault with me for publishing these pages. I have already, indeed, sustained some obloquy in this matter. But so long as this taste does not interfere with, but rather stimulates to, professional exertion, I care not for their vituperation, seeing that it can only proceed from the morose, cynical, and narrow-minded. Man is so constituted, that relaxation of one kind or another is indispensable for his well-being, as well as for the efficient discharge of his severer duties. Now, this being the case, I maintain, that we not only *may*, but *ought* to obtemperate this salutary craving of nature. The Deity has not only implanted the desire, but graciously provided the means for its gratification—" *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit*;" so, "What God has given, let not man despise."

T. G.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IT is not a little gratifying, that, in these days, when the sale of books, like most other commodities, is much at discount, a second edition of my "Rambles" should be in demand. This, I am aware, is in a great measure to be attributed to the particular *walk* in literature which I have chalked out for myself; for it would be presumptuous in no ordinary degree, when so many abler pens are at work, to ascribe my success to any intellectual superiority. In the department of *pedestrianism*, I have not much dread of a rival, for some time, at least, though I shall be most happy to yield the palm to any aspirant in that way, who may have been called to the field by the perusal of my lucubrations.

My success is also much owing to the very favourable manner in which my little book has been reviewed in many of the most respectable periodicals throughout the kingdom, though in few of them did my advertisements appear, and my personal acquaintance with any of their editors or contributors is extremely limited. To the "Athe-

næum," in particular, I am much indebted for its very flattering eulogium, as, from the high character which that work bears, there can be little doubt of the "Rambles" being extensively perused throughout England, more especially at the University seats, from which principally our spirited and enterprising pedestrians are now-a-days known to emanate.

Among other highly complimentary remarks in that distinguished journal, my reviewer states:—"Walking tours may be regarded as a peculiarly English pastime; for, though more decently clad persons are found on the roads of Germany than on those of our own country, these are the *hand-workers* travelling professionally—not students and men of means taking exercise out of mere love of adventure and of physical exertion. Mr Grierson speaks with enthusiasm of the hundreds of young English whom he has met with on the hills and by the lochs of his romantic country," &c.

Of these young men, every person *must* speak enthusiastically, who has met them, as I have frequently done, in the wildest and most barbarous scenes imaginable, making light of the numberless discomforts surrounding them, expatiating, with clever and good-humoured volubility, on the strange characters with whom they have recently been associated, and expressing unbounded admiration of a country which, in every respect, contrasts so diametrically with their own. Envidable, indeed, must be their feelings, released for a season from the trammels of college life, their health and strength

renovated by change of scene and salutary exercise, whilst their minds are expanded by intercourse with a description of men who, though rude in manners and in speech, are yet possessed of many of those sterling qualities which contribute mainly to the worth and dignity of our race. And scarcely less enviable must be their social intercourse at Oxford and Cambridge, in their hours of respite from classical and scientific pursuits, when, with youthful buoyancy and glee, they recount their various exploits and experiences among the savage glens, foaming torrents, and heath-clad mountains of Caledonia.

It was principally with a view of encouraging and enlightening such interesting young men, that I resolved, at my ripe age, to appear before the public in the capacity of a *mountaineer*, and I rejoice to think that my exertions of head, hand, and feet, have been duly appreciated. This new edition will be found to contain nearly a half more matter than the former, though the price will be comparatively little increased. Deeside, owing to its being that district of Scotland chiefly favoured by royalty, must be particularly interesting to tourists. This consideration induced me to dwell at some length upon its attractions; and, if reliance is to be placed on the opinion of many of my friends, by whom my remarks have been perused, my efforts in this instance, compared with what I have formerly written, have been more than commonly successful.

Excepting in cases where a mere *jeu d'esprit*

was evidently my object, I have been most careful to adhere scrupulously to matter of fact, and I possess the amplest testimony that I have succeeded in this most essential point. A learned professor in Glasgow College writes—"I have followed you from the Broomielaw to the Point of Ardnamurchan, the extent of my travels in that direction, and can vouch for the strict accuracy of all your statements." The worthy minister of Strath, in Skye, avers that, "All my remarks as to that island are just and correct;" and another esteemed clerical friend says, "I am glad to learn that a new edition of your 'Rambles' is forthcoming. I gave my copy to a friend near Glasgow, who writes that he has found it of great service to him in *his rambles*, and that it is correct to the minutest particular."

In addition to the list of hills enumerated in my former preface, I may here state that I have since ascended ~~E~~ Etteric Penn, Wind Fell, and Loch Fell, near Moffat; Birrenswark, near Ecclefechan; and Lochnagar, Mor-ron, Ben Macdhui, &c., on the Dee. Some may feel disposed to ridicule my including such puny eminences as Birrenswark. In reply, I have to remark, that such hills as that are named, not on account of their *height*, but on account of their *position*, or *historical association*. Thus, Birrenswark exhibits the remains of one of the most distinct Roman camps to be seen in Britain; whilst Craig Phadrig, of nearly equal altitude, has been much celebrated for its vitrified fort. Though I have included these and similar insignificant hills in my list, I have omitted many

which every one climbs, and others four or five times their height, but not remarkable, being overtopped by neighbouring mountains on whose summits I have stood.

In this second edition, appears a very correct and interesting representation of Balmoral. My fellow-traveller, Mr Donaldson, furnished the original sketch; and I am indebted to Mr Alexander Ritchie for the very tasteful manner in which he has executed the engraving of this, as well as of the frontispiece. The view of Balmoral was taken from the private walk leading from the public road to the Queen's Arbour, on the south side of the Castle. The river Dee is on the north side, close to the mail road, and the Castle stands, as nearly as may be, half way betwixt these roads. The grounds around the Castle are as trim and neatly kept, and the verdure as fresh and soft, as can be seen at any of the royal palaces in merry England, while rude rocky mountains ascend on every side.

Nearly a mile down the river, there is an iron bridge, leading to the church, &c. This bridge is not reckoned very secure, so that her Majesty generally, if not always, leaves her carriage, and walks across, when travelling in this direction. Near the south end of the bridge, are several cottages tenanted by some of the humblest of her Majesty's subjects. These tenements are gradually assuming a neat and comfortable appearance, and her Majesty takes much pleasure in inquiring into the circumstances of the inmates, and removing their wants. The Lochnagar Distillery is in the immediate vicinity,

but much screened by woody and rocky eminences. As Prince Albert honours this erection with his patronage, it is presumed his whisky-flask will frequently be replenished from its produce, when on his stalking excursions among the mountains.

T. G.



J. Donaldson, Aug^r 1850.

BALMORAL FROM THE SOUTH.

A. Ritchie, Lith. Edin^g.

THREE DAYS IN ARRAN

IN 1840.

First Day.

A REMARKABLE change has taken place within the last twenty years, as to a taste for pedestrian excursions among young men of rank and education. Some time ago, it was quite customary for gentlemen to set out on foot to visit the romantic districts of our Highlands and islands, with no other accommodations in the way of dress than were contained in a knapsack or fishing-basket. The writings of Scott, Wilson, &c., aided by their example, no doubt tended greatly to create and keep alive this spirit; and it can as little be doubted, that the facilities in travelling afforded by steam-boats and coaches have crushed it, and rendered the Scottish youth of the present day disinclined to, and unfit for, such continued feats of activity and hardihood.

I am one of those who have enjoyed the pleasures of pedestrianism in a very high degree; and cannot help deploring the habits of indolence and effeminacy observable among young gentlemen in

these modern times. So alive are they in general to the discomforts of blistered feet, a soiled dress, and a hard couch, that they can scarcely be prevailed upon to extend their rambles beyond the regions of silk stockings and feather beds, thereby depriving themselves of much that would at once tend to invigorate their bodies, and add to their knowledge of nature and of mankind.

I have been induced to make these remarks in prefacing a notice of a three days' excursion to the Island of Arran—decidedly one of the most magnificent, and now one of the most accessible on the coast of Scotland. I left Ardrossan in the steam-packet, the Isle of Arran, on Monday. This vessel leaves the said harbour daily at half-past ten A.M., and reaches Brodick generally in less than two hours. She is a stout-built, slow, but safe boat, and her captain is as civil and smart a young man as any who navigates the Clyde. The view of Arran from every quarter is strikingly grand; and upon approaching it no one, capable of appreciating the sublime, can remain unmoved. The precipitous cliffs and savage glens become gradually more stupendous and interesting, till you reach the pretty little bay of Brodick, close under the castle of that name. Here everything looks snug and comfortable. The extensive woods surrounding the castle screen the lofty peaks from the view; and in a few minutes the passengers may be in the very commodious inn, which has been long remarkably well kept by its present kind and attentive hostess, Mrs Jamieson.

Upon reaching the inn, I proceeded to prepare myself for the ascent of Goatfell, by substituting a travelling cap for a hat, and a pair of strong double-soled shoes for boots, &c., &c. A friend provided

me with a small flask of the best Islay whisky; and precisely at half-past one, I left the bay alone. At three I reached the summit, having passed a party of three gentlemen in the way, and met with three more and two ladies on the top. The day proved one of the most favourable we have had this season. The islands of the Clyde, Bute, the Cumbræ, &c., lay like a map at our feet; while those more remote, Jura, Isla, Mull, &c., with great part of the Irish coast, and many of our most celebrated Highland mountains, were distinctly in view. But by far the most attractive object seen from Goatfell is the mountain itself, with those by which it is immediately surrounded. In this respect, Goatfell surpasses anything of the kind I ever saw, and I have climbed many of the most elevated peaks in Scotland, England, and Wales. The upper part of the mountain, as well as those adjoining, consists of naked rocks, huge masses of granite, piled up in the most grotesque and fantastic forms by nature's mighty architect. In some instances, there is an appearance of irregularity, Cyclopiæ walls, like mason work upon a gigantic scale. In other parts, the most frightful chasms appear, into which the eye cannot penetrate without a thrill of horror, while around you are seen serrated ridges, like huge devouring fangs.

I had ascended this mountain many years ago, but could then merely discern, through a thick fog, that it was well worthy of a second visit under more favourable circumstances. As this, in all probability, was the last time I should ever be there, I was resolved to make the most of it. Accordingly, I scrambled to the tops of several points on the Goatfell ridge, till I came within view of Kioch-na-hain (a most interesting peak, with, by

interpretation, a still more interesting name), all on the same side of Glen Sannox. Returning by a somewhat different route, I descended at great hazard into the upper part of Glen Sannox, passed over into Glen Rosa, close by Kier-Vohr and Castleaval, descending the said glen with unbounded admiration, but not without dread of being benighted, if not cut off, in such circumstances as might exclude the probability of my ever receiving Christian burial. The upper part of this glen is of the rudest and most romantic character. Its waters fall into the bay of Brodick. On one side rises Goatfell in all its wild magnificence; on the other, Kier-Vohr and Ben-Oosh are the most striking objects. Let the pedestrian particularly remark a ledge of lofty, perpendicular rocks, forming a screen or amphitheatre, about half-way up Ben-Oosh, of singular structure and grandeur. This glen proved much longer than I anticipated, so that my fears were in part realised, as I was fairly benighted when half-way down. The most formidable part of it, however, I had left behind me; and though I got at least a score of awkward enough tumbles, I found myself "at mine ease in mine inn" at half-past eight. Being totally ignorant of the nature of the ground, and to prevent broken bones, I kept the bed of the stream for the last mile or more, wading promiscuously through pools and shallows till I reached the bridge. Not having tasted a morsel of food since I left Irvine at eight A.M., it may readily be conceived that Mrs Jamieson's dainties disappeared with no ordinary rapidity. I was greatly surprised to learn, that in Brodick it had rained very heavily for two hours during my absence, though I had not felt a drop all day. I observed shadows of several

brilliant rainbows in the sea, proceeding from clouds that were beneath me, from which the rain must have been discharged.

Second Day.

After a sound sleep, I arose betimes, in order to explore the vicinity of Brodick Castle before the noble owner and his numerous party of sportsmen were astir. The morning was beautiful, and the bay enchanting. No place can be imagined better adapted for bathing; and were the duke disposed to improve his exchequer at the expense of his aristocratic feelings, he might have an excellent opportunity by feuing in this island. The contrary, however, is the case; and the few bathers that resort to Arran must content themselves with very indifferent accommodation. Though it be questionable how far importations of drapers and cotton-spinners from Glasgow, Paisley, &c., would add to the interest of these scenes, it cannot be doubted that their neat villas would adorn the island, and their wealth enrich the poor natives.

At the castle, I found all quiet, with the exception of the bustle occasioned by carpenters busied in constructing a temporary pavilion for the reception of the *savans* of the British Association. The castle itself is well worth visiting, both on account of its splendid situation, and its being a fair specimen of a baronial residence of several centuries standing. The apartments are said to be by no means splendid, but admirably adapted for a shoot-

ing residence. The surrounding woods are well stocked with beautiful American deer, two of which I happened to surprise; and the upper grounds, as far as heath extends, afford abundance of black game and grouse.

On descending to the beach, I walked several miles along the shore towards Lamash; and then, retracing my steps, breakfasted with a venerable professor of Glasgow College, who, having long faithfully discharged his academical labours, has been for several years enjoying *otium cum dignitate* in this delightful retreat. I was lucky enough here to partake of haddock and whiting, which I had seen alive in the hands of the fisherman. They were indeed excellent, and bespoke the services of an accomplished cook.

The arrival of the packet, particularly at this season, creates considerable excitement, as it is generally full of visitors. After waiting its arrival, I set off along the shore for Loch Ranza, of which very singular place I had once got a glimpse at sea, in passing to the Giant's Causeway, which determined me to form a nearer acquaintance, should it ever be in my power. About five miles from Brodick, there is a neat little inn at a place called Corrie. Passing this, I proceeded to the foot of Glen Sannox, where the road to Loch Ranza leaves the shore. In this glen, the Duke of Hamilton has lately erected a work for converting barytes, or heavy spar, into a substitute for white lead, in the composition of paint—an expedient which many think will be successful, but which is a very questionable one.

The farm-house and offices at Glen Sannox are by far the best on the island; indeed, they would grace the Lothians, and the tenant seems every

way worthy of them. Having an introduction, I called, and was very hospitably received. After having been instructed as to the road to Loch Ranza, and kindly convoyed for a mile or so, I proceeded on my solitary ramble through a long and very deary moor. The track I followed is in many places so obscure, that it is not easy, even in broad daylight, to keep it; I would therefore earnestly advise no one to risk being benighted in this district, there being no house of any description for eight or ten miles—especially as there is a carriage road by no means very circuitous.

Loch Ranza is a place to dream of, but such as you will rarely see in real life. It is a narrow inlet of the sea, among the lofty and steep mountains, apparently land-locked by a bold rocky precipice. On the foreground, in looking towards the sea, beyond a straggling village and small missionary church, there is a level on which stands an old castle, pretty entire, and of great strength. Eight or nine miles of sea intervene betwixt this and the coast of Kintyre, and beyond all appear the bold and lofty mountains of Jura. The sea here, as all around Arran, is of great depth, and so clear, that you may see shells or any white object forty or fifty feet from the surface. In the bay of Brodick, you have soundings from 12 to 20 fathoms; but a little farther out, from 80 to 100.

At Loch Ranza, there is a comfortable little inn, kept by Mr and Mrs M'Larty, no way connected with the Glenburnie family of that name. Upon entering, I was glad to see a roast of mutton at the fire; but, to my mortification, was informed that it was preparing for two gentlemen who had ordered it some days before. Trusting to some favourable arrangement, I loitered about the shore for an hour

or so, till the expected arrival, when I was politely invited by the gentlemen to partake. Our dinner consisted also of excellent fresh haddock ; so that we had no reason to complain of bad cheer. My companions were very genteel, agreeable young men—one had been ten years in India ; and the other, the son of a gentleman connected with the island, had just returned from prosecuting his studies in England. We spent a very happy evening together, over some excellent whisky-toddy, and tea, which the Eastern soldier had been so provident as to send along with their luggage, not trusting to the resources of this sequestered spot for that delicate commodity. In these gentlemen, I was happy to find an exception to the generality of their class in these degenerate days. They had left Lamblash early in the morning, driven to Brodick, walked up Glen Rosa, ascended the ragged crests of Kier-Vohr, and marched direct upon Loch Ranza, through many a trackless moor and raging torrent, arriving at their destination about four o'clock.

Here I may just suggest a day's work, quite practicable by young men of spirit who have the use of their limbs, and one which would be attended with no little gratification to any man who has a taste for the grand and sublime. Leave Glasgow early, either by sea or land ; breakfast at Ardrossan ; climb Goatfell ; descend by the head of Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox, and proceed direct to Loch Ranza, as was done by the gentlemen above-mentioned. I know not a more varied, comprehensive, and delightful excursion than this ; and, if the weather were clear and fine, any active healthy young man might accomplish it with ease. Not to speak of steam conveyances, it might even be ex-

tended to Kilmarnock, by taking the Independent coach at five A.M. Coaches are ready upon its arrival to convey passengers to Ardrossan in time for the Arran packet. I trust these hints will not be thrown away, but fall into the hands of some of your Glasgow readers, and induce them to devote their next few days of respite from the wareroom or desk to exploring some of nature's sublimest retreats.

As I meditated a very early departure next morning, I made all requisite inquiries of mine host as to the route by the west side of the island, and withdrew betimes to my humble but cleanly and comfortable couch. It is but justice to say, that Mr and Mrs M'Larty seem a most respectable couple; she proved a Gallowegian, which soon matured our acquaintance. Their charges are very moderate; and, as they are making some addition to their establishment, half-a-dozen visitors may soon be accommodated as well as could reasonably be expected in such a lonely situation. A more splendid retreat for sea-bathers cannot be conceived; and the arrival of a Clyde steamer twice or thrice a-week would produce a wonderful metamorphosis.

Third Day.

The weather for the last two days had been delightful; now, however, a sad reverse occurred. No sooner had I retired to anticipated slumbers, than wind and rain came on to a degree little short

of a tempest. Doors and windows rattled so, that sleep was out of the question; and the very house shook to the foundation. In this state of things, I had no difficulty in discerning the boundaries of darkness and light, as I scarcely shut my eyes. Being obliged to sail by the packet of this day, and having been informed that I had thirty miles to walk by my intended route, I started at five o'clock, with grey daylight, leaving all quiet at Loch Ranza, except the elements.

There was something inexpressibly dreary and cheerless in holding on my solitary course along the wild north-west coast of Arran under these circumstances. Close on my left arose stupendous cliffs, and on the right an angry tempestuous sea dashed its troubled waters to my very feet, as there is little more than space for a narrow Highland road intervening. The rains had converted all the streams into torrents; several of which, there being no bridges, were next to impassable. Upon one occasion, where some huge granite blocks had been carried down, I found very great difficulty. Seeing two men not far off, I requested them to lay a plank over the chasm. To this they kindly consented, holding hard by one end while I crossed. An emphatic "Gudesake, sir, tak' care o' yoursel!" was ejaculated; while the board vibrated, till it was partly immersed in the broken water. When fairly over, I bowed my gratitude, the noise of the foaming torrent being beyond the compass of the voice. This stream flows chiefly from the north side of Ben Vharren, or Barren Mountain, one of the loftiest on the island.

Here and there, one meets with miserable huts, and equally miserable crops of oats and barley along the coast; but, upon the whole, it has a de-

solate and savage aspect. The herring fishery is the principal employment of the natives. Close under the shelter of a headland, I observed no less than fifteen serviceable-looking boats, belonging probably to the islanders. One of them attempted to cross the channel while I was passing, but had not proceeded farther than a couple of hundred yards before she was obliged to put back, as the sea was dashing over her pretty freely. The opposite coast of Kintyre is extremely bleak and uninteresting. It cannot be called bold; and the uniform-looking hills nowhere, I should think, exceed a thousand feet in height.

I pushed on through wind and rain, without anything remarkable occurring, till I was suddenly brought up by a broad, deep, and raging torrent, which, for some time, I feared would render farther progress that day impracticable. It is called the Iorsay, and is decidedly the largest river in the island. Its waters flow from the rugged sides of Ben Vharren, Caimnacaillach, Ben-Oosh, &c., and on this occasion presented a truly formidable aspect. Not far from me, on a little knoll, was a flag-staff with a flag flying, indicating the residence of the Hon. Mr Westenra, one of the three proprietors of the island, and brother of Lord Rossmore, an Irish Peer. He resides here during part of the shooting season in a small white-washed cottage; but a more dreary abode can scarcely be imagined. It is sheltered from the sea by the eminence above-mentioned; and, in front, the impetuous Iorsay dashes on to the restless ocean, about a quarter of a mile distant.

Ascending till the channel narrowed was out of the question, as I might have trudged on till night without a chance of effecting a safe passage. At

length I resolved to strike in where the stream was broadest, and to slant downwards about a hundred yards, as being the least dangerous course I could adopt. The depth was not so great as I anticipated, for I was never above the middle; but the strength of the current, among huge rolled and rolling stones, repeatedly almost threw me off my feet; in which case the chances were, that I should very unceremoniously have been hurried into the sea as a waif to the finny tribe. After much caution, and no little danger, I reached the dry land; but what was my mortification, when, upon looking back, I found that I had passed a clachan, concealed from the road by high ground, where I had been advised to breakfast! Returning was not to be thought of; so I pressed on, drenched and hungry, to some caves on the shore, in one of which, called the King's Cave, kept with considerable care, Robert Bruce is said to have sheltered himself from his enemies.

As nature now called aloud for sustenance, I entered the best-looking of several cottages not far off, and asked if I could have breakfast. I was answered in the affirmative, and soon partook plentifully of their best, which was most acceptable, though certainly, in other circumstances, not very inviting. I could not complain of want of company, as the whole of the neighbours flocked together to see the *Sassenach* at feed. The customary recompense was thankfully received; and a lad kindly conducted me to a foot-path through the muir, leading to the road lately made betwixt Brodick and Siskin. Several miles' travelling brought me to this road, which is the best in the island; and here ended my difficulties, as there now remained little more than six miles to Brodick. From the

highest part of this road, where it is called the *String*, there is a splendid view of the Alpine peaks, as also of the Bay of Brodick, where the steamer had just arrived on her way to Lamlash. Passing the exceedingly neat new church, with its trim-kept enclosure, I soon again arrived at headquarters, having walked no less than thirty miles before two o'clock—not a bad day's work for a man who was in his prime a quarter of a century ago, especially when the performances of the two preceding days are taken into consideration. The comforts of a change of raiment, and an excellent dinner, were unspeakably enhanced by the hardships of the morning. Before six, the "Isle of Arran" arrived at Ardrossan, after encountering what the captain called a "snappish sea," which induced him prudently to lift his fares as soon as we got on board.

As the mountain scenery is by far the most attractive object in Arran, and as it can be visited comparatively by few, I may here mention, that, next to the view from their summits, the best views of the mountains are from the String, the road from Lamlash, and Glen Sannox farm-house, all of easy access by carriages. Whoever goes to Lamlash, which is well worth being visited on account of its admirable natural harbour, should ascend the Holy Isle, nearly a thousand feet high, from which also the mountain range is seen to great advantage. The Holy Isle, when viewed from Goatfell, bears a very striking resemblance to Arthur Seat.

Though Goatfell is universally allowed to be the highest point in Arran, yet its apparent superiority is owing more to its advantageous position, than to its actual greater elevation. He is unques-

tionably the father of the flock; but he is surrounded by sundry stalwart soldier-featured sons, whose names have been repeatedly mentioned in these letters. Some of them, I should imagine, are not lower by more than 50 or 60 feet, not to speak of others, on the same ridge with Goatfell, whose stature approaches still nearer that of their sire. Viewing the whole as a stately family group, they cannot be matched; and though they are not very accessible in their demeanour, yet their acquaintance is well worth cultivating, and the impression of their lofty and dignified bearing must be indelible in the minds of all who are admirers of the great.

To return to sobriety.—The granite of which this mountain range is composed, though in general compact and durable, has been so acted upon by the elements, here and there, in great veins, as to form a fine granitic sand. But the fundamental rock is so hard and tough, that it would puzzle Dr Buckland and all his hammermen to procure from its “thunder-split peaks” a good solid fragment as a specimen. It was owing to the rotten crumbling nature of these veins, that much of my difficulty arose in descending into Glen Sannox. I was somewhat surprised to find juniper bushes, with fruit, as far up the mountain as vegetation extended—not less than 2000 feet above the sea-level. The entire elevation is about 3000 feet, rising immediately from the sea.

As serpents are common on the island, long worsted stockings should be worn; and no person should attempt roughing it, as I did, without a pair of Hornell's best double-soled shoes, or something as good, if they can be got. A motley collection of the serpent tribe was shown me by a

gentleman who had casually encountered them in his rambles.

There is good angling in the Arran streams after rain, when they are visited by sea-trout. A few days before I went there, the Marquis of Douglas, with a party of friends, and many of the natives, had a *battue* in Loch Iorsay with the net, and caught about a hundred salmon and sea-trout. One day I came to a gentleman fishing with fly in the salt green sea! He was not successful while I looked on, but told me he sometimes caught fine salmon and sea-trout in that way. I shall only farther state, that the inhabitants, the *aborigines* of this island, are very kind and civil to strangers, but have generally a starved, dejected look, though, no doubt, like most mountaineers, they prefer it to every other place—

“The tempest’s fury, and the torrent’s roar,
But bind them to their native mountains more.”

A MORNING RAMBLE IN GLEN ROSA

IN 1844.

SOME years ago, I sent you, in three letters, an account of "Three Days in Arran." It may be remembered by some of your readers, that, on the first of these, I was benighted in Glen Rosa, after visiting Goatfell and Glen Sannox, and that upon that occasion I got many severe falls and bruises, owing to the roughness of the ground and the darkness of the night. Having occasion to be in the same most interesting island last week for one night, I resolved, before breakfast next morning, to explore the scene of my former adventures; and having been informed that the communications above alluded to were read with considerable interest, I hope the present may be so also.

I left Mrs Jamieson's inn betwixt five and six o'clock, and, owing to misdirection, or, more probably, my own blunder, I kept the Goatfell side of the glen (which is neither so direct nor comfortable as the other), till I reached the quarter where my jeopardy began, about four miles above the village of Brodick. At this place, there is nearly an end to all vegetable productions, with the ex-

ception of occasional tufts of heather. I crossed the stream at the upper end of a pool, over which hang the birch and mountain ash, but of such stunted dimensions as to indicate their expiring effort. The pool itself is one of the most tempting to the bather I ever saw, especially on such a morning as was the 3d of July. It is of considerable length and depth, fenced by a perpendicular wall of granite, ten or twelve feet high, and paved with the same substance. At the upper end is a cascade; and the water was as cool and limpid as can be conceived. After indulging in the luxuries of the bath, I ascended the sharp rocky ridge in a direct line between Goatfell and Ben-Oosh, and was amply recompensed for my exertions. From this ridge, which may be about 1800 feet above the sea-level, you command a full view of all the more lofty peaks in the island, comprehending, besides those that have significant Gaelic designations, many "huge nameless rocks," particularly arresting the attention of the pedestrian. Immediately around you, are Ben-Oosh, Caimnacaillach, Kier-Vohr, Goatfell, &c. These exhibit, when viewed in certain directions, the most fantastic shapes imaginable. Some of the masses of granite resemble prodigious waggons, or hay-stacks; others seem sharp as needles, and rise in regular succession, like the teeth of a saw, or the comb of a cock. Immediately beside and under me, lay a huge excavation, fenced by nearly perpendicular cliffs, much resembling the crater of an extinct volcano, which I greatly regretted I had not time minutely to explore. The whole scene presented itself under the most favourable circumstances, and was one which I shall never forget.

Though Goatfell is confessedly the highest point

in the island, there are others, especially one at the head of Glen Sannox, and on the opposite side of the chasm, which cannot be more than a hundred feet lower, if so much. Upon approaching the island, indeed, from Glasgow by water, this latter point, even to an experienced eye, seems the higher of the two, though in almost every other direction where they are both seen Goatfell maintains the superiority. There is something pre-eminently imposing and dignified in the summit of this latter mountain, as seen from the position I have just been describing. The middle portions are rugged and broken, like all the surrounding eminences; but the upper region rises for eight or nine hundred feet, in calm and graceful majesty. You might fancy its resemblance to the "hero of a hundred battles," who has survived the tug and havoc of them all, and finally been elevated to the Peerage. Thus Goatfell, the hero of ten thousand tempests, rears his bald, majestic head to the clouds, surrounded by his staff of thunder-split peaks, "towering in horrid nakedness," companions amidst the war of contending elements for numberless generations. Far from scatheless, however, has been his career of glory. In some respects, he seems to have had decidedly the worst of the set-to with old Father Time. His very summit, indeed, consists of immense blocks of hard imperishable granite; and a little lower down are seen huge Cyclopiian walls of the same material. But the latter are shaken, as if by some great convulsion; and the whole surface of the conical top of the mountain is strewed thickly with riven rocks, stones of all sizes, and granitic sand.

I would earnestly recommend you, sir, and all your readers who are mountain-fanciers, to repair

to the above most interesting of all our islands, if you have not already been there. Access to Arran is now most easy. There is a daily steam-packet from Ardrossan to Brodick and Lamlash, in addition to one from Glasgow, during the summer months; and thus, for a mere trifle, you can be transported in the course of a few hours to Brodick, at the very base of Goatfell. The whole scenery from the Broomielaw is such as cannot be surpassed—beginning with all that is soft, verdant, and cultivated, and terminating in Nature's wildest and sternest aspect. Only be careful to choose favourable weather. Within the last few weeks, a party left Edinburgh by the railway for Arran—arrived there in a wonderfully short time—remained in the island a few hours, and returned at night to the Metropolis; but such was the state of the weather, that many never left the vessel, while groups were seen cowering about Brodick under umbrellas, scarcely able to see the chimneys of the cottages!

At the best, however, such a Cockney expedition is of questionable celebrity, and would hardly stand the test of Christopher North's criticism. To all who have a sound constitution, and a few days at their command, I would recommend something different. In three days, an able-bodied pedestrian may visit, or see, all that is truly interesting in the island. Let him, on the first, ascend Glen Rosa, go to the top of Goatfell, pass through the gorge between Glen Rosa and Glen Sannox (the most interesting point of all) to Loch Ranza. On the second, let him return by the Cock of Arran, entrance of Glen Sannox, and the Corrie, to Brodick. On the third, he should visit Brodick Castle, and go to Lamlash by land, climb the Holy Isle, re-

turning at half-past three by the Isle of Arran steamer to Brodick and Ardrossan. If he has a fourth day, he could not employ it better than in going to Bruce's Caves, on the opposite side of the island, by the String, and returning by the pass which leads from the west coast to Lamlash. If a man can accomplish this with personal ease, in favourable weather, and not feel the liveliest gratification, he must have something in his nature little to be envied.

The inhabitants of Arran are primitive in their character and manners, owing, in a great measure, to the Duke of Hamilton not permitting feus in the island. In Brodick, may be seen the old women sitting at their doors, arrayed in flannel *toys*, a species of head-gear now very little in use, and the men lounging about knitting stockings on wires. All classes have an appearance of indolence; and their little gardens, instead of abounding in pot-herbs, flowers, and fruit-trees, are full of weeds, and have every appearance of neglect. They are, however, remarkable for peaceableness and honesty, so that many will question how far it would be advisable to introduce among them the habits of civilised life. They are most fortunate in having the Marquis of Douglas as their feudal lord, whose German bride takes much delight in her mountain home. He is now making an addition, on a great scale, to the castle, and intends to spend more time in the island than has been customary with his family. A few days previous to my late visit, he and his princess had added greatly to their popularity by their presence at gymnastic games, in which they seemed to feel a lively interest, as well as by their kind and cordial attentions to all around them. In such circumstances,

though many may lament that Arran is in a great measure shut up from the world, yet none can blame the proprietor for his resolution to avail himself of it in that way which tends most to his gratification.

THE HIGHLANDS OF GALLOWAY.

MERRICK, LOCH ENOCH, &c., IN 1846.

THE Highlands of Galloway may be described as being chiefly comprehended in the parishes of Kells and Minnigaff; for although there are other lofty mountains—Criffell, Cairnsmuir of Carsphairn, Cairnsmuir of Fleet, &c.—yet these are comparatively unapproached by mountains of similar altitude, and ought consequently to be regarded more as detached chains.

It has often struck me how very little known this district is, considering its interesting character. The cause is no doubt to be referred to the want of roads. The black water of Dee is a fine Highland-featured river. Towards its source, there are many mountain lakes, containing trout and pike in abundance, and grouse is plentiful; but, strange to say, there is actually not the vestige of a road upon its banks, from Loch Kenn to the fountain-head! Were a road opened from Loch Kenn up this river as far as Cooran Lane, and across by Loch Dee to Loch Trool, and the road from Newton-Stewart to Maybole, it would, I am convinced, be a great accommodation, not only to sportsmen

and tourists, but to the public in general. A road ought also to be made up the Fleet from Gatehouse, by Loch Grannoch, to join the former at or near Dee Bridge. The making of these roads, through a district of the best materials, and where property, instead of being injured, would be vastly improved, is an object well worthy the attention of proprietors, and ought no longer to be delayed.

These remarks have been occasioned by an excursion made lately by myself and a friend to the top of Merrick, and some of the adjoining mountains and lakes. The weather proved favourable, and we were highly gratified by our exertions, inasmuch that I would earnestly recommend tourists who are sound in wind and limb to follow our example; but these qualifications will be found indispensable, as the localities in question can be approached with safety neither by a wheeled vehicle, nor on horseback. Clattering Shaws is the nearest practicable road on Dee-side, and Stroan, or Skiongchan, on that of the Cree, any of which will be found far enough from Merrick or Loch Enoch by those who feel disposed to visit these truly interesting scenes.

