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# VOYAGE TO THE HEBRIDES,

OR

WESTERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND;

WITH

## OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE HIGHLANDERS.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS & CO.

1822.

[*Price 3s. 6d. sewed, or 4s. in boards.*]

LONDON :

SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S-COURT.

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# JOURNEY TO THE HEBRIDES.

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## CHAPTER I.

*Castle of Linlithgow.—Falkirk: celebrated for two famous Battles.—Bannockburn.—Stirling Castle.—Callender.—Roman Camp.—Trosachs.—Comparison between the Mountains of Scotland and Switzerland.—Ben Lomond.—Dreadful Massacre of the Colquhouns at Glen-Fruin.—Inverary.—Castle and fine Estate of the Duke of Argyle.—Church of Glen-Orchy, and ancient Tombs.—Oban.*

I HAD long contemplated a visit to the Isle of Staffa, the far-famed Cave of Fingal, and the other islands; which, being but little known, would furnish a rich store of curious observation. The peculiar aspect of nature in these northern regions, and the original and engaging manners of their inhabitants, combined to promise me a journey replete with the most interesting subject-matter. As soon as my arrangements would allow, I set out alone, with no settled plan; but in order to lose no time, and profit by the remaining fine weather, I made towards the port of Oban, where I was to embark.

On the 6th of August I left Edinburgh for Stirling. The route lies through Linlithgow, a small, ancient, and indifferently built town. The ruins of the ancient castle of Linlithgow, situate a short distance from the town, here appear in a picturesque point of view; they command the summit of a little hill covered with groups of fine trees, whilst a large pool of clear and limpid water bathes the foot of the hill, reflecting in its waters all the traits of this captivating picture. An ancient gothic church is built at the side of the castle, formerly the residence of the kings of Scotland: a crowd of interesting recollections rush upon the mind on beholding these ruins. It was here that Mary Stuart was born; it was here, at a more remote period, her ancestor, James IV. on going to the

church to perform his devotions before joining his army, saw an old man clothed in a blue robe, who, approaching him, strongly exhorted him to renounce his projects, and threatened him with evil and calamity if he persisted in his intention of fighting against the English. This man suddenly disappeared, leaving the king in the firm persuasion that he had witnessed a supernatural apparition, and that God himself had sent St. Andrew or St. John to dissuade him from a battle which might become so fatal to Scotland. James, notwithstanding these warnings, persisted in his intention of penetrating into England at the head of his armies; but having encountered the English at Flodden Field, on the 4th of September, 1513, he lost his life on that fatal day, in which perished the greatest part of the Scottish nobility.

Six miles further I passed through Falkirk, another small ancient town, which now presents an animated scene of commercial industry: there was here at this time a great cattle fair, to which the people flock from all parts of Scotland. This town has been the scene of two battles recorded in history. The first took place on the 22d of July, 1296. Edward I. King of England, commanded the English army; he came with the intention of conquering Scotland, after this country had, by the talent and bravery of William Wallace, the Scottish hero, shaken off the yoke of England. The Scottish nobles, having at their head Cumming of Badenoch, were entrenched before Falkirk, and, although very inferior in numbers to the English, they depended on their courage in defending that independence which they had just obtained, and awaited the attack. Unfortunately for them, Wallace, who alone would have been able to lead them on to victory, fatigued with the jealousy of more powerful nobles, resigned the command of the army, and had only under his orders a small body of troops devoted to their ancient chief. Valour could not resist numbers, and the English obtained a decisive victory. The Scots, driven from the field of battle, were pursued with great slaughter. "Never," says Hume, "did the Scots suffer so severe a loss; never, in any battle, was their country so near its ruin." Wallace, by his military talents, and his presence of mind, succeeded in saving his small body of men, and retired in good order behind the river Carron. Thus a feeble remnant was preserved, around which new defenders of the liberties of Scotland were afterwards destined to unite.

The second battle was that of Falkirk, which proved a more glorious result for the Scottish armies. On the 17th of January, 1746, this battle was gained by the Pretender over the English



army, commanded by General Hawley ; the action took place on a waste plain, a mile from the town. Prince Charles Edward, after the victory of Prestonpans, wishing to profit by the surprise which his first success had caused among his enemies, and by the ardour which he had inspired among his soldiers, entered England, seized upon Carlisle, and, meeting with no resistance, advanced as far as Manchester. A profound consternation reigned in England, the partisans of the King were afraid that the Pretender would enter London before the army, collected in great haste in the southern provinces, would be ready to act. However, Prince Charles was not without doubts ; the succour promised by France did not arrive ; the expectations he had formed of reinforcements from the English jacobins proved fallacious, the partisans of the Stuarts in England were very few, and these dared not declare themselves. His own troops, deceived in their prospects, began to murmur. The English army, on the contrary, was reinforced daily, and the Duke of Cumberland had returned with the troops which he had commanded in Flanders. In these alarming circumstances, the Prince, after holding a council of war, decided instantly to regain Scotland as promptly as possible, and to retreat without risking the hazard of an engagement in England. He displayed in this retreat still more ability than in his former victory. Pursued by a numerous army, harassed on his flanks by bodies of cavalry, he preserved the strictest discipline in his small troop, and retreated in good order through the enemy's territories as far as the frontiers of Scotland. He was there joined by fresh supplies of Scottish troops, which Lord Lewis Gordon had raised in the mountains. The Duke of Cumberland, after taking Carlisle, returned to London, leaving the command of the English army to general Hawley. The young Prince Charles having collected all his forces, seized upon the tower of Stirling, and besieged the castle where the English garrison had retired. General Hawley, with the intention of assisting so important a place, advanced from Edinburgh towards Stirling : Prince Charles also seemed disposed to march to encounter the English. He did not wait to be attacked, but marched onward, and surprised the English before they had time to take up their position. The attack began on the part of the Scots by a sharp fire, which threw the English line into disorder ; but the victory was not complete until the Highlanders, throwing away their guns, took sword in hand, and with loud shouts rushed into the midst of the enemy, who immediately gave way. The loss of the royal army was very considerable : their whole artillery, colours, and extensive ammunition,

were left on the field of battle. Night having arrived, Hawley set fire to his camp, retreated to Linlithgow, and from thence to Edinburgh, having to deplore the loss of several brave officers. In this battle the Highlanders proved themselves, as formerly, terrible in the attack, and intrepid during the action; and on this occasion their triumph was not sullied by any excess.