We ascended Merrick from Loch Trool, perhaps the most romantic spot in the south of Scotland. This lake is about two miles long, well skirted with wood, and has several graceful bends among lofty and precipitous mountains. After scrambling among huge blocks of granite for about three miles, we came to one of the most sequestered and inaccessible shepherd's dwellings in Scotland, called Kilsharg. Here, as everywhere in this mountain district, we were most hospitably received, and made welcome to their best cheer. The shepherd's wife, in the absence of her lord, provided us with

stout *cleekies* to steady us among the rocks and moss-hags; and we then proceeded to the top of the mountain, which might be about four miles from her cottage. The first part of our route was serious climbing, but the last two miles consisted of a gentle slope over soft verdant pasture, such as I never witnessed at anything approaching the elevation, though I have climbed almost all the mountains of note in Scotland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland.

We had now "climbed the highest hill that rises o'er the source o' Dee," and were struck with admiration of the surrounding scenery. Merrick is said to be nearly 3000 feet in height, and is decidedly the loftiest mountain in Galloway. The view from its summit is of the most commanding description. The whole Frith of Clyde lies, as it were, mapped before you towards the west. The weather was by no means remarkably clear; still we saw the whole of Arran, with its fantastic peaks, the Mull of Kintyre, 100 miles of the coast of Ireland—from the Giant's Causeway to the mountains of Morne—Mull of Galloway, Benghairn, Criffell, the Moffat hills, &c., &c., and were convinced that, under more favourable circumstances, we might have had a view, not only of the Isle of Man, but also of the Cumberland mountains, with many of those of the West Highlands, and even some of the Hebrides. The Island of Ailsa and Knockdolian were particularly conspicuous, with the whole coast of Ayrshire, from Largs to Lochryan; and under certain glimpses of the solar rays we could even distinctly discern ships under sail!

The adjoining mountains, Carlin's Cairn, the Mill Yeas, those to the east of Loch Trool, &c.,

had a sternly wild appearance, and added greatly to the interest of the scene, with the various lakes interspersed, glittering in the sunbeams. In short, let the mountain-fancier repair to Merrick in fine weather, and he will be richly rewarded for his trouble; but let him beware of fogs, for in a region so rugged and remote from human dwellings, these would be most bewildering and dangerous.

The side of the mountain towards the north and north-east is remarkably abrupt, and falls into Loch Enoch by two prodigious leaps, which characterise its appearance from a distance, and have a fearful aspect when viewed from the brink. Down this ravine the engineers, lately employed in the Government survey, appear to have employed their idle hours (which could not be few) in rolling huge boulders of granite, some of which might have plunged into the dark waters of the lake. Loch Enoch is in some respects one of the most remarkable anywhere to be seen. It contains several islands, in one of which is a small lake, said to be well stocked with trout; and it is so indented by headlands, that keeping close to its margin would perhaps double the circumference, which may be estimated at about three miles. A more desolate, dreary, unapproachable scene, can hardly be imagined. All its shores are of granite, bleached by the storms of ages, which, in such a region, probably 1200 feet at least above the sea, must rage with tremendous fury. It is intersected by dykes of granite, resembling artificial piers; and, as there are no weeds, and deep water from the very edge, it is particularly favourable to the angler, who may in the course of a few hours fill his basket with trout, scarcely averaging herring size, but some of which cut up red, and are of fine quality. This

lake is on the confines of Ayrshire, as the water issuing from it runs into the upper extremity of Loch Doon. Some of its bays contain abundance of beautiful granite sand, resembling the finest oatmeal, which is much prized for sharpening scythes, and carried to a great distance for that purpose. Adjoining it, southward, are Lochs Nelderkin, Valley, Long, Round, and Dee, the farthest (Loch Dee) not being above eight miles distant, all containing trout, pike, or both; so that, to a fisher who has a relish for the sterner beauties of nature, I know no other district in the south of Scotland better calculated to gratify his taste. These lochs are emptied into the rivers Dee and Cree.

The evening was beautiful, as we descended to the upper extremity of Loch Trool; and the effect of the charming scene was much enhanced by a numerous boating party of ladies and gentlemen in gay attire, who spent their time alternately in rowing, fishing, singing, and strolling upon the beach. After calling at the farms of Buchan and Stroan, where we were hospitably treated, we returned late to our little inn at "House of Hill," and supped luxuriously on our Loch Enoch trout.

A FEW DAYS OF RECREATION

IN 1848.

First Day.

THERE is nothing more exhilarating or conducive to health than occasional change of scene and occupation. This variety is particularly salutary to men of studious and sedentary habits; so that, if indulgence in it be at all practicable, they ought, at all events once in the year, to leave care behind, and prepare themselves for renewed professional energies by a few weeks of complete relaxation. Impressed with this conviction, I resolved to avail myself of the various locomotive powers which have of late so wonderfully increased, to see and hear a little more than is generally to be expected in rural retirement, and am now about to relate what may be effected in little more than ten days, without incurring any formidable expense; hoping that to some of your readers my communications may not be altogether uninteresting or unedifying.

Along with a fellow-traveller of similar tastes and pursuits with myself, I left the Lockerbie Station for Glasgow on the 4th September. In our progress thither, nothing occurred particularly worthy of remark. That astonishing cutting at,

and near the summit of the Caledonian line, cannot fail to arrest the attention, as a proof of what wealth and ingenuity can effect. On each side of the line, several precipices have been called into existence of imposing grandeur, by cutting through the hardest and most compact rock ; and, were it not for the strictest vigilance on the part of the servants of the railway, imminent danger would be incurred by fragments falling on the rails, whether accidentally detached, or intentionally placed there by the reckless and unprincipled. Unusual caution, however, is observed for several miles, so that no serious accident has hitherto occurred there.

In passing through this district, I was forcibly struck with the contrast between the present circumstances and those in which, when a boy, I used to traverse the same localities. Like many others on their route to school or college, staff in hand and *prog* in pocket, I was wont to wend my solitary way through mountains which, from our tardy, toilsome progress, seemed most provokingly to accompany us on our journey. Now, how different ! Queensberry, Hartfell, the Lowthers, Tinto, Coulter Fell, &c., are scarcely seen till they are triumphantly passed and left far in the distance, scarcely leaving a trace in the memory ; but greatly to the relief of both purse and person.

Long before entering Glasgow, the smoke, noise, and bustle which everywhere prevail, evidently prove the vicinity of a mighty city. Tile and brick-works, hot-blast iron furnaces, enormous cotton-mills, with their lofty chimney-stalks, all proclaim that here mammon has pitched one of his principal abodes ; and, while thus impressed, the train is ushered into the station amidst a crowd of human beings of all denominations, each intent on

their several interests. Porters, cabmen, omnibus drivers, &c., all offering their services, render it an easy matter for experienced travellers to reach their destination, whether in hotels or in the houses of friends; though, to the uninitiated, all seems a Babel of utter confusion, and there is much danger of their being imposed on, or falling into awkward and troublesome blunders. As for my companion and myself, having only small carpet bags and stout walking-staffs, we soon found our way to a comfortable hotel at the steam-boat quay, from which we intended next day to proceed to Inverary.

It is entirely unnecessary to enlarge upon the extension, &c., of this wonderful city, now decidedly the second in the empire. Suffice it to say, that its population amounts to 350,000, and is steadily increasing at the rate of 10,000 per annum, or perhaps even more; though there is much reason for suspecting that the quality does not keep pace with the quantity, as a great proportion of the newcomers are needy and ignorant natives of the Emerald Isle. Its business resorts and places of public amusement have of late been astonishingly multiplied; so that there is no city in the British dominions which, in these respects, bears a more complete resemblance to London.

Second Day.

Next morning we sailed in the Breadalbane steamer for Inverary, by Lochgoil. The navigation of the Clyde is particularly interesting to strangers, who wonder at the listless yawning in-

difference with which passengers accustomed to it behold everything around them. To those, however, who have never before, or seldom been there, all is beheld with lively interest—from the trim thatched cottage of the retired mariner, to the stately mansion of the wealthy merchant, or far descended nobleman. But to the lover of nature there is a charm in the ever-varying peaks of the surrounding mountains, far surpassing everything else. Those of Arran, Argyle's Bowling-green, and Arroquhar, are particularly attractive, and cannot fail to arrest the attention of English travellers, who, now that the Continent is in a great measure shut up, compose a very great majority of our Highland tourists. Every one must admire the retired quiet retreat of Ardentinny; while the whole of Lochgoil is pre-eminently "wild and majestic." At the landing-place, a coach awaited the arrival of passengers for St Catherine's, on Loch Fyne, to which there is a very precipitous and rugged road of about eight miles, over great part of which passengers generally prefer pedestrianism, to the risk of broken necks, or over-fatiguing the poor horses. The valley, from Lochgoilhead to the top of the ascent, is remarkably rugged, with many fine cascades, and has received the expressive, though somewhat startling, denomination of Hell's Glen. The streams and pools here must be very favourable for angling; and, owing to their proximity to the sea, cannot fail to be occasionally visited by something superior to the common run of burn trout. At St Catherine's, a small eight-horse power steamer soon conveyed us to Inverary, where we arrived amidst thick mist and heavy rain, a too frequent occurrence in this quarter, and which seems the only drawback to this princely and most delightful residence.

There is much difference of opinion as to whether this place or Taymouth is to be preferred. In many respects, there is a considerable resemblance, and much may be said on both sides. If the mountains about Inverary are less elevated, yet, by their being closer to the town and castle, their appearance is more imposing than those of Loch Tay; and as Loch Fyne possesses all the attractions of an inland lake, in addition to all the advantages of being an arm of the sea, navigable to the very doors, in this respect there is a decided superiority. Though Loch Tay is one of our very finest lakes, yet it is not seen from the castle, and its inland situation is attended with many and obvious inconveniences; so that I, for one, after long and intimate acquaintance with both, am rather inclined to prefer Inverary. If anything could have shaken my preference, it would have been the state of the weather during my late visit. Fortified, however, by an excellent dinner in the Argyle Hotel (Walker's), one of the best in Scotland, we sallied forth to renew our acquaintance with some of the splendid surrounding walks and drives, many of which are open to the public.

The avenues are of great length, and can boast some of the largest beeches and limes in Scotland. In one of these, there are two contiguous beeches, very tall and straight, which unite at a great distance from the ground, and form one of the most complete specimens of the kind anywhere to be seen. This is called the Marriage Tree. It has been carefully enclosed, and is much admired by strangers. The public roads along the beach in both directions are particularly interesting; and none should omit going to Duniquaigh, which, though only about 700 feet in height, commands all

that is most worth seeing in this vicinity, especially the splendid residence of the Duke, with its lovely river and grounds. The bridge over the Airy is remarkable for being close to the salt sea on one side, with a bold rapid river on the other; thus affording every facility for all the salmon tribe to accomplish their fresh-water avocations, and the best angling to such as can procure liberty from his Grace. There is something particularly solemn and aristocratic in the town of Inverary. The houses are in general lofty, and have more the air of being the fragment of an ancient city, than what is looked for in a Highland village, containing little more than 1200 inhabitants.

Third Day.

Having to proceed to Oban on the top of a stage-coach, and through a mountainous district, the state of the weather was not a little appalling. Our vehicle was quite full inside with an English party of ladies and gentlemen, and nearly so without. If the preceding evening was bad, the morning was still worse. After breakfast, however, we moved off at the risk of a complete drenching. As good luck would have it, we had not proceeded many miles through a thick forest of varied and magnificent trees, till a decided change took place in the weather. Even the sun occasionally burst forth, displaying countless mountain torrents in all their glory. At Cladich, especially, we were all delighted with the gambols of a prodigiously swollen stream,

rushing to Loch Awe with frightful and frantic rapidity. This end of the loch is by much the most interesting. It is here broadest, interspersed with well-wooded islands, and overlooked by the gigantic Ben Cruachan, which we had intended to climb; but its being enveloped in clouds rendered that out of the question.

Dalmally is six miles from Cladich. There is here a large and comfortable inn. The road betwixt these stages is so very steep in many places, that some of us preferred walking nearly all the way. We were here met by the Oban return coach, and tarried fully half-an-hour, greatly admiring the surrounding scenery. On leaving Dalmally, Kilchurn Castle, the Orchy River, Loch Awe, and Ben Cruachan, with the adjoining mountains, chiefly arrest the attention; and it may well be questioned if there is a grander scene throughout all the Highlands of Scotland. The pass of five miles between Lochs Awe and Etive is particularly striking. The outlet of the lake forms at once a bold magnificent river, embanked by lofty precipitous mountains, and rejoices in the appellation of the Brunder Awe. The salmon-fishing here is strictly preserved, and considered by some the best rod-fishing in Scotland. Gentlemen, I was told, are permitted to fish by paying five shillings per day, or a pound per week, to the tacksman.

Though the upper part of Loch Etive is said to be very magnificent where it approaches the Glencoe Mountains, yet we were somewhat disappointed with that portion of it between Taynuilt and Oban. The celebrated Connel Ferry was unfavourably seen, owing to the state of the tide, and there is no very imposing grandeur in the surrounding mountains. Dunstaffnage Castle is certainly one of the most

picturesque of our Scottish ruins; but the sudden appearance of the beautiful bay of Oban, with Kerrera, Mull, and others of the Hebrides, cannot be surpassed, and must be seen, to be duly appreciated. The bay is semicircular, backed with precipitous rocks, and all around its margin there is a rising town, with a considerable population. In the immediate vicinity, gentlemen are constructing beautiful villas; and the Castle of Dunolly, overhanging the sea, is an object of surpassing interest. The bay is landlocked by the island of Kerrera, by each end of which there is ready access to the Atlantic; so that there cannot be imagined a more snug and commodious harbour for all descriptions of shipping, from the herring-boat to a first-rate man-of-war.

The want of a parish church here has afforded an excellent opportunity for Free Church zeal being displayed, by the erection of a very handsome place of worship on an eminence overlooking the town and bay. Various other places of worship are also to be found here; but an imperfect knowledge of the Gaelic in the preachers is an obstacle to the satisfactory communication of spiritual instruction among the lower classes, who, throughout the Highlands, are profoundly ignorant and bigoted. Here, as at Inverary, there is a deplorable prevalence of wet weather, insomuch that a gentleman residing in the neighbourhood informed me that, by referring to a regularly kept meteorological table, he found there were no less than 268 days on which rain had fallen from the 19th August last year, when the Queen visited Oban, till the corresponding day of this year! Upon my observing that surely May would be an exception, he assured me that it was one of the rainiest months,

though throughout the rest of the kingdom such a month for fine weather has rarely been known.

Fourth Day.

There is perhaps no expedition connected with the coast of Scotland more generally interesting than that to Staffa. Its remote situation among the raging billows of the Atlantic renders its approach at all times precarious; but, when a landing can be effected, rarely, if ever, have visitors been disappointed. I had long ago visited Oban, with the intention of going to Staffa, but was thwarted, along with some others, owing to the state of the weather. On this occasion we nearly met with a similar fate. "The morning lowered, the dawn was overcast, and heavily in clouds brought on the day," insomuch that several of both sexes, who intended visiting the island, deemed it imprudent, and remained snug in Oban. At seven A.M. however, the *Dolphin* weighed anchor, under Captain M'Killop, who had last year been selected as pilot to her Majesty from the Crinan Canal to Oban, Staffa, and Fort-William.

The wind blew strong a-head, and the rain descended in torrents. We set several passengers ashore at Tobermory, among whom was a distinguished Edinburgh D.D. with his spouse. The situation of this little town is extremely interesting. The bay is well secured from heavy seas, well wooded, and no less than five good cascades were observed within half a mile of us, some of them fall-

ing perpendicular from a great height into the sea, and being all flooded, we saw them to great advantage. On leaving Tobermory, and till we were about half-way between that and Staffa, there was no appearance of the weather moderating, so that the Captain hesitated as to proceeding, and despaired of landing us. The Dolphin, however, is a first-rate sea-boat, and seldom shipped water to any great extent. On nearing the island, symptoms of improvement appeared, and, to our great delight, we were all (about 24) safely put ashore, having the sailors as our guides to the great cave. There are many adjoining islands of most grotesque forms; but little, if any, better than naked rocks. Staffa is an exception. Though only about two miles in circumference, the pasture seemed tolerable, and there was about a score of small bullocks making the most of it.

A wooden ladder and ropes facilitated our entrance to Fingal's Cave, which came suddenly in view, and affected us all with a kind of solemn but pleasing awe. Entering in a boat was out of the question, as the long lofty surges would soon have reduced it to shivers; but most of us advanced half-way on the broken columns, and saw the waves distinctly dashing on the farther extremity, and falling in foam and spray from the roof. Their hoarse hollow echoes have a very fine effect. The tall basaltic columns are somewhat curved, and of a very dark colour; but altogether are elegant as well as majestic. The sea is deep, and beautifully green, and there is not the slightest appearance of seaweed or sludge of any kind, to render the footing slippery or uncomfortable. In short, we were delighted, and the more so, as we had all but despaired of being set ashore at all. There was only one

lady of the party; but she was the first to leap ashore, and evinced throughout a degree of spirit and activity equal to any of the other sex. She was an Englishwoman, and, as her husband informed us, the mother of twelve children! There are the walls of a cottage in Staffa, but no dwelling-house. These walls are not old, and have evidently been constructed with care, and at considerable expense, probably with the view of its being a sentimental retreat for part of the year, though a very short period indeed would suffice to satisfy the longings of the most devoted recluse.

From Staffa we proceeded to Iona, about eight miles distant. Nothing can be more bleak and barbarous than great part of the west coast of Mull. It consists of red granite or porphyritic rocks, piled together in shapeless confusion, few of them exceeding 200 feet in height, and evidently so destitute of vegetation, that hundreds of acres would not afford pasture sufficient for one goat! We had no difficulty in landing on Iona; but it puzzled us all to conceive what could be the inducement to render this a seat of learning, or a burying-place for philosophers, bishops, and kings! It is certainly one of the most uninteresting, physically, of all the Hebrides. Here and there is to be found an attempt at cropping; but, as for wood of any kind, there is absolutely none. Monks and friars seldom selected such abodes, as they have been proverbially addicted to roost in the fattest pasturage, so that their congregating here seems a mystery not easily to be solved.

The ruins are fully as entire as most of us expected to find them; and many of the tombstones are covered with strange effigies of priests, warriors, kings, &c., which, with the inscriptions, are won-

derfully sharp and entire. An islander, who speaks English tolerably, acted as our guide for a small consideration from each; and we were followed by scores of famished-looking children, offering for a trifle plates full of shells and small stones, some of which might be valuable, but the greater portion mere rubbish. "*Penny, fourpence, sixpence,*" seemed the amount of their English literature. The whole population of the island does not exceed 450, and is contained principally, if not entirely, in the immediate vicinity of the ruins.

Here are two respectable-looking manses, with as many churches, *free and bond*. It is difficult to conceive a more melancholy effect of the late Secession than is exemplified in this wretched island. Its poor, half-starved, ignorant population has not escaped the late epidemic; for we were informed that, few and mutually dependent as they are for comfort, those visited by the new light will scarcely recognise their former friends as beings of the same species with themselves! This sad state of things is to be observed throughout the whole of the Highlands, and prevails just in proportion to the ignorance of the inhabitants. I asked a highly respectable Highland clergyman, if there was no hope of proving to them its incompatibility with true religion? He replied, that "it would be very difficult, as their Gaelic preachers had crammed them with such gross misstatements in regard to the Established Church; and as their ignorance and prejudices were such, that they could not read refutations of what they had heard, nor would they listen with patience to any one who was disposed to enlighten them."

On returning to the Dolphin, the sailors handed about a begging-box, to which we were all disposed

to contribute on account of their civility. A letter, however, accompanied the box, stating that the contributions were in aid of a Free Church School in the island. This intelligence being made public chilled the intentions of nearly the whole party, as we could not conceive the place destitute of either a Parliamentary or Parochial School, and as one must be quite sufficient where there are only three or four score children, and these concentrated in one corner of the island; moreover, we had just seen and heard enough of the effects of Free Kirk tuition to induce us not to connive at its extension.

Upon leaving this renowned seat of learning, reputed to have been "once the luminary of the Caledonian regions," we proceeded on our voyage round Mull. The same frightfully barren aspect prevails for a considerable way, when the coast becomes extremely lofty and precipitous, with here and there waterfalls of stupendous height, which, after heavy rains, are truly magnificent. The mountains here are covered with heath, and in character much resemble what is generally met with in the Highlands. Ben More (the highest) attains an elevation of 3000 feet.

The darkness was fast setting in as we completed our trip of about one hundred miles. Some think the fare (£1) too high; but really, considering the distance, the stormy sea, the double landing of the passengers, and the quality of the vessels, I cannot see there is much of an overcharge. Were the two meals (breakfast and dinner) included, I think no one would be inclined to murmur; and, circumstanced as most of the travellers are, these meals would be more nominal, than detrimental to the owners. Some of us partook of a hearty breakfast; but of these, few indeed had the hardihood

even to look at a dinner such as aldermen might have sighed for.

The approach to Oban, whether by sea or land, is most interesting; but the inside of our various hotels, comfortable fires, and steady footing, were by this time as desirable objects as any that the Highlands could present.

Fifth Day.

Early next morning, we were again on board of the *Dolphin*, for Ballachulish and Fort-William. The weather, in the first instance, was greatly improved. A strong favourable breeze hurried us along Loch Linnhe, passing the low-lying, rich, and verdant Lismore, anciently the seat of the Bishop of Argyle, and a complete contrast to Iona in every respect. We passed also Loch Creran and the beautiful Appin on the right, having the fine mountain district of Morven and Ardgour on the left. We soon entered Loch Leven, whose farther extremity seemed bounded by the fantastic lofty peaks of Glencoe, though it penetrates considerably farther in nearly the same direction.

Ballachulish exhibits some exquisitely fine features of Highland scenery; but the effect is much marred by the active operations carried on in the slate quarries. We landed in the very midst of them, in order to visit the far-famed Glencoe. A huge, open, yellow-painted machine, bearing in Brobdignag characters the designation of "The Glencoe," drawn by four stout horses, was soon in readiness, when no less than thirty adults besides the driver

were forthwith in motion, in addition to others in less imposing vehicles. The road was far from being good, being much injured by recent heavy rains. The driver, however, did his work well, for there were few among us who were not prepared for a capsize or break-down, if not for both. We drove past scenes unsurpassed in grandeur, and beheld with no little interest the remains of the houses where the bloody and treacherous massacre took place in the reign of King William, but for which he was by no means responsible, as it has been most satisfactorily proved to have been owing to the barbarous feuds of the Campbells of Glenlyon with the M'Donalds of Glencoe.

The mountains here on both sides of the glen average 3000 feet in height, shoot out into the most singular forms, and are almost destitute of anything like vegetation. The summits of some of them seem wholly inaccessible, and are torn asunder by numberless ravines and cataracts, so that many who have seen this glen consider it unrivalled, in wild, gloomy, romantic sublimity. About four or five miles from Ballachulish, there is a lake of remarkably pure water; but as it is quite destitute of wood, of a circular form, with tame shores, it adds little to the interest of the scene. Beyond this we proceeded about two miles, walking all the way, and not a little annoyed by rain. There is the appearance of an immense cave about half-way up one of the mountains on the south side of the glen. It is in the face of a perpendicular rock, inaccessible by human foot, and admirably adapted to impart interest to such legends as those of Ossian and other Highland bards. The upper portion of the glen, as I can testify, having long ago visited it as a pedestrian, is equally magnificent; and turning to

the left, there is a near road to Fort-William, by what is called the "Devil's Staircase," near which two English gentlemen perished last season in a way that has never been satisfactorily accounted for, as the day, though cold, wet, and blustery, for the middle of September, was not such as could have been expected to produce fatal consequences to men at all accustomed to undergo cold and fatigue.

Our straggling ranks were at length summoned together by the frequent sounding of a trumpet; and, after considerable delay, we all resumed our places in our monster car, on our return to Ballachulish and the Dolphin. The rain now fell in good earnest, and it blew a perfect hurricane, insomuch that many were thoroughly drenched who had seldom, if ever, been so exposed; for there were among us ladies and gentlemen of very high rank, who generally manage to escape such familiarity with the angry elements. To do them justice, however, they submitted with a good grace to their portion of the infliction, and were as ready to make a jest of it as any of the party.

We were all right glad to regain the comforts of the deck and cabin, and soon re-entered Loch Linnhe on our way to the Fort. The evening continued wet and stormy, so that we lost much in this part of our trip, particularly the view of Ben Nevis, only the lower portion of which was visible, and even that obscurely. To mountain-fanciers, this was a great disappointment. There is something very striking, as I well remember, in the first appearance of the giant hulk of the mighty Ben in approaching him from this quarter. He is curtailed by mountains of inferior dimensions till arriving within eight or ten miles of the Fort, when

he gradually emerges in frowning majesty from among his satellites, and at once asserts his dignity as king of British mountains. Arrived at our destination, our party divided, as some intended next day to ascend the mountain; while others, who had no such ambitious object in view, accompanied the Dolphin to Corpach, that they might more conveniently proceed by the canal on the following day to Inverness. My friend and I, being of the former number, stayed at the Fort, where there are now two excellent hotels, which is more than could be asserted a few years ago, when the miserable hostels of the place received a severe and well-merited flagellation from the eloquent pen of Miss Sinclair, in one of her talented and interesting publications.

Before closing this letter, it is but justice to recommend to particular notice the excellent accommodations of the Dolphin. The modest quiet demeanour of Captain McKillop, one of the most able and attentive of his class, was duly appreciated and acknowledged by all; and we had dinners and breakfasts, of the most inviting description, served up in a style most creditable to the steward, and that might and would have satisfied, and *did* satisfy, Queen Victoria herself.

Sixth Day.

During the course of the night and morning many anxious looks were directed towards the mountains, in hopes that the mists would be dispersed, and thus permit those who were so disposed to ascend

Ben Nevis. But, alas! we were doomed to disappointment. The lazy, lumbering clouds shrouded the mountain nearly half-way down; and, being assured by the weather-wise that there was little chance of a change, we were reluctantly induced to take our places on the Corpach omnibus at an early hour. We soon crossed the Nevis, which in its short course, owing to the number and great height of the adjoining mountains, speedily becomes a river of no ordinary dimensions. We were then ferried across the bold, broad, and rapid Lochy, which may well be ranked among the largest rivers in Scotland. This river, however, in common with the Ness, the Awe, and the Leven, owing to their short courses under these names, are scarcely ranked with others of far inferior pretensions as to the quantity of water they throw into the ocean. Compared with any of them, as regards the flow of fresh water in a given time, "*Father Thames*" degenerates into a *mere baby*.

At the ferry, we were joined by a tall, athletic gentleman, in the full garb of old Gaul, well known, not only in his district, but to all its visitors. We found him extremely good-humoured, intelligent, and communicative. Being an inhabitant of Glen Nevis, the height of the mountain is a point as to which he is particularly tender and jealous. On one of the party mentioning that Ben Macdhui was higher, "Long John," as he is familiarly termed, fired at the idea, and rebutted the assertion, by assuring us that he had recently been informed by the chief of the late Government trigonometrical surveyors, that Ben Nevis was decidedly the highest by 110 feet. Of course this closed the argument, as "staying in Rome and fighting the Pope" has always been held injudicious.

On board the Edinburgh Castle, we found ourselves in company with almost the same party who parted from us the preceding evening, almost all English, and several with high-sounding titles. This is readily accounted for in various ways. During the shooting season, the Marquis of Douro, Lord Ward, and others of the English nobility residing in this district, may be supposed to bring friends of their own order around them. The Court also being then in Scotland might set others in motion. But the main cause is to be found in the shutting up of the Continent, which has providentially been the means of much spare wealth being concentrated in Britain, which would otherwise have been diffused over foreign lands.

The weather improved as the day advanced, so that a more cheerful and delighted party never traversed Glenmore-na-h'alabin. After partaking of a sumptuous breakfast, we were on deck in good time to admire the stern and strictly Highland scenery of Loch Lochy. Loch Oigh, though much inferior in extent, is still more interesting, owing to greater variety among its mountains, the romantic ruins of Invergarry Castle, and the splendid scenery around Glengarry House, the residence and property of Lord Ward, who is much esteemed in this district, though the successor by purchase of a far-descended Highland chief. The mouth of the river Garry is particularly striking. It is close to the ruins of the castle, dark and deep, and received a portion of our company into its winding recesses, overhung by lofty-spreading trees—the very *beau ideal* of a Highland chieftain's mountain fastness.

The canal here is rather beneath the summit-level, consequently the waters of the Oigh flow in an eastern direction. The river of the same name

leaves the loch broad and rapid; and after a boisterous course of five or six miles is received into Loch Ness at Fort-Augustus. Owing to the tedious process of passing through the locks, many, and some even of the ladies, walked the whole way between Lochs Oigh and Ness. Fort-Augustus is truly magnificent in its situation, and has not generally been done justice to by tourists. We had plenty of time to walk all about the Fort, which is kept in good repair, and commands a view of the whole of Loch Ness, through a splendid vista, twenty-four miles in length, of noble mountains, well wooded on both sides towards their base, of which Meal-fourvonie ranks decidedly the highest.

Once more on board the steamer, she dashed through the waves at a prodigious rate, having a strong breeze from the west, and the sun shining in all his glory. Glen Morriston, with its elegant mansion, arrests the attention of all, as a residence well worthy of any proprietor. Here also we shipped and unshipped passengers, and then steered across the Loch to the Fall of Foyers, where we found a vehicle ready to take the ladies to the Falls, who, being somewhat dilatory in their motions, afforded pedestrians abundance of time to see them to full advantage. This was the third time I had been there; and being pretty well acquainted with all the by-paths, I had an opportunity of exploring the whole course of the river from the high road to its mouth. As there had been much wet weather, and there was now bright sunshine, we could not have been more fortunate. They who were particular as to comfort had recourse to umbrellas and plaids to protect them from the spray; and on one projecting point about half-way down the great fall, we actually felt the solid rock trembling under

the tumbling rush of waters. There were stragglers in all directions, so that there was much bell-ringing before we were all fairly on board again.

Castle and Glen Urquhart next attracted our attention. The former, situated on a rocky promontory, must evidently have been a place of great strength before the introduction of artillery. The latter is a rich, beautiful, and well-wooded district, but destitute of much of the Highland character, which, however, may be witnessed in perfection at Inverfaragag on the opposite side of the lake, whose bold rugged shaggy cliffs and thundering cascades amply reward the adventurous pedestrian. At the eastern extremity of this noble lake (which, considering its enormous and uniform depth, contains, I am confident, more fresh water than any other in Scotland, not excepting Loch Lomond), stands the elegant, though fantastic, modern mansion of Dochfour, where Prince Albert and suite dined and lodged in the autumn of 1847. Here the loch finds an outlet for its thousand feeders, by the bursting away of the broad, clear, and stately Ness, celebrated for its salmon-fishing, beautiful islands, and fertile holms. In the course of half-an-hour we were at the locks, within a mile and a-half of Inverness, to which there was ready access by conveyances of every description. There are few objects of much interest here. The Castle and view from it are principally deserving of attention; and, as it was in the immediate vicinity of our hotel, we were not long in being there, and repeatedly returned with much satisfaction, besides walking out in various directions. It is but justice here to add, that the Captain of the Edinburgh Castle (Turner, I think, by name) is most affable and communicative, as well as strictly attentive to his duties.

Seventh Day.

Next day, being the Sabbath, afforded us an opportunity of hearing several of the preachers in this Highland capital. We attended the High Church in the forenoon, whose venerable pastor, Dr Rose, has long been laid aside by age, as his excellent assistant has recently been by bad health, contracted by a too faithful discharge of professional duty. Their place, however, was ably filled by a young friend, who preached both forenoon and afternoon, to a numerous and highly respectable congregation. In the evening, I attended Divine service in the Free Church, where I was likewise much pleased with the ability of the Rev. Mr Thorburn, who had also a very well-filled church. It is customary for some of the gentlemen here, and many of their children, to wear the philabeg on the Sabbath, regarding the Highland costume as *full* dress. We were delighted to witness the respect shewn to the Lord's day by all orders of the people. At night we attended a Quaker meeting; but, as the Spirit did not move them on this occasion, our edification was but small.

On the evening of our arrival at Inverness, a young gentleman of modest prepossessing appearance entered the traveller's room. Soon after, on my remarking that he seemed to be a pedestrian, and asking what route he had taken, he informed us that he was travelling on foot and quite alone; that he was fond of mountain scenery, and had last been on the tops of Lochnagar, Ben Macdhui, and Cairngorm, and had spent a stormy night in the open air on the side of Loch Aven, one of the wildest scenes in existence. His style of travelling

so much resembled my own when about his age, and when I had visited these very mountains, that I soon became interested in his narrative. Upon our informing him that we intended going to the top of Ben Wyvis, he begged to be of the party, to which we readily assented.

Eighth Day.

On Monday morning early, the 11th September, leaving our luggage in the hotel, we set off for Kessock Ferry, at the base of Craig Phadrig, said in most of the tourist books to be 1150 feet in height, though it evidently does not exceed 550, and whose celebrated vitrified fort seemed to us a mere delusion, or, as one of our friends termed it, a "vitrified humbug." A little before seven, we embarked in the Dunoon Castle steamer for Invergordon, passing Fort-George, the most complete perhaps in the kingdom, and Fortrose, with its lighthouse still ignited. We greatly admired the entrance of the Frith of Cromarty, sentinelled by "the Souters"—detached rocks at the entrance.

The town of Cromarty is beautifully situated, and commands a view of nearly the whole bay, in which the entire British navy might most conveniently ride at anchor. A few days before our visit, a great shoal of bottle-nosed whales visited this place, of which nearly a hundred were killed. After a short delay, we proceeded to Invergordon, where we landed about ten o'clock, and commenced a day of toil and adventure not readily to be forgotten by any of us.

Having breakfasted at sea, after passing Fort-George, we started from Invergordon without delay, knowing that we should have a stiff day's work, but by no means anticipating the actual amount. We had seven miles of a walk along the beautiful coast-road, before striking off at Evanton, for the astonishing scenery on the Aultgrande river. This we soon reached, under the kind guidance of a jolly miller who lives hard by, and found it far surpassing anything of the kind we had ever seen. Crichup Linn in Closeburn is but a faint type of it. For nearly two miles it rushes over a succession of rugged rocks between banks about 150 feet in height, overhung with trees and brushwood, and so near each other, that in some places an active person might leap across the hideous chasm. In very few places can the dreadful work below be seen, and there only by hanging from the trees; but the noise and ascending spray afford sufficient proof that the scene must be terrific indeed—much of it perhaps never witnessed by human eye, and impossible to be visited, unless the spectator were slung over with ropes. There is a slight foot-bridge over it in one place, by standing on which we had a pretty good view of the scene for a short space above and below; but by far the greater part of this horrible den must be left to the imagination.