After passing through Falkirk, the road continues under an aqueduct bridge belonging to the canal which joins the gulph of the Forth with that of the Clyde. Whilst our coach proceeded under the arch of the bridge, a small sloop was sailing in the canal over our head. A thousand fine points of view present themselves over the whole of this route, through a cultivated and woody country. At some distance on the right are the numerous buildings of the Carron foundry, which have the appearance of a small town, and rise in the midst of a plain surrounded by woods of fir, and watered by the beautiful river Carron. This foundry is celebrated for its short cannons employed in the navy, which have taken the name of Carronades, from the place where they have been manufactured.

Some miles further, we arrived at the small hamlet of Bannockburn, celebrated in history for the memorable victory which Robert Bruce, with 30,000 brave Scots, gained in 1304, over Edward II., of England, who came with the ambition of conquering Scotland, at the head of an army of 100,000 men, composed of English, Flemish, and Gascons. This battle, in which the English army was completely destroyed, secured Scotland its independence, and Bruce, the sovereignty of the kingdom which he had just delivered. These places are classic ground for the Scots. The fields of Bannockburn, of Loncarty,\* and of Largs, are, to them, what the celebrated fields of Morgarten, Sempach, and Morat, are to the Swiss. As the Swiss have had their William Tell, and their Winkelreid, the Scots have had their Wallace and their Bruce; these heroic names—these places in which the mind retraces the famed deeds of the ancient defenders of their liberty, are still dear to them. Such glorious recollections keep alive the national spirit among them; the historians, poets, and novelists even,

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\* The battle of Loncarty, a small village near Perth, took place at the commencement of the eleventh century, between the Scots and the Danes. The latter had already obtained the victory, when the peasant, Hay, who worked in a neighbouring field, seizing the yoke of his oxen for his weapon, presented himself with his sons before the flying Scots, and having rallied them, he conducted them to victory. The King of Scotland, in recompence for his valour, created Hay Earl of Errol, which noble family exists still in our day.





have seized upon these scenes, and have animated their works by the transports of their patriotism.

Stirling (where I stopped a day), is situated on an eminence surmounted by a strong castle, built like that of Edinburgh, on the summit of a perpendicular rock of black basalt. From the exterior, the aspect of this town is picturesque, but it is old, and the interior is irregularly built; the streets are narrow, have no pavement, and the houses are very lofty. The town of Stirling presents nothing remarkable, with the exception of its ancient gothic cathedral. The castle is very large, and encloses within its walls a palace, formerly inhabited by the Scottish Kings. The architecture of this palace is by no means tasteful; the exterior is loaded with several grotesque and ridiculous statues. The fortress is kept in good order, and guarded by a company of veterans. It is one of the four castles which, by the treaty of Union, have been preserved. Its batteries are supplied with several pieces of heavy artillery.

The view from the summit of the rock, is as remarkable for its extent, as for the variety of objects which it embraces. On the east extends a fertile plain, well cultivated, and here and there covered with woods, country seats, and farm houses. The river Forth forms a serpentine, of innumerable windings, in this beautiful country. The picturesque ruins of the abbey of Cambus Kenneth rise in one of the peninsulas which surround the river. The plain is still prolonged to the west of Stirling, and from all sides, small hills, adorned with woods, agreeably diversify the scene. To the north, the view is intercepted by the chain of elevated Ochiel Hills, at the foot of which is a rock very similar to the Salisbury Craigs; but here thickets of small trees, of beautiful verdure, crowning its summit and adorning its base, give it a very picturesque aspect. In fine, to the north-west, the mountains of Ben Ledi and Ben Lomond, form the groundwork of this superb picture.

*August 7.*—At an early hour this morning I arrived at Callender, a village situated at the entrance of the Highlands, and about nine miles from Stirling, after having traversed a country of a very varied aspect, on the banks of the Teith.

Callender is built at the foot of Ben Ledi, a steep and barren mountain, about 3000 feet above the level of the sea. We here easily perceive by the aspect of the country, which becomes wilder, by the height of the mountains, and by the costume of the inhabitants, all clothed in the ancient Scottish costume, that we had passed the boundary which separates the High from the Lowlands.

Before leaving Callender, I went to see a spot which is

shown to strangers as a Roman camp, on the banks of the Teith. Although this kind of bank or dyke may have regularity sufficiently rare in the works of nature, I cannot help thinking, that the river alone has been at all the expence of this construction. At Callender I quitted the coach which brought me from Stirling, and I set out on foot conducted by a guide, dressed in a Highland *kilt*, and wrapped in a large plaid, which he used as a knapsack to carry my luggage. My intention was to visit Loch Kathrin, to pass from thence to Loch Lomond, and after ascending to the top of Ben Lomond, to take the great route which leads to Oban.

After crossing the Teith over a fine bridge, I followed a narrow road, between the small lake Venachar on one side, and the mountain of Ben Ledi on the other. Loch-Venachar is nearly six miles in length, by one and a half in breadth; its banks are marshy, and the lake not being surrounded with trees, has a monotonous and unpleasing appearance; a narrow isthmus of land separates it from that of Auchray, which, although still smaller, is much more picturesque. It is only two miles in diameter; its banks are entirely covered with shrubs of the most delightful verdure; and two little islands, adorned with small trees, rise in the bosom of its calm and pure waters. The hills called Trosachs, seem to close up the valley at the western extremity of the lake; and behind these small hills, in the midst of which spring up thickets of trees, we perceive, rising to a great height, the imposing mass of Benivenow, a steep and barren mountain, which terminates this brilliant perspective.

After having coasted along Loch Auchray, we arrived at the foot of the Trosachs, where it was difficult to foresee how we were to continue our route; since this chain of hills completely closes the valley comprised between Benivenow and Benneon. Formerly, travellers could only pass the Trosachs by scaling the rocks by means of long ladders; at present a carriage road leads over the hills and the woods as far as the banks of Loch Kathrin. We amused ourselves, in wandering through these solitary retreats, where trees of all kinds grouped together in a thousand forms, issue from the crevices of the banks; the rugged and sharp surfaces of the rocks are adorned with a multitude of plants of moss and fern; the weeping birch trees, here and there, raise their ivory trunks above the others, and gracefully droop their slender branches, clothed with leaves of fine green, which the least breath of wind puts in motion; whilst the beech, varnish, and sorb trees, form thick groves, which afford a retreat to a multitude of singing birds. Among this concert, we did not hear the sweet

voice of the songster of our woods; the nightingale, inhabiting mild countries, dreads the cold of the northern regions, and does not visit Scotland. The thrush replaces it; and this bird, which is not heard in spring, nor in summer, in the south of Europe, animates the forests of the north, by its melodious and varied warbling. Thus Linnæus has, with reason, called it *Turdus Musicus*.

If the unlooked-for spectacle of such fine vegetation, in a country where nature appears to have raised so many obstacles to the growth of trees, causes an agreeable surprise; how much more additional pleasure will the traveller feel, when, after having cleared the narrow defile of the Trosachs, he arrives on the banks of Loch Kathrin; which justly passes for being the most picturesque of all the lakes in Scotland. I shall not attempt here to describe this lake,—so pure, so tranquil, and so solitary,—the outlines of which, gracefully designed, are cut into long promontories, flying one behind the other, and dividing the lake into small basins of multiplied forms. No language can describe these small islands, nor that assemblage of trees and rocks, whose image is reflected in the mirror of the waters, and those perspectives are so varied that they appear changing in proportion as we advance; whilst the wild mountain of Benivenow constantly presents its barren sides, and its summit crowned with rocks, as an invariable ground-work to these enchanting panoramas.\*

I followed the northern bank of the lake for the space of three miles; beyond that, the prospect takes the appearance of an immense sheet of water in the midst of a narrow and barren valley. I returned by the same road. A party of English travellers had just arrived on the banks of the lake; their carriage was waiting their return from the Trosachs; some scaled the rocks; some sketched the remarkable points of view, while others again threw their lines into the lake to catch small salmon trout. In the midst of these mountains, lakes, and alpine torrents, I, for a moment, imagined myself in Switzerland. In travelling, we amuse ourselves in comparing the most attractive objects, with those which resemble them in our native country. Thus, Loch Kathrin appeared to me, the portrait in miniature of the Lake

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\* Sir Walter Scott, in his elegant Poem of *The Lady of the Lake*, has placed the scene of his romance on the banks of Loch Kathrin, and he has described in his verses the charm of this fine country, with such truth and originality of colouring, that in reading that work after having quitted Scotland, I experienced with renewed vigour the sensations I felt on beholding these beautiful scenes.

of Lucerne, with its gulphs, its bays, and its assemblage of rocks, woods, and lengthened promontories.

It may probably be supposed, that the great difference between the height of the mountains of Scotland and those of Switzerland would prevent all comparison as to the aspect of these two countries; however, it is not so. I have already said how much we may be deceived as to the height of mountains, above all, when they are bare, and cut into bold forms. It is also worthy of remark, that the highest mountain seen from its base, does not hold a place in a vertical line, proportionate to its real elevation; consequently, notwithstanding the difference of height, the mountains of Scotland, seen from the valleys open at their feet, produce as much effect as the highest in Switzerland. In fine, although the Scottish mountains are less elevated above the level of the sea, than the highest mountains of the Alps, yet as the latter rise above an elevated ground, whilst the former have their bases at the very level of the sea, there is in reality less difference in their height, to the eye of the observer, than might be imagined. Another source of illusion which induces a comparison between the views of the Highlands and those of the Alps of Switzerland, is the relative proportion of the objects composing the landscape, being pretty much the same in both countries. Thus, in the alps where the mountains are very lofty, the valleys are very wide, and the lakes very extensive. In Scotland the narrow vallies, and the small lakes, are proportionate to the height of the mountains; the enormous forests, seen in Switzerland, commanding at great elevations, the inaccessible summits of the rocks, are represented in Scotland by masses of small trees or shrubs, which produce an analogous effect in the landscape. Consequently, if our views in Switzerland present an *ensemble* more stupendous and striking, in grandeur and majesty, no where to be equalled, the views of Scotland are, perhaps, more picturesque, taking this word in its true sense; viz. that they offer subjects for a picture more agreeable to the painter, and more varied and graceful in their features. Scotland has not, like Switzerland, those mountains covered with eternal snow; those peaks of bold and light granite, which, by the beauty of their outline, and the contrast which they produce, with the brilliant verdure of the valleys, give to all the distant places so striking an effect; but it has in compensation, lakes abounding with islands of all forms and dimensions; it has the Atlantic Ocean, its isles, and interior gulphs, which give a peculiar beauty to the first ground-work of the landscape.