X Soon after emerging from this truly wonderful spot, we crossed the river by a wooden bridge, and, passing some cottages, directed our steps to the summit of Ben Wyvis. This we had occasionally seen from on board the steamer soon after passing Fort-George, and, to our mortification, found it covered with newly fallen snow. Showers of snow fell all day on the mountain, visiting us in rain, so that we could only get glimpses of the top. These

lucid intervals, however, we made the most of; as, the mountain being a huge shapeless mass, without taking accurate observations, we might never have reached the real summit. Upon asking a shepherd the best mode of ascent, he told us we could not reach the "Monument," as he termed the Cairn, that day, and that we were sure to be benighted. This put us to our mettle, and we never stopped a moment for three or four hours hard walking over hills, and through bogs, often knee-deep in heather and peat moss alternately, till we came to the bottom of the last ascent, which was fearfully rugged, and the upper part covered with snow.

Several miles above the fore-mentioned bridge, the river is divided into two; the main branch emerging from Loch Glass, about eight miles in circumference, and the other descending by cataracts, through frightful ravines, from the summit of Ben Wyvis. We kept pretty close to the latter, which we crossed close to the steep ascent above alluded to. It was now half-past four, and, before we got to the top, it must have been at least six; but we were actually afraid to look at our watches, as there was now a certainty of our being benighted. The snow fell fast, and lay several inches deep, pretty hard frozen, among which, in many places, we had to struggle with hands as well as feet. The difficulty now was to find the "Monument," for we could not see above fifty or sixty yards in any direction. We agreed to separate, that we might have three chances instead of one, but not farther than that we could hear a loud call. After a considerable time, our young friend proved the lucky man, and shouted, with him of antiquity, "I have found it!" This was indeed a joyful sound, though it may readily be conceived how much we were

disappointed when, instead of one of the most commanding views in Scotland, extending over great part of the Atlantic and German Oceans, with many of the Hebrides, the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Cromarty, Argyle, Inverness, Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen, and Perth, we could only distinctly see each other at the distance of a few yards! Such, however, has since been the fate even of Royalty herself on Lochnagar, so that we have the less reason to complain.

Our triumph, even in these circumstances, was great on reaching the Cairn, which I ascended, and heightened by an additional stone, using snow instead of mortar. This mountain is nearly 4000 feet high, and has perhaps a larger base than any other mountain in Great Britain. Being the most elevated ground north of Ben Nevis and the Braemar mountains, the view is very little intercepted in any direction. It is, however, an ugly, savage-looking concern; and, being far removed from any inhabited district, none should attempt its ascent who have not an entire day at their disposal—“*monstrum horrendum ingens*,” and on this occasion it may be added, “*cui lumen ademptum*.” I may here mention that the best starting place is Strathpeffer, which is ten miles from the top, while Dingwall is twelve. The mountain resembles a horse-shoe—the upper ridge being three or four miles from one extremity to the other, but rising very gradually from the end nearest Strathpeffer, which ought to be ascended first, and the ridge kept till the other end is reached, on which stands the Cairn, and by which we ascended.

In descending, we chose a less dangerous route, though frequently checked by ugly precipices, which, owing to falling snow and approaching

night, it was not easy to avoid. Great though our difficulties had been, they were surpassed by what still lay before us, having to struggle through five or six miles of the worst description of bogs and quagmires, which few think of crossing even in broad day without a guide. Countless were the tumbles we met with, some of them so ludicrous, that had we not dreaded falling asleep, and lying among these horrid morasses all night, at the imminent risk of our lives, we could not have refrained from laughing heartily at each other and ourselves. Forward, however, we had to toil, far from knowing where we should emerge. Indeed, had it not been for the moon, it is more than probable that we must have wandered about in all directions, till we became completely exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

At length we reached a peat road, by following out which we arrived at a shepherd's cottage. The inmates were all in bed; but, on hearing of our disastrous circumstances, they were, with some difficulty, induced to get up and bring us some thin milk. We were here informed that Dingwall was the nearest place of accommodation. We had still between three and four miles to go, but had now a hard road under foot, and went on our way rejoicing. We soon reached the toll-road between Dingwall and Strathpeffer, and in half-an-hour found ourselves snugly seated in the Caledonian Hotel, with every luxury at our command. It was now half-past ten; and when we sat down to supper, we had eaten no food of any description for fourteen hours and a-half, though we had walked at least thirty-three miles, over some of the wildest moors in Scotland. The innkeeper told us that gentlemen thought it a hard day's work

from his house, and that they never tried it without a guide.]

Many, no doubt, will be disposed to marvel at the folly of men, reputed sane, voluntarily exposing themselves to such hardships as to hunger and fatigue. To this I reply, that, unless they are mountain lovers, fired with the noble ambition of standing at the very top of society, it is utterly hopeless for me to attempt our justification. To those, however, who are capable in some degree of sympathising with us in our lofty aspirings, I may say, that having been disappointed both as to Ben Cruachan and Ben Nevis, we were resolved, at all hazards, not to be beaten with Ben Wyvis, the last object of the kind we had in view on this occasion. Besides, after undergoing such an amount of labour, it would have been very spiritless not to have persevered till we reached the highest pinnacle of the mountain. Such want of pluck would have covered us with confusion all our lives. I may still further add, that we did not despair of the day clearing, and that we were mistaken both as to the distance and the nature of the ground, which in many places was next to impassable. Had we known more about these matters, we would certainly have carried some provisions with us, which we avoided doing, either as to meat or drink, conceiving that the less we were burdened the better, and that, after a hearty breakfast, we should require no more sustenance till we reached Strathpeffer about sunset. Experience, however, is the best of all instructors, and all of us agree that, if ever so circumstanced again, we shall richly deserve it.

Ninth Day.

On the following morning, as may readily be supposed, we felt no disposition to be early astir. Our knee-joints almost refused their office, so that coming down stairs was attended with no little difficulty, and required considerable tact. Breakfast, however, was easier managed, which, along with the perils and pleasures of the previous day, was discussed with all that zest and alacrity for which the heroes of the staff and wallet have so justly been celebrated.

Dingwall has been greatly improved within the last half-dozen years. At that time, the streets were so wretchedly paved, as almost to be unfit for coaching, and the whole place left an unfavourable impression on my mind, as well as on my *body*. Not so now. It really is a nice little town, with two excellent hotels, and the streets, being Macadamised, are as smooth as can be wished. To prove that we were not wholly knocked up, we agreed to walk to Strathpeffer. This strath is short, but consists of rich well-farmed holm land, perfectly level. At its upper extremity is Castle Leod, one of the best specimens of an old baronial residence throughout the Highlands, and apparently quite in a habitable condition. The village of Strathpeffer is beautifully situated, but built without any regard to plan. There were still a good many visiters, of whom a great proportion were 'clergy; but all seemed much at a loss what to do with themselves, which is a mighty bar to the enjoyment of such places. We returned by an omnibus, and, after a short delay in Dingwall, took places on the coach for Inverness.

Strathconon is the first attractive object in this route, and a finer there is not in broad Scotland. The river is large, rapid, and richly wooded. The adjoining ground is well cultivated, and the distant conical mountains at its source pierce the clouds with their sharp adamantine peaks. Judging from the specimens we had at M^rPherson's hotel, the trout-fishing must be first-rate, and the salmon are abundant. Near Beaul, we passed through the Muir of Ord, famous for its cattle markets. The soil here is particularly light and barren, though in the immediate vicinity we saw them housing as fine crops of wheat as ever grew. Beaul is an interesting village, with an excellent inn, well frequented in the touring season, on account of the Falls of Kilmorac, a few miles distant, which we would have visited had time permitted. Many years ago, I saw them to such advantage that I would gladly have repeated my visit. The whole scenery on this river is fine, which is supposed to have originated the name, *beau lieu*, at a time when Scotland was much frequented by the French. Eilan Aigas, the Highland residence of the late lamented Sir R. Peel, is on an island in this river Beaul, and belongs to the Chisholm. It was most provoking, the whole way to Inverness, to see that huge mass of deformity Ben Wyvis perfectly divested of clouds; so that, had we been one day later, our toils would have been amply rewarded!

Tenth Day.

Very early next morning, we left Inverness by the mail for Aberdeen. Our young friend parted

from us here, having resolved to go to Fort-William. Soon after the dawn of day, we passed Cul-loden Moor on our right, and a little farther on, Castle Stewart close on our left, where Prince Charles Stuart slept on the night before his sad reverse. Had he on that occasion "rowed him in a Hielan' plaid" on the heath among his devoted followers, and thus allayed their clannish feuds and raised their drooping hopes, he might not have been compelled to do so afterwards on the rugged sides of Ben Alder, though, very probably, the results would ultimately have proved more ruinous to Scotland.

Nairn is the first town of any note through which the mail passes. Much of this neighbourhood has been rendered classic by the magic pen of Shakspeare; and the venerable ruins of Cawdor Castle, by reason of historical associations, are particularly attractive. Here, as in Forres, Elgin, Fochabers, and, indeed, the whole way to Aberdeen, the inns seem to be extremely well kept and comfortable, which is mainly owing to this district being much frequented by wealthy sportsmen during the shooting and fishing seasons, who, after the fatigues of the day, afford little breathing-time to waiters, cooks, hostlers, or any who can minister to their comforts. From the appearance of its banks, the Findhorn must be a most mischievous river in its wayward moods. Its suspension-bridge is one of the finest in the kingdom; and the forests around Darnaway Castle, a seat of the Earl of Moray, seem almost interminable. Forres and Elgin are two of the most genteel looking little towns in Scotland—the latter is celebrated for its splendid ecclesiastical ruins and very handsome modern church. From this neighbourhood, there is a distant view

of the Cairngorm mountains; and Belrinnes, on whose summit I have stood, is distinctly visible for a great many miles. In an opposite direction we were still haunted with a dim view of the long ridge of our old enemy, Ben Wyvis, like the apparition of an ill-laid ghost.

At Fochabers we stopped for breakfast, but were only allowed twenty minutes, which was no small mortification, for there was no lack of the best salmon, hot rolls, and everything tempting; and a drive of fifty miles was no bad preparative for the ample enjoyment of them. As for myself, these good things came in so late, that I conceived I was quite justified in carrying part of them in my hand to the coach. The Duke of Richmond's splendid seat (Gordon Castle) is in the immediate vicinity, and was graced with a flag, in honour, we presumed, of her Majesty. The town of Fochabers is much resorted to by anglers—the salmon-fishing in the "rapid Spey" being considered equal to any in the kingdom. Here there is, perhaps, the very finest specimen of school architecture in Scotland. It is quite new, and was founded by Alexander Milne, a native of Fochabers, who died in Louisiana in 1839, leaving a legacy of 100,000 dollars for the gratuitous education of children in this parish.

In passing through the centre of Strathbogie, and on hearing the names of the various parishes—Keith, Huntly, Marnoch, &c.—we were forcibly reminded of this being the Waterloo of the Church of Scotland. Had it not been for the determined stand made by the ministers of this Presbytery on the side of rational religion and constitutional law, the people of Scotland would have been consigned to a state of thralldom unknown to them since the

days of Popish supremacy; for who can doubt of such being the direct tendency of those claims advanced by the scheming ambitious leaders of the late secession? True it is, in these times, such usurpation of power by any body of ecclesiastics could not have been of long duration; still it was their object to render it permanent; and had their projects not met with a prompt and firm resistance, it is hard to say what mischiefs might have ensued, before law, reason, and common sense resumed the ascendancy. An overruling Providence, however, has, from seeming evil, educes real good, as a vast accession has thus been made to the Christian ministry, while the Established Church continues more firm and efficient than ever. The marked success of the late Mr Edwards of Marnoch, whose presentation to that parish was the origin of the fray, and whose congregation was quadrupled during his short incumbency, in defiance of every discouragement, affords a striking proof of the correctness of the well-known apophthegm, "*magna est veritas et prevalebit.*"

Benachie,* a ragged-looking mountain of no great height, continues long in view from the coach-road; and the small river Urie, a branch of the Don, was our fellow-traveller for many miles. To all appearance, this must be a first-rate trout-ing-stream, its banks being free from brushwood, while its waters are of a proper hue and depth, with most desirable alternations of stream and pool, and the fields, being well cultivated, must

* Benachie has become classic ground, being celebrated, of late, in one of the prettiest songs in the Scottish language. It says much for the author's fancy, as a more sterile and uninteresting scene than that "*where Gadie rins,*" to the eye of a stranger, can hardly be conceived.

afford plenty of grubs and worms for fattening the finny tribe. Rain fell in abundance as we approached Aberdeen, which we entered about five o'clock, after a rapid drive of thirteen hours.

Aberdeen, in many respects, is one of the most remarkable cities in the kingdom. Its streets, bridges, and harbour, are on a scale which might well become the capital of Scotland. The new College, new North Church, County Buildings, Banking-houses, Markets, &c., are well worthy of the attention of all travellers. They impress one, indeed, with the idea of their being too fine—much grander than there is any occasion for; and lead one to infer that, in these respects, the pride of the inhabitants has outrun their prudence. The suspension-bridge over the Dee is a truly splendid structure, and the viaduct for the intended railway is the most magnificent thing of the kind in Scotland; but the nearness of these edifices to each other, and their awkward relative position, create a confusion which is somewhat offensive to the spectator. We counted considerably above a hundred arches in the viaduct, but could not accurately number the rest, though we saw there were many more. It terminates at the New Markets in Union Street, one of the most spacious, elegant, and substantial, anywhere to be seen, being throughout constructed of polished granite, of which there are many quarries all around the city, and which is exported to London, and other places, as an article of traffic.

The Royal Fleet lay in the harbour, but we arrived just one hour too late for seeing the interior of the Victoria and Albert, which was open to respectable parties, not exceeding twelve, every day from eleven till four. The appearance even of the outside of this noble steamer is not a little gratify-

ing; and the triumphal arch and arrangements for the accommodation of the spectators were very tasteful and commodious. Her Majesty's residence at Balmoral created considerable excitement in this interesting city; and, if she is an annual visiter, it cannot fail to be of incalculable benefit to Scotland in many respects. Nothing, for instance, could have a finer moral effect than her regular and devout appearance in the House of God on the Sabbaths, among the simple, lowly population of a Highland parish, evidently impressed with the conviction that she and they were but members of one great family, and all alike in the eyes of their heavenly Father. What a salutary lesson was this to our Scotch nobility and gentry, many of whom conceive that, being Episcopalians, it would be inconsistent, or perhaps degrading, to worship in the Established Church of their native land!

Eleventh Day.

Very early next morning, we were on board of the *Bonnie Dundee* on our way to Granton Pier. Aberdeen harbour is large and commodious, but the entrance is much obstructed by a bar, for the removal of which much money has been expended to very little purpose. The London steamers are very large, 1100. or 1200 tons burden, and can only find egress and ingress when the tide is at full flow. The *Dundee* was in the offing, so we were carried out to her by a steamer of much inferior dimensions.

The coast, for a great way, is very rocky and interesting, being indented with numerous creeks and caves, to explore which, in a small boat, in fine weather, must be very curious and amusing. The ruins of Dunnottar Castle are picturesque, and very extensive; but here, as all along the coast, there is no wood of any description, so that Dr Johnson's well-merited sarcasms seem to have been completely thrown away. We passed close along the shore till we were off Montrose, so that we had a most satisfactory view of Stonehaven, Johnshaven, and many other fishing villages celebrated for the curing of haddocks, if not for their natural charms. The weather could not have been more favourable, and the wind being from the land, the nearer we lay to it, our progress was the more smooth, pleasant, and expeditious. As we passed Montrose, Dundee, and St Andrews, at the mouths of their respective bays, we could see little of them but their smoke, though we observed the Bell Rock Lighthouse distinctly, at about twelve miles distance, and had a very satisfactory view of the fine ruins of Arbroath, and the rugged caverned coast in its neighbourhood.

The Isle of May, the Bass, North Berwick Law, Traprain Law, and even Tantallan Castle, were all distinctly visible as we entered the Frith of Forth. The numerous tile-clad royal burghs on the Fife coast, from Crail to Aberdour, were quite under our eye, and at several of them we shipped and unshipped passengers and goods. Passing close under pretty little verdant Inchkeith, with its elegant lighthouse, we soon reached our destination, Granton Pier; and, for the small charge of fourpence each, were most comfortably driven in an omnibus to the very centre of Edinburgh—a city

too well known, and too generally admired, to require any eulogy from my humble pen. Suffice it to say, I am convinced, after having had it for head-quarters twenty years, that, were it not for its chill, cutting east winds, for two or three months in spring and early summer, it would be the most delightful city residence on the face of the earth.

Here my companion and I parted company next day, when I made a run by railway into the centre of East Lothian to visit a friend; and next again, by a similar conveyance, regained Lockerbie, our starting place, and in a few hours more reached my home, after travelling by sea and land at least 800 miles in thirteen days.

THE OCHILS, ALVA, &c.

IN 1849.

MANY years ago, I visited Clackmannanshire and the Ochils as a pedestrian ; but, owing to want of time, could not get to the top of Bencleuch, from which there is the most splendid view of the Grampians that can be conceived. It was my lot to repeat my visit a few weeks ago, under more propitious auspices, when I was gratified to the utmost, by being on the summit of the highest of the Ochils on a very fine day indeed. Along with two young gentlemen, I left the Manse of Alva, one of the most interesting spots in Scotland, soon after breakfast, and we reached the top of Bencleuch by an easy gradual ascent in about two hours. The height is not great, not quite 2500 feet ; but, owing to its position, the view of the Highland mountains is most extensive and imposing. The whole range of the Grampians, from Ben Lomond to Ben-y'-Gloe in Glen Tilt, is quite visible ; and, under particularly favourable circumstances, I make no doubt the Aberdeenshire mountains might be seen on the extreme right, though I suspect the Largs and Kilbirnie hills intercept the view of Goatfell and the other Arran peaks on the extreme left.

Strathmore, or Great Glen, which extends quite across Scotland, separates the Ochils from the Grampians. It is owing to this that the view of the latter is so complete, there being no adjoining high ground to interrupt the prospect. The more remarkable mountains within sight on this occasion were, Ben Lomond, the Cobler, Ben Ledi, Stuichron, Ben Voirlich, Ben Cruachan, Ben Loy, Stobinain, Ben More, Ben Chonzie, Ben Lawers, Schihallion, and Ben-y'-Gloe. These, with innumerable others of inferior note, were quite visible, some of them marked by streaks of snow. In a still clearer day, Ben Nevis may also be seen, and I have no doubt of Ben Macdhui and Lochnagar being within reach of the eye, though I could not make them out on this occasion.

From having been on the tops of nearly the whole of these mountains, their shapes and relative positions were quite familiar to me; but had it been otherwise, I could be under no mistake, as a friend in Edinburgh favoured me with a sketch very accurately copied from a panoramic chart, taken on the spot by scientific men employed by Government for geometrical purposes in 1817. This neat little chart I spread out before me to the extent of six or seven feet, though, when wrapt on its roller, I carried it easily in my pocket. It contained all that is to be seen in the larger one, and had all the names of the mountains attached to them—a most satisfactory companion to all who visit the top of Benclench, so that I hope it will be stereotyped for the use of the public.

The view on all sides of this mountain is interesting, but the Highland district incomparably the most so. The whole horizon is serrated with mountain peaks from S.W. to N.E., their distances

varying from 20 to 60 miles and upwards, as the crow flies. The most remarkable were Ben More, Ben Voirlich, and Ben Lawers, with its elegant conical top and huge bluff rocky eastern shoulder, much resembling Meal-fourvonie on Loch Ness.

The Devon rises not many hundred yards from the top of Bencleuch, and, after a long and singularly circuitous course of more than 40 miles towards every point in the compass, falls into the Frith of Forth near Alloa, not many miles from its source, perhaps not above six in a direct line! It reminds one of the hunted hare, which, after numberless doublings, often breathes its last in the vicinity of its den.

It is truly astonishing that so few from Edinburgh visit Bencleuch. There is no mountain of its height more easy of access, and certainly none commanding such a splendid Highland prospect. The whole drive from Stirling, through the parishes of Logie, Alva, Tilliecultray, and Dollar, is strikingly beautiful, although it has of late been sadly disfigured by huge chimneys, and all the appendages of coal, woollen, iron works, &c. The glens are very narrow and steep. That of Castle Campbell is well known to tourists. On this occasion, I went up the Alva Glen till it seemed quite impervious, as mural precipices arose on all sides in a spot where there is a very fine cataract. Not far from this, there were formerly several deep diggings for silver, which was found in considerable quantities. We entered some of the caves, which are very dangerous to strangers, as they contain uncovered pits of great depth, and, being quite dark a few yards from the entrance, any unwarned person would, in all probability, be precipitated

30 or 40 feet—a risk which ought certainly to be obviated.

An entertainment of a different kind awaited us in an infant school in the village of Alva. It is attended by about 170 children, who sung some beautiful hymns, and, in various other respects, did great credit to their teachers. I have reason to believe that this school, as well as others in the vicinity, is much indebted to the Hon. Mrs Johnstone, who takes a warm and judicious interest in everything likely to promote the improvement and happiness of the labouring classes.

Alva House is one of the most beautiful mansions in Scotland. It is situated near the base of what is most appropriately called the “Wooded Hill,” the bald summit of which cannot be less than 1500 feet above the “banks of the clear winding Devon.” The house itself is magnificent, having not long ago been much enlarged; but the scenery around is absolutely like fairy-land. The flower gardens, terraces, conservatories, archery ground, fountains ejecting water in all directions, &c. &c., render this a scene almost unparalleled, and not to be surpassed.

We were privileged with a view of the interior of the mansion, which quite corresponds with what we had seen without. The paintings are of the choicest description, particularly those representing sea and Highland scenery; and there are many rare and curious articles in the lobbies and galleries, highly deserving the attention of the virtuoso and antiquarian. There is one picture which none can witness without feeling greatly interested. It contains a group of sixteen gentlemen and ladies, eight of each, all the children of the late Mr and Mrs Johnstone, whose eldest son is the present

worthy and amiable proprietor. They have all attained the years of maturity, and, in so far as I have heard, there has not yet occurred a death among them. The picture is ably executed, the grouping admirable, and the likenesses said, in general, to be very striking.

The course of the Devon being so very circuitous, renders the road from the north to the south of the Ochils equally so. This often induces pedestrians to prefer the string to the bow, when, owing to mist or snow, it should not be attempted. Hence, many lives have been lost here and elsewhere. I recollect reading a very simple and effective plan for obviating this risk, viz., let poles be placed at proper distances betwixt the points of danger, and through these let strong fence-wire be run. This might be effected for many miles at a very trifling expense, and could not fail to be of vast utility to the bewildered traveller.

There are many districts where this contrivance is loudly called for, and there cannot be better examples than the routes across the Ochils to Dollar and Tillycoultry, and that from Kingshouse to Rannoch. Of course, the chain should diverge from the straight line wherever there is danger from bogs or precipices, or to touch at such shepherds' or foresters' houses as may not be far from the direction. In many places, large stones would answer better than poles, being at hand, and more durable, and the chain might be discontinued when such burns and glens have been reached as are known to lead to habitable districts.

A WEEK IN SKYE

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1849.

First Day.

THERE is a certain order of men whom, during the autumn months, it seems to be the general object of society to starve and ruin! This may appear a somewhat startling remark; but, when I point to the members of the medical profession as the objects of this conspiracy, all will readily admit the truth of the statement. At this season of the year, there is a general rush in quest of health by nearly the whole community; and were the object attained, what would be the fate of the poor doctors? From Queen Victoria to the way-side beggar, all are on the toddle, in hopes of repairing their corporeal and mental frames, and thus reducing the poor sons of Æsculapius to their last shift.

As implicated in this heartless combination, I left my home a few weeks ago, and met by appointment a fellow-conspirator in the Rainbow Hotel, close to the Ayrshire Station, Glasgow. This city may justly be regarded as the *focus* from which all Highland tourists can most conveniently emanate. Whether bound for the North or West Highlands, they will here meet with facilities not to be equalled

anywhere else. Steam, *ad infinitum*, by land and sea, is at their service ; and, as these two elements are now pitched against each other in hostile strife, the charges are so moderate as to be easily met by tourists of almost every description. At the Broomielaw, elegant slender steamers are at all times to be seen struggling and panting like greyhounds in the slips, as if eager to start with their freights to every point of the compass. Then knapsacks, carpet-bags, dressing-cases, canteens, &c. &c., are displayed in such tempting array at many of the shops in the Trongate, Arcade, and nearly all the streets, that it is almost impossible to refrain from casting off as lumber good old articles, once the pride of our hearts, and which have been our companions by mountain and flood for many a long interesting day, and equipping ourselves with corresponding articles of more modern and tasteful quality and dimensions.

As strangers in Glasgow are often much perplexed in finding suitable accommodation, I may here mention that I have met with no place better adapted for travellers of moderate means than the said Rainbow, kept by Mr Menzies. It is close to the south end of the Broomielaw Bridge, one of the finest in the kingdom, and consequently adjoining not only several of the railway stations, but the steam-boat quays, and is thus in as central and convenient a position as can well be imagined. The accommodation is at once comfortable and genteel : first-rate cookery ; civil, active waiters ; and, though last not least, the charges are far from oppressive.

After partaking of an excellent dinner, I found I had a few hours for looking about me in this immense city, now the second in point of population in the three kingdoms, and the most handsome,

with the single exception of Edinburgh. Though in former years well acquainted with Glasgow, I was not fully aware of its present merits, as I am sure all who have been there of late will agree with me in asserting, that it has progressed wonderfully in everything generally attractive to strangers. Its public buildings have multiplied astonishingly, and many of these are surpassingly elegant. The Exchange Reading Room has for a number of years been much admired, and there seems to be no objection to the free admission of respectably dressed visitors. Among other handsome edifices, large and splendid Normal Schools, *free* and *bond*, attract the attention; while the mushroom architecture of the Free Church meets the eye in almost every direction. The aspect of these imposing and costly structures contrasts strikingly with the model churches of Culsalmond, for country parishes, and that of Dr Candlish, in the Lothian Road, Edinburgh, which was to be the *ne plus ultra* of expenditure in towns, the plainness of the external structures being incalculably compensated by the purity of doctrine poured forth within. Poor human nature, however, soon put an end to these fond and fanciful notions. Vanity and pride must be pampered, and take the lead even in the most pure and spiritual of our sects; and thus Glasgow, like Edinburgh, is largely indebted to her Free Church zealots for many of her gayest and most costly places of worship.

While treating of these subjects, I must not allow to pass unnoticed that magnificent triumphal arch, erected in honour of the late visit of her Majesty, at the north or city end of the Broomielaw Bridge. Though only a temporary erection of wood, painted to represent granite, it is universally

admired, and there is a very general desire that it may be permanently superseded by one of real stone. Its proportions are admirable ; and, as the bridge is perhaps the most spacious in the kingdom, the obstruction as to traffic, if felt at all, must only be to an inconsiderable extent. The situation is the best in Glasgow for a thing of the kind ; and, when it is recollected that it was in passing through this fine massive, classic arch, the sun burst through all the celestial obstructions of the morning, and welcomed our beloved Sovereign into this centre of Scottish industry and wealth, the loyalty of thousands will glow with redoubled ardour. Let "*esto perpetua*," then, be the sentiment of every Glasgow merchant ; and if the work were set about, while the memory of the honour done them is still fresh, I am convinced there would be no lack of funds.

The Cathedral is allowed to be the finest and most entire in Scotland, and should be visited by all strangers. It has been recently repaired, and, notwithstanding former disasters, still bids fair to brave for centuries the ravages of time. It adds a pleasing interest to this noble pile that its venerable pastor, Principal M'Farlane, was honoured with the arm of his Sovereign while engaged in pointing out to her its "long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults"—a reward justly due to one who, in the most trying and perilous times of our Church, unflinchingly preserved his consistency till the storm was bravely encountered and triumphantly weathered.

In immediate juxtaposition to the High Church is the Cemetery, one of the first, if not the very first, of the kind attempted in Scotland ; and one which, as regards situation and general interest,

may well be compared with the most successful of them all. Here we found ready admittance, after entering our names in the janitor's book. This burying-ground contains many interesting mementos of the mighty dead, among which that of our great Reformer Knox is the most conspicuous, whose lofty statue seems superintending, as its guardian angel, that Church of Scotland which, under Heaven, owes its existence to his ardent piety and indomitable energies. With what transporting emotions would he have been animated, could he have anticipated the entire success of his exertions in behalf of the Protestant schools and churches of his native land! And it may be added, with what grief and indignation would he have regarded their contemplated ruin by a numerous and powerful body of her recreant children!

Second Day.

The Tartar, Captain Macdonald, sails from the Broomielaw for Skye every Tuesday morning, and from Portree for Glasgow every Friday morning. She is a strong good vessel, and her captain has long been a great favourite with the public. As she doubles the Mull of Kintyre, where the full swell of the Atlantic proves generally too potent for the comfort of landsmen, many prefer the Crinan Canal as far as Oban, where the Tartar calls on the forenoon of Wednesday. My friend and I preferred this latter plan—so we went on board the Pioneer at 6 A.M. on the 28th August.

Though the Frith of Clyde is universally allowed to be the most grand and interesting of all our estuaries, yet, as it is so generally known, I shall not detain my readers with any description of its scenery. The weather was by no means favourable. Though not absolutely wet, it was thick and muggy, and anything but exhilarating. In passing through the Kyles of Bute, however, it improved so far as to open up these straits in a very interesting manner. The entrance to Loch Riddan is decidedly the finest portion of this scene. Here the coast is rugged and precipitous, and the receding hills assume the character of mountains. The son of an English divine has, for a considerable time, been located here with his family, and a more complete contrast to the parsonages of merry England can scarcely be conceived. Remote from the busy world, he may here "hunt the roe, the hart, the doe," or whatever other game he has a mind for, without much danger from Episcopal superintendence.

The mountainous district of Arran was much obscured on this occasion, which is always greatly to be lamented by tourists. The lower portion of the mountains only was discernible; but we had a fine peep into the sequestered bay of Loch Ranza, and, with the naked eye, could readily discern its venerable ruined castle, and even some of the adjoining cottages. On entering the Crinan Canal, we found there was to be considerable delay in waiting for the boat which conveys passengers from both extremities; so, in company with two ladies and as many gentlemen, we resolved to walk to the nearest locks, about five miles off.

Lochgilphead is greatly improved of late years, and has now a neat and thriving appearance, being

much frequented as a bathing-place by the gentry of Glasgow. The Crinan Canal, from its antiquity, has assumed very much the character of a stately river, having its banks fringed with hazel, birch, alder, and all those shrubs and trees usually attendant upon our Scottish rivers; and, were it not for the constant traffic, I am persuaded it would afford first-rate sport to the angler. Much valuable ground has lately been redeemed from the marshes; and, as the work is still in progress, some thousands of acres will soon be added to the amount. Oakfield is very beautifully situated on the banks of the canal, surrounded with well-grown and well-selected trees, among which, no doubt, the "monarch of the wood" maintains his boasted sway. As rain now fell in good earnest, the ladies became very anxious to reach the locks, and were most provokingly tantalised by the conflicting statements of the peasantry as to the distance. After nearly an hour's hard walking, we were told that we had farther to go than when we first inquired! At length, however, we reached a substantial inn, where there was comfortable shelter till the arrival of the boat, which came up at the canter, drawn by three horses, driven by two smartly-equipped postilions.

The west end of the canal is particularly striking. It is quite Highland, and I am persuaded that, were it not for the frequency of its being visited, there are few places in Scotland that would be more admired. The Bay of Crinan, though often resorted to by Cockneys, is very far, indeed, from being a Cockney scene. It is landlocked by precipitous islands and headlands, whose bare, weather-beaten cliffs cannot fail to impress an admirer of Nature with a lively idea of the sublime;

more especially when he reflects that these are the embankments reared by the Almighty to check the fury of the Atlantic. The situation of Duntroon Castle has been much and justly admired, and the present proprietor is laudably exerting himself, in many respects, for the improvement of this interesting district.

We were here transferred to that fine steamer, the *Shandon*, which, alternately with the *Dolphin*, navigates among the Western Islands. Though now in the Sound of Jura, we saw little of its rock-bound shore, and nothing of its mountains. We passed many of the Hebrides almost without being aware of their presence, so dimly did they loom through the dense fog; like the vision described in *Job*, though "before our face we could not discern the form thereof." This was a sad disappointment to many, especially to those who had never been there before. It is an ill wind, however, that blows good to none; for many were thereby induced to have recourse to the tempting viands of the steward, who, in more propitious weather, would have treated them with disdain. Thus did we reach the unrivalled bay and town of Oban, where, in the course of the evening, as other steamers and coaches arrived, the usual scramble for beds took place.

Third Day.

Next morning, though not quite what could be wished, the weather was improved; so, after par-

taking of a truly Highland breakfast with an old and much valued friend, we were apprised of the Tartar's approach, and were soon *en route* for Skye. The day brightened as it advanced, so that the Sound of Mull was seen to much advantage. Tobermory is particularly interesting as seen from the bay, but a nearer approach by no means tends to heighten its charms. It is well wooded, and its rocky shores are adorned by some beautiful cascades, as well as by the elegant mansion and pleasure grounds of Drumfin; but the town itself is miserably ill-planned, and the inhabitants manifest a hearty contempt of all sanitary laws. It is surrounded by wretched hovels, and, though everywhere there is a steep slope to the sea, yet filth of every description stagnates at the very doors, so that we regretted having left the Tartar, as it dissipated much of the enchantment which distance here lends to the scene.

On retiring from Tobermory, a splendid view of Ben More in Mull was opened up to us by the rising clouds. It ascends in two abrupt starts, as seen in this direction, and appeared to me a much finer mountain than I had ever previously given it credit for. The point of Ardnamurchan, with its stately new lighthouse, and bold rocky coast, next attracted our attention. There is something particularly savage in the aspect of this bare, barren headland, exposed to all the violence of the Atlantic billows; and, to heighten the interest of the scene, a very large eagle descended from the impending cliffs, and followed the vessel for about a mile, attracted, as we surmised, by the scent of the fish, and other good things on deck. So near was he occasionally, that he might easily have been brought down with swan shot had we been so

prepared. He eyed us askance with much significance, as much as to say, "I'll come in if you'll come out." The deep sea salmon fishery, at the mouth of Loch Shiel, seems in a very thriving state from the number of empty boxes that were here thrown out to be replenished. The entrance of many of these salt-water lochs is singularly grand and impressive, owing to the height and rugged forms of the mountains by which they are encompassed. Of these, Loch Nevis and Loch Hourn are particularly deserving of notice. This was the country where the standard of rebellion was first unfurled in 1745, a measure which involved many of the oldest and best Highland families in misery and ruin.

We were now, while the shades of evening were closing around us, in the Sound of Sleat, and our anchor was soon dropped for the night in the commodious and beautiful natural harbour of Isle Oronsay. This is the best wooded and most civilised portion of Skye. Armadale Castle is one of the handsomest of which Scotland can boast. It is situated in the midst of extensive thriving woods, many of the trees being of stately dimensions. The "Lord of the misty hills of Skye" makes this his constant residence; and, in so far as his means permit, is most anxious to promote the well-being of the inhabitants; but it would require a princely fortune indeed to remove them beyond that poverty which bears so hard on this, as well as on many, if not the whole of these islands.

As we had to pass the night on board, and it was several hours from the usual time of going to rest, the male passengers had recourse to creature comforts of various kinds, and spent the interval in lively and amusing conversation. Perhaps the fol-

lowing anecdotes, then narrated, may interest my readers:—Some one speaking of the difficulty of getting beds on the west coast at this season, a gentleman said that he had never felt it more, than on the preceding evening. He had arrived at Oban very late, and was told at the hotels and lodging-houses that every bed was full. The night was wet and cold, and he did not relish the idea of spending it outside, so he resolved to try all the windows as he went along, in hopes of one or other of them being unsecured. After many fruitless attempts, he got admission into what he found to be a snug little dining-room. So in he stepped, and, after shutting the window, wrapt himself in his plaid, and slept comfortably on a sofa, till in the morning a servant girl came to clean out the room. "Bless me, sir!" she exclaimed, "how cam' ye here? Ye waur na here when we gaed to our bed! Does my maister ken o' your being here?" "It would be very strange, indeed," said he, "if he did not. I came late, and did not like to give you trouble; but I find the boat will soon be off—will you give him my compliments, and say, I was so much hurried that I could not see him before starting?" So saying, he put a couple of shillings into her hand, and was politely curtsied to the door. On another occasion, when a boat was arriving at Oban, crammed with passengers, one of them particularly intent on comfort, sprung actively ashore, and calling out, "Hurra! for the first bed," ran in the direction of a strong gas-light, which he had ascertained was in front of the Caledonian Hotel. He succeeded in getting the *first bed*, but it was just across the pier, in ten or twelve feet of water, from which he was not without difficulty extricated by some herring fishers, who happened to be still astir.

Fourth Day.

At five o'clock A.M., on Thursday, 30th August, we weighed anchor, and left Isle Oronsay. This snug anchorage is right opposite the entrance of Loch Hourn, one of the grandest scenes in the West Highlands. The mainland all along this coast, Inverness-shire, is remarkably rugged and interesting, and the channel being so strait, it is seen to great advantage. Not having undressed, I was on board before five, and enjoyed the view on both sides exceedingly, only lamenting that all my fellow-passengers were in the Land of Nod. The barracks of Bernera, though apparently deserted, add to the interest of the scene, as also the Church and Manse of Glenelg. Kyle Rhea is the narrowest part of the straits, and here there is a regular ferry from Skye to the mainland, the distance not exceeding half-a-mile. At Kyle Akin there is another ferry; and close to it, in Skye, several respectable-looking houses have been built, with a view to their being the commencement of a trading village. On the opposite shore, an English gentleman possesses considerable property, and has his shooting lodge close to the water's edge. Purchasing of land by rich Englishmen has become very common throughout the Highlands, and cannot fail to bring much wealth as well as civilisation into a country which stands greatly in need of both. All along this coast there is no receding of the sea. It is so steep and rocky that a few feet perpendicular is all the difference made by the tide, so that vessels of heavy burden may tack close to either shore. The tide, however, runs remarkably strong,

giving it the appearance of a rapid majestic river, and rendering missing stays in a breeze a very dangerous matter.

On leaving this narrow channel, Scalpa, Raaza, Pabba, and various other islands, were opened to our view; the two former wild and rocky, the latter remarkably low, and apparently well cultivated. Dun-caan, in Raaza, is the only hill of considerable height; its abrupt sides and table-shaped summit are seen from afar, and distinguish this from all the neighbouring islands. It has, not long ago, become the property of a gentleman who has been the architect of his own fortune, by means of that laudable persevering industry so characteristic of many of our countrymen. On this occasion, he, his wife, and son, were our fellow-passengers till we arrived at the village of Broadford, where my friend and I, with other two tourists, left the Tartar, with the view of visiting the Spar Cave of Strath Aird and Loch Corruisk. At Broadford, and all along during the morning, we were struck with the number of people, principally females, crowding into the vessel as often as opportunities occurred, and were informed that their object was to attend a Free Church sacrament at Snizort—a prodigious distance from their homes, but resorted to by hundreds far more remote.

Arrived at the inn of Broadford, we felt well appetized for breakfast, and, along with the two above-mentioned gentlemen, ordered it forthwith. "*Citius dicto*," however—*done ere bid*—is far from being the order of the day in Skye. After much delay, and visiting the scene of action, the kitchen, I found that absolutely nothing was done! On expressing disappointment, the reply was, "Oh! are ye in a hurry? we didna ken."—"Can we

have herrings and eggs?"—"You can get plenty o' eggs, but we hae nae herrin's."—"Indeed! the boat which set us ashore was so full of them that we could scarcely find room for our feet."—"Weel, then, we'll see what can be done." Notwithstanding our utmost efforts, much time was lost before we could manage our point; and, had we not lent a hand ourselves, it seemed questionable whether breakfast would ever have made its appearance. The people, generally speaking, in this island have no idea of the value of time. Many of them, unfortunately, having little to do themselves, conceive all others similarly circumstanced, and their great object seems to be to spin out every little job that occurs.

During breakfast, the weather, which had never been very promising, assumed a decidedly unfavourable aspect. The Skye mountains had at no period of the morning been visible; but now thick mist gradually degenerated into thick rain, so that our prospects of enjoyment were gloomy indeed. While thus lamenting what no human power can obviate, notice was brought that a conveyance had arrived from the truly polite and hospitable minister of the parish, to conduct us to his residence five miles distant. His youngest son was our charioteer, and we were soon received with that hearty welcome for which our Scottish Highlands are so justly celebrated. All this day there was no relenting in the elements, but the reverse; for, as night approached, the rain increased. There was one comfort, however, we could not have been in better quarters. Topics of mutual interest were discussed with much zest till dinner was announced, the quality of which would have done credit to any manse in Scotland.

Fifth Day.

Early next morning, the weather still looked doubtful. We were assured, however, by our entertainer, that the day would be good; and his prediction was verified, for it turned out splendid. Our two Broadford friends arrived to breakfast, having also letters of introduction here; and after a feast, which would have gratified the Court at Balmoral, we four visitors set off for Loch Slapin, in order to visit the Spar Cave. Our worthy host accompanied us to the boat, where we found five men ready for service under the direction of his son, to whose polite attention we were greatly indebted. The rowing was by no means first-rate, but in time we reached the cave, which far surpassed our expectations. It is so very different from Fingal's, in Staffa, that a comparison cannot well be drawn. The latter is grand and solemn, but is seen, all at once, in the most satisfactory manner by the light of day. The former requires much time and the aid of artificial light. Besides ourselves and boatmen, we had several boys to assist us in holding candles in suitable positions, so that we saw the whole to the utmost advantage. The approach between lofty perpendicular rocks is very imposing; but soon after we would have been in utter darkness had it not been for our candles. After advancing a considerable way, there are two steep ascents, with distinct landing-places to each, and then a descent into a deep pool of limpid water, which bars farther progress, though the cave extends somewhat beyond it.

I pretend not to give a particular description of this freak of Nature; suffice it to say, that we were all delighted. Everthing is on a large scale; the width and height are such that there is no creeping and soiling of clothes, as is often the case in curiosities of this nature. The ascents and descents were much facilitated by a strong rope held above and below by the boatmen. There is a constant dripping of water from the roof, but it is so pure and sparkling that it can scarcely be regarded as an annoyance. No doubt, there are many plants and minerals on this coast interesting to men of science in these departments who have time at command. I was particularly struck with one plant which grew from the crevices at the mouth of the cave. It consisted of bunches of very long broad leaves, and would have puzzled me greatly, had it not been for one of our new friends, a distinguished botanist, as well as mineralogist, who pronounced it to be a very uncommon species of fern.

On emerging from this singular scene, the day seemed particularly brilliant. The islands of Eigg and Rum were in front of us, the latter distinguished by lofty peaked mountains, while those on the mainland, Inverness-shire, were seen to great advantage. So clear was the atmosphere, that I am convinced I saw Ben Nevis, from the summit of which, many years ago, I had distinctly seen the Alps of Skye. Upon entering Loch Scavaig, these appeared in front of us in all their glory; and certainly I never saw any mountains so grisly, wild, and sublime, as the Cuchullins, or Coolins, as they are generally termed. The Arran Peaks resemble them a good deal; but in so far as granite is inferior to hypersthene in the power of resisting the

ravages of time and the elements, in the same proportion are the former surpassed by the Coolins in sharpness and singularity of outline. The Arran mountains are also said to be considerably less elevated.

In approaching our landing place, we passed many desolate looking caves, in one of which the Pretender spent some dreary days while a price was set on his head. Here much caution is required, as sunk rocks are frequently discernible very near the surface, surrounded by water almost unfathomably deep. On our left, rising abruptly from the sea, is Garsben, the nearest and most southerly of the range, which extends in a deeply serrated curved line around the head of Loch Corruisk, terminating in Scur-nan-Gillean at the northern extremity. On our right we had Scur-nan-Stree, Blaven, and several others of nearly equal height.* On landing, we soon found ourselves, after a rocky scramble, on the margin of Loch Corruisk, without exception, the most terrific scene I ever witnessed. Here we all joined in a hearty repast, for which we were still indebted to our kind and provident hostess of the previous day. Not far off, we saw two gentlemen who had come from Sligachan for sketching and fishing, and they could not have found a spot more favourable for their respective pursuits. Some of us scrambled nearly to the upper end of the loch, two miles off, after which, and settling with our boatmen, my

* In the frontispiece, Blaven, Scur-nan-Stree, and the range called the "red mountains," on the east side of Glen Sligachan, are hidden by the high rocks on the water's edge. Loch Corruisk lies in the centre, immediately beyond the darkest shaded ledge of rocks. The distance from the boat party to Scur-nan-Gillean, on the extreme right, is about ten miles.

friend and I set off for Sligachan, while the rest of the party returned in the boat.

From Loch Corruisk the ascent is very abrupt, over a spur of the Coolins, which we crossed opposite Lot-o'-Corry; and let any man visit that scene if he be really anxious to witness the sternest and most impressive that Scotland can boast. The rocks, which are completely naked, are very dark and metallic-looking, their surface being encrusted with crystals, which occasionally glance vividly in the rays of the sun; and there are huge blocks here and there, placed in the most singular positions. From this dark den issues the stream that reaches the sea about a mile below the inn at Sligachan. The whole of this glen is magnificent; but, there being next to no track, and night fast approaching, we had some difficulty in finding our way to the inn, where we arrived between nine and ten, considerably indebted to the moon.

Sixth Day.

The last day of August was to us one of unmingled satisfaction; the first of September one of grievous disappointment. On the former, we had seen the Spar Cave, with all its fairy-like tracery, Lochs Scavaig and Corruisk, and the "dark frowning glories" of the Cuchullins, in as great perfection as they have ever been, or can be viewed. We had from a great height descended into the abysses at the source of Glen Sligachan, skirting the base of Scur-nan-Gilleann, scanning its shivered

sides with a view of climbing its stately summit next day, one of the main objects of our going to Skye. But, alas!

“The best laid schemes o’ mice and men
Gang aft a’gley.”

The morning, though grey, still looked hopeful, and all the mountain tops stood out sharp and clear in the horizon. I took an early walk in their direction to plan the best mode of ascent, and had fully satisfied myself that it was quite practicable, notwithstanding all that has been said and written to the contrary. Tradition says that the above mountain derives its name from several young men having lost their lives in a rash attempt to reach its summit.

A party arrived from Portree before breakfast, whom we had the pleasure of meeting in the Tartar. They had been at the Storr and Quirang, and were going to the Spar Cave and Loch Corruisk. We all breakfasted together, and had much agreeable conversation as to our adventures in the island and our future intentions. One of our party was a London lady of great spirit and vivacity, who, in company with her husband and another gentleman, had climbed the Storr on the previous Thursday, encompassed with mist, and in a deluge of rain, and yet she seemed only more determined to brave every difficulty. The inn at Sligachan is one of the best in Skye; still we should have found it no easy matter to get breakfast in decent time, had it not been for the help of this lady’s maid-servant. She tried every persuasive art to expedite the business, but failing, she set to work herself, and actually stupified the natives with her activity. They stared in mute amazement on observing one

girl do more work than any half-dozen mountaineers, and seemed to regard her as some supernatural being of the Brownie tribe, whom it was scarcely canny to speak to, or even to look at.

During this meal the clouds caught hold of the highest points of the Coolins, and gradually crept down their ravines, attended by rain, till we saw that our purpose was altogether hopeless. To ascend almost any high mountain in mist, even though well known, is perplexing; but, in such circumstances, to have attempted Scur-nan-Gilleann would have been absolute folly and madness, so with much chagrin we set off for Portree. I may here mention, that Sligachan is by far the best starting point either for climbing the Coolins, or visiting Loch Corruisk. I am persuaded that a persevering judicious pedestrian may leave the inn and stand on the highest peak, provided the weather be favourable, within three hours. The mountain above-mentioned is generally esteemed the highest; but I am much mistaken if there are not eight or ten others in the immediate vicinity not two hundred feet lower, some of them nearly on the same level. Indeed Blaven, on the opposite side of Glen Sligachan, is by some reckoned the highest of them all; so that, if Scur-nan-Gilleann, as is allowed by scientific men, be above 3200 feet in height, there are many of its neighbours above 3000; and as they all start from the sea, sharp and rugged, stern and grim, it may readily be supposed they are well worthy of the tourist's attention. Let him, however, beware of mist, for they are rarely entirely free from it, and be sure never to ascend unless he is certain of a safe retreat, as the latter is by much the more difficult. M'Culloch states that in five successive summers he made

seven attempts to see these mountains to advantage, and only once gained his object; so that, notwithstanding the above mishap, we considered ourselves fortunate in seeing them quite distinctly every day we were in the island, excepting the first.

The road to Portree from Sligachan is good and free from tolls, as are all the others in this island. The Storr, with its very extraordinary prongs, appeared in view when we were about half-way. It is six miles on the opposite side of Portree, and is justly regarded as one of the greatest curiosities in Skye. There are some neat villas near Portree, and the little town itself is beautifully situated. The bay resembles that at Tobermory. It is surrounded by steep, rocky, well-wooded hills, and is secure from every wind, as the island of Raasa defends it on the only side assailable by the sea. The inn is a very good one indeed, and the charges here as elsewhere reasonable enough, considering that a few months at this season are all they have to depend on for profitable custom. Though the morning had been unpropitious, the latter part of the day was good, and the evening beautiful. The full moon shining upon this very interesting bay showed it off to great advantage. There is here a neat church, a bank, a post-office, and a jail; so that, though not containing above fifty houses, Portree may well be considered the capital of Skye. There is a good herring and salmon fishery also, which, in their season, gives the place an animated appearance.

Seventh Day.

Next morning, the Sabbath, was very gloomy and wet; and, as there happened to be no public worship in Portree, we were confined to the house till mid-day, when it faired, so that we resolved to walk seven miles to be present at the Free Church sacrament at Snizort. In defiance of the heavy rain, Portree seemed emptied of its inhabitants. Every kind of vehicle was in requisition, and many were on foot. The country towards Snizort is heathy and uninteresting; but the river there, being much swollen, and having a very rocky channel, was well worth seeing. The Free Church is neat enough, but the manse is one of the largest and finest I have seen. The place of meeting on this great occasion was an open heath, about a mile farther on than the church, and near a large fir plantation. The assemblage was immense, surrounded by numberless carts, gigs, &c., and the horses either running loose, or having two legs tied together. The tent was placed with its back to the wood, nearly surrounded by the strangest looking group we ever witnessed. The number present was estimated at about 7000; and, when it is considered that many had come from Lewis, Harris, Uist, and many other islands, as well as from the Mainland, it may readily be conceived that this was by no means above the mark. My mode of calculation was by comparing the space filled with the area of Tanfield at Edinburgh. The latter is said to seat 4000 people, and it appeared to me that the crowd here would have crammed it at least twice. True, there were many reclining;

but, to compensate for this, there was a much greater proportion of children here than at Tanfield—not to speak of the *worshippers in the wood*, of whom there were of both sexes not a few.

We regretted much being too late for the sermon by the talented Mr Roderic M'Leod, who, I believe, is the only Free Church ordained minister in the island, and whose sway is despotic. He is much liked and respected, not only by his own people, but by the people and ministers of the Establishment. The whole of the service was in Gaelic, and it is questionable if there were one hundred present who could have been edified by any other language. We heard two tables served; and, if power of lungs, and extravagant gesticulation constitute eloquence, there was no lack of it here. To do the people justice, it must be allowed they were all calm, and seemingly attentive. There was none of that agitation and screaming which were too common in such meetings a few years ago. This, it seems, instead of being connived at by their ministers as formerly, has of late been discouraged and suppressed, as it was bringing their religious assemblies into disrepute among the judicious and intelligent. The psalm-singing, to my taste, was most solemn and impressive. At the end of each line, after the precentor finished, the notes were prolonged by the remotest skirts of the multitude in a manner that appeared to me most appropriate to Divine worship. I never heard old Coleshill warbled so sweetly. Oh! how unlike the flippant new-fangled airs so much in vogue in most of our churches!

“ Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears nae heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison ha’e they wi’ our Creator’s praise.”

In the evening, we went to hear English service in the church, the officiating clergyman being the first whom we heard at the tables. The congregation did not exceed forty-five, including the minister. He was animated in the extreme, and had a noble text; but we agreed in thinking him *more edifying in Gaelic*. Though the Queen was now in the Highlands, no allusion was made in prayer either to her or her Court. Would this silence have been observed had she attended divine worship in the Free Church? As a patroness of an *Erastian* Church, they should surely have considered her the more in need of their prayers.

It is singular that any intelligent people should regard it as an argument in favour of the Free Church, that it has so many adherents in the North and West Highlands. As well may it be urged in favour of the Romish Church, that the priests carry the people along with them in the south and west of Ireland. They are alike ignorant, and incapable of conviction, and are thus mere tools for promoting any object their spiritual guides may have in view. Gaelic having only of late years been a printed language, and being differently spoken in every different district, it must of necessity be a very imperfect means of instructing those who are acquainted with no other. Johnson describes it as "the barbarous language of a barbarous people, who conceive grossly, and are content to be as grossly understood;" and in this sentiment I entirely agree with regard to all those who can converse in no other tongue.

When we returned at night to Portree, I expressed surprised to the company in the inn that several of the elders assisting at the tables wore red and striped worsted night-caps, even the precentor

wearing one of the former flaming complexion. A gentleman, particularly conversant with everything connected with the Highlands, assured me that this was no mark of disrespect, but a badge of distinction; that none wore these articles but such as had great spiritual attainments, and that they wore red, striped, or blue head gear, according to their various gradations in sanctity. I thanked him for his information, as, had it not been for his civility and superior light, I might have done "*the men*" great injustice by regarding *that* as a mark of slovenliness in which they chiefly gloried, though I confess their taste still seems to me not a little questionable. At all events, as "*the men*" have assumed the *cardinal's hat*, it seems but fair that their omnipotent and infallible spiritual guide should be decorated with a *papal crown*.

Eighth Day.

Having resolved to visit Quirang, in the north-west corner of the island, and to go by sea, we secured the services of two active able-bodied sailors on the Saturday evening. Early on Monday, we left Portree, in an excellent boat, but too heavy for rowing, and, as there was little or no wind, this proved a serious obstacle to our progress. It is about twenty miles to Stenhol, the nearest landing-place to Quirang. If there had been a breeze from any quarter, we counted on being only a few

hours at sea. There was scarcely a breath of wind, however, and, as the heat was intense, we made provokingly little way.

About four or five miles from Portree, we landed to see a cave celebrated for having lodged the Pretender and several of his devoted followers for a considerable time. It is almost inaccessible by land; and, from its external appearance, no one could conceive its interior so capacious as it is. Had we not previously visited the Spar Cave, this one would have made a much stronger impression. It is wide, high-roofed, and extends a long way back, so that I should think fifty people might find in it tolerable accommodation, especially if the *gibbet* was the alternative. It seemed quite dark upon entering, but gradually we could explore all its recesses, and ascertain that, like the Spar Cave, it was much encrusted with beautiful stalactites.

After toiling at their oars a couple of miles farther, we asked the men to put us ashore opposite the Storr, which we were anxious to ascend, while they proceeded onwards. The ascent for five or six hundred feet from the water's edge was very steep and toilsome, as the sun was unclouded, and it was near mid-day. After surmounting this difficulty, and finding the Storr was still several miles off, my companion preferred "the way of the plain," proceeding northward, just above the high ridge overlooking the sea. Being determined to explore the recesses of the above most fantastic mountain, I toiled on through bogs and by the side of a lake, till I came to the last ascent. About half way up I got among the prongs, whose appearance amused us so much when approaching Portree. Some of these are perpendicular, others oblique, and they must be several hundred feet in height. Opposite

them, in the mountain-side, from which they seem to have been detached by some convulsion of Nature, are corresponding ravines of a truly terrific appearance. After surveying them, I looked back towards Portree, and witnessed a scene which for sublimity and singularity I shall never forget. The atmosphere was remarkably clear, so that the wild towering cliffs of the Coolins were seen through the fangs of the Storr, while the extreme background was filled up by the serrated ridges of the Glenelg and Loch Hourn Mountains, and others in that direction.

My work, however, was here only about half finished. In ascending the upper part of the Storr, my progress was frequently intercepted by the ravines above mentioned, which, being sheer precipices, and composed of a very crumbly amygdaloidal rock, must in thick mist expose the climber to imminent danger. On the summit there is a large mound of turf, and the walls of a cottage, raised by the sappers and miners when engaged in their scientific pursuits. The view from this was truly magnificent, comprehending, besides the whole of Skye, the mountain scenery of Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, and Argyle Shires, with many of the Hebrides. My old enemy Ben Wyvis, some sixty or seventy miles due east, was distinctly visible, and scanned with much interest, as there, last season, along with two friends, owing to our being benighted, we had nearly climbed our last.

Descending in a sloping direction towards the sea, I rejoined my friend, who, after losing sight of me for about five hours, had become somewhat uneasy, as a broken or even a sprained limb in such a solitude would have been attended with serious consequences. We found our boatmen waiting for

us in a very remarkable creek, overhung by rocks, whose shadows shone conspicuous in the deep, green, unruffled sea. After labouring long at the oar, a slight breeze having sprung up, our sails were hoisted, but what little wind there was being right a-head, we made very little progress ; so that, seeing it would be long after midnight before we could expect to reach Stenhol, we agreed to go ashore and make the best of our way by land, allowing the men to return to Portree.

All this was very discouraging ; still we had seen a magnificent rocky coast, with its natural arches, caves, and buttresses ; and, in particular, a splendid waterfall into the sea, of perhaps two hundred feet perpendicular. After a scrambling walk of about a mile, we came to some cottages, where we were supplied with excellent milk, and soon found a road lately made from the funds of the Destitution Society. This proved to us a mighty boon, as it had become dark, and the natural face of the country is of a very rough and impervious description. At length we reached what is called the Inn of Stenhol, to us a most welcome sight, though I question if there be another like it in Scotland. Luckily, we were the only guests, so we had all the accommodation at our disposal, and all the attendance of the inmates, and most anxious they were to please us. The peats, however, being wet, and the epidemic slackness particularly prevalent, if we had not bestirred ourselves, we should have been ill off indeed, especially as our principal waiter could not speak one word of English.

Ninth Day.

Next morning was fine, but foggy. Having an introductory letter to the *quoad sacra* minister, about a mile distant, we called on him, just as he and a chance guest of the preceding evening (who, luckily for himself as well as us, had *mistaken* the manse for the inn) were beginning breakfast. After they had finished, we all set off for Quirang, about three miles distant, under the guidance of an old Waterloo man, who had served twenty years in the 42d regiment, during the most eventful period of the war. As we ascended the heights of Quirang, the heat was most oppressive, particularly to the minister, who, not being in first-rate condition, earnestly and pathetically urged us "not to make a toil of a pleasure." On reaching the singular scene, we were much gratified. In some respects it much resembles the Storr, but differs in that there is here, among the lofty spire-like cliffs, about an acre of level ground covered with beautiful soft grass. This on one side is bounded by the mountain, on the other three by those insulated prongs, whose summits never were, nor can be, reached by mortal man without artificial means. The whole scene much resembles the gigantic ruins of some mighty cathedral, such as might be the subject of a dream. Around these peaks, on this occasion, floated thick, fleecy, white clouds, and between them the blue sea occasionally made its appearance, rendering the scene still more attractive and fantastic. It seems to be generally allowed, that this must at one time have been the crater of a volcano, and it would be difficult to account for the aspect of the rocks in any other way.

The whole of this mountain range, from the Storr to Quirang, is composed of the same species of rock, and assumes in various places corresponding singularity of appearance, but nowhere nearly to the same extent. The Storr is by much the highest point, Quirang being the next highest.

We descended on the opposite side to that by which we had reached this strange scene. Our guide took us to one of the most copious and delightful springs we ever saw, close to the road leading to Uig; and here we parted from him and the minister, having to proceed to Portree on foot, by Uig and Snizort, a distance of twenty-five miles. For six or seven miles there is a black heathy country, extending to the sea on the opposite side of the island. The bay of Uig is very beautiful. It is embosomed in steep, but not very rocky hills, and contains many cottages with considerable patches of corn. There is here a cascade well worthy of attention, also a place of worship, and a burying-ground, sadly overgrown with nettles—no uncommon sight in Scotland, but which in England would be reprobated as shamefully neglectful, and disrespectful to the dead. It is high time we were taking a leaf out of our neighbours' book in this respect; and surely, when around Edinburgh and Glasgow there are seen such interesting places of interment, the provinces will at least in some degree approve and imitate.

On emerging from the high ground about Uig, the splendid Coolins again became visible. The evening was fine, and we greatly admired the situation of the Manse of Snizort, where, having an introduction, we were hospitably received. Here, however, we could not tarry. The minister gave us a Highland convoy of about two miles, and we

went on our way rejoicing. We came up again with the gentleman who accompanied us to Quirang, who, though of considerable standing in the navy, and the scion of a noble English family, felt pleasure in roughing it on foot among these Highland fastnesses—an example not frequently imitated by men of high rank and fashion. He drove before him a small ricketty Shetland pony, with a mere trifle of luggage, and entered Portree without coat or waistcoat, these being on such a day regarded by us all as superfluous incumbrances.

On the night of the 4th September, the scramble for beds in Portree was almost unprecedented. Having secured ours, however, before leaving it the previous day, we were not incommoded. Late in the evening, a coach-and-four arrived full of ladies, but how or where they were lodged we could not conjecture, as every corner was occupied long before their arrival; very probably they were indebted for night-quarters to the vehicle in which they had travelled. This I know, that some half-dozen gentlemen were glad to wrap themselves up in their cloaks and plaids, and squat for the night on the floor of the sitting-room; there being no alternative, they wisely submitted with a good grace.

As the Marquis of Stafford steamer from Stornoway was to call here next morning, we resolved to avail ourselves of her as far as Oban, much regretting that our time would not permit us to return by one or other of the splendid routes through the glens to Fort-Augustus, or Fort-William. But what we most of all regretted was our not having a couple of days to revisit the Coolins, as the weather was still very favourable for their ascent. Upon the whole, however, considering the general character of the Skye climate, we thought ourselves

very lucky in having so much fine clear weather. It would have required a few days more to have gone to Dunvegan, Talisker, and Bracadale; and if tourists have time enough to accomplish this, along with what we had seen, they may be said to have made a very complete survey of the island; for the Sleat district is far from being particularly interesting, excepting that part of it seen from the Sound. The Spar Cave, Loch Corruisk, Glen Sligachan, the Storr, and Quirang, are the main objects worthy of attention; and if I were to particularize which of all these interested us the most, I would decidedly say Loch Corruisk. It is the most sequestered and inaccessible of all Scottish lochs. Dark; deep, and desolate, it reflects the lofty Coollins from their highest pinnacles down to the very water's edge. In this pellucid mirror, "auld Nature's sturdiest bairns" may survey their dingy charms from head to foot. But in storm and tempest, when foaming cataracts dash from the precipices, when the forked lightning darts from the splintered crevices, and a thousand echoes reverberate the crash of the thunder, what imagination can conceive a more tremendous scene? The powerful pencils of Turner and Horatio M'Culloch have indeed been splendidly employed in the delineation; but as they could not be actually present in the elemental strife, many features of it must have been omitted or misrepresented. In crossing over from the head of the loch to the source of the Sligachan, the tourist may safely assert that he has witnessed a scene unrivalled in her Majesty's dominions. I am familiar with the scenery of Glencoe and Arran, but, greatly though I admire it, I must very decidedly give the palm to what I have been attempting to describe. Let no tourist there-

fore omit this district of the island ; but let him be sure to start early, and to attempt climbing none of the mountains excepting in clear weather, as the distances are most deceptive, and the mountains of a character not to be trifled with. M'Culloch and others have stated that many of them have not and cannot be climbed ; and, very probably when M'Culloch wrote his tour, no one excepting shepherds had ever been among them ; but I have the best authority (the ministers of Strath and Portree) for asserting, that an active, cautious, persevering pedestrian, may, without imminent danger, reach all the highest points of the Coolins.

These mountains are said to be frequented by red deer ; of this, however, we had no ocular proof, but we saw a few ptarmigan in passing over the ridge between Loch Corruisk and Lot-o'-Corry. Game does not seem to abound in Skye, as we saw no grouse, dead or alive, all the time we were there, though we passed over much very likely ground. Goats are to be seen in many places. When climbing the Storr, several rather large stones came bounding past me, which, at first, I thought might have been wantonly thrown over the precipice by some one who had got the start of me. Upon investigation, I saw they had been dislodged by a couple of most grotesque-looking goats, which had found their way to a ledge of rock that seemed inaccessible to any animal without wings. We were shown two eagles' nests ; one on Scur-nan-Stree, the other among the cliffs at Quirang. Of the latter we had a pretty accurate view ; it was secured from rain by a projecting brow of the rock ; and what we remarked in both was, that there seemed to be water trickling from the crevices close to the nests, which is perhaps indispensable

during incubation. It will be a great pity if these noble birds should be extirpated from our land, as has been the case with the capercailzie. Their haunts for hatching their young are indeed inaccessible, but there are so many sportsmen now intent on signalising themselves by bringing down an eagle, and rifle-shooting has attained such perfection, that their extirpation is by no means unlikely.

The rivers and lakes are not large, but I have no doubt of their affording excellent sport to the angler, as there seem to be very few so occupied. At Broadford, Sligachan, Portree, Snizort, and Stencho, there were streams that looked most inviting; and, as there is ready access from the sea, red trout and salmon must be abundant. The river which flows from Loch Corruisk has a very short course, certainly not above three hundred yards, but it has every appearance of abounding with fish, and the loch is said to be full of salmon and trout of the finest quality; whoever goes there, however, from Sligachan, the nearest inn, if he has to carry his own fish, will soon find he has caught enough.

The inhabitants of this island, in so far as we saw, are inoffensive and civil, not given to quarrelling nor drinking; and though there are evidently a great many of them oppressed with poverty, I do not think we met with a beggar all the time we were there; so that greediness is not one of their besetting sins. Between Stencho and Uig we saw many women spinning on the distaff while walking along the road—a pretty good proof of their being industriously disposed. The want of English on their part, and of Gaelic on ours, prevented the intercourse of speech, but they always

looked good-natured, and anxious to oblige. Owing to the soil and climate, agriculture makes but little progress. The rearing of black cattle and horses is their chief dependence. Among the rocks we observed miserable patches of potatoes and oats, some of which were not above four or five yards square ; and as the potatoes were diseased and the oats would never ripen, it may readily be conceived they had bad prospects for the winter. The Highland Destitution Society has given a good deal of encouragement in road-making, and at Uig we were privileged by being admitted to a committee room, where wool was given out for stocking-making and other purposes. The entrance to this most primitive emporium of fashion was through a byre. It was full of women, young and old, who were receiving wool from a shopkeeper in Portree, and money for the stockings they had wrought. Though mid-day, this busy scene was lighted with candles, and exhibited altogether such a saleroom as none of us had ever before witnessed. Lord M'Donald has been much blamed for his behaviour to the inhabitants of North Uist, but if they who blame him reflect on the extreme poverty of the people, and the enormous expense to which his Lordship has been exposed by supporting them, while, in many instances, he receives not a shilling of rent, fault-finders may see cause to alter their opinion. Like the Irish, the Highlanders are indolent and inactive at home, but in almost all cases are industrious and excellent workers abroad. Emigration, therefore, seems the only effectual remedy for the evil ; and, in such an emergency, there is much to reconcile them to the prospect, provided whole families remove from the same district, and are not separated beyond seas.