I reluctantly left the banks of the charming Loch-Kathrin,



and directing my steps towards the south, I passed the hills of Auchray, which form the continuation of the mountain of Benivenow; during all this route, which is nearly six miles, we travelled in the midst of a high and thick heath. Nothing can be more solitary and more deserted than these hills. The lofty pyramid of Benivenow rises alone above the thickets of dark heath which extend as far as the eye can reach. Having descended the length of a hollow road, dug by a torrent, I listened with pleasure to the conversation of my guide, a sensible man, who appeared to me better informed as to the state of the country, its policy, and the war, than persons generally to be met with among men of the same class. At last the open country presented itself, the heath disappeared, and we entered into the valley of Aberfoyle, a beautiful open tract of country, fertile, well cultivated and watered with limpid streams. The handsome village of Aberfoyle is surrounded with trees, fields and meadows, and I here found a very passable inn for so retired a place.

*8th August.* Leaving Aberfoyle at an early hour, I directed my steps towards the west, by ascending the valley into which the Forth runs, which is here only a shallow brook. I passed by the banks of the two charming lakes called Loch-Ards, in the waters of which the surrounding mountains are reflected as in a mirror. *Upper Loch-Ard* is one of the handsomest basins I ever saw, surrounded on all sides by green meadows, groves, and picturesque rocks; it is bounded at the extremity by the lofty mountain of Ben-Lomond, the bases of which it waters. The district of Monteith, in which I travelled from Callender, is, perhaps, the most romantic portion of Scotland; a multitude of small lakes of varied aspects occupy the bottom of the vallies, and the sides of the mountains are covered with flourishing vegetation. After passing the Loch-Ards, we entered into a wild glen, without verdure or trees, which terminates at the foot of Ben-Lomond. Here I found a small farm-house, similar to a *chalet* of the Alps; the peasants inhabiting it, hastened, in the most obliging manner, to offer me cheese and milk. After resting some minutes in the hut, I began to ascend Ben-Lomond, following up a steep hollow road, of difficult access, along a torrent. The slope of the hill is very rapid, and is entirely covered with a woody heath, forming a thick mass, through which we made our way. The ascent of this long mountain is thus rendered very fatiguing; but on arriving at the summit, the traveller is amply repaid for his trouble, by the beauty of the scenery which suddenly bursts forth on his view.

The position of Ben-Lomond is particularly favourable for the

extent of the prospect, being placed on the first line of the chain of the Grampians; it rises perpendicularly 3,000 feet above the plains of the Lowlands, and commands the surrounding mountains on the north and on the west. A circle of nearly one hundred and fifty miles in diameter is at once presented to the view of the spectator, who, placed on this point, embraces at a single glance nearly the half of Scotland; at this height, and in so immense an horizon, minute objects disappear, but the whole scene is as remarkable for its variety as for its grandeur. In the south and in the east, a vast plain, fertile, cultivated and studded with innumerable towns and villages, extends to a great distance, and terminates at the horizon by the blueish chain of the hills of Galloway. The eye follows the course of the Clyde in all its extent; the Forth, the Teith, and a thousand other less remarkable rivers water this fine country, in the midst of which are seen the basaltic masses, commanded by the Castles of Dumbarton, Stirling, and Edinburgh. The hills, which surround the latter city and the rock of its castle, are lost in the distance, and appear only as small prominences on an even surface. The light clouds of smoke which rise above Glasgow alone indicate the site of that great city. Greenock is nearer; we see the Clyde enlarging, opening and then mixing itself with the unlimited ocean, in the large bay which bears its name. In the midst of this fine gulph I again saw the Islands of Arran and Bute, which I had visited some months before; at a still greater distance appeared the conical rock of Ailsa as a point at the extremity of the liquid plain, and the long peninsula of Cantyre, between the gulph of Clyde and the Atlantic Ocean. If we turn towards the north and the west, we behold a very different prospect; long chains of wild, dark and dreary mountains are displayed in successive lines. I counted towards the north ten ranges of these mountains, and only seven towards the west; the nearest of them, which already darkened the brown colour of the heath which covered them, are separated by vallies equally as dark and uncultivated: further on, the rows lie closer, and are at length lost in a blueish vapour. A multitude of small lakes are scattered in the vallies, and even as far as the tops of the mountains.

Some mountains more elevated and barren still attract attention; these are the heights of Ben-Ledi, Benivenow, Ben-Lawers, and at the north, Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Great Britain, at an elevation of nearly 4000 feet above the level of the sea. Behind the western chains, we still see the Atlantic Ocean extending to a distance, from which issue the Isles of Mull, Isla, and that of Jura, all covered with moun-

tains. If we are desirous of resting our eyes, fatigued with wandering over such an immense field, we must look at our feet, and we shall see nearer, on one side, the verdant vallies of Monteith and their charming lakes, Loch-Ards, Loch-Monteith and Loch-Kathrin; and on another side, the beautiful Loch-Lomond, whose calm and limpid streams bathe the foot of Ben-Lomond. Here we command a view of this lake to its full extent, the several islands which adorn it, and its banks covered with rich vegetation.

In approaching the precipice, I saw a large brown eagle (*Falco Fulvus*) fly off at a little distance. This fine bird had probably built its nest in the midst of these inaccessible rocks. It came hovering round me, by which I could examine it completely at my ease. I spent a great part of the day on the summit; and in contemplating the prospect from this magnificent point, I felt an interest in surveying the sites with which I was already acquainted, and which gave rise to a thousand interesting recollections; I amused myself also in observing those I was about to visit; and the sight of the Hebrides, whither I was going, gave me fresh zeal, and made me anticipate further pleasure.

The weather was delightful, and the sky was perfectly serene, during the whole of the morning; but in the afternoon, I observed at a distance light clouds rising towards the west. I saw them gradually advancing, and form into columns of rain, concealing first the Isles of Mull and Jura, and afterwards the remotest hills of the main land; in drawing nearer to the place where I stood, this curtain became still darker, and the sky still more portentous; the storm approached us with incredible rapidity, it soon reached the mountains which bounded Loch-Lomond to the west; in a few moments it cleared the valley, and we in our turn were enveloped in the stormy cloud, which poured down torrents of rain.