Before taking leave of Skye, it is but fair to allude to one circumstance, which ought ever to be remembered in honour of its population. We have had occasion repeatedly to allude to Prince Charles Edward, or the Pretender, as we have ventured to designate him. Whether they were right in favouring the claims of one whose family had been proscribed by the simultaneous voice of Britain, on account of their cruelty, treachery, and bigotted attachment to the Pope, is a question which I mean not now to discuss; but, after having committed himself to their protection, their disinterested fidelity in shielding him from violence cannot sufficiently be admired. Skye was the place where he principally skulked after the fatal battle of Culloden. A reward of £30,000 was put on his head, and, though very many, even of the poorest of the people, knew of his haunts, not one of them, so far as known, ever harboured an idea of betraying him! Very probably they knew little of the merits of the case; or, as a national bard has beautifully pleaded their cause—

“’Tis true that our reason forbad us,
But tenderness carried the day.”

However this may be, their views of the matter were strikingly in unison with the best feelings of our nature, and will be warmly responded to by every generous heart.

If any would satisfy themselves as to the demerits of the Stewarts, let them read Macaulay’s history of James II., and they will no longer doubt of his doom and that of his family being a just one. I will not, by any means, subscribe to the clever, sarcastic, couplet of the poet—

“An idiot race, to honour lost,
Who knew them best despised them most.”

But this I maintain, that, having committed themselves implicitly to the dictation of the Jesuits, they were utterly unfit for protecting the liberties and promoting the honour and welfare of this great nation.

Tenth Day.

In returning to Oban, a striking instance occurred of the uncertainty of human life. Near Armadale, Lord M'Donald came alongside with some friends, by whom we were informed of the sudden death of Captain Beatson, R.N., at Armadale Castle. This gentleman had been our fellow-passenger to Skye, when he seemed in excellent health and spirits, and a finer-looking man could scarcely be seen. On account of this mournful event, our flag was hoisted half-mast high for the whole of that day.

Excepting that we lay to for goods and passengers at the island of Eigg, there was nothing to distinguish our return from our progress northward. This island, though less, is better cultivated than its neighbour, Rum, and about equally populous; the latter, however, has greatly the advantage in the picturesque outline of its mountains. The whole of Rum is, I believe, the property of Lord Salisbury, whose yacht, as well as that of our fellow passenger, Campbell of Jura, and several others, came repeatedly very near our course. Cove seems a place of some note in Rum, as the

flash term *Rum Cove*, in juxtaposition in our maps, amused us not a little.

Near this we bid adieu to the noble Coolins, I should be sorry to think for the last time. Now that the Caledonian Curling Club is making such a splendid figure, its spirited Secretary might engage in a worse speculation than establishing a manufactory at Loch Scavaig for furnishing the heroes of the broom with their implements of war. Hypersthene is so renowned for hardness, closeness of texture, and specific gravity, that there can be no doubt of its capabilities; the only fear is, that if it does not belie its name, the weapons may last for ever, and thus injure the stone-market. Joking apart, might not some wind-bound vessels lay in a store of good sound blocks, and establish a curling-stone mart at the Broomielaw?

The approach to Oban on this occasion was particularly interesting. The weather being brilliant, the mountain scenery appeared to the greatest possible advantage. Ben Cruachan, straight in front, made a most conspicuous figure, not having its base screened by inferior mountains, as was the case with Ben Nevis and those of Glencoe. To view Ben Nevis to advantage, it must be approached by the canal, or the glens north of Corpach. There is no screen on that side, so that the impression made on a mountain-fancier is not easily eradicated. Often though I had been at Oban, I never saw it look so well as this evening. As the sun was near setting, every person possessed of taste for such scenery repaired to the little rugged hills behind the town, and I am sure none who were there on the evening of the 5th September will forget the glorious scene. Along with many others, I went to the flag-staff. The un-

clouded sun was just sinking behind Mull, and an extensive distinct view of this and many other islands, as well as of numberless mountains on the mainland, with a vast extent of sea, was the rich reward of our very trifling exertion. The sky was tinged with blue, green, red, and yellow, blended together in the most fanciful and beautiful manner imaginable, insomuch, that some well acquainted with the Continent declared that no Italian nor Grecian sky could surpass it; and yet, strange to relate, there were some of our friends who preferred reading old newspapers in the hotel!

Eleventh Day.

There are two early coaches during summer from Oban, one running to Inverarnen at the head of Loch Lomond, the other to Inverary, both enabling passengers to reach Glasgow at night. As it was my intention to climb Ben Cruachan, I took my place by the earliest, while my friend preferred going by Inverary, not having been there before; so here we separated. The morning was beautiful, though thick, dry, fleecy clouds hovered all around, occasionally obscuring the mountains. There were plenty of passengers, chiefly young sportsmen and tourists; and at Taynuilt we found a first-rate breakfast ready to be devoured. On approaching Ben Cruachan, it was at times so beclouded, that I all but despaired of fulfilling my intention. It soon, however, became almost quite clear, so that,

on coming to the Bridge of Awe, I left directions with the guard as to my little luggage, and soon after began the ascent.

I may here mention that this is by far the best side for climbing the mountain, and that, in going from Oban, the tourist should not leave the road till he has passed the first ravine after crossing the river. He may then proceed in a direct line to what seems the highest point. The ascent may be divided into three distinct portions of nearly equal height. The first is very steep; the second much longer, but not nearly so steep; the third almost totally divested of vegetation, and, towards the summit, the steepest of all.

This last division consists entirely of huge masses of granite, and, as the smaller blocks are loosely huddled together, much caution is required, lest a broken limb should prove the consequence of their being disturbed. As I saw the clouds were gradually rising from the valleys and lakes, and conjectured they might soon be more familiar than was agreeable, I availed myself of the short time I had to plan my descent towards Dalmally; and it was well I did so, as in a quarter of an hour after reaching one of the summits, I was quite enveloped in the thickest mist; so very dense was it, that I could not see above forty yards in any direction!

This was a grievous disappointment, but it might have been much worse. The appearance of the mountains over the clouds, while there was a clear sky above, was most singular. I saw the Glencoe mountains, and beyond them Ben Nevis, quite distinctly, as also all those in Appin, Morven, and Mull, and in several of the other islands. The mouths of many of the salt water lakes were also quite visible, while the upper and most interesting

portion of Loch Etive seemed close beneath me, and looked very beautiful. Towards Rannoch, Strath Tay, and Ben Lomond, scarcely anything could be seen, though, wherever there was a high mountain, the dense white fog was thrust up into the blue sky.

Ben Cruachan has, as far as I could discern through the mist, three distinct tops. The first I came to was that seen from the road at the foot of the mountain, and is not the highest. I found on it several small cairns, and it was from it I planned my descent. The next I went to is the highest, and is very sharp, with one cairn about ten feet high, built of large stones, which must have been quarried, as there were none around capable of being lifted. Just before reaching this, the fog became extremely dense, so that, after waiting impatiently for more than an hour, I lay down to rest, and slept soundly for nearly two. On awakening, I found matters as bad as ever. All this, however, had been anticipated, and, as the day was far advanced, I resolved to descend. There are some dreadful precipices on the N.E. side of the mountain; but, having plenty of time, I steered my course among them very warily, till I got from beneath the clouds into as clear a sunshine as could be seen. Being still at a great elevation, nearly 3000 feet, the view was splendid, particularly of Loch Awe; and of the corry into which I was descending, without exception the finest I ever beheld. Like many of our highest mountains, such as Ben Wyvis, Ben Aulder, &c., Cruachan is hollowed out, the upper ridge being semicircular, and the concave side very precipitous. This is strikingly exemplified here; and if I were ascending again, I would keep the serrated ridge the whole way till within a few miles of Dalmally, where it

terminates ; or else reverse the process, if proceeding from that to Taynuilt.

I was by no means sorry, however, that my course was different on this occasion. The stream by the side of which I descended, is called Eas-Ben, or cataract of the mountain, and is said to have been a favourite haunt of Rob Roy. Its course is very rugged, containing many fine cascades, which, on approaching Loch Awe, are beautifully wooded with oak, mountain-ash, birch, &c. This stream falls into the Loch near the seventh milestone from Dalmally, and these seven miles may be said to exhibit as fine scenery as Scotland can boast. Among other interesting objects, the well-wooded islands of Loch Awe and Castle of Kilchurn particularly arrest the attention. Unlike most of our Scotch ruins, such as all those in the Sound of Mull, this seems really to have been a fine building, and may be ranked with the castles of Dunstaffnage, Doune, Bothwell, and Carlaverock. The situations of all these are good, but that of Kilchurn is unrivalled in Scotland, and probably not surpassed anywhere. The whole of this part of Glenorchy, indeed, has been justly celebrated for its romantic beauty. The *site* of the church and manse is as fine as can well be imagined ; but the *sight* of the very comfortable inn was to me the most welcome of all, as it was now fully ten hours since I left the coach at the Bridge of Awe ; and, hearty though my breakfast had been, I felt that additional refreshment was by no means superfluous. Here, as almost everywhere, I met with some very agreeable young Englishmen, who seemed delighted with Scotland, and declared they would spread such a report of its charms in the South, as would increase the swarms of visitors

next season; so let our masons and carpenters see that their tools are in order.

Twelfth Day.

The morning after climbing Ben Cruachan, was one of the loveliest that ever dawned, there not being a speck of mist on the hills, nor a cloud to be seen. To be on the top of Cruachan on such a day would be the greatest gratification of the kind in Scotland, as no mountain in it commands such a varied and extensive prospect of mountains, lakes, islands, and ocean. Let no tourist, therefore, who has an entire fine day at his disposal, and who has the free use of his limbs, visit Taynuilt or Dalmally without climbing Cruachan. It is the highest mountain in Argyleshire, starts from the sea, and is supposed to have a more extensive base than any other in the kingdom, excepting, perhaps, Ben Wyvis.

The Oban coach arriving at Dalmally about nine A.M., I travelled by it to Inverarnen. The whole of this route is quite Highland, and very interesting. The road for a considerable way is so steep that most of the passengers walked. We passed along the base of Ben Loy, perhaps the second highest mountain in Argyleshire; and if I had been aware of its being quite in the line of Tyndrum, the first stage, I would most certainly have been off on foot by six o'clock, and been on the top of it before breakfasting at said inn. This might easily have been accomplished before the arrival of the coach, and on

such a day it would have been a rich treat indeed. It is a sharp, *clean*, steep, but easily climbed mountain, and the view from it cannot be much inferior to that from Cruachan.

The inns of Tyndrum and Taynuilt have been mightily improved since I first knew them. Of the former, M'Culloch mentions its "unspeakable badness and dirt;" and the latter he characterises as a "vile pot-house." I make no doubt of his then being quite correct, though both are very different now, especially Tyndrum. When the Doctor wrote they were visited by few but drovers, excisemen, and worn-out pedestrians, who are glad to repose their limbs under cover of any description. Now, during summer and autumn, they are resorted to by the rich and noble in splendid carriages, and the lazy habits of the people are vastly improved by the coach and steam-boat conveyances, which render quickness and regularity imperative. On approaching Tyndrum, I looked with no little interest on the stately pyramidal summit of Ben More, the second highest mountain in Perthshire, from which, many years ago, I saw the sun descend into the Atlantic, after one of the severest walks I ever encountered. At Tyndrum we waited the best part of an hour for the Fort-William coach, upon the arrival of which we started for Loch Lomond with no fewer than twenty-one adults, and much luggage, in and on a common stage-coach! Scarcely one of us expected to reach the loch without an accident. The driving, however, was first-rate, and nothing occurred to mar the complete appreciation of one of the very finest mountain glens in Scotland. It astonishes me that more has not been said and written about Glen Falloch. Its mountains, waterfalls, and woods, cannot be sur-

passed for grandeur and beauty, and the near approach to Inverarnen is more like fairy-land than anything I have seen. There were many groups of finely dressed ladies and gentlemen rambling through the woods, and among the rocks, awaiting our arrival, while music from various instruments awakened the echoes all around.

Inverarnen is, in my opinion, the most picturesque inn I ever saw. Its style of architecture is fanciful, and resembles that among the English lakes and in Wales. Our guide-books are unaccountably dumb as to its merits, while they are often loud in praising scenes not to be named with it. Many admire the inn at the Trosachs, but I am certain every person of real taste will admit that it is unspeakably inferior, in point of romantic beauty, to Inverarnen.

By far the grandest and most impressive portion of Loch Lomond lies between the head of it and Luss, the lower division being comparatively tame and uninteresting. It suits very well to sail up the loch, but to reverse the process is a severe test. The mountains at the upper end are beautifully grouped, and being close at hand, their forms as you advance are constantly changing; while the natural wood at their base is of the finest description. Inversnaid, with its cascade, where the boat stops to accommodate passengers to and from Loch Katrine, is one of the prettiest scenes on the loch. But the most fascinating spot of all is just between Ben Lomond and the comical old Cobbler. On this occasion, the splendour of the day showed them to the greatest advantage. So clear was the atmosphere, that they seemed ready to tumble on board of us, and looked like two old cronies hob-nobbing across the lake.

I shall say nothing more of Loch Lomond. It is too well known to require minute description from my pen; and, to say the truth, the Water Witch was so full of guzzling Glasgow folk, whose chief enjoyment seemed to consist in eating and drinking, as materially to impair the interest of the noble scene. At Balloch, were many land conveyances of all descriptions, with smart *whips*, arrayed in London toggerie, touching their hats, and recommending their various turn-outs in eloquent strains. In one of these we found accommodation, which soon whirled us through Dumbarton to the centre of the best representative of London in her Majesty's dominions. The sun setting over the mountains of Kintyre was a truly splendid object, as we drove up the Clyde, illuminating the noble estuary for many miles, covered with steamers and shipping from every quarter of the globe.

Thirteenth Day.

At the Rainbow, I found every accommodation a reasonable being could wish for; and early next morning I left Glasgow by railway. Arriving at Symington about ten, I left the train to climb Tinto, the day being particularly favourable. Though I did not take the most direct line, I was smoking my cigar on the top of the cairn within an hour and a quarter after leaving the station-house. The view in every direction, excepting towards Edinburgh and Glasgow, was very commanding, as may well be supposed, from its isolated position. The

smoke of these cities, with that of the great coal and iron works, &c., obscured the whole horizon between and around them, though I can readily conceive that, in clear breezy weather, the view of the Highland mountains would greatly enhance the gratification. All around the hill seems to be remarkably well farmed. The adjacent country has a clean tidy appearance, and, as there is little wood and few fences, it seems the very *beau ideal* of a coursing country.

The direct road to Tinto from the Symington Station is also the best. Turn off the high road at the second cottage from the station, and proceed right onward to the cairn by the side of a fir plantation. By this route, even any lady, of ordinary pedestrian prowess, may be on the top of the hill in an hour and a half, remain half-an-hour there, and return in good time for the next train. While waiting for it, an express dashed past like the swoop of an eagle darting on its prey. In the station-house I saw some articles of iron, the use of which I did not at first comprehend, but conceived they might be some portion of the railway machinery. By and by, it dawned upon me that they might be quoits, implements with which I am not entirely unacquainted. They were nearly a foot in diameter, and about 10 lbs. weight each! The science and dexterity of that fine national game are entirely destroyed by the use of such tremendous weapons, which make it far more a trial of strength than of skill. Whoever has the lead, if a tolerable player, has a mighty advantage. I will venture, however, to assert, that I have seen players of quoits not exceeding 4 lbs. each, who would beat any man with these 10-pounders in a 51 shot game. In all probability the heavy quoits would take the lead, but,

in the end, a really dexterous player of 4-lb. quoits would prove the winner. If a strong man must have weight, let him have it; but in fairness, and for the love of science, let the diameter be restricted to six, or at most seven inches.

I have now finished my little tour; and, if my readers have enjoyed the perusal of it as much as I have its narration, I shall be greatly gratified. That many have done so, I have good reason to believe, as I have been frequently urged to publish it in a collective form, along with other ramblings in previous years.

Before finishing, I may mention that of all the Guide-books I have seen, Black's and Anderson's seem to me the best for the Scotch Highlands. Anderson's is the most scientific and carefully got up of the whole, and a new edition of it, judiciously superintended, with good illustrations, would entitle it to the first place. "Rhind's Scottish Tourist" is prettily got up: its maps and plates are particularly so. M'Phun's two little volumes are well enough for their size and price, but their maps are very defective as to the mountains and sea-coast.

M'Culloch is rather antiquated. He is learned, dictatorial, sarcastic, and amusing. Though full of prejudice, there is a fascination in his ponderous volumes, which may be regarded as a good mine for others to dig from who follow in his wake. His descriptions seem deeply tinged with the spirits in which he happened to be while writing; and he is too anxious to signalise himself by finding surpassing charms in scenes overlooked by others, especially if they have furnished him with a savoury dinner or two. Thus he is most abusive of Inverary, while he lauds Loch Erne, Blair, the Pass of Leny,

and many other third and fourth-rate places to the skies. Though I am an enthusiastic admirer of Loch Corruisk, yet I cannot go the length of stating with him—"Corruisk is a giant, before which Glencoe and Glen Sannox sink into insignificance." These are both magnificent, though certainly surpassed by the former.

In his abuse of the Moor of Rannoch, I most cordially agree. He describes it as "hideous, interminable, a huge Serbonian bog, a desert of blackness and vacuity, solitude, and death." My dear-bought experience of this horrid quagmire entirely justifies him here; and when he describes himself as having been miserably fed, and cheated by a Highlander lending him a horse to travel through this bog, "twenty miles square," every person must sympathise with him. The following quotation will amuse the reader not a little—"As to the horse, he might as well have remained at Glencoe. A ride this was not by any figure of speech. I cannot even call it a walk; for half of the space was traversed by jumping over bogs, and holes, and ditches, and pits, which were generally so wide as to demand much serious meditation. I may fairly say that I jumped half the way from Glencoe to Rannoch." After such an achievement as this by a learned doctor from the West End of London, we cannot expect to find him in the best possible humour, especially as he had to pay two guineas for the loan of his steed for one day.

Talking of steeds, the best of all for the Highlands are a man's own legs. In no direction can mountain scenery be viewed so satisfactorily as on foot. Let the tourist, therefore, provide himself with shoes, neither too heavy nor too light, too large nor too small; such as none know better how to make

than the Messrs Hornel in Kirkcudbright. I have used John Hornel's for many years in my pedestrian excursions, and have never suffered from a blister. When such an annoyance does occur, let not the patient anoint with whisky, or any such combustible, as is often done, but let him turn his stocking inside out, and moisten it plentifully with grease from the candle opposite the part affected; this is by far the best specific I ever tried.

"Si quid novisti rectius illis, candide imperti—
Si non, his utere mecum."

If on these subjects you have clearer views,
To make them public pray do not refuse.
If not, with me these homely counsels use.

POSTSCRIPT.—*March, 1850.*—The representation of the Coolin mountains, at the beginning of the volume, is from a drawing by a friend, reduced from a sketch taken on the spot by Professor Forbes, whose permission to make use of it I beg to acknowledge. The sandstone rocks on the right occupy a more conspicuous place in the Professor's sketch than perhaps they ought, in order to illustrate a remarkable geological feature of Loch Sca-vaig.

Having been assured that I have underrated the difficulty of ascending Scur-nan-Gilleann, I take this opportunity of guarding myself against the chance of unqualified pedestrians putting themselves into peril on my authority. I beg, therefore, to state that, as I have been only very recently informed,

Professor Forbes did ascend the peak in 1836, along with —— Macintyre, Lord Macdonald's keeper; that the keeper had twice failed before; and that they succeeded by turning the left shoulder of the mountain as approached from Sligachan, and, on arriving at the opposite side of it, climbed the ridge which there buttresses the peak. The Professor was given to understand that the summit, which is really a peak of only a few square yards in extent, had not been reached before; and he recommends that no one should make the attempt *alone*. On learning that the ascent was practicable, General Colby immediately made Scur-nan-Gilleann one of his trigonometrical stations.

Before receiving this account, it was certainly my impression that the easiest and quickest ascent would be turning the *right* shoulder of the mountain. In approaching it from the above inn, any person would regard this as quite practicable. Of course, however, I must defer to the learned Professor, who has actually been on the summit.

MOFFAT AND ITS MOUNTAINS, &c.

IN 1850.

THE most celebrated of our Scottish watering places are Airthrie, Pitcaithly, Pananich, Strathpeffer, Innerleithen, and Moffat—in the counties of Stirling, Perth, Aberdeen, Ross, Peebles, and Dumfries. There are many other mineral springs of less note, though probably equally salubrious; the only cause of preference being the interesting scenery in which the above favoured spots are located. It is not my intention to make any invidious comparison betwixt the several pretensions of these rival districts, all well known to me, farther than asserting that Moffat would not rank inferior to any of them in the estimation of any true lover of nature.

As regards their medicinal pretensions, I profess myself much of a sceptic, being firmly convinced that good, common, mountain water is, in every respect, preferable to them all. Change of scene and climate, temperate living, relaxation from sedentary pursuits, company, driving, pedestrianising, &c., seem to me quite sufficient to account for any improvement in the health of those who are so eloquent in their praise. My conviction is that the quantity of water imbibed by visitors would, in many instances, be most injurious, were it not for the exer-

cise and variety in which they are accustomed to indulge when removed from their usual places of residence. It is well for such as Dr Gully at Malvern, and Dr Jephson at Leamington, that the public generally entertain different sentiments from me on this subject, as, were it not for the fond delusion of invalids, the annual incomes of these far-famed doctors would be cut off by several thousands.

Towards the close of last month, I met, by appointment, a much valued friend at Moffat, for the purpose of a long-projected mountain excursion in that vicinity. The weather proved favourable, and our gratification even surpassed our anticipations. There is no town in Scotland better aired, or more clean and tidy, than Moffat. The principal street is unusually broad, and contains many excellent lodging-houses, with neat shops in the under storey; and the neighbourhood, especially towards the Well, is ornamented with tasteful villas and cottages, the very *beau ideal* of snugness and comfort. Moffat House, in the centre of the town, though externally somewhat sombre, is magnificent within. The staircase and drawing-room flat are truly splendid, and the pleasure-grounds behind are laid out with much taste and elegance, over which are seen the beautiful pastoral hills between the Annan and the Evan.

The general style of building in Moffat is peculiar, and has a very substantial and pleasing appearance. The hard compact stone natural to the district, being coarsely polished, squared, and oiled, has a dark grey aspect, and contrasts agreeably with the white sandstone ribbets at the corners and around the windows. But if the exterior is becoming, in almost all instances the interior is equally so, as the inhabitants vie with each other in making their lodgings as handsome and commodious as their

respective means will admit—even the lowest-priced among them being vastly superior to cottages of similar dimensions in other places, while the inmates are particularly civil and obliging.

The Caledonian Railway has been of immense advantage to Moffat, and, in all probability, will greatly add to its celebrity. The station at Beattock is within two miles, and there are frequent omnibuses to and from it every day, which are constantly importing and exporting well-dressed, happy-looking parties, and thus adding greatly to the interest and liveliness of the place. But, of all the advantages accruing from the railway, the reduction in the price of fuel is perhaps the greatest. Till it was opened, the price of coals was such as to be a serious grievance to the inhabitants. It is now reduced to one-third of what it formerly was, by a competition in both directions, so that domestic comfort, in a corresponding ratio, is secured to all ranks of the people. As regards agriculture, the advantages have also been most striking. The whole vale of the Annan bears testimony to this. The carriage of lime, guano, &c., has fertilised the fields throughout the whole district, and the produce is now exported at a rate, and with an expedition, formerly utterly unknown.

It is greatly to be lamented, however, that the cause of all this prosperity should also be the cause of incalculable loss to those who promoted it, for it cannot be concealed that the Caledonian is very far from being a paying concern. Had the inhabitants of the south of Scotland been content with one line, whether that by Dumfries, or that by Moffat, there is little doubt that it would have been a prosperous one; but to expect both of these to succeed, is out of the question. The Caledonian was the

first sanctioned by Parliament, and, it must be confessed, there was something very like a breach of faith in afterwards sanctioning the Nithsdale, as it was publicly declared in Parliament, by the respected chairman of the former line, that "they never would have harboured an idea of proceeding with it, had it been conceived possible that both lines would have been carried." The proprietors of both are now pretty well aware that they are awkwardly situated; and we greatly err, if the intelligent people of Nithsdale, especially in Dumfries, are not now convinced that a feeder to the Caledonian from Kirkcudbright, through Castle-Douglas and Dumfries, to the vicinity of Lockerbie, would have been unspeakably preferable to two starving lines, which, in all probability, will be the result of both having been conceded.

The reading-room, billiard-table, and bowling-green, are the three principal attractions of that description to Moffat loungers; but let men do what they will at such places, time, I suspect, still hangs heavy on their hands during certain portions of the day, owing to the want of their customary regular employment. Reading is seldom resorted to to much purpose by water drinkers, any more than by Oxonians and Cantabs, who, under the imposing term *reading*, think of little else than amusement, when they retire from their colleges to Wales or the Lakes. The bowling-green seems in very good order; but it has often surprised me that it should be so little used. Its close resemblance to curling ought to make it a favourite game with Scotchmen, and yet in few parts of Scotland is it much practised; whereas, in England, where curling is all but unknown, bowling is held in high estimation.

Of late years, the Well has been much improved by a handsome pavilion, open at one side, in which dancing might be practised under very interesting circumstances; the music being accompanied by the bleating of lambs, the crowing of grouse, and the "wild bravura" of the curlew. Here I cannot omit drawing particular attention to the extremely neat apartments—a sitting-room and two bedrooms—belonging to the tenants of the Well. The rooms are small, but very comfortable, and the young couple who possess them seem amiable and obliging. The scene there is altogether rural, mountainous, and fascinating. The burn which rushes past abounds in cascades and deep pools, seemingly well stored with trout, so that it astonished me some disciple of the renowned Walton has not secured this snuggerly, especially as the rent is moderate. I am much mistaken if a skilful angler, after a heavy shower, could not, in the course of an hour or two, bring home a respectably filled basket. All these suburban places, however, the Bell Craig, enchanting Dumcreiff, coy, concealed, classic Craigieburn, &c., I must leave to be more fully discussed by M'Diarmid's quick and clever pen, it being now high time I were lifting my eyes to the hills which induced me to lift my quill upon the present occasion.

The river Annan, towards its source, is mainly composed of three feeders, which unite about a mile below Moffat. The Evan is that best known to railway travellers, as they traverse its whole course from the source, near which it is conveyed over their heads in an iron channel, to where it loses its name in that which gives its title to the district. In this glen, it may safely be affirmed, more gunpowder has been exploded, betwixt sports-

men and navies, than in any other of similar dimensions in her Majesty's dominions. The lower part of it is ornamented by beautiful woods of natural birch, especially at Middlegill; and there has recently been built a very handsome modern-antique residence on the lands of Mr Butler Johnstone, near the foot of the glen. Annan, properly so called, is that which passes close to Moffat. It is the smallest of the three streams, and must be held to retain the name solely out of courtesy, its course being in the direct line of the main river. There is also much less variety in it than in the other two. Granton, however, is a very genteel-looking mansion; and this glen long maintained its title to celebrity from its containing the mail-road from Dumfries to Edinburgh, over the noted pass of Erricstane, near the foot of Hartfell.

Moffat Water is decidedly the most varied and interesting of all the rival glens, besides being the largest, and the best adapted for angling. Sequestered Cragieburn is the first object of much interest after entering the glen. The only objection to this sweet retreat is, that it is lost to the public, unless they leave the road, which is close at hand, and poke about among grottoes and shrubberies, almost at the very door of the mansion-house. Farther on, after passing through beautiful groves of oak, larch, and fragrant birch, the charming farm-house of Caplegill arrests the attention. Here Blackhope Burn joins the Moffat, rushing from one of the most rugged, mountainous, and romantic glens in the south of Scotland. The lofty hills overhanging it are diversified in their outline, and have all that dry, clean appearance that is most inviting to an active pedestrian, whose taste prompts him to investigate Nature in her high places.

Above Caplegill, the next object attracting attention on that side of the valley is the rough, savage-looking glen and rugged heights of Correi-fron. Then comes the far-famed gorge or chasm, containing indisputably the loftiest cascade in her Majesty's Britannic dominions, the Grey Mare's Tail. When seen in perfection, after "dark Loch Skene" has been well replenished by its countless torrents, rushing from White Coomb and the adjacent mountains, it is, indeed, an astounding spectacle. On common occasions, it descends in that hop-step-and-leap style which considerably mars the effect. But view it when brimful, spurning all intermediate obstacles, and "at one bound overleaping all bounds," springing about 400 feet, and causing all the surrounding rocks to quiver—and if *you* do not quiver also, you have no need of repairing to Moffat, so far as your nervous system is concerned. Only once have I seen it in this phrenzied state, and it has left an indelible impression on my mind. I had on the previous day ascended the Tweed from Rachan, the Talla, and Gameshope, and gone to the top of White Coomb, fished round Loch Skene, in which I killed about a score of trout, averaging herring size, and reposed at night in the hospitable farmhouse of Polmoodie, then tenanted by a worthy elder of the Kirk. During the night it rained with excessive violence, which caused me to return two miles next morning to witness the scene above described, and certainly I had no cause of regret.

Farther on, at the very head of Moffat Water, is the singular spot called Dobb's Linn, celebrated by the Ettrick Shepherd, and the solitary cottage Birkhill, where travellers usually bait their horses. On the north side of the stream, the steep lofty

falls of Polmoodie and Bodsbeck are the most prominent objects. The drive to the Grey Mare's Tail is the favourite pastime of Moffat visitors, and so fashionable has it become, that the worthy hostess of the Annandale Arms has erected stabling for her horses near the foot of the fall. It is gratifying to think that this season, so far as it has gone, has, in posting, proved more than usually profitable to that enterprising lady.

One of the favourite drives in this vicinity is that to Lockwood. The oaks here, as well as the ruined castle in the centre of them, are of very remote antiquity, probably coeval with those at Cadzow, near Hamilton; though at Cadzow, owing to soil and climate, the trees have attained much greater dimensions. The distance from Moffat is about six miles, and the drive may be agreeably varied by taking the Dumfries road in going, and the Carlisle road in returning, or *vice versa*.

The more aspiring visitors, however, ascend Hartfell, the base of which is about four miles from Moffat. There is, perhaps, no mountain of its height so easy of ascent. The Spa is close to the foot of the hill, and may, without inconvenience, be visited by all who mean to ascend the mountain. Around the Spa, the banks are remarkably precipitous not to be rocky, but may be easily slanted or avoided altogether, by going a little way from the direct line, so the ladies may ride on horseback to the top without the least danger. The height above the sea is about 3000 feet, and that of White Coomb 20 or 30 more. These mountains have a very uniform outline when seen from a distance, Hartfell being at one extremity, and White Coomb at the other. The distance betwixt the tops may be five or six miles.

Several years ago, I climbed Hartfell, with a friend, by the Spa, and the steepest part of the ascent. We were lucky enough to reach the top, and to have nearly half-an-hour of fair weather while there, during which we had a very good view as far as the Pentlands, Cheviots, the Cumberland and Galloway mountains, &c. In fine weather, I make no doubt Arran, Ben Lomond, and other Highland mountains, may be within view, as well as, in very favourable circumstances, the Isle of Man. Before half-an-hour had elapsed, rain came on, accompanied with thick mist, and, having resolved to keep the ridge of the high ground the whole way to the Well, we had great difficulty in preserving anything like a direct course. Before reaching Moffat, we were nearly as wet as if we had spent the day at the bottom of Loch Skene. Thus ended our *pleasure* trip.

This season I was more fortunate in ascending Ettrick Penn and Loch Fell. My friend and I left Moffat on horseback, after an early breakfast. We stayed at Caplegill while our horses baited, the situation of which, as I formerly mentioned, is particularly interesting. Exactly in front of the dining-room windows, and close at hand, there is a narrow, lofty, and very steep chasm, down which, after heavy rain, a cataract is precipitated, which must have a splendid appearance to those who are dry and snug within. Here we crossed Moffat Water, passed the ancient farm-steading of Bodsbeck, and climbed its very steep and rocky hill, without almost the shadow of a road, or encountering any of the *brownies*, by whom, according to the Ettrick Shepherd, it was tenanted in former times. I have a lively reminiscence of having, some years ago, taken a gig across this pass, but

I would not like to repeat the experiment, and would caution all against it, as without a very steady horse the danger is imminent. No sooner, however, is the summit of the hill reached, than the road becomes excellent for such a high country, owing to the persevering, indefatigable public spirit of the late Lord Napier. We descended into the Ettrick not far from its source, having the Penn exactly in front, with a cluster of other hills of nearly equal height. We reached this interesting little stream at the farm-house of Potburn, and rode upwards nearly a mile to Upper Fawp. Here we crossed the Ettrick, and then rode straight up various long and steep ascents till we reached the cairn at the top of the Penn.

To any one climbing the hill from this side, the view is particularly striking. Towards the south and east, it bursts upon you all at once, and is very commanding, there being no other hills in these directions. The Eildon Hills, Cheviots, all the English border counties, and the distant Kells and Minnigaff Mountains, are quite within view, while the whole of Liddesdale and Eskdale lie, mapped as it were, at your feet. From the sides of Ettrick Penn several silvery streams are seen hurrying on to embrace each other, and to form the beautiful and stately Esk. Of these, the White Esk, Devington, and Garwald, are the most conspicuous; while much of the Dryfe, and peeps of the more distant Black Esk, may also be seen. Towards the west and north, the view is more limited, owing to the higher range of mountains, already noticed, at the sources of the Moffat and Annan; but even in this direction there is much seen that is very far from being uninteresting. The beautiful green hills of the Tweed and Yarrow, the favoured haunts of

Thomson, Scott, and many other celebrated bards, must ever be dear to Scotchmen.

On the top of the Penn, we parted from a young gentleman who had accompanied us from Caplegill. Loch Fell is considered the highest point of this group, and may be about 2500 feet above the sea. To this we now directed our course by Wind Fell and Craigmichan Scaurs. The latter have a very formidable appearance, and are much resorted to by foxes and birds of prey. The distance betwixt the Penn and Loch Fell we considered about four miles. The ground is in various places steep; but all about the top of the Fell it is so smooth and grassy, that we had an excellent gallop; and in dry weather a capital race-course may be found on the very summit. There is a cairn here also, and the view is very much the same with that recently described. Here we were struck with an appearance which we were not naturalists enough to comprehend or account for. In many places there are rings of bright green grass, very different from the general weather-beaten colour of the sward. These are about two feet thick, varying in diameter from twelve feet, to as many yards, and were in some instances as regular circles as if they had been mathematically described.

After taking a peep into the Craigmichan Scaurs and the source of the well-wooded and beautifully secluded Wamphray water, we returned to the top of Loch Fell, and then descended to the source of the Dryfe, which issues from the side of this hill as clear and cool as it is possible to conceive. This is the pure wine of Nature; and well had it been for our race had no other beverage been discovered, as I firmly believe one-half of our mortal woes may, directly or indirectly, be ascribed to in-

temperance. At this delicious fountain, we met, by appointment, other two friends, also mounted, and here we tarried till they visited the cairn and returned; after which, we descended the beautiful pastoral glen, whose stream constantly received accessions, till it became such as might well gladden the heart of any genuine lover of the gentle art. We had occasionally very precipitous and boggy ground to encounter, there being no vestige of a road, so that, at times, we had enough to do to keep our saddles. After wet weather, many of the places over which we rode must have been impassable on horseback. On this occasion, however, the excursion was particularly pleasant; and, after passing Dryfehead, Finningill, and Macmaw, we reached the delightful residence of Shaw, where a hospitable board and kindly welcome awaited our arrival.

Before returning home, I visited Burnswark in company with a young friend. This is one of the most interesting spots in Dumfries-shire. I believe there are few hills of its height, 750 feet, from which there is a more extensive view. It is singular in its outline, and is the first object that attracts the attention in crossing Shapfells from the south, and Erricstane from the north. Its formal appearance and commanding prospect are by no means its principal attractions, as it is well known to have been a Roman encampment in the times of Agricola. We were fortunate enough to have for our guide a gentleman who designates himself the "Hermit of Burnswark." His hermitage is a lovely and comfortable retreat, about half-way up the hill, embosomed in wood of his own planting. By our kind and learned friend, we were not only accompanied over the whole of the hill, but thoroughly

indoctrinated in all the mysteries of the *fossa, agger, prætorium*, &c., so that, if hereafter we are not at home in all such matters, the fault rests entirely with ourselves. After drinking from the self-same fountain that quenched the thirst of Agricola, we remounted our steeds, and bade adieu to our worthy host, as I now do to my courteous reader.

A FORTNIGHT ON DEESIDE.

EDINBURGH, PERTH, GLAMMIS, &c.

“Edina! Scotia’s darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers;
Where once beneath a monarch’s feet
Sat legislation’s sovereign powers.”—*Burns.*

THE numerous attractions of Edinburgh are so universally admitted, that dwelling upon them is altogether superfluous. If, even in the time of our great poet Burns—half a century ago—these drew forth his warmest encomiums, what would he have thought of them now, heightened as they have been by all the resources of nature and art? Her “palaces and towers” have since been increased tenfold, with all the improvements of modern architecture; while the most captivating pleasure-grounds have been substituted for those waste pestilential swamps which then surrounded the city, spreading their nauseous effluvia through all its streets and squares. Prince’s Street Gardens, the Meadows, the ground under Salisbury Crags, afford striking instances of what has now been remarked; and what splendid interesting burying-grounds are now to be seen in almost every direction! While formerly visitors

could only approach by a tardy process, through narrow, dirty, winding streets and lanes, they are now ushered into the very heart of the city all at once, as if by magic, by four different channels, each of which presents to their admiring gaze some of the most grand and imposing features of our unrivalled northern capital.

Through one of these, on the 19th August last, along with a friend, I proceeded northwards, principally with a view of climbing some of the lofty mountains at and near the source of the Dee, Aberdeenshire. We were whirled through below the New Town and to Granton Pier, in little more time than formerly would have been taken by the coach-guard to arrange his toggery and call out, "All right." This instantaneous start, at the moment fixed, is a beautiful improvement upon the old system of hanging on till lazy loiterers chose to make their appearance, thereby causing the active and business-like to do penance for their indolence and sloth. The day, throughout Scotland, proved extremely boisterous, so that, in crossing to Burntisland, the fierce nor'-wester drove the sea over us from stem to stern, to the no small dismay of such as were arrayed in their holiday finery to do credit to their friends in the kingdom of Fife. One gentleman, after a convulsive grasp at his denuded knowledge-box, lost a smart new hat; while many similar casualties amused those who had been more provident in the protection of their moveables. We were particularly tickled with the gyrations of a certain facetious-looking gentleman, with a most extraordinary *wide-awake*, or *tyle*, nailed on his attic. After several eccentric evolutions across the slippery deck, he was, by a sudden lurch, snugly ensconced in a coil of rope, luckily stern-foremost,

where he remained immoveable for the rest of the passage, and from which it required no little ingenuity to extricate himself on reaching port.

There was much bustle and no little confusion at Burntisland, before we got all fairly seated in the train. And here I would advert, generally, to the perplexity into which many, especially the uninitiated, are thrown for want of distinct intimation as to their taking their places. Many seemed quite at a loss where to go, and whom to apply to for information; while, at the various stopping-places, their names were so indistinctly pronounced that it was with difficulty even those familiar with the names could ascertain them. On one occasion—I think at Dysart—a woman and child lost so much time in getting out, owing to what I have stated, that they, and the man helping them, were all thrown down by the moving off of the train, and very nearly run over. Surely these things should be remedied.

On the first part of our transit through Fife, we progressed but slowly, though afterwards we got on with rapidity. There is much cutting through very hard rock for eight or ten miles, which must have rendered this part of the work very expensive, the ascent and descent betwixt the Friths of Forth and Tay being very considerable. We passed close to the pretty Loch of Lindores, on which the Grand Caledonian Curling Club mean to play their great annual match next winter, and a more commodious spot could hardly be named, there being abundance of space for frozen water, and the trains running close to the margin of the lake. Since I have adverted to this subject, I may suggest that the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway would be a far more judicious line of demarcation betwixt the champions

of the north and south of Scotland than that last fixed on, which was evidently most disadvantageous to the south.

The approach to Newburgh is very interesting, as you have that pretty little town in the foreground, the Frith of Tay, with the fertile Strath of Earn and Carse of Gowrie, for the central part of the scene, backed by the Sidlaw Hills and the more remote Grampians. On a truly fine evening, this forms a landscape scarcely, if at all, to be surpassed. The well-wooded hills of Moncreiffe and Kinnoul add much to the attractions of this part of the route; but the near approach to, and first view of, the "Fair City" have been dreadfully injured by the tunnel. Formerly, the sight of Perth from this quarter was surpassingly fine; now, you are hurried into it through a dark hole miles in length, and, from the railway, can only see that part of the city which is the least interesting, as being farthest from the noble river, and consisting of the meanest and dirtiest streets. Whoever merely passes Perth by rail will be miserably disappointed; but let the tourist climb Kinnoul Hill and others adjoining, and he will acknowledge this scene to be well worthy of all the fame it has acquired, even that bestowed on it by the ancient Romans, when they exclaimed that the Tay reminded them of their beloved Tiber.

On arriving at the Perth Station, we found we were too late for the train which should have carried us on to Glammis, to which we were booked in Edinburgh. Other two gentlemen were in the same predicament, as far as Cupar-Angus. Upon making our case known, insisting on the importance of our time, and our claim of remaining in Perth at the expense of the Company, they agreed

to forward us by a *special*, which carried us to our destination at something like forty miles in the hour. We were struck with the poverty of the soil and crops on the Cupar side of Perth. Within a few miles of the latter, the soil is shallow and gravelly, far better adapted for bearing heath than any other crop—a striking contrast to what we saw in Fife and Strathearn. In passing through Fife, I was much struck with the danger to which the ripe corn was exposed from the fire of the engines. These were constantly emitting live coals, which had obviously, in many places, ignited the dry grass on the steep banks, so that the adjoining crops must have been in imminent danger. In the event of any such conflagration, the Railway Company would surely be responsible, which ought certainly to make them more careful as to the construction of their grating.

We arrived in good time at Glamis to walk round the towers, and mark well the bulwarks of its very large and interesting castle, by far the finest of its kind in Scotland. It was originally a royal residence, and was granted by Robert II. to the ancestors of the present proprietor, the Earl of Strathmore. The height of the castle is prodigious, and its style of architecture quite different from that of any other that I have seen. Though very old, it is quite in a habitable state, and contains many suits of armour and other curiosities well worthy of the attention of the antiquarian. As part of the family were residing there, we could not be gratified to the extent we wished, though my companion, by dint of very early rising and the application of a silver key, got admission to the battlements next morning, from which there is an excellent view of Strathmore and the adjoining hills. This magni-

ficent structure is on the banks of the small river Dean, which is said to be an admirable trouting stream, and is a branch of the Isla, one of the principal feeders of the Tay. The Railway Inn affords very good accommodation to any who may have a few days at their disposal for piscatory pursuits.

KIRRIEMUIR, CLOVA, &c.

Having heard at Glammis that the Clova Gathering was to take place next day, and being anxious to witness the games there, we resolved to join another party in hiring a conveyance, that we might be there in good time. The distance is about twenty-one miles. The morning was cold, but otherwise fine. We had a smart phaeton and pair of horses all to ourselves till we reached Kirriemuir, about four miles. Here we had to tarry nearly an hour, as our fellow-travellers, all of the fair sex excepting one, had to busk themselves for the occasion, and as we made our appearance while some of them were in bed.

The Clova Gathering is a grand annual event, and occasions a holiday in Kirriemuir and all that district. This is a very large manufacturing village, and, if it continues to progress as of late years, it may soon aspire to be called a town. There is here a splendid school-house, the offspring of a munificent bequest, where the blessings of an excellent education are easily accessible to all. Where new buildings have been erected, due attention is paid to appearance and sanitary laws; but

the old streets are remarkably narrow, angular, and confused, so that driving through them is anything but a sinecure. After meeting much civility at the house where our fair friends were preparing for slaughter, and partaking of their kindly proffered morning cup, we started for Clova. Carriages of various descriptions crowded the road, which gradually became more Highland, till in many places we had to turn out, for safety to ourselves and ease to the horses.

This is the country of the Ogilvies, whose magnates possess several fine mansions along the South Esk, up which we had now to proceed for many miles. This river, with its tributary the Prosen, were in fine trim for the angler, and are celebrated for their trout. Near their junction, we left the braes of Angus, and fairly entered the Grampians, among which we had resolved to perambulate for the succeeding fortnight. The kilt was now the prevailing garb, but more as *full dress*, and in compliment to the occasion, than as the customary attire, as a manufacturing population is more partial to *weaving* the philabeg than *wearing* it. On passing a few cottages, a pretty numerous band of plaided and kilted Celts were drawn up in military style, and as the carriages drove past we were treated with some fine airs by an excellent band. The Generalissimo of this troop was a personage of no ordinary pretensions. He was a portly gentleman, arrayed in a complete military dress, such as was worn by officers of distinction in the times of the Covenanters. A prodigious cocked hat and feathers adorned a head completely bald, and his boots, which came far above his knee, were of such enormous width, that walking in them would have been wholly impracticable. He was mounted on a hand-

some grey pony, which at first shied considerably at its grotesque burden, but afterwards behaved with becoming decorum. This gentleman was the hero of the day, attracting universal admiration, and, though consenting to make somewhat of a ludicrous exhibition for the occasion, we were told that he was by no means destitute of education or intelligence; that there was a method in his freak, as it might lead to favour in high quarters, he being a tenant of the gentleman who principally patronises this Gathering.

As we proceeded, the road became more and more crowded, till at length we reached the completely Highland and interesting church and village of Clova. Like most of these villages, it is of a very straggling character, scarcely any two houses being placed together in a similar exposure. There is a tolerable inn; but on this occasion it would have been ten times over filled to suffocation, so that all the houses in the clachan, besides several spacious tents, were crammed with such as had come from a distance, and were clamorous for breakfast. In such a scramble it was every man for himself. After considerable patience, and not a little coaxing, I got a plentiful repast in a corner of the kitchen; and it was well I was so lucky, for it so happened that I was destined to eat no more till breakfast next morning.

As the games were not to commence till noon, many strayed in all directions. While my friend went a-fishing, I, among many others, climbed the hill, at the base of which the village is situated, to visit Loch Brandy, from which issues a stream, rejoicing in the same exhilarating name. They who breakfasted and started early reached said loch, but the bagpipe and other musical instruments recalled

the greater number of us before we were gratified with a view of it, which, from its position among lofty rocky eminences, must be well worth seeing. As we descended, the scene below was of a truly lively and interesting description. The Celts, having been marshalled in marching order, filed off, headed by the band, and that martial leader formerly noticed, who ever and anon returned, with all the grace and dignity of a Wellington, the salutes with which he was greeted.

The scene of action was about a mile from the village, where there was a fine level field duly prepared for the sports of the day. A considerable portion of it was enclosed with ropes, to prevent the multitude from crowding in upon the competitors, and there was a wooden stage for the accommodation of the dancers. On this, in the first instance, the aristocracy, male and female, were comfortably seated, when not induced to retire to their carriages by the slight showers which occasionally fell during the exhibition. Among these were Ogilvies innumerable, of both sexes, Lord Glammiss, &c. &c. Not a few tourists were obviously prowling about among the crowd, while we were all kept in due subordination by the presence of a corps of rural police. The vale of the Esk is here particularly romantic. The mountains are lofty and precipitous, and, farther up, the narrow strath seems nearly shut in by almost perpendicular rocks, its remoter recesses being concealed by the windings of the glen. The main source of the Esk is a small loch of the same name, in a district so wild and rugged as very seldom to be visited by any but devoted anglers.

The games consisted of those commonly practised on such occasions—throwing the heavy and light hammer, short and long race, putting the stone,

tossing the caber. After this came dancing, and the whole was wound up by a sack-race. The short race seemed about 300 yards, and was well contested by three competitors. The long one, to the top of a steep hill about a mile off, was the reverse. Nine started, all of whom, excepting three, soon gave in, having sacrificed their wind and strength to a display at the outset. At the winning post, it was evident that the two who reached it had agreed to make it a *job*; as, when yet a good way from the top, they seemed to be *walking hand in hand*. On returning they declared it was a drawn match! the first instance of a *drawn steeple-chase* that I ever heard of. In throwing the hammer, there was no wheeling round, as used to be the custom, and by means of which it may be thrown considerably farther. The objections to this practice are substantial. By not wheeling, the competitors foot the mark more accurately, and victory is often decided by a few inches. Besides, in wheeling, the hammer frequently takes an unpremeditated direction, thus endangering the lives of the lieges. The putting-stone seemed too heavy for the display of much science. It was 28 lbs. weight, and, of course, this prize could only be won by a very tall and strong man. Had there been also a lighter stone, 18 lbs. or so, very probably the man who gained the prize for the other would have been worsted by activity and science. Tossing the caber had nearly foiled all the competitors, only one man having succeeded in turning it *cleanly* over, and he only once after many trials. The caber is a pole about fifteen feet long, five or six inches in diameter at the heavy end. It is poised in front on the two hands, and the object is to make it throw a somerset, or complete evolution,

over the heavy end of the pole. The reels were pretty well danced, but the dancers being all kilted gave the display a savage appearance. The sword-dance was the most worth seeing. Two broad-swords are laid across each other, and the dancer, after gracefully bowing to them, dances over and around them in all directions, snapping his fingers, and carefully avoiding coming in contact with his *partners*, which would be reckoned clumsy, or, in French style, a *betise*. The tune universally played to this favourite dance is "Gillie Callum," simple and peculiar; but admirably adapted for aiding the dancer in his varied, difficult, and somewhat hazardous evolutions. The sack-race was the most amusing of the whole. He who tumbles very seldom wins the race, if there is one man who can keep his feet, however slow his progress. This closed the field sports for the day. In the evening, there was to be a grand ball in a building seemingly erected for such entertainments; but of this I can give no account, as we had adventures of a different kind to encounter.

LOCH MUICK, LOCHNAGAR, &c.

Owing to our anxiety to see the Clova games closed, we left ourselves too little time to reach the Spittal of Muick, where we had resolved to find quarters that evening. The distance may be about twelve miles, but, owing to there not being even a track for by far the greater part of the way, and the rugged nature of the ground, consisting of

nearly equal portions of mountain and moss, no one should attempt it who has not at least five hours of daylight at his disposal ; and in snowy or misty weather, it should not be attempted at all. We had a tolerable road till we left the side of the Esk, about three miles from Clova. Here we ascended one of its principal feeders, setting our faces due north. The mountains surrounding this stream are very lofty and steep. After proceeding a mile or two, a young man came up to us, begging earnestly that we should stop till two of his friends, who were very much fatigued, could reach us. They had heard where we were going, and had been told that, unless they joined us, they were sure to stray, and not to reach any house that night. We told him to hurry them as much as he could, while we proceeded slowly. After a considerable time, they all came up, one of them, in particular, so completely fatigued, that it was with the utmost difficulty the other two could coax him along. They had come from Alyth, and had started at a very early hour. Their clothing, poor fellows, was so scanty that, had they spent the night on the mountains, it would very probably have been their last.

We toiled up a very high and rugged hill, half-way up the glen, till we came in sight of Lochnagar, Morven, Montkeen, and a splendid display of other lofty mountains. Here we consulted our maps and compass, and took what we considered the most direct course for our resting-place. We soon got entangled in an extensive morass, full of quagmires, a species of travelling alike fatiguing and tedious. While crossing this, it occurred to me that, by keeping to the left, I might get a glimpse of Loch Dhu, or Black Loch, described in some of

the guide books as being of a surpassingly wild and terrific character. Accordingly, I left my party, and by ascending a considerable eminence, I was gratified by a distant view of a scene, which must be as well worthy of being visited as anything of the kind in Scotland. Loch Dhu is surrounded by black, almost perpendicular precipices, of great height, having Lochnagar on the north, and discharges its waters by a succession of many cataracts into the upper extremity of Loch Muick.

To this latter loch I descended by a very precipitous route, expecting to find some kind of track along its margin which might conduct me to the place of rendezvous at the lower end. In this, however, I was mistaken, as on the upper and south side of Loch Muick there is not the slightest vestige of its ever having been trod by a human foot. This would have been of little consequence, had the edge of the loch been such as to admit of anything like safe progress, however slow. This was by no means the case. The mountain which skirts it all along is of nearly uniform height, and so abrupt to the very brink of the lake, that the large loose stones are often dislodged, thus endangering the limbs and life of the pedestrian. As darkness increased, the risk became the more imminent, which determined me to squat for the night, as the least of two evils. Accordingly, after collecting some heath, and spreading it on the sheltered side of a rock, I composed myself for rest, having put on dry shoes and stockings, and made myself as comfortable as circumstances would admit.

I confess I felt not a little dreary at first, especially as I had neither meat nor drink of any description in my fishing basket. Having borrowed

my whisky-flask from a *teetotaller*, the *top* had rusted on so fast that I could not get it filled! Most fortunately, I had a thick short greatcoat, which I had worn all day, much to my annoyance, but which was now my chief comfort. Fagging on under this had caused a profuse perspiration, so that, as soon as I relaxed my labours, I became as cold as if I had been cased in ice. Gradually, however, I grew tolerably warm, and passed seven hours and a-half far more agreeably than I had reason to expect. Though *without food*, I could yet *ruminate*, and I even enjoyed some refreshing sleep. The noise of numerous cascades from the sides of Lochnagar, directly opposite, served as an agreeable lullaby, forcibly reminding me of the graphic, admirable description of our great national bard—

“Foamin’ strong, wi’ hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin.”

This occurs in his elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson, a poem whose merits are too much overlooked, but which contains beauties, I hesitate not to say, superior to anything of the kind by any poet, ancient or modern. There is in it a raciness and vigour baffling the efforts of our most renowned Lakers. Poetry of the most exalted and refined description was no effort to Burns. It flowed from him spontaneously when in the pensive mood, and often under the most unpropitious external circumstances. Whereas, most of our modern poets, even though surrounded by books in every language, and all the comforts and elegancies of life, frequently woo in vain that inspiration which almost invariably guided his masterly pen. Well was he entitled in his “*Vision*,” to describe the

Scottish Muse in the following exquisitely beautiful strains, gracefully applied to himself:—

“‘Then, wear thou this,’ she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head ;
The polished leaves and berries red
Did rustling play ;
As like a passing thought she fled
In light away.”

Let any competent judge (I would name John Wilson, Laker though he be) declare whether, as regards the above two poems, as well as very many others, I have over-rated their most extraordinary author.

But to return from this digression. When day dawned, I was not a little astonished to see the upper half of Lochnagar white with snow, which had descended on me in slight showers of rain. My toilet being soon finished, I resumed my route to the lower end of the lake. In a small farmhouse, I found my friend snug in bed, and sundry members of the family in another in the same apartment, so that I would have been one too many had I reached this on the previous night, especially as several other lodgers of a different grade occupied the other end of the tenement, several of them having lain on the floor. Our greeting was most cordial, as our fears for each other's safety were mutual. The three young men proved tailors in search of occupation and pleasure. I found them all, cross-legged, plying their needles, in order to defray their board and lodging ; and delighted they were to be so comfortably housed after the labours of the previous day. The porridge-pot was soon suspended over a splendend peat-fire, both of which I was right glad to superintend after my recent fast and bivouac. It may be right here to state

that there is no public house here, which the term *Spittal* would lead one to expect. We had the most conflicting accounts as to this, some telling us there was *one* good inn, others saying there were *two*, and one man even assured us there were *three*! The fact is, that it depends entirely on the good-nature of the farmer whether strangers are admitted at all. This is another district where the plan recommended at page 92 would be of immense advantage. A chain across these mountains might not only save the time but the lives of the lieges. A cairn should be erected where the track leaves the Esk, from which the chain should extend to near Spittal of Muick. With such a guide, even in falling and lying snow, the traveller would be enabled without perplexity to steer a direct course.

After partaking of a hearty, multifarious breakfast, and examining the hills and sky, we resolved on ascending Lochnagar. It had been cloudy all the morning, but the clouds were dispersing, and we thought by delaying we might get a worse day. The smallest of her Majesty's *palaces* was about a mile off, across the Muick river, and close to the base of the mountain. It is called "The Hut," and consists of three rooms, and a kitchen detached. We entered the latter, and found in it two discreet-looking female servants. They said the Queen sometimes visited the hut on her way to Lochnagar and Loch Muick, and had even spent two nights in it with Prince Albert the last time they were at Balmoral.* The direct road to the mountain passes the door, and is extended up the hill three or four miles. About half-a-dozen men were

* The royal pair repeated their visit in 1850, spending an equal length of time at the Hut.

engaged taking out large granite stones, with a view of completing a bridle-road to the top, as her Majesty has the good taste to delight in mountain-climbing, an exercise in which she is said to excel.

As we advanced, the day became splendid. Indeed, we could not possibly have been more fortunate. Soon after passing the road-makers, we got upon the ridge which had obstructed our view to the north, and began to get a commanding prospect of the lofty mountains at the source of the Dee, as well as in various other directions. The next object that riveted our attention was the "steep frowning glories" reflected in the inky-looking loch at our feet. This is a scene well deserving of the celebrity bestowed on it in one of the noblest songs that ever was penned, and, in some respects, not unworthy of being compared to Loch Corruisk in Skye, though unquestionably much inferior as a whole. Towards the summit, we found the morning's snow, in some places, unmelted, so that we could pelt each other with its balls. The highest ridge rises more gradually for about a mile, and during the whole of this part of the ascent, we were in ecstasies with the view which was now opening up in every direction. We kept as close to the brink of the awful precipice as we safely could, and, in one place, admired the structure of the rocks, which strikingly resembles castellated mason-work on an enormous scale. When we reached the cairn, there was not a cloud to be seen in any direction. The sun had drunk up all the vapours of the morning, and thus produced such an intense clearness of atmosphere as in all my rambles I had never previously witnessed.

The cairn is not built on the highest part of the mountain, but about 150 yards south from it. The cause of this, probably, was, that here stones are to be got for the lifting, whereas, on the sharp peak which forms the graceful summit, the rock is solid, and would require to be quarried. Upon the pinnacle, we spread our maps, and, with the aid of a compass, ascertained the bearings of all the remarkable mountains by which we were surrounded. Some idea of the extent of this prospect may be formed, when I mention that due west we distinctly saw Ben Nevis and Ben Cruachan; southwards, Schiehallion, Ben Lawers, Ben More, the Ochils, the Lomonds, and even the dim shade of the Pentlands, over Ben Arti, close to West Lomond. We saw also the Sidlaw Hills, the sea at St Andrews, Montrose, Aberdeen, and the mouth of Moray Frith—Benachie, Belrinnes—while all the innumerable nearer mountains were, of course, just the more distinctly visible. On Deeside, we saw almost all the places of note from Aberdeen to Benmuigdhui; such as Banchory-Ternan, Kincardine O'Neil, Aboyne, Ballater town and bridge, Church of Crathie, Invercauld, Mar Lodge, &c. &c. We spent about an hour at and near the top, and left it most reluctantly. The ascent and descent, including half-an-hour at the summit, cannot be comfortably accomplished under five or six hours by ordinary pedestrians, starting from or near the hut; and when the royal road is finished, there will be little need of a guide. We raised a couple of blue hares, and two coveys of ptarmigan, near the top, and plenty of grouse towards the base; and fell in with some beautiful bunches of white heath, which is seldom met with, even in the Highlands. These elegant sprigs were much thought of by some ladies

whom we met on our return, connected with a hunting-party.

After partaking of some refreshment at our starting-place, we fished for an hour or two in the loch and river of Muick with tolerable success, and proceeded, separately, in the evening to Ballater, ten miles from Loch Muick. The road down the Glen is of an interesting character, especially about half-way down, where there is a very fine waterfall into a broad dark pool, seemingly of great depth. Near the junction of the Muick and Dee, we passed some places of considerable beauty and interest—particularly Birkhall, now the property of Prince Albert, Knock Castle, and the old Church of Muick. The country here is remarkably well wooded, and many consider Ballater the most favourable specimen of Deeside, though there is a formality in the streets and squares of the little town, that by no means harmonises with the magnificent scenery around it.

BALLATER, CRATHIE, &c.

Strath Dee, according to Dr M'Culloch, "is superior to any other in Scotland in the displays of its wild Alpine boundary, and yields to none in magnificence and splendour." In this instance I quite agree with the Doctor. There are *portions* of other straths that may successfully vie with Strath Dee, but, taken *as a whole*, I would very decidedly give it the preference. From Aberdeen to the Wells of Dee, it may fairly be reckoned eighty miles; and, if

the course of the river be followed, it cannot be computed under one hundred. Now, from head to foot, it is either *beautiful* or *grand*, and in many parts is well entitled to both epithets. For sixty-five miles from its mouth, till you reach the Linn of Dee, the banks are remarkably well wooded; all above this is bare, stern, and rugged. Owing to the group of very high and steep mountains at its source, this river, almost in its infancy, becomes rapid and unfordable, excepting in unusually dry weather; and its rapidity is continued throughout its whole course, insomuch that I consider the proverbially "rapid Spey" does not pass nearly so quick over its channel. The wood on its banks consists principally of natural fir, birch, and oak; though in the lower district there is much that is artificial, and, of course, a greater variety. This encomium may readily be conceded, seeing that all the natural beauty of Aberdeenshire may be regarded as concentrated in the valley of the Dee.

If the Dee is spoken of in an *agricultural* point of view, its pretensions are far from being great. Towards its mouth, by dint of good farming and help from Aberdeen, the soil and crops may be considered tolerable; but, when you ascend beyond the reach of city manure, there is a sad falling off, the soil being naturally shallow and gravelly, indicating a very decided propensity to crops of whins, broom, and heath. In one respect, however, this shallowness, combined with the dry subsoil, is of great advantage, for we remarked that harvest was just about as far advanced at Braemar, on fields from 1200 to 1400 feet above the sea, as anywhere else betwixt that and the Forth. At Tomintoul, a farm within a mile of Castleton, the upper part of which, under cultivation, cannot be less than 1400 feet, they

were actually leading home their ripe dry grain in the end of August. So far as I know, this is the highest spot in Scotland where corn is advantageously grown to any extent.

There is only one inn at Ballater, but that is a very large and good one. A melancholy occurrence took place while we were there. On the night of our arrival, the hostess, Mrs Ross, who was very favourably known throughout the district, was suddenly struck with paralysis, and died at two o'clock on the following day. As the house was full of visitors, this event created great confusion; but, in the circumstances, none were disposed to complain, as all deeply sympathised with the family in their most unlooked for bereavement.

There is, perhaps, no part of the Dee more frequented than Ballater, not only on account of its being very pleasantly situated near the verge of the Aberdeenshire Highlands, but also owing to its vicinity to the medicinal springs at Pananich, which have been long celebrated, and, I daresay, with as much justice as most others of similar pretensions. The air and walks among the mountains are fine, so that, in defiance of the prodigious draughts of cold water imbibed, the visitors generally contrive to leave the district in better bodily condition than when they left their homes. Pananich is two miles from Ballater. The accommodation at the Wells is very limited, and of a humble description, compared with the hotel and lodgings at Ballater, so that few reside at the former place, excepting such as cannot ride or walk so far twice or thrice in the day. There are hot and cold baths at the Wells, and the place seems carefully, and rather tastefully kept. There are various springs, each having small drinking cups attached; and, un-

like other places of the kind, you may swallow as much of the chilly beverage as you please, without being charged for the risk you run.

While my companion indulged in the luxuries of the hot bath, and in his favourite pursuit of sketching, I climbed some of the adjoining heights, so here we separated for the remainder of the day. There is one hill about two miles from Pananich, in the direction of Montkeen, very well deserving of a visit. Owing to its position, rather than its great height, the view is comprehensive and interesting. The graceful outline of Lochnagar, and lofty summits of the Cairngorm Mountains, are seen from this to great advantage, as well as many miles both up and down the vale of the Dee. From Craigendarroch, though only about half the height, there is a similar view, and as the latter hill is quite close to Ballater, and easily climbed, it is perhaps the most popular resort of the kind in the whole course of the Dee.

Though the church is placed in the centre of Ballater, the name of the parish is Glenmuick. It consists of three parishes combined, Glenmuick, Glenghairn, and Tulloch, thus constituting, decidedly, the second largest parish in the county. The adjoining parish, Crathie and Braemar, is, however, more than twice as large as this, and these two may be regarded as the Highlands of Aberdeenshire; for, though there are here and there detached mountains of considerable altitude, there are nowhere such groups of them as occur in these two.

Towards the evening, I left Ballater for the Manse of Crathie, to which I had received a kind invitation from the worthy minister. I had not proceeded far, when a respectable-looking gentleman came up in his gig, and kindly invited me to share it with

him, to which I readily consented. In the course of conversation, he mentioned that he farmed Ballatrich, about four miles below Ballater, and that the house once occupied by Byron was now his barn, the bed in which his Lordship slept being still in his possession, and in tolerable preservation. We soon parted company, as he had to go up Glenghairn, the entrance to which is extremely fine. This rapid, powerful stream, the Ghairn, is one of the principal feeders of the Dee, and a favourite haunt of the anglers; it takes its rise on Benaven.

Being expected at Crathie, I was very cordially welcomed, and, there being a numerous and cheerful family, all decidedly musical, we spent a very happy evening. On parting next morning, I was invited to return with my friend from Ballater, too good an offer to be rejected by either of us. On our way up, we were particularly favoured by the weather, which caused everything to appear in a most engaging aspect. There is a small but very tasteful Free Church about a mile from Ballater, placed in one of the finest situations imaginable. It is in the midst of a copse of oak and birch, overlooking the river, and from it Lochnagar is seen in a very interesting point of view. On the opposite side of the river, in Strath Girnock, a handsome school-house has been built by her Majesty, in which she takes great interest. Abergeldy Castle, the residence of the Duchess of Kent, is one of the prettiest spots on the Dee. It is close to the river on the south side. The cradle bridge is a very simple contrivance, but a great convenience to the inhabitants of the castle, the public road by which the mail-coach daily travels being on the opposite side. One or two persons enter the cradle, and, by means of a windlass, fixed high in the cleft of a

large tree, can pull themselves across with very little trouble. As soon as the person crossing is seated, he launches the cradle, which, like a ship on the stocks, glides rapidly down the inclined plane, and, when the ascent commences, he pulls himself and vehicle up by the rope. The river here is broad, rapid, and deep. Not many years ago, in attempting this passage, a sad catastrophe took place. A newly-married couple, being seated, let themselves down in the usual way. Unfortunately, however, the rope had not been properly fastened to the windlass, so that it ran off, when the pair were thrown into the river and drowned.

Our reception at the manse was unaffectedly kind. In the course of the evening, we, accompanied by the minister and some of his family, ascended the heights overlooking Balmoral by beautifully kept walks, and had the finest view possible of the castle and its attractive pleasure-grounds. It has been, in every respect, greatly improved of late, and is now, every way, a residence fitted for the reception of its *august* visitors. The lease of Balmoral is nearly expired; but it is expected soon to become the property of her Majesty, as well as Abergeldie, in which case, these, along with Birkhall, will make one of the most princely Highland possessions that can be imagined. This arrangement would be of incalculable importance to the inhabitants, as there is nothing conducive to their moral or temporal well-being neglected by the Queen and her Royal Consort.

[of *Craathie*]

X On returning to the manse, we were delighted to observe the frank, kindly feeling pervading all the members of the family. The daughters, though young, touched the piano as if by intuition; and even the sons proved themselves no novices in fin-

gering that now almost indispensable instrument. One of them, a kilted stripling, performed the sword-dance, to his brother's "Gillie Callum," in a style that would have done credit to any prizet-dancer in the land. Upon the whole, I have seldom visited a family evidently so thoroughly united, and where sportive, innocent merriment so generally abounds. In reflecting on the two nights I had the pleasure of passing here, it somehow happens that I am visited by lively reminiscences of the Vicar of Wakefield.