The brilliant spectacle with which I had been enraptured but a few minutes before had now vanished. The rich plains, the lakes interspersed with little islands, the innumerable mountains, the sea, with its gulphs and islands, had all disappeared: immersed in a thick mist, I scarcely saw the distance of a few feet around me. I then quitted this elevated station to descend the length of the western declivity of the mountain, and after a long and tedious route through heaths and marshes, I arrived on the banks of Loch-Lomond at the small hamlet of Rouerdenan. Here I quitted the guide who had conducted me from Callender, and crossed the lake in a small boat. The rain ceased as suddenly as it came on, and the sun was just setting when I embarked. After a short but charming sail, and a walk

of nearly three miles on the enchanting banks of this fine lake, I arrived at Luss.

I had a letter for the pastor of Luss, Dr. Stuart, a distinguished naturalist and fellow-traveller of Pennant, and of Lightfoot, author of the "*Flora Scotica*:" he had many years ago, with these two learned individuals, travelled over a great part of the Hebrides. Wishing to enjoy the conversation of this intelligent gentleman, and the hope of receiving useful directions from him for my journey;—in short, the curiosity I had to visit the environs of Luss and the banks of Loch-Lomond, induced me to accept the obliging solicitations of Dr. Stuart to pass the Sunday (9th of August) with him. I had no reason to regret my resolution in any respect; I learned in his company many curious details on the natural history of the mountains and islands of Scotland, and on the manners and language of their inhabitants.

The parsonage is a small house on the banks of the lake, surrounded with fine orchards and beautiful gardens. Dr. Stuart showed me his botanical garden, where he has collected a great number of plants from Scotland and the northern countries of Europe. As the weather was very fine, I took a boat to visit the largest of the isles of the lake, Inch Stavnach, or Monk Island. It is a small rock, and partly covered with trees. From thence we have two views very different in character, and equally remarkable. To the south, Loch-Lomond extends like a large sheet of water, surrounded by small hills, covered with abundant vegetation, and in the midst of this liquid plain a multitude of islands appeared here and there as if floating on the surface. This landscape is cheerful and agreeable. To the north, nature presents a more rigid aspect; the lake becomes narrower and confined by high mountains, having at a distance the appearance of a river; one or two small islands are only seen on the plane. The banks of the lake are also covered with woods and meadows, but the trees and verdure no longer flourish on the sides of the naked and barren mountains which surround it.

My boatmen did not fail to point out to me the curiosities of the country. Here, on a small steep island, are the ruins of a tower formerly inhabited by a robber, who made frequent incursions into the neighbouring domains of the lake, and into the fine estate of Roesdue, belonging to the Chief of the Colquhouns, pillaging and laying lords and vassals under contribution. In another island was formerly a convent of religious nuns, which has given it the name it now bears, Inch Ceallach, or the Isle of Old Women. In a third there exists an establishment

destined as a retreat for insane persons belonging to rich families. In short, they detailed to me the war between the two clans of Colquhoun and Macgregor, showing me all the places where the principal events of the contest took place. The account of so many battles, marked by traits of unheard-of cruelty and ferocity, is found consigned in the private histories of the families and of the Scottish tribes. From such authorities, more authentic than those of the boatmen of Luss, I will relate in a few words the most striking circumstances of those feudal expeditions, which are characteristic of the times and manners of that warlike people.

In the year 1602, after a protracted quarrel between Allastor Macgregor, chief of the powerful tribe of that name, and the Laird of Luss, Sir Humphrey Colquhoun, they were anxious to treat for peace, and agreed to meet for that purpose in the valley of Glen Fruin, on the banks of Loch-Lomond. The two chiefs arrived at the place of rendezvous, each escorted by a considerable troop of his vassals, well armed, and ready to terminate the difference by combat, should they not agree on the conditions of peace. They disputed, and a terrible combat ensued; the Macgregors were victorious, two hundred of the Colquhouns were killed, and a still greater number fell into the hands of their enemies; the Laird of Luss took refuge in one of his castles; whither he was pursued by the Macgregors, taken and massacred. Many youths of the first families in Scotland, who were receiving their education at the College of Dumbarton, went to Glen Fruin to witness the battle. The Colquhouns, in order to protect them, shut them up in a barn; but, after the victory, the Macgregors broke open the doors, and massacred the whole of these unfortunate young men.

The King of Scotland being apprized of this act of atrocious cruelty, and being much irritated against the clan Gregor, the most turbulent of all the tribes of the mountains, decreed the total destruction of the clan, proscribed even the very name of Macgregor, spread fire and slaughter throughout all the country which these rebellious vassals inhabited, and chased like ferocious beasts, with dogs, all those who were concealed in the mountains. Macgregor was taken, conducted to Edinburgh, and decapitated, with eighteen of his comrades. Those of the Macgregors, who were enabled to escape punishment, changed their name and fled to the Continent. Notwithstanding all the severity of this decree, and although it was renewed by the Parliament of Scotland under the reign of William III., the tribe of Macgregors re-appeared as powerful as ever in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and has continued from that time to form part of the Scottish clans.

The Macgregors always denied the participation of their clan in the murder of the Chief of the Colquhouns, as well as in the still more horrible one of the young students of Dumbarton: they accused the Laird of Luss with having treacherously conspired against the lives of those of their tribe who were negotiating for peace at Glen Fruin; they also pretended, that the proscription of the tribe, and of their name, was less owing to the excesses by which they had rendered themselves culpable, than to the pity which the widows of the Colquhouns killed at the battle of Glen Fruin inspired in the breast of King James VI. These widows, it is said, sallied forth to the number of sixty, to demand an audience of the King at Stirling, each mounted on a white horse, and carrying at the point of a lance the bloody clothes of her husband; a spectacle well calculated to excite the indignation and vengeance of the monarch.