Next morning, we started for Castleton. Nothing can surpass the beauty of the birches all along from Ballater. They abound on both sides of the road and river, and a great proportion of them are of that description called "Weeping." Owing to this *lachrymose* tendency, their long tendrils hang in elegant festoons from a great height almost to the very ground. The birch is, perhaps, the most generally useful of all our trees. Even when quite green, it affords excellent fuel. Cloggers, I believe, also prize it highly; and it rivals satinwood itself in the hands of the cabinet-maker. The smallest twigs are manufactured into fences and ropes; it furnishes first-rate stable besoms; and there is even a species of delicious wine distilled from its sap; while the air is redolent with its delightfully fragrant perfume. To all this, it may be added that, in the good old times of castigation, before Solomon's injunctions were regarded as a dead letter, it had a most salutary effect in sharpening the wits and improving the morality of the rising generation! Can as much be said of any other tree?

"Its glossy leaf and its silvery stem,
O dost thou not love to look on them?"

About two miles from the Church of Crathie, stands the very comfortable Inn of Inver. This is quite a model lodging for the pedestrian tourist. Its occupiers are extremely civil, while all its appointments are snug and tidy. I spent two nights here ; and, if fate should ever again direct my steps to this quarter, Inver would be my favourite resting-place. In this neighbourhood, my friend, after lashing the Dee with much barbarity and patience for a couple of hours, managed to capture a few trouts, upon which we partly dined at Castleton. The Dee is too rapid and clear to be a good trout-ing stream. It is spanned by a very old and steep bridge of four or five arches, at one of the entrances to Invercauld, where the scenery is of the most enchanting description. In this vicinity are the forest of Ballochbowie and the fall of the Garrawalt, both much admired by the tourist. A little beyond the bridge, the enormous rock, called Craig Cluny, overhangs the road. Invercauld House next bursts upon the sight, one of the most elegant and delightful mansions in Scotland. There is nothing on the Dee to be compared with it, not excepting Balmoral itself, which, however, may rank second. After this, Braemar Castle arrests the attention. The valley is here of considerable width, and the fields large and well cultivated. The castle is of great height, and quite entire, but uninhabited ; for what reason I cannot tell. About a mile farther on, we entered the very peculiar and interesting village of Castleton, so metamorphosed from what I had seen it when last there, more than thirty years ago, that I could scarcely recognise it as an old acquaintance. J

CASTLETON, DEER FOREST, &c.

Few villages have undergone a more complete metamorphosis than Castleton during the last thirty years, and this change is still progressive. I was there thirty-two years ago, when it aptly represented one of the meanest description of Highland clachans. It then consisted of a great number of low smoky cottages, overgrown with grass and noisome weeds, scattered in all directions, without the slightest regard to order or convenience. There was one tolerable inn, according to the notions of the day, but such as was more suitable for drovers and excise-officers than any higher description of travellers. As regards regularity in the position of the houses, little change has been effected, but, with few exceptions, they seem all comfortable; and there are two elegant hotels fitted for the reception of the best in the land. What chiefly characterises Castleton is its brawling, boisterous river, the Cluny, which divides it into two nearly equal parts. The bed of this river is exceedingly rocky, and, during a high flood, it must present a magnificent appearance.

This village, being at least 1200 feet above the sea, is reckoned very salubrious, and is much resorted to, during summer and autumn, by the inhabitants of Aberdeen, Montrose, and other towns along the east coast. To accommodate such visitors, the old cottages have generally either been new roofed, or superseded by others of a more pretending description. The uneven, rocky nature of the ground, intersected by the Cluny and sundry mill leads, renders it dangerous to walk about at night; so

that, if accidents have not frequently happened to strangers from this cause, they may regard themselves as having been in great luck. Though the inns are large and commodious, they are often overflowing with company, who are quartered at night throughout the village. We took up our residence at the Invercauld Arms, and slept in a very neat, newly-built cottage, and in both respects found ourselves extremely comfortable. Mrs Clark and son are most attentive to their guests; and whoever has tarried there this season will not readily forget the alacrity and cheerfulness of Old George, the waiter. He has seen much service in various parts of England and Scotland, and is so well up to his business, that he should not be parted with on slight grounds. He was always very decently attired, and the number of breakfasts, dinners, teas, and suppers, he had to provide, was endless; yet he never lost patience, having a good-natured joke ever ready for those who seemed to like them, and overlooking nobody.

Castleton can boast of no fewer than three handsome places of worship. One belongs to the Establishment, another is Catholic, and the other Free Church. Almost the half of the population in this district is of the Catholic persuasion. Catholics here, however, are very different from what we find them in most other parts of England and Scotland. There are few, if any, Irish among them, and they may be regarded as the aborigines of this part of the Highlands. They are generally well educated, orderly, and civil, and have had the advantage, for many years past, of having a lady of high rank as a member of their communion. Their place of worship is new and elegant. Tradesmen being employed in adorning it, I entered repeatedly, and

was as much pleased with its internal as its external appearance. The priest, I was told, is superior to the generality of his order. The Free Church is of a less pretending description, but extremely neat, and what is of more consequence, the minister, who seceded in 1843, is a man of a peaceable, pious, and literary disposition. The Established Church vies with the Catholic one in external and internal elegance, and its minister is respected and esteemed by all who know him—so that I know few places so fortunate as Castleton, as regards the most important of all concerns, religious instruction, and from all I saw, it has not been thrown away upon the inhabitants. We attended the Established Church, and were highly pleased and edified with the services of the day. There was a remarkably good congregation, considering the vicinity of the other places of worship. Several families of distinction occupied the front of the galleries, and there were many respectable-looking strangers interspersed with the general flock. It is surely much to be desired that this parish, Braemar, should be disunited from Crathie, not only on account of the greatly increased and increasing importance of Castleton; but as all the free teind of the united parishes belongs to the Braemar district.

Our great object in coming here was to visit the lofty mountains at the source of the Dee, for on this side of them there is no inn nearer than Castleton, though the distance to the summit of the highest is twenty-one miles. The weather was of a most teasing description; very cold, but generally fair and clear, though the high mountains were almost always covered with clouds, and when these occasionally dispersed, we found they had constantly been discharging copious showers of snow, with

which the highest range had been covered from the middle of August. We waited two days, in hopes of a favourable change, but, as the snow was evidently becoming daily deeper, and time more precious, we resolved to make the ascent. These two days, I devoted to climbing some of the neighbouring heights, particularly Mor-ron, or *large nose*, the view from which is very commanding. It rises close to the village, and ought to be visited by all strangers who have any taste at all for mountain scenery. Considering the height of its base, I should think the cairn cannot be under 2800 feet above the sea. The ascent is gradual and easy, and the view richly remunerates the fatigue. While on the summit, I was joined by two genteel young tourists, who politely offered me protection under their plaids from a heavy shower of hail and snow, an offer which I gladly accepted.

During this time, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the excellent minister of Braemar and his family circle. Owing to a mutual friend, I also became acquainted with one of the district surgeons. It is not a little remarkable, that this gentleman, though a native of one of the richest and most level counties in England, has become completely naturalised as a Highlander. He even wears the philabeg, and, both professionally and otherwise, is quite a favourite with the inhabitants. He has a brother in Ballater, who has been at least equally successful as a vender of almost all kinds of merchandise. It is a rare case, indeed, for Englishmen, not only to migrate to such a clime, but by patient continuance in well-doing, to ensure success in their professions. During these two days, my fellow-traveller was occupied with fishing in Lochs Callater and Tilt, sketching, and *deer-stalking*,

having had the honour of joining, by invitation, a party from Mar Lodge in this latter very exciting pursuit.

Before leaving home, having heard and read much of the extreme strictness of the Duke of Leeds in preserving his forest, I thought it might be as well to write to his Grace on the subject, lest, after travelling some two hundred and fifty miles, I should be foiled in my object. Accordingly, I wrote respectfully, intimating my intention, expecting that one or other of his people would be directed to reply. The Duke himself did so, and in terms becoming his high rank. Repeated letters passed between us, and I must say in a spirit of condescension and reasonableness on his part that fully convinced me the public ought to be satisfied with his views on the subject. His Grace even invited me to call at Mar Lodge, and promised, if I did so, that he would send one of his foresters along with me to any of the mountains I might wish to visit. Though altogether unauthorised, yet I trust no offence will be taken by my extracting from one of the above letters a passage which may remove much misapprehension on this subject:—

“In answer to your letter, I never make any objection, nor have I the right to do so, to persons using any of the *established* roads through Mar Forest. These roads are—1st, Up Glen Lui and the Derry, to Speyside and Abernethy; 2d, Branch from Glen Lui, up Glen Lui-Beg, and round the base of Cairn-na-Veim into the Larig Rhui, to Aviemore; 3d, Up Glen Dee, and over the Geldie, by Cairn-na-Geldy, to Glen Feshie; 4th, A branch from this near junction of Dee and Geldy water, up Glen Dee till it joins road No. 2, and so leads through the pass of the Larig Rhui.

“There is, properly speaking, no road to the top of Ben Macdhui; but no objection is ever made to persons going up by the Sapper’s Track, up Corri Etichan and Derry, or to their returning by the Ben Macdhui burn to the Glen Lui-Beg road, provided they will call and mention their wish to do so; and, of course,

no objection to their descending the west face to the Larig Rhui, if they choose to risk their necks, as all the upper part of the Larig is beyond the deer ground."

From the clear statement here given, it appears that there are no less than *four* different routes through the Mar Forest, in none of which will travellers meet with any interruption; and I can answer for it, that these are exactly the tracks that are most likely to gratify the tourist. That noblemen and gentlemen, who pay enormously for these forests, should be careful to preserve them from illegal intrusion, is most natural; and I cannot see how any person can reasonably object to their doing so.

With regard to Glen Tilt, the merits of that case are under litigation, and therefore I shall say nothing about it. But as to the Mar Forest, it seems to me so very clear, that I am convinced none who understand the case thoroughly will blame the Duke. How would any low country proprietor or farmer like to have his fields traversed in all directions by the public? Now, the Forest of Mar is the Duke's farm, for which he pays a high rent, and the stock of which cannot be suitably preserved without much care and expensive outlay. If any man prefers rocks, heath, and deer, to cultivated fields, sheep, and oxen, we have no right to object. This is a matter of taste; and right glad ought Scotland to be that such a taste does prevail among many of our English neighbours, as much wealth is thus annually poured into our comparatively poor country.

It may be said that in traversing these forests no fences are thrown down and no crops injured. This is granted. But any man who knows anything of red deer, must be aware that their senses of seeing,

hearing, and smelling, are most acute, and their habits shy in the extreme; so that a stranger, by incautiously passing through their haunts, may quite inadvertently drive them from the ground, and thus injure the sport for weeks, or even for the whole season. When accompanied by a forester, this may, in a great measure, be obviated, as these men are thoroughly acquainted with the ground and the nature of the animals; and, by examining the hills with their glasses, and studying the wind, they can generally conduct a stranger through the forests so as not to occasion material injury. These things considered, it astonishes me not a little that any intelligent person should blame the Duke in this matter; and still more that, when civilly warned of their trespass, and directed to the lawful tracks by which the most interesting parts of the forest may be seen, they should yet persist in violating the rights of property.

Some years ago, a learned Professor of Botany, in going to Ben Macdhui, with some dozen or two of his pupils, armed with hammers and cudgels, *gallantly* stormed the pass of Glen Lui-Beg, in defiance of one or two keepers, who civilly requested them to ascend by the ordinary and lawful route. Perhaps they considered they had performed a mighty exploit in so doing, though I trust there are very many who will be of a different opinion. Be this as it may, their successful foray aroused the genius of some unknown bard, who celebrated their courage and prowess in strains which require only to be known to be admired. I have vainly inquired as to his name and whereabouts, for true merit is always associated with shrinking modesty. After no little pains, however, I have succeeded in rescuing his sublime effusion from entire oblivion, though

I regret to say it must still be presented to the public in a very mutilated form :—

“ They cam’ to pu’
 Some girse that grew
 On Ben M’Du’,
 Whar ne’er a cou
 Had set her mou.
 If a’ be true,
 Tween me and you,
 They sair did rue
 They ere did view
 The big *black sou**
 Or Larig Ru;’
 For not a few
 Got roarin’ fou
 On mountain dew,
 Whilk gart them grue,
 And bock, and spue ! ”

Whether the above is to be regarded as lyrical, or a portion of an epic poem, having the learned Doctor as the hero, I am not sufficiently versed in these matters to decide. I trust, however, that my exertions in picking up such an interesting fragment, here a little and there a little, will not be unappreciated by a discerning public. The closing lines are particularly pathetic and moving; and I am sure, if warbled by some fair damsel in a strain equally touching, the effect would be overpowering. Scotch music is now, unfortunately, banished from all our fashionable circles and educational institutions; or, if tolerated at all, it is so tricked out with outlandish meretricious graces, called *variations*, that our finest old tunes are only faintly recognisable at intervals, like angels in a mist. I would therefore humbly suggest that, seeing also the measure and rhyme are somewhat quaint, the lines

* *Macdhui* is thus interpreted.

should be married to some plaintive German or Italian air, in which case the fair *cantatrice* might in all probability touch the heart of one or other of the doughty champions, whose victory and woes are here so pathetically recorded.

“Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.”

“The time may come when even these,
Our sad mishaps, may soothe and please.”

GLENS DEE, DERRY, LUI-BEG, &c.

“Ye hills, near neebors o’ the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns;
Ye cliffs, the haunts o’ sailing yearns,
Where echo slumbers;
Come, join, auld Nature’s sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers.”

Thus does Burns pathetically invoke Auld Nature to condole with him for the demise of his friend Matthew Henderson. In similar strains may I invoke her to condole with me in the change which must now come over the spirit of my narrative. Our ascent of Lochnagar was, in every point of view, eminently successful and satisfactory. But, as the Roman author asserts, “*nihil est ab omni parte beatum* ;” or, as it may aptly be translated by our Scotch proverb, “we canna kep at a’ slaps ;” or, as we have it in English, “they who play at bowls must meet with rubbers.” The ascent of Ben Macdhui was the grand object of my ramble on this occasion. The accomplishment of this I had contemplated for years. In public

opinion, this mountain had, for at least a quarter of a century, snatched the laurels from the brow of Ben Nevis as being the highest point in the kingdom. Even children at all our schools were instructed to give the preference to this Aberdonian *upstart*; and it grieved me to think that I had once been half-way to the top, in the most favourable circumstances, and had, by mere accident, been prevented from reaching it.

These considerations led me to form the resolution of not only climbing Ben Macdhui, but also several mountains in its vicinity, especially Brae-riach and Cairntoul, which are only lower by about 150 feet. My plans were fully, and in my opinion, most judiciously matured. By consulting maps, charts, and guide-books, as well as by correspondence, I had completely mastered the geography of the district. Not only the mountains, but all the glens and burns, were familiar to me; and I concluded that by one, or at most two nights' bivouack, I could overtop all that is particularly interesting at the source of the Dec. That I might not be foiled in this long cherished enterprise, I had resolved to go entirely alone; and in the prosecution of this object, I resisted the proffered society of those who would, in many respects, have been most agreeable fellow-travellers. The elements, however, cannot be controlled. This achievement has hitherto bid defiance to the boasted ingenuity of man, and compels him to acknowledge that, whereas in many things he deals proudly, yet there is One above him.

As formerly mentioned, I had tarried as long at Castleton as time would permit, in hopes of the mountains becoming clear of clouds and falling snow. The Queen was to arrive at that village on

the 31st August, upon which occasion, as a loyal subject, I was determined to be present. Accordingly, about mid-day, on the 28th, after having *uncorked my whisky-flask at a blacksmith's vice*, and stowed into my fishing-basket a fair supply of provisions for two or three days, I proceeded alone up the Dee. Three miles from Castleton, the river is joined on the north side by the Quoigh, on which there are several romantic falls. This stream flows from the precipitous sides of Ben Abourd and Benaven, mountains about 4000 feet high, and by no means difficult of ascent. Her Majesty and her Royal Consort visited the former this autumn, and, as they were highly gratified with the novelty of the scene, it is to be hoped they will extend their rambles to the Cairngorm range on some future occasion. Patronage of this description will soon bring mountain climbing into fashion, and banish that effeminate indolence which has long been gaining ground among all ranks. Men now-a-days allege that they cannot rough it without imminent danger, and that a night's lodging on the cold ground, even in summer, would be certain destruction. This may all be true enough, but what is the cause? their superfluous flannels and countless other unnecessary indulgences. Let them reflect that, if history is to be credited, our forefathers deemed it sufficient to have an occasional *fresh coat of paint*, without troubling the tailor at all!

Benaven derives its appellation from the number of streams which issue from it on every side. It is still more remarkable for eight or ten odd looking excrescences at and near its summit. These consist, I believe, of solid rock, and have much the appearance of being artificial when seen

from a distance, especially that one which crowns the summit of the mountain. Their height is considerable, varying perhaps from 50 to 100 feet. The river Aven flows chiefly from the north side of this mountain and the loch of the same name, and joins the Spey at Inveraven. The far-famed Glenlivet whisky is manufactured from a tributary of this stream.

On the south side of the Dee, opposite Glen Quoigh, is Corriemulzie Cottage, the very interesting Highland retreat of that distinguished veteran, General Sir Alexander Duff. It consists of various unpretending buildings, erected at different times, as the family increased, and has more of a classic and picturesque than a grand and imposing appearance. You might fancy it the elegant retreat of literature and science, rather than the residence of a soldier, the next heir to the vast estates of the Earldom of Fife. A wicket-gate and a well-kept footpath lead from the high road down to the Dee by the side of a stream, on which there are some beautiful cascades. No one should pass these unvisited. I followed the stream till it fell into the Dee. On a beautiful lawn by the side of the river, stands the effigy of a noble stag. It consists of iron painted, and is so well executed, that, when I first saw it, I half thought it might be some favourite of the General's family that had become tame by their attentions and indulgence.

The next object worthy of notice is the handsome "Victoria" Bridge leading to Mar Lodge, the Highland residence of the Duke of Leeds. An ornamental cottage is here tenanted by a very old woman, on whom I called, who has seen better days, but who has still much cause of gratitude in being so near a neighbour of the General and the Duke.

On my telling her I was going to Ben Macdhui, she remarked, "Wi' leave, Sir, I think ye're o'er het at hame; they tell me it's deep wi' snaw." Mar Lodge is beautifully situated on the north side of the Dee, at the foot of Ben Abourd, with an extensive lawn in front, and on both sides. I have given Invercauld the first place, and Balmoral the second, in point of splendour and beauty on the banks of the Dee. Mar Lodge, in Doncaster phrase, "comes in a good third." Its architectural pretensions are not great, but the situation is splendid; and, as a sporting residence in autumn, it is unrivalled. The only bridge above this is that at the Linn of Dee. The river is here so narrow that it is easily spanned by a single arch, though above and below, the channel expands to 40 or 50 yards. This linn consists of a succession of falls of no great height, but imposing on account of the vast body of water dashing through rocks so contracted, that, for the space of 18 or 20 feet, any active boy or girl of twelve years of age might easily leap across. The only circumstances to prevent the frequent accomplishment of this, are the sudden rise of the rock on the south side, where you alight, and the certainty of destruction should you slip and fall into the roaring gulf below. The river being high and the wind boisterous, the spray was flying about in all directions while I was there; this, and there being no one to witness the feat, if so it may be termed, prevented me from the attempt. The extent of the linn from head to foot may be about 80 or 100 yards. In various places there are hideous eddies or whirlpools, which some of the good people in the vicinity declare to have no bottom!

After crossing the Dee, I turned to the right and

then to the left, near its confluence with the Lui. I then proceeded up Glen Lui for three or four miles, as far as the forester's lodge, at the entrance of Glen-Lui-Beg. The stream is here divided into two, the Derry being the larger branch. On entering the lodge, I was informed that the forester, Peter M'Hardy, was not at home, but was civilly received by his spouse, and the evening being showery and cold, I was glad to sit down with her and her young folks round an excellent peat fire. Soon after, she apprised me that, as she had kindled a fire in the room end, I would find myself more comfortable there. Three splendid broadswords were suspended on the wall, which, along with other implements connected with his profession, proved Peter to be no greenhorn. In the course of the evening he arrived, and kept me company. M'Hardy is about as good a specimen of a Highlander as can well be imagined. He is considerably above six feet in height, straight and active, without an ounce of redundant flesh. Like all these foresters whom I have seen, he is remarkably intelligent, and, from frequent intercourse with men of rank and education, their manners are much superior to those of our ordinary peasantry. Some years ago, he was an adept at throwing the hammer and putting the stone, as was testified by several elegant silver medals which he showed me, and to which, I make no doubt, he might still be adding, had he not thought proper gracefully to retire from the arena, while *facile princeps*. Had there been *six* Peters instead of *one*, the learned Doctor and his "Girse gatherers" might have felt a little discomposed ere they forced the Pass of Glen-Lui-Beg, regaling the deer with their cigars, grog, &c. &c. At our first meeting, I informed

him that I had letters from the Duke, to whom I had applied for a pass through the forest. He said it was unnecessary to produce them, as he had been informed by his Grace of my intended visit, and had been instructed to afford me every facility. Here, therefore, I spent the night, somewhat more comfortably than had I been once more stretched among the rocks and heather, as at one time I thought I should have been compelled to be.

I have heard some lamenting that so much ground should be devoted to deer forests, considering that much of it is well adapted for sheep. In this lamentation, I cannot sympathise. There is comparatively little of Scotland devoted to this purpose; and, when we reflect that it can only be in the wildest and most desolate parts of the country the object can be successfully accomplished, there can be no just foundation for such regret, provided *lawful* roads and footpaths are not interfered with. In addition to this, let it be kept in view, that this system brings annually a great number of noblemen and gentlemen into our country, who would otherwise be utter strangers to it—that, not only do these men liberally spend their money in the Highlands, where it is most wanted, but very frequently take an interest in promoting the welfare of the inhabitants—patronising our patriotic and benevolent institutions, and, in not a few instances, finding employment abroad of a lucrative and honourable description for those who would otherwise have spent their lives in idleness and starvation at home. We should also consider, that, for the preservation of the deer, as many men are required as had the ground been under sheep, and that their families are, in almost all instances, kept in more comfortable circumstances than those of

the generality of our shepherds. Besides all this, would it not be a national disgrace, that this noble breed of animals, the red deer, should be extinguished for such a paltry and questionable lucrative consideration? for this would most certainly very soon be the result, were they not so preserved.

CORRY-ETICHAN, BEN MACDHUI, &c.

At the forester's, I spent the night very comfortably, and, after an early breakfast, went up Glen Derry with my entertainer and his assistant, on their customary rounds. Glens Derry and Lui-Beg are unlike anything one meets with even in the Highlands. The forester's house is the only one they contain. It is snugly situated among old fir-trees, which is the only kind of wood to be found in these desolate regions. The greater part of these trees are very old—the growth of centuries; and, unfortunately, when they die out, there is no chance of their being replaced, as the deer, which are much on the increase, uniformly eat up the seedlings. From the excessive violence of the storms, many of these venerable tenants of the desert have been broken through the middle, and every way mutilated, while others have been twisted like cork-screws. Another striking feature in this glen, is the effect permanently left in it by the memorable flood of August, 1829. The Derry, upon that awful occasion, was perhaps as much, if not more, flooded than any stream in the Highlands. The ground is torn up in all directions, and enormous stones have been thrown into posi-

tions which one can hardly conceive would have been reached even by the greatest floods; while hundreds of majestic trees, denuded of their bark, bleached, and checked in their growth, stand, like sheeted spectres, testifying their wretched fate. Most appropriately has this scene been described as

"The land of the mountain and flood,
Where the pine of the forest for ages has stood,
Where the eagle darts forth on the wings of the storm,
And the eaglets are nursed on the lofty Cairngorm."

As we proceeded up the glen, and beyond the firs, we saw several herds of deer in sheltered places along its sides, for the morning was stormy, with occasional heavy showers of rain and sleet. To an inexperienced eye, these interesting animals would easily escape detection. Many were pointed out to me by the keepers, which, even though on the outlook, I would not have seen. With the aid of their excellent glasses, however, I could distinctly discern their gestures, and even count their antlers. This forest is computed to contain about 4000. The eagle does not always build among rocks. On a solitary pine, I was shown a nest in which young ones have been reared for many years, for, unlike most sportsmen, the Duke protects these noble birds, being unwilling they should be extirpated, of which there seems much danger. They always lay two eggs, one containing the male, the other the female, and from the external appearance of the egg may be ascertained the gender of the occupant. Eagles have not been detected destroying the young deer, though they often fly after and annoy them, apparently in sport.

After proceeding several miles up the Derry, we entered Corrie-Etichan, which joins it at right angles from the summit of Ben Macdhui, having

Ben-a-main on our right hand, and Cairngorm, Derry, on our left. This is a remarkably wild and savage scene, on this occasion particularly so, as the wind had become tempestuous, accompanied with heavy showers of sleet, hail, and snow. On each side "ascended huge nameless rocks," not *bottomless*, like the whirlpools of the Dee, but *topless*, as their summits were shrouded in snow and mist. In front, a torrent came raging down from Loch Etichan, which was lashed into fury by the violence of the wind, the spray reaching us at a considerable distance. During the whole of our ascent the wind was right 'a-head, and so very boisterous, that it was with the utmost exertion we could hear each other speak. I frequently begged my companion (his assistant having left us in Glen Derry) not to proceed farther, as I was pretty sure of finding the cairn, and it was needless for him to be so exposed. This, however, he peremptorily refused doing under such circumstances, and I confess his presence was of much advantage to me, as, though I was determined at all hazards to persist till I found the cairn, yet I might have been considerably longer in the discovery had I been alone.

Loch Etichan is unquestionably the highest loch in her Majesty's Britannic dominions. Owing to the state of the weather, I could not ascertain its dimensions; but I suppose it may be a mile or two in circumference. It contains abundance of trout, as I heard that the Duke, with a friend, had killed five or six dozens with the rod and otter not long before I was there. Just above the loch we got one indistinct peep into Loch Aven; but after this the snow fell so thick, that seeing beyond 50 yards was out of the question. My attendant took me a little way to the left, that I might get

a glimpse of the upper part of Glen Lui-Beg, through tremendous precipices, with which a sudden gust of wind had nearly made me more familiar than would have been altogether pleasant. We then steered nearly due north till we reached the remains of the Sapper's House, which had evidently been one of the most substantial of the kind, as its terribly exposed situation required. A very short way north of this stands the cairn, which was invisible till we came within 15 or 20 yards of it. For the last two hours, there had been almost a constant fall of heavy snow, which in many places was more than knee-deep, and near the summit the drift was quite blinding. When we reached the cairn, ten miles from our starting-place, we were quite benumbed and covered with icicles, so that a tasting from the whisky-flask was right acceptable to us both.

This cairn is by far the highest of the kind I have seen. It is built in the Tower of Babel style, in four distinct storeys, the pinnacle being, I would suppose, from 20 to 25 feet in height. I was too much chilled to go to the top, and only ascended the second storey, on which I placed a large stone, handed to me by my companion, whose attentions I shall not readily forget. Some say that Lord Fife caused this cairn to be more elevated than common, that it might overtop Ben Nevis, the competition being considered a neck-and-neck affair; while others jocularly allege that, as he had intimated his intention of being buried there, it might be as well he should have a *fair start upwards*. It is pleasing to reflect that for many years his Lordship has led such a quiet and orderly life as to require no such vantage-ground. His birthday has just been celebrated throughout Aberdeenshire with

a spirit of kindness and cordiality that must have been highly gratifying to his feelings.

As to the comparative height of these two mountains, I believe it has recently been finally decided in favour of Ben Nevis, by 40 or 50 feet. The intelligent people of Castleton allow this, having been so informed by the late Government Surveyors. Even although her Majesty is said to have expressed anxiety that the decision should have been in favour of Ben Macdhui, I cannot but say that I rather rejoice the Old Champion has carried the day, as it would have been hard to have been denuded of *the belt* after it had been so long and *unostentatiously* worn. Ben Nevis, certainly, is a far more imposing mountain than the other. The former starts almost from the sea, whereas the latter rises the whole way from Aberdeen, so that nearly one-half of the height is attained before there is anything like a steep ascent.

Of course, I cannot describe, from actual observation, the view from Ben Macdhui, mine being confined to a circle, whose diameter might be about thirty yards. Of this, however, I am certain, that it must be very much obstructed, as to near objects, by the immediately adjoining mountains. They surround it on all sides, and, being nearly as high as itself, must be an insurmountable obstacle. On the south and west, Ben-a-vrochan, Cairntoul, and Brae-riach, obstruct the view. On the north, Cairngorm and Ben-a-main. On the east, Ben-aven, Ben-abour, Cairngorm Derry, and Cairn-a-veim. These mountains must have a magnificent appearance from Ben Macdhui. As to the shape of the latter mountain, it is uninteresting in the extreme. All the above named, with the exception of Ben-a-bour, have much finer outlines.

Ben Macdhui, as the name imports, is a huge *sow-backed* monster rising gradually on all sides to an undefined top, so that, unless the cairn informed you, there might be some difficulty in deciding when the top has been reached. Like most of our high mountains, it is covered, near the summit, with many hundreds of acres of large loose granite stones, of a reddish hue, which may, perhaps, more properly be styled porphyry.

The state of the weather upset all my plans. I had intended, after reaching Loch Etichan, to visit Loch Aven, and the Shelter Stone near its head, ascending Ben Macdhui from that side, and descending by the Wells of Dee to find quarters for the night in the Larig, where stones of all dimensions, shapes, and sizes, are to be found in myriads, for the protection of the tourist. Being thoroughly drenched, and without a change of raiment, it would have been an obvious tempting of Providence to have stuck to this plan, so I retraced my steps as far as the head of Glen Lui-Beg, into which my friend descended, while I scrambled down to the Dee, in quite an opposite direction. A bivouac at such a height, in any circumstances, is not to be courted, as, unless the constitution be of the soundest, it may be attended by fatal consequences. Most certainly, I never would have harboured the idea, if I could otherwise have accomplished the object I had in view.

The highest source of the Dee is within 150 feet of the top of Brae-riach. This must be a very copious spring, as it becomes a rapid and pretty large torrent as soon as it reaches the brink of the precipice, down which it rages and foams, without a moment's repose, for 1300 feet, till it joins the Larig, which flows from several small tarns, called

the Wells of Dee. This latter stream, seeing it runs more in the line of the river, is generally regarded as its source, although the other, called the Garchary, seems the larger. My friend, who, along with an English gentleman and a guide, reached the top of Ben Macdhui two hours later than I did, was more fortunate in weather, the storm being nearly over when they reached the summit. They descended by the Wells of Dee, the largest of which they computed, by pacing, to be about 200 yards in circumference, which accords very much with my recollection of it when I passed long ago from Castleton to Cairngorm and Avie More.

Brae-riach and Cairntoul were right opposite me in descending the west face of Ben Macdhui, and before I reached the Dee, the clouds had so far dispersed as to expose their summits. They have a far more bold and broken outline than their loftier neighbour, but on none of them are there such perpendicular and overhanging cliffs as are to be seen on the north-east face of Ben Nevis. The upper part of Glen Dee has, I think, been overpraised in most of our guide books. It is certainly not a little rugged and abrupt, but it cannot boast the romantic and varied scenery of many of the wild passes to be seen in the counties of Argyle, Inverness, and Perth.

In descending the Dee, the day became beautiful, so that I was almost induced, drenched as I was, to spend the night there. The deceitful state of the weather, however, led me to doubt a renewal of the fierce blasts I had so lately encountered, and determined me to continue my route to Castleton. The Geusachen is a wild stream separating Cairntoul from Ben-a-vrochan, and flows from a

tarn called Loch-na-Sirtag. There is a particularly fine view of Ben-y-gloe, in Glen Tilt, as you go down Glen Dee; and near the junction of the Dee and Geldie, Mor-ron, with its lofty cairn, is seen to great advantage. For several miles I enjoyed the society of another of the Duke's foresters, whom I accidentally met on his rounds. He was also particularly civil, offered to carry my luggage, and even pressed me to spend the night at his house, which I would gladly have done, had it not been a considerable way out of my course.

Delavorar, on the south side of the river, is the farthest up dwelling in Glen Dee. This is tenanted by one of General Duff's foresters, and seems a very comfortable residence. It was here that my friend, with his English acquaintance, spent several nights, much to their satisfaction, previous to and after their ascent of Ben Macdhui. About a quarter of a mile above the Linn of Dee, I had the luck to see the Duke of Leeds killing a fine salmon with the rod. He was pretty deep in the river, with fishing-boots, and managed the matter remarkably well *for a Duke*; but what I most admired was the gaffing of the fish by one of his two attendants. I never saw that nice and ticklish operation so neatly executed. I was within 50 yards of his Grace, with several of his very polite and courteous letters in my pocket; so that, had it not been for what many may consider a morbid aversion to thrusting myself into society so decidedly above me, I would have been induced to accost him, and congratulate him on his success. My ambition, however, soars infinitely above the domes and pillars of the aristocracy, even to the pillars that support the clouds of heaven; so, after seeing the fish safely laid on the bank, I pursued my route to

Castleton, which I reached about eight o'clock, after a very pleasant crack of half-an-hour with the old lady, formerly mentioned, in the picturesque cottage at the Victoria Bridge. I found her sitting under the porch, enjoying the fine evening, under a load of clothing that would have defied all the tempests that ever blew. She recognised me at once, and, on hearing of my disastrous mountain-trip, asked if I did not think she was right about my being "o'er het at hame?" I replied that, "if I had only had one-half of her thatching, I would have considered myself snug there for the night." Thus terminated my day's work, and with far less fatigue than might have been anticipated, considering the nature of the ground and the state of the weather. In former days, I am confident I could, with equal ease, have accomplished the whole distance from Castleton to Ben Macdhui and back again, and in nearly the same time.

THE QUEEN, CRATHIE CHURCH, &c.

While we sojourned in this vicinity, a very remarkable feat was performed by an English gentleman, who had taken the shooting at Loch Callater. While on the moors, a herd of ill-starred deer came past him, out of which, by dexterous management on his part, or an unaccountable fatality on theirs, he killed no less than eleven fine stags! It is reckoned fair enough sport to bring down one stag in a day, even in regularly preserved

ground; but here eleven were shot dead by one sportsman, and on ground not exclusively allotted to deer. It was generally accounted for by their having strayed, and got into confusion from the loss of their leader; though, even on this supposition, one can hardly conceive how they came to be so easily victimised. We were in great luck as to venison during all the time we were on Deeside. In one form or another, it was presented to us almost at every meal. When kept a considerable time, and properly dressed, it is excellent food; but, generally speaking, this was not the case. The flesh of the animal is very solid, so that it requires several weeks' keeping, and slow deliberate cooking, to make it tender and fit for the table. Unless this be attended to, it is not to be compared with ordinary mutton; but on two or three occasions, we had it all right, and then it was excellent. I do not know that I ever relished it more than at Peter M'Hardie's, where it was presented *cold*, and slightly salted, after it had been long and slowly *boiled*.

On the day preceding her Majesty's arrival, all was preparation and bustle at Castleton. Invercauld's men were actively engaged in furbishing their beautiful tartans, as there was to be a general turn-out of that clan upon the occasion. Saturday, the 31st, proved very propitious as to weather, and from all quarters there were arrivals long before there was the least chance of the great event taking place. About the middle of the day, a flag was displayed on the castle, and similar demonstrations of loyalty were observable in all directions. The village was swarming not only with denizens of Deeside, but with tourists from all quarters, and the best spirit prevailed among them all. From

two till six o'clock, the hour of the Queen's arrival, the rallying-point was the Invercauld Arms. About the former hour, the Duchess of Kent and suite arrived from Abergeldy, and partook of luncheon at the above hotel. Her appearance is grave and dignified, and her stature rather above the middle size. Contrary to expectation, she did not await the arrival of her royal daughter, but returned to Balmoral, after staying about an hour and a half. At four o'clock, Lady Agnes Duff drove up in a handsome pony chaise, having several young people as her companions. This lady is nearly related to the Queen, and has a considerable resemblance to the royal family. She is very good-looking, but remarkably *embonpoint* for so young a woman, so that a little *mountain training*, along with her distinguished relative, might be a salutary prescription. Ben-abourd and Ben-aven are directly in front of Corriemulzie Cottage, and there cannot be better training ground.

As all were on the *qui vive*, every carriage arrival created fresh excitement. The Celts were repeatedly mustered and disbanded, before certain intimation was brought that the moment of gratification was at hand. The royal party were conveyed in about half-a-dozen carriages, each drawn by four horses. The first was a sort of *pilot*, that the way might be cleared; and the second contained the Queen, Prince Albert, the Prince of Wales, and his eldest brother, Prince Alfred. They drove up close to the porch of the hotel, and, as the carriage was open, every one was gratified to the utmost. There was no crowding, as all seemed quite satisfied with the places they had selected. Mine was in the porch, just behind Lady Agnes Duff, who was immediately recognised in the frankest man-

ner by her Majesty, to whom she introduced her little daughter held in her arms. Nothing could be more calm, lady-like, and unpretending, than the Queen's appearance and manners, insomuch that one could hardly realise the fact, that the greatest and most influential personage alive was within a few feet of us. She wore a plain black dress, and looked particularly interesting and intelligent; the vivacity and youthful glow which characterised her when first she wore the diadem, gradually and gracefully yielding to the matronly look and air which become the wife and mother. She smiled, and seemed pleased with her reception, which was respectful and kindly, but by no means vociferous. Prince Albert's appearance is bluff and manly, far more that of an Englishman than is common with foreigners. The young princes conducted themselves quietly and modestly, so as to lead one to infer that they are under proper parental discipline. Their looks are ordinary enough, and, were it not for their lofty lineage, would pass wholly without observation. I was so much engrossed with the contents of the first carriage, that I took but a very cursory glance of the other members of the royal family. After remaining about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, the whole drove off for Balmoral, amidst a hearty cheer from all ranks of spectators.

I may here narrate an anecdote, which will amuse those who are not aware of the homely habits of these distinguished individuals when among the mountains of the North. The superintendent of the county police, upon a former occasion, had given suitable directions to his men to see the road quite clear of all obstructions between Castleton and Glenshee; but, lest there should be any vagrants

who had eluded detection, he rode off by himself to meet the royal party just before their expected arrival. About half-way, the road is very steep and bad, and here the royal visitors had preferred walking, and had even got the start of the carriages. They were attired in a very simple, rustic manner, and were all engaged in playing at some game by the wayside, when they attracted the notice of Captain A. His first impression was, that, in defiance of his precautions, they were a strolling party, bent upon asking charity, who had escaped the observation of the police, and he hastened his pace that he might have them removed. On a nearer approach, he recognised the real character of the *vagrants*; but, though he relates the anecdote, I have not heard that he ever mentioned to *them* the nature of his mistake, though there is little doubt that his doing so would only have added to their amusement.

On the evening of the 31st, I went to the very comfortable inn at Inver, in order to be near Crathie Church, which the Queen was expected to attend next day. I walked by the private drive through the woods, from which there is the finest possible view of Invercauld House. In going, you pass the forester's lodge behind the village of Castleton, and right under the "Lion's Face," as a shaggy projecting rock is called. No stranger should omit taking this walk. At Inver, I met a gentleman whom I conjectured, from his shrewdness and intelligence, to be in connection with the Aberdeen newspaper press. We spent a very comfortable evening together; but, in common with many others, were sadly disappointed next day as to seeing her Majesty in church. She had been fatigued by the long journey of the previous day—about

150 miles—and, I believe for the first time, absented herself, though we were gratified by seeing the Duchess of Kent there, and many other distinguished individuals.

In attending divine service at Crathie, her Majesty gives a most important lesson to very many of her Episcopalian subjects, especially to those addicted to Puseyism. It has been stated in the newspapers, and, in so far as I know, without contradiction, that the Bishop of London presumed to remonstrate with her Majesty on this subject, and that he was answered in a way which will probably check a repetition of his zeal. We have no reason to doubt of her Majesty's attending divine service from the best of all motives—that of worshipping her Maker. But, in subordination to this, she is no doubt well aware of the propriety of supporting all our valuable and venerable institutions; and, as the Church of Scotland is just as much the Established Church *there*, as the Episcopalian Church is in *England*, nothing but ignorance or bigotry can account for his Lordship's interference.

The Parish Church of Crathie is a convenient and well-lighted modern building, but, in my opinion, its architecture is not in keeping with the romantic scenery around it. Something in the Gothic style would certainly have been preferable. It is directly opposite Lochnagar, of which there is a splendid view from the front. Balmoral Castle is on the other or southern side of the Dee, and not above a mile distant. In this parish, the Secession has been insignificant, considering the exertions made to promote it. The minister of Crathie is deservedly a favourite among all ranks of his parishioners, from the Queen to the beggar; so that, I am convinced, had the people not been un-

duly tampered with, not one would have deserted his ministry.

On the Sabbath evening, my travelling companion and I parted, he having arrived at the Manse of Crathie in the morning. It was his intention to proceed to Aberdeen by the Don, and mine to return southwards, next day, by Glenshee. My original plan was to have returned by Glen Tilt, having obtained a pass from the Duke of Athole, through the application of a highly valued friend, but it did not reach me till I had decided upon a different route. On my return to Castleton, the evening was still and peaceful. In passing Balmoral, it was not easy to fancy that *there* was the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland enjoying, with her family, the Sabbath repose, as quietly as any family in the land!—the only symptom of there being an illustrious personage in this Highland retreat, being a flag floating from the top of the Lochnagar Distillery in the immediate vicinity.

In going up the Dee from Crathie, one is struck with the extremely neat appearance of the foresters' lodges on the estate of Invercauld. They look like genteel cottages in the precincts of a town; and, were they not decorated with deers' horns above the doors, as is the custom, one would conceive their inmates were of a higher and more refined grade. On the side of the steep, rocky hills overhanging the Forest of Ballochbowie, there is a white speck much resembling snow. Upon asking what it was, I was told it was occasioned by lightning, during a violent thunder-storm, which threw off the heath and moss, thereby exposing the surface of the white granite. An exactly similar effect was produced on Criffel, two years ago, just above Loch Kindar. On re-entering Castleton, I

found it in that state of stillness and tranquillity so characteristic of the Scottish Sabbath, which has been so admirably described by our national poet, Graham, and which, I trust, will continue to signalise our country, till her example shall have had a salutary influence on every nation on the face of the earth. The following lines struck me as being particularly fine and appropriate :—

“ Oh Scotland! much I love thy tranquil dales:
But most on Sabbath eve, when low the sun
Slants through the upland copse, 'tis my delight,
Wandering and stopping oft, to hear the song
Of kindred praise arise from humble roofs.”

HINTS TO INNKEEPERS, HIGHLAND PRIDE, &c.

Before bidding adieu to Castleton, I shall quote a passage from Dr M'Culloch. It is quaint, and highly characteristic at once of the author and his subject :—

“ Castletown is a wild, straggling village, scattered amid rocks and rapid streams, and among a confusion of all kinds, that seems as if it had been produced by the subversion and wreck of a former landscape. Those who enter it in the night, for the first time, will wonder where they are, and what is to happen next. After a house, you meet a plain, or a hillock, or a rock, or a thundering river; and then there is a house again, or a mill, or a bridge, or a saw-pit. You follow some jack-o'-lantern of a light, and, when you think it is close at hand, you find yourself separated by a ravine. All around you are lights, you cannot cou-

jecture where, with the roaring of water, and the noises of saw-mills and fulling-mills; and when the village seems to be at an end three or four times, it begins again. I thought of Sancho and his mills more than once, and, when the day broke, was not much less surprised than I had been in the night."

This village, though greatly improved since the above was written, still retains symptoms of recent emergence from barbarism. Its cottages, as I have said, are generally neat and commodious; but there are still some observable of the olden school, much resembling Irish hovels. Altogether, it is what may be called a *queer* place. You may here find the aborigines, in their most primitive form, mingled for several months in the year with gownsmen from Oxford and Cambridge, who, with a *laudable thirst of literature*, have retired from the busy world, lest *their studies should be marred*. While here, a circumstance was narrated, the recital of which may perhaps amuse my readers as much as it amused myself. In a certain village, *not Castleton*, there is, or was, a notice to the following effect—"Knockin' up done here at 3d." Here is a riddle well worthy of the Sphinx herself. I have heard various guesses as to its intended meaning, but never the real one. Some surmised that it referred to ladies' dresses "got up," as I believe they call it, in proper style; others, that such a quantity of mountain-dew might there be had for the above sum, as would suffice to deprive a man of that which mainly distinguishes him from a beast. The real solution of the riddle, however, is, that, for the sum of 3d., lazy tourists or sportsmen, who are "better risers at night than in the morning," will have an opportunity of looking about them at an early hour, if they continue so disposed.

In the heart of the village are the remains of a

very ancient castle, built, it is supposed, in the eleventh century, called Kyndrochit, once a hunting seat of the Kings of Scotland. Little more than the foundations of the walls are now to be seen above ground; but there are sundry vaults and secret passages, beneath the surface, which savour strongly of rugged times, when safety was more an object than comfort, even in royal residences. There is still extant a deed, in the original Latin, and lately published by the Spalding Club, signed by Robert II., some five centuries ago, dated from this castle, and securing an annuity to Barbour, the Scottish Poet, author of "The Bruce," &c. *Kindroghit*, by interpretation, means *Bridge-end*. It was the name of the parish long after its junction with Crathie. There are several places in this vicinity whose Gaelic names indicate connection with a royal residence, so that Queen Victoria, the descendant of a hundred kings, is only treading in the steps of some of her less civilised ancestors, when she rambles among the mountains of "Highland Dee."

The nearest road from Castleton to Lochnagar, is by the east side of the Cluny. After going up that stream nearly as far as Loch Callater, you turn to the left, and find a tolerably direct and easy ascent, the whole distance to the top being nine or ten miles. A party of ladies and gentlemen, during our visit, went there and returned, after having, on the previous day, walked from the Spittal of Glenshee, sixteen miles. We saw them arrive cold and wet, but apparently not much fatigued. Had they been so, they might have availed themselves of their carriages, which they deserted for the purpose of exercising their pedestrian powers.

On the morning of the 2d September, I reluc-

tantly left this interesting village; I say *reluctantly*, as on the 5th the Queen and all her retinue were to attend the games here, which, upon that account, are always particularly interesting. My time was up, however; so, after partaking of a hearty breakfast at the Manse, the minister kindly gave me a cast in his gig towards the Spittal, on my return to the south. We parted where the road becomes steep, I should be sorry, indeed, to think not to meet again. This pass through the Grampians is very wild and romantic. The mountains are steep and rocky, and the road in winter must be often impassable, especially at and near that part of it which is known by the appellation of the "Devil's elbow." Just above this, close to the road, is a delightful spring, called Cairnwell, which gives its name to the pass. The counties of Aberdeen and Perth meet at the summit, where the Shee has its origin. It was once my intention to have proceeded to Ballater from this quarter, keeping Loch Callater on my left, and descending to Lochs Dhu and Muick. From this, however, I was dissuaded, though I am convinced, in clear weather, it would be quite practicable, and be a most fascinating excursion to the mountain tourist. I would leave the road about four miles above the Spittal Inn, climb a very high mountain, one extremity of which is called (as near as I could catch the abominable jargon) Glass-meal, and the other Craig-Leggich. After reaching Loch Dhu, I would have gone to the top of Lochnagar, thence by the Hut to Ballater. This would be a delightful ramble for an active young fellow, if the weather were really fine. In mist or bad weather, it would be rash and dangerous. I do not think the whole distance would exceed thirty miles.

The Inn at Spittal of Glenshee is beautifully situated near the junction of several small streams issuing from fine Highland glens. A few miles back, a gentleman came up with me, mounted on a beautiful bay pony, which, a day or two before, had carried him from Avie More to Castleton—a path, one would imagine, all but impassable on horseback. We had met repeatedly at Castleton, and now claimed acquaintance. Besides his pony, he had another *companion*, not so much to my fancy—a *large adder*, which he had killed, or rather disabled, at the foot of Ben Macdhui! He was carrying it home with him, in a strong paper bag, for the purpose of preservation. When we arrived at the inn, having several hours of good daylight, we agreed to have some fishing in the Shee. Between us we caught several dozens, but the trout were small, and, being miserably cooked, were indifferent food. The fact is, river fishing in the Highlands, excepting for sea trout, is generally bad, not to be compared with some of our low country rivers. The water is too clear, and the current too rapid, for large, fat, and good trout.

At the Spittal, we, in the traveller's room, did not meet with that attention which we expected, and met with elsewhere. As this inn is generally well spoken of, we ascribed the neglect to the Queen and suite having had luncheon there two days before, and to several fashionable arrivals while we were there. By all means, let "honour be paid to whom honour is due." But I maintain, that every traveller who is able and willing to pay for his accommodation, and conducts himself with propriety, has a right to look for *common civility* at a house of public entertainment; and this was not the case with us upon this occasion. All inn-

keepers would do well to imitate the "good old country gentleman," who,

"While he feasted all the great, yet ne'er forgot the small."

I shall never forget my first visit to the English lakes, thirty-five years ago, in company with another young pedestrian. We had spent ten days among the interesting scenes there, and were returning to Scotland by Ullswater. The day was throughout one of the wettest I ever saw. We had travelled from Lowood in a perfect deluge, and, upon our arrival at Pooley Bridge, there was not a dry stitch upon either of us. So completely drenched were we, that, in the ardour and folly of youth, we actually leapt into the lake, and swam about with our clothes on. We found there an admirable inn; but, as there were several fine carriages about, we almost despaired of admission on any terms. When the jolly landlord, however, heard of our plight, he brought us two complete suits of his own clothes, one of which would have held us both, and told us we should find dinner ready, piping hot, as soon as we came down stairs. When we begged him not to mind us, but to attend to the great folk, "No," said he, "you do not know William Russell of Pooley. These big 'uns have plenty of their own people to look after them; *my* business is with *you*." Such conduct is an honour to human nature, and should serve as a pattern to all landlords. I shall be sorry if, in one form or another, it is not heard of at the Spittal of Glen-shee.

In the course of the evening, we had some amusing specimens of Highland pride; and I cannot refrain from alluding to those ludicrous displays of it which occur at gatherings, and such great occasions.

It is not so prominent in the Highlands, as when the clans are mustered to *play at soldiering* during Royal visits to Edinburgh. There they seem to think that they are almost superhuman, and much of this is owing to their being pampered and spoiled by over much attention. It is by no means confined to the lower orders; for it has always seemed to me that their superiors, who drill and command them, are even more absurdly mighty and consequential, especially if they have an eagle's feather in their bonnet, and a profusion of red hair all around their mouths. In these circumstances, their self-importance, or, as it may be termed, *turkey-cockism*, knows no bounds. I remember, during the Queen's first visit to Scotland, going out in a steamer to the Roads to see the vessel in which she had sailed. It was full of people. Among them was a Highland gentleman in full costume, plaided, kilted, plumed, Cairngorumed, &c. He was in company with some ladies, to whom he paid marked attention. It so happened that a friend of mine inadvertently sat down upon a camp-stool which the Celt had intended for one of his fair friends. The moment the error was discovered, the seat was politely relinquished; but the bristling up of her male attendant to the unconscious offender caused a general titter. The look was one of extreme indignation, which was returned by another of ineffable defiance and contempt. Luckily for the lady's champion, he did not follow up his *look* with a *blow*, which many of us were expecting; for, if he had, he would in all probability soon have found himself awkwardly situated, his opponent being as hardy and active as any Celt among them all, and particularly conversant with the use of his hands, which he was by no means averse to prove on all

suitable occasions. This description of pride to which I have been alluding, was never more happily ridiculed than in the following lines of the talented and much-lamented Sir Alexander Boswell:—

“ First, the Grants o’ Rothiemurchus,
Every man his sword and durk has,
Every man as proud’s a Turk is—
Fee-faa-fum.
Niest, the Grants o’ Tullochgorum,
Wi’ their pipers gaun before ’em ;
Proud the mithers are that bore ’em—
Fee-faa-fum.”

HINTS TO PEDESTRIANS—CONCLUSION.

On the 3d September I left Spittal of Glenshee, alone, early, and fasting, but *without any reluctance*. It was a wet, cold morning ; but the country being quite new to me, I did not much mind the state of the weather. Though this glen is by no means so high as the Crathie and Braemar district, yet the crops were far behind—in many fields as green as leeks. This must be owing to the soil being deeper and wetter than that in Glen Dee. There is a neat Free Church and Manse at Cray, about four miles below the inn—one of the prettiest spots in the glen, and the minister is one of the best of his class, and esteemed accordingly. Though an old and much-valued friend, I could not think of disturbing his slumbers, especially as I had to proceed to Coupar-Angus in time to reach Edinburgh that night. In the immediate vicinity stands a remarkably well-kept, though small mansion-house, belonging to a

military gentleman, who takes a warm interest in the adjoining church. A splendid flag was still flying here, in honour of her Majesty's recent visit. At a place called Persie, there was to be held that day a great cattle fair; and here there is a remarkably small place of worship, belonging to the Establishment; this being a detached portion of the parish of Bendochy. The bell and belfry are proportionally small, the former positively not larger than one belonging to a common bedroom. Great numbers of farmers and drovers, &c., were flocking to the fair from all directions.

About ten, I reached the neat little inn at Bridge of Cally, fourteen miles from the Spittal. On entering, I was much disappointed to find all in confusion. Mine hostess apologised, by saying, that her arrangements had been much disturbed by having to supply some scores of farmers and drovers with breakfast a short time before my arrival—sufficient, certainly, to account for all that was amiss; and, as they had left abundance of good things for me, I had no reason to complain. This is an interesting spot; and here may be reckoned the boundary of the Highlands in this district of Perthshire. The rivers Airdle and Shee meet a little way below the inn, and form the Ericht. At the bridge, the bed of the river is rocky, with amazingly deep black pools, which gives the scene a romantic appearance. Over the bridge was a very tasteful triumphal arch, richly festooned with heather, with the Gaelic word *Faillte* in large characters in the centre. I asked a schoolmaster-looking man the meaning of the word, pronouncing it according to my ability. He laughed at my abortive attempt, substituting a guttural ejaculation, no more like the spelling than any other sound in

existence. The term, it seems, implies *Welcome* or *Hail!*

It is really high time the Gaelic were altogether suppressed, and fortunately this happy era seems not far distant. In Braemar and Glenshee, it is miserably adulterated with English and Lowland Scotch, as is the case in all districts where there is much intercourse with the low country. But this is not the worst of it. Wherever Gaelic is the prevailing tongue, there must necessarily exist much ignorance and bigotry, as the population generally, not being able to read English, are at the mercy of those who are full of prejudices, and very much require to be themselves taught the first principles of civilisation. How can it be expected that any accessions to literature or science can emanate from districts where this undefined and fluctuating jargon prevails? In this point of view, such parts of Scotland are a dead loss to it, excepting in cases where individuals have migrated to more enlightened regions; and, as to religion, it is quite sufficient to say "the Men" will look after that. Similar remarks are applicable to Ireland and Wales.

Immediately after crossing the Bridge of Cally, the country acquires quite a Lowland aspect. Well-enclosed fields and heavy crops prove the food of man is more an object with the farmer than the food of cattle. A highly ornamental lodge by the roadside terminates a long approach to Glen Erich Cottage, the beautiful seat of General Sir William Chalmers, one of the heroes of Waterloo, who has exchanged the sword for the ploughshare, as he seems now to be much interested in the agricultural improvement of this district. Near this I observed a species of rake, different from any I have seen, for gathering the droppings of the harvest-

field. It seemed about five or six feet long, with a wheel at each extremity about a foot in diameter, with teeth of six inches, fixed in what may be termed the axle-tree. One man draws this *across* the ridges, that the furrows may be reached. It appeared a very simple and effective mode of gleaning. A similar machine is used in the Lothians, drawn by a horse. The next place deserving of particular notice is Craighall, certainly the most striking spot of the kind I ever saw. It stands on a very lofty perpendicular bank of the Erich. There is a wicket-gate, and a good footpath down to the river, which for miles is of the most romantic description, richly wooded, and the banks very high and precipitous. The mansion-house overlooks the river on the opposite side. Right under the windows there is a pool of prodigious depth, overhung at a great height by a semicircular balcony. The view very much resembles that at Hawthornden, but is much grander, as the river is far larger and the banks more imposing. I descended to the water's edge, and walked upwards about 200 yards, where my progress was obstructed by a long, deep pool, on which was a boat, apparently for scenic effect, as Lord Kinnoul has effectually prevented salmon from ascending so far—a service for which anglers in Glenshee may well have a *rod* in pickle for his Lordship. Whoever has it in his power should not pass this very singular and beautiful scene unexplored.

Not far from Craighall is Blairgowrie, the situation of which is remarkably fine; but the mills, with which it abounds in all directions, remind you that you have emerged from the Highlands, and prove that the picturesque is not so much an object with the inhabitants as the rise and fall of cot-

ton. Many neatly kept places in the vicinity, however, evince the proprietors to have an eye to the *dulce* as well as the *utile*. From Blairgowrie to Coupar-Angus the distance is five miles. There are plenty of coaches here for the railway; but being quite fresh, and as there were none to start for an hour or two, I proceeded on foot, completing my twenty-five miles easily by three o'clock. Just before reaching Coupar, the Isla is crossed, the largest feeder of the Tay, excepting perhaps the Tummel. The Ericht is a branch of the Isla. Soon after arriving in Coupar, a train came up from Aberdeen, which I entered, and, to our mutual surprise, my friend and I met in the same carriage, and were carried to Edinburgh, through Perth and Fife Shires—the same line on which we had travelled northwards a fortnight before.

After spending a day in Edinburgh and its vicinity, we returned to the south, parting at Abington, where we had started together. I passed two days much to my satisfaction in Moffat, which is progressing faster as a fashionable summer resort than any place of the kind in Scotland. Around it are many neat lodging-houses springing up like mushrooms; and hundreds of gay people frequent the Well every morning, many of them with handsome equipages, but the far greater number on foot. It is pleasant to think that, as the railway has in a great measure *made* Moffat, so Moffat, on the good old principle of *giff-gaff*, is the best spoke, perhaps, in the wheel of the Caledonian betwixt Carlisle and Glasgow.

I have now finished my mountain rambles, probably for ever, in so far at least as the public is concerned. I make no doubt many will be disposed to ridicule me for egotism and magnifying my ex-

plots; but such captious, carping critics do not annoy me, while my unpretending lucubrations have been so favourably noticed in many of our most popular and respected periodicals. Even though this had not been the case, I have had nearly as much enjoyment in recording my wanderings as I had when actually engaged with them. As the comic song says, "All have their hobbies." Mine has been *hill-climbing*, and it would be well if all were of as innocent a description. This taste has been cultivated by many men distinguished for literature and science. Why, then, should I be ashamed to avow it? We have even seen that the highest Lady in the land has overtopped some of our noblest mountains, and she will yet, I trust, stand on the loftiest pinnacle of her European dominions. Many of her sex are fired with similar ambition. Among others, I may mention the authoress of "Self Controul" and "Discipline"—a lady not less distinguished for high literary talents than for the still nobler graces of morality and religion. In writing to her friend, the celebrated Miss Joanna Baillie (see "Memoirs"), she says—"I am not sure that the benefit is lasting; but I know that the climbing of hills has an admirable effect on the spirits at the time. Perhaps my feeling is partly prejudice; but it is not quite so—therefore, though you should not join in it, do not hold it in utter derision. I have *jumped* with joy when, from the top of one of our own mountains, I have unexpectedly seen, as it were just at my feet, some well-known object which I had thought far beyond my sight."

Being the avowed "Pedestrian Tourist's Friend," I shall close my communications with a few homely but useful hints:—If a man's constitution be tole-

rably sound, he should not encumber himself with much clothing. I have never been half so much annoyed by rain and cold, as by heat. Continued exercise promotes and preserves warmth, and if you get yourself all right at the end of your day's work, as will generally be the case, the contrast will amply repay you for a pretty effectual drenching: "He never knew pleasure that never knew pain." An umbrella I never could think of, as it always reminded me of Bow-bells and Cockneyism. Besides, there are now such admirable waxcloth contrivances, light and waterproof, as to supersede the use of an umbrella, which, when rain is accompanied with high wind, is a miserable encumbrance, and is often blown into ribbons. I never even carried a greatcoat till this season, when I expected to have been obliged to pass several nights in the open air. In my Highland trips, I never wear either flannel or cotton under garments; these, however, cannot be safely dispensed with by those who are accustomed to use them. A couple of spare shirts, as many pairs of socks, and a pair of shoes, are the principal things required; and if these, along with a book or two, maps, &c., be carried about with you from morning till night in hot weather, you will find them quite enough of luggage. To accommodate them and yourself, the best thing I know is a pretty large fishing basket, covered with waxcloth, having the security of a padlock. This has a light and gentleman-like air with it; and if you carry a staff-rod, with the reel upon it, there is no saying but you may pass for a gentleman altogether, whose carriage and horses await him at the next stage.

As to the description of shoes that should be worn, I have already been pretty explicit; I may

add, however, that they are generally got too heavy. We all know, that, in horse-racing, a few pounds tell strongly against any horse; as was recently proved in the case of the, till then, unbeaten Flying Dutchman. Now, if in a three mile race, the horse is thus encumbered by a few pounds, it may readily be conceived that a *man* carrying an unnecessary half-pound on each foot, during a whole day, will not be much the stronger for it. Besides, a very thick shoe, with large nails, wants that elasticity which is required for comfortable walking, while it beats and bruises the foot. A shoe an inch thick on the heel, and half an inch on the sole, is the outside thickness that should be worn, with *sparables* instead of *tackets*, where they are most likely first to fail. For the information of my English readers (of whom I am glad to say I have many), I may explain that the former of these terms implies small nails without heads; and the latter, short nails with very broad heads, which are apt to slip among the rocks, and annoy you in this way, as well as by their superfluous weight.

As the preservation of the feet is a primary consideration, I must not here omit giving some instructions on this subject, with which I was lately favoured by a friend. To my "*Si quid novisti*" challenge formerly promulgated, he takes up the gauntlet, boldly replying "*Quid novi*," "I do know a more excellent way;" and I consider his communication well worthy of attention. "Before starting," says he, "procure one or two large bladders, dried of course; cut them into soles, so as to cover the whole of the foot, and well round the edges, the farther up the better. Put one on each foot next the skin, stitching them slightly to the stocking. When first put on, you will feel them

stiff and cold, but in a short time the heat brings out the latent oil, and prevents all friction. If your journey is to be long, you should have several pairs. In this way, all scalding, beating, and blistering, are avoided. This I know by experience; and I knew a man, seventy years of age, who thought nothing of walking fifty miles a-day, when thus prepared for the task."

As to the pace to be observed, let it not be quick, if you are not walking for a wager. The exertion in quick walking produces excoriation (unless, to be sure, my friend's *panacea* be used), and by the end of the day you will lament your mistake. Remember the fable of the Hare and Tortoise. If walking close for several weeks, you will find thirty or even twenty-five miles a-day fair enough work, and the pace should not exceed three-and-a-half miles in the hour; or three, stoppages included. I have heard of wonderful performances in the way of quick walking; but, for my part, I never could manage above six miles in the hour, and if I had tried it longer I should have been much distressed. I recollect reading of a man in Glasgow who walked fourteen miles in two hours. I did not believe it. That he went over the ground in that time, I doubt not; but that he *walked* over it, I cannot believe, as I do not think the human body is so framed as to admit of it. I regard it as *physically impossible*, unless the two feet are off the ground at the same time, which implies *running*. I need scarcely add that frequent ablution will tend greatly to the comfort of the pedestrian in various ways, and among the rivers and lakes of the Highlands, he can never be at a loss for indulgence in this luxury.

I have now said all that I deem necessary on

this subject, and trust my remarks will not be thrown away, as they have been penned with a sincere desire to extend that rational happiness to others, which, through a kind Providence, I have so long enjoyed myself. My remarks will not be wasted, if they animate the young and healthful duly to improve these blessings, while, at the same time, they cultivate their minds by acquiring an experimental knowledge of men and things. Let them not keep aloof from any stranger who may casually be thrown in their way, if they have reason to believe him to be an honest and well-meaning man. Something may be learned almost from any one, if you can hit upon that subject to which his attention has been particularly directed. Frequently I have asked my entertainer to join me in my evening meal, and I never failed in this way to obtain such local intelligence as amply to repay me for this trivial mark of civility. As my concluding advice, I would counsel you not to be readily disconcerted, nor yield to despondency in bad weather, as a few days of that will only cause you to enjoy good weather the more—

“Think not clouds will always lour;
Hope not sunshine every hour.”

I would have closed this series of rambles with a graphic account of the ascent of Snowdon by a young friend who was accidentally my companion, two years ago, at Ben Wyvis, had he not therein stated, that there is now a confectioner's shop close to the summit of the Welsh champion! A cook-shop on the top of Snowdon, where you may be supplied with all sorts of pasties and foreign liqueurs, and sleep on a *feather*, instead of a *hea-*

ther, bed! This is *going a-head* with a vengeance. I trust the Prince of Wales, young though he be, will assert the dignity of this splendid mountain, the main ornament of his principality, and scatter the above abomination to the four winds of heaven. This absurdity is only surpassed by the celebrated Righi in Switzerland, to which you may be wafted in a coach-and-four, meet with hundreds of people from all nations for several months in the year, and be regaled with all the delicacies of Italy and France, while shoals of pampered and perfumed lackeys are fluttering in all directions! This is certainly the aeme, the *ne plus ultra* of European Cockneyism. The bare idea of the thing is revolting to the feelings of a genuine mountaineer. Away with such monstrosities from our British shores! They may be suited for the aged, the infirm, and the softer portion of the softer sex, but ought, upon no account, to be countenanced by the healthy and robust. Let our young men cultivate hardihood and activity—those manly virtues which now-a-days are too apt to be overlooked—and shun those effeminate, enervating indulgences, which have always been the harbingers of national degeneracy and ruin. Rather than satisfy my taste with such delicacies, infinitely would I prefer sitting all alone on the summit of Cairntoul or Brae-riach, my whole repast being a crust of bread soaked in the infant Dee. This is the true way of enjoying such scenery. The buoyancy of spirits of a hardy pedestrian, whose mind is qualified for duly appreciating the sublime grandeur of our Scotch Highlands and Islands, can hardly be adequately described; and, under Providence, such a man will be as active at threescore as he would have been at

forty, had he lived in luxury and ease. How often have these spirited and beautiful lines recurred to me while roaming alone among the Grampians :—

“Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion-heart, and eagle-eye;
Thy steps I'll follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that sweeps along the sky.”

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have had the pleasure of receiving the following very satisfactory information from my friend, the minister of Braemar. It will be seen from it that I had been in error as to the Queen's lease of Balmoral. The public will rejoice with me in learning that there is every prospect of Scotland being honoured with her Majesty's presence for a much longer period than I had at first been led to imagine, even supposing she were not ultimately to be the purchaser of Balmoral :—

“You ask me to inform you if I detected any inaccuracies in your letters. Instead of that, I have been particularly struck with the extraordinary correctness of your statements, and the amount of information connected with the district, considering the shortness of your sojourn in it. I have seen many most inaccurate and absurd things reported of Deeside and its *lions* during the last three years; but there is nothing of this kind in your ‘Rambles.’ The only inaccuracy I observe in the whole series, is your remarking that the lease of Balmoral is nearly expired. This is not the case. The late tenant, Sir Robert Gordon, had a lease of the place secured not only during his own life, but for twenty-eight years afterwards, which his brother, the Earl of Aberdeen, inherited on Sir Robert's death in 1847. On this *sub-*

lease, as I have always understood, the Queen entered three years ago, so that she has the secure possession of Balmoral, as tenant, for about a quarter of a century to come. It is generally surmised that she is anxious to become proprietrix of the estate; and it is hoped the proprietors will be disposed to meet her Majesty's views in the matter."

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