The environs of Luss are considered very salubrious; the inhabitants live to an advanced age, and are but seldom visited with sickness. Pennant, in his work, gives striking examples of their longevity; he mentions the ages of six old men at the time when he visited Luss, the youngest of whom was eighty-six years, and the oldest ninety-four.

*August 10.*—I quitted Luss, and the hospitable roof of Dr. Stuart, with regret, to take the route for Inverary. I wandered along the shores of the lake, enlivened with the morning sun. Its banks are covered with groves, whilst bold and picturesque mountains rise in the back-ground; but it is a gloomy picture to see such beautiful foliage about to fall under the pitiless hatchet of avaricious proprietors, who have already stripped the greater part of these banks of their finest ornament.

I regretted passing the charming village of Tarbet, placed on a small promontory, and in the most agreeable situation: the houses are clean, well constructed, and separated from each other by small orchards of fine trees. I quitted at this place the banks of Loch-Lomond, and entered a small valley, planted with trees, well cultivated, and a mile and a half in length. At the extremity of the valley is Arroquhar, a house surrounded with gardens and lofty trees; at first sight it may be perceived, that Arroquhar has not always been an inn, as at present; it was, in fact, a few years ago, the residence of the Chief of the Macfarlanes. Loch-Long, which environs it, is not like Loch-Lomond, a lake of cheerful and peaceable water, surrounded with verdant and woody banks, since we no longer see here the shrubs dipping in the calm and pure waters. Loch-Long consists of salt water, being a narrow and long arm of the sea, stretching among barren and naked mountains; no

tree grows near its banks; the steep rocks, which the ebbing of the tide leaves exposed, are here and there supplied with *ulva* and *fucus*, which spread a sea odour to a great distance. Among these primitive mountains, which bound the arm to the north and to the west, I remarked that which bears the name of Arthur's Seat, or Cobler's. The top of the mountain is at present terminated by a crest, fantastically notched. The lake of Arroquhar is little more than a mile and a half in width; I crossed it in a long boat, and was much amused by seeing a troop of *porpoises* pursuing the herrings. These fish seemed to roll on a level with the water, sometimes disappearing altogether, at others elevating their backs and thick fins above the surface.

I rejoined the great route on the other side of the lake, but was not able to find a guide at Arroquhar, as all the men were at the herring fishery: having met some waggoners at the small inn near which I disembarked, who were going to Cairndow, I put my luggage into the waggon, and journeyed with them.

The valley of Glen-Coe, by its severe and desart aspect, recalls to the mind the most elevated defiles of the Alps, and if we saw it covered with snow, we might imagine ourselves passing St. Bernard. In this narrow passage we did not see a single tree; on all sides nothing is to be seen but masses of rocks in immense heaps. The declivities are not covered with heath (a rare thing in Scotland), but with a short and shaggy turf, furnishing another resemblance between Glen-Coe and our Alpine passages.

Before the memorable year 1745, it was scarcely possible for a traveller to find a path to penetrate into the valley; at present there is a fine road, forming part of the great line of military routes, commenced after the rebellion, by General Wade. The object of the English government, in facilitating the entrance into the mountains and valleys, until that period inaccessible, was more securely to render itself master of the enterprising and formidable people who inhabited them. At the most elevated point of the road is a place so arranged as to afford a convenient seat for the traveller; an inscription invites him to rest himself, and to acknowledge his gratitude—"Rest, and be thankful." A little further we pass near a small solitary lake, commanded from all parts by barren rocks. There Glen Kinglas commences, a valley equally as wild as Glen-Coe. We afterwards arrived at Ardinglass, the fine estate of Sir Archibald Campbell. It is the entrance to the country of the Campbells: this clan has the Duke of Argyle for its chief, who has always been celebrated for his attachment to the House of Hanover. The family of Argyle has always embraced the Whig party;

thus, we find, that in 1715 and 1745 the Campbells were fighting with the English army, against the other Highlanders, attached to Prince Charles Edward.

I stayed the night at St. Catherine's, a small inn, situated on the banks of Loch-Fine, another salt water lake, parallel to Loch-Long. Like the latter, it penetrates much in advance into the land, under the form of a long and narrow gulf. Its banks are not so wild, nor its mountains so high, and their forms are less rugged. From St. Catherine's we see Inverary on the opposite side of the lake. This small burgh, with the castle of the Duke of Argyle, which rises in the middle of a fine park—the plantations of lofty trees—and the neighbouring mountains surrounded to their summit with thick forests of fir,—the whole together forms an enchanting scene. The weather was very favourable for the enjoyment of so agreeable a prospect, and the calm surface of the sea, reflecting the rich hues of the sky on a fine summer's evening, presented a fascinating groundwork to the beauty of the picture.

The sun had scarcely set, when the lake was covered with an innumerable multitude of small boats, which directed their progress towards the end of the gulph, for the herring fishery during the night. It was an animated spectacle to see so many boats covered with nets and tents, lashing with rapidity, some with their small sails hoisted, others aided by a great number of rowers, who made the air resound with their songs.

*August 11.*—I was awoke at break of day by the bagpipe of the fishermen, who after passing the night on the gulph, came to take their morning repast at St. Catherine's. I crossed Loch-Fine, and landed at Inverary. This burgh presents a scene worthy of the pencil of Vernet; its port was filled with small vessels and fishing boats, and others were arriving every moment: the pier was covered with fishermen, who brought the fish caught during the preceding night to the fishmongers and inhabitants of the burgh, who came to purchase. Inverary, although inconsiderable, is, notwithstanding, the capital of Argyleshire, one of the most extensive counties of Scotland, but very thinly populated. One of the finest ornaments of this place is the estate and castle of the Duke of Argyle. The avenues leading to the castle are equally remarkable for their magnificence; a large causeway, in form of a quay, and supported on the sea side by a wall of porphyre, leads to an elegant bridge, built also of porphyre, taken from the open quarries in the park itself. From thence we see the imposing mass of the castle rising above a hill, blooming with verdure. This edifice, when seen at a distance, produces a fine effect



above this beautiful grass-plot, but appeared heavy and massive when we approached nearer to it: we could not determine to what kind of architecture it belongs. The four huge towers, the angles of which are flanked, the turret surmounting the castle, and the battlements, are of a gothic style, whilst the windows are rather Moorish. The stone with which the castle is built contributes also to give it a ludicrous appearance; it is a species of the talc genus, or pot-stone, of a clear green. With the exception of a grand vestibule, with two flights of stairs, the interior of the building appeared to me no way in harmony with the exterior. It is true, the furnishing of it was not yet finished. In the vestibule, or hall of entrance, I remarked two charming groups of statues from Italy; but I was astonished not to find, in the castle of one of the greatest noblemen of Scotland, a single picture worthy of remark. I could not, however, sufficiently admire the beauty of the gardens and the park, as well as the situation of the castle: trees of the finest shape forming groups on the green turf; groves surrounding the grass-plot, and plantations extending to a considerable distance on the hills. A beautiful winding brook crosses the whole extent of the park, and flows among the thickets of trees and shrubs, whose branches bathe in its limpid waters.

The Duke of Argyle has not excluded strangers from seeing his fine estate. Every individual may, without permission—without being watched by gate-keepers or avaricious *Ciceronis*, perambulate at leisure every part of his domain, and take up his abode there, without any one offering him the least interruption. This privilege gives the humble individual an idea of independence, that adds much to his enjoyment. The stranger, in wandering through this place, may imagine himself the master of these extensive woods, green turfs, and beautiful lake; and no importunate object tends to dispel such illusions. Thanks to the liberal proprietor of this enchanting paradise: this is a noble instance of liberality, which well merits the imitation of all country gentlemen.

I much wished to see the herring fishery, and waited with impatience till the evening, especially, as I was informed that a whale of a considerable size had entered Loch-Fine, and was pursuing the innumerable shoals of herrings. A storm came on in the evening, which obliged me to relinquish my project.

*August 12.*—Wishing to reach Oban with all possible speed, I endeavoured to procure a coach to Inverary, but it was impossible to find one; neither cart nor horse, nor vehicle of any kind. An English gentleman, travelling over the mountains, seeing my embarrassment, obligingly offered me a seat

in his carriage, as far as Bunawe; this circumstance procured me the society of intelligent persons and the pleasure of their conversation.

We left Inverary at an early hour, and travelled through a barren and deserted valley; the weather was dull and rainy, and the route extremely monotonous. After proceeding several miles, the aspect of the country changes, and another lake presents itself, viz. Loch-Awe. This lake, like the preceding ones, is long, narrow, and surrounded with high mountains. Its direction is also the same, from south-west to north-east; but it only communicates with the sea by the river which runs out of it.

On seeing this succession of lakes similar and parallel to each other, some of salt water and others of fresh, the idea is irresistible, that the latter have themselves been, at a comparatively recent period, gulphs of the ocean; a few fathoms only from the level of the sea, has sufficed to break up the communication between these waters and those of the gulph. The latter, shut up in an isolated basin, would, by the lapse of time, have lost their saltness, when the salt had been drawn towards the sea by the rivers. It is thus that I account for the lakes of Lomond and Awe becoming reservoirs of fresh water, instead of being arms of the sea, as formerly. Perhaps a small retreat of the ocean would also suffice to change into lakes the salt gulphs of Loch-Long and Loch-Fine.

Loch Awe, towards its northern extremity, encloses a group of small islands; one of them, more woody than the others, is surmounted by the picturesque ruins of the castle of Awe. On the bank opposite to the one we were travelling on, rise the high and majestic mountains called *Kruachan Bens*. The storm, which beclouded the landscape with a black and sombre tinge, gave an imposing and sublime appearance to the whole of these ruins, as well as to the barren and deserted mountains, and this dreary lake.

We soon arrived at the extremity of the lake, where stand the gothic ruins of the great castle of Kilchurn: Sir Colin Campbell, one of the Scottish knights who sallied forth to attack the infidels, built this vast edifice on his return, in 1480. This brave knight, one of the ancestors of the Earl of Breadalbane, belonged to the order of St. John of Jerusalem; his exploits entitled him to the surname of Great, and the Highlanders still call the Dukes of Argyle "the sons of the Great Colin," *Mhic Caillan Mhor*. Further on, the fertile valley of Glen Orchy bursts in view. This narrow and well cultivated defile, abounding with villages, and watered by a fine rivulet, is an agreeable contrast with the sharp rocks which surround it on all sides. The church of Glen Orchy, built on an eminence,

is itself a picturesque object at a distance. The eldest son of the family of Breadalbane derives his name from this district. We stopped at the little village of Dalmaly, situated at the entrance of the valley.

The ancient tombs which surround the church engaged our attention for some time: the figures which cover them, although very rudely sculptured, are not without interest, being strongly characteristic of the costumes of the country in the middle ages. Many warriors, celebrated in olden time, lie buried under these stones; they are represented by rude sculptures, some on foot, others on horseback, all armed with large swords and shields, and wearing the *philibeg*, the ancient Scottish tunic. Their descendants still live in these mountains; they carefully preserve the tombs of their forefathers, and proudly point out to strangers the places where their warlike ancestors repose, and where the tradition of their exploits is transmitted from generation to generation.

Curiosity led me to pay a visit to the blacksmith Macnab, to see the MSS. of the poems of Ossian, which, according to report, were long possessed by his family. I saw the old man, but not the manuscripts; they had long ago been sent to Edinburgh, for the use of the members of the Highland Society. He showed me the ancient armour of his ancestors, for he gloried in a long succession of them, all blacksmiths like himself. This family inhabited the same cottage upwards of four hundred years. In the ages of feudalism, they handled successively the hammer and the sword.

One of the ancestors of Macnab had been employed in building the castle of Kilchurn, and many of them, no doubt, contributed to defend it against the attacks of the enemy's clans. What appalling vicissitudes in human affairs! The castle of that powerful lord, of that once formidable chief, is now deserted and in ruins; whilst the hut of the humble vassal still exists, and has never changed its masters. This long succession from father to son, who have followed without interruption the same profession, and in the same place, is considered as a high mark of respectability. If they cannot boast, as other men in a more exalted sphere, of famous names, and of illustrious warriors among their ancestors, it is to be presumed that integrity, irreproachable conduct, and hereditary adherence to the virtues and duties of an obscure state, have insured to subsequent generations the protection of their chiefs and the laws.

These examples of ancient families in an inferior rank of life, are by no means rare among the Highlanders. Whilst I was walking in the park of Inverary, I met a Highlander, who,

with the natural curiosity of these people, came to ask me what country I belonged to, and whither I was going? After satisfying him, I put the same questions to him; he replied, "I am going to that cottage which you see there between those trees high above, on the hill: we have lived in it during the three hundred years that we have been vassals of the Duke of Argyle."

We pursued our route, with fine weather, near Kilchurn castle, and having again reached the banks of Loch-Awe; we followed the northern bank of this lake, by a charming route, in the form of a cornice on the slope of Kruachan-Bens. Here the mountains raise their cragged summits; below us we saw the lake, and its fine woody and verdant isles reflected in its tranquil waters; by degrees the basin grows narrower, the mountains on both its banks contract, they soon appeared to unite, and a rapid current indicates that the lake is become a river. We soon found another lake, viz. Loch-Etive, a gulph of the Atlantic Ocean, confined between two mountains, whose forms are altogether Alpine and picturesque. It was late when we arrived at Bunawe, where we were obliged to sleep.

*August 13.*—I reluctantly quitted my amiable fellow-travellers, who continued their route in the mountains, and I hired a carriage to conduct me to Oban. The weather was rainy, the country barren and deserted; the road winds on the banks of Loch-Etive, and the appearance of the soil changes; there are no more high mountains, but little hills, which, by their number and forms, do not ill resemble the waves of the sea.

I passed near the Connal Ferry; this short and narrow canal, by which Loch-Etive communicates with the sea, presents a singular phenomena in the ebbing and flowing of the tide. When the tide flows, it rises rapidly to a great height, and runs with violence into this canal where it forms a rapid torrent. The surface of the waters of Loch-Etive being still much under that of the sea, as the motion ascending has only been able to communicate with it through this narrow passage, the waters of the canal rush down in the form of a cascade into the lake, till the moment when the lake and the sea become of the same level, which takes place a little after high water. The contrary effect happens when the tide ebbs, the sea retiring very rapidly, the level of the lake is then above that of the ocean, and it takes a certain time to empty itself by the narrow canal; a strong current settles from the lake to the sea, and forms into a cascade in an opposite direction to that which took place six hours before. A passage boat, however, has been established in a place

which appears very dangerous, but it only plies in the hours when the sea has reached its greatest height, or has retreated to its lowest level.

Some miles farther, on the right, we passed the ruins of the castle and chapel of Dunstaffnage, an ancient royal residence, built on a peninsula; tradition attributes the foundation of this fort to a Caledonian King, contemporary with Julius Cæsar. These gothic masses produce a fine effect in the midst of so wild a country. From thence I began to perceive the Atlantic Ocean, and the long island of Lismore, whose form is like that of a small hill; it appeared to me covered with woods, but this was an illusion; for although it is pretty fertile in rye and pasturage, yet no trees grow there.

I arrived at Oban, where I met some young Scotsmen of my acquaintance, who were going to visit the Isle of Staffa; they had been waiting two days for a favourable wind to embark; we instantly agreed to travel together.

Oban is a fishing village, situated on the sea-coast, it has a pleasing appearance of cleanliness and comfort; the trade of the Hebrides with the mother country, which is almost entirely transacted at this port, keeps the inhabitants employed. The sea here forms a vast bay, protected against every wind by a multitude of small and large islands, and calculated to receive a fleet of a hundred ships of the line; thus, those vessels which make the voyage of the north, when overtaken by a tempest, lay at anchor in great security in the Bay of Oban.

I was struck with the beauty of the view which this bay presented. Opposite is the little Island of Kerrera, covered with basaltic rocks, and heath, cut into the form of benches; and behind this island rise the conical summits of the mountains of Mull. Lismore appears to the north-west, and over an adjacent plain rise the ruins of the tower of Dunolin. The sun was setting behind the Isle of Mull, fringing the clouds with purple and gold, and colouring all the islands with a thousand varied and brilliant hues. The sea, as smooth as glass, was tinged with the same rich colours, and reflected the small vessels lying at anchor in the bay, whilst the tranquillity of the waves formed a pleasing and agreeable picture, presenting a very different aspect from the idea I had formed of the Atlantic Ocean in these latitudes.

## CHAPTER II.

## FROM OBAN TO STAFFA.

*Adventure of the Lady's Rock.—Castle of Aros.—The Macdonalds, Kings of the Isles.—Flora Macdonald and Prince Charles Stuart.—Ulva-House.—Staffa.—Cave of Fingal.*

August 14.—The weather being very fine, we took a large open boat at Oban, provided with rowers; the wind although favorable was slight, and we advanced but slowly. Leaving on our left the uncultivated and rocky Island of Kerrera, and on our right, first, the venerable castle of Dunolin, and, afterwards, the fertile Lismore, (the name of which, in Gaelic, signifies a large garden,) we arrived in the sound or strait of Mull; it is a long and narrow canal, which separates the mountains of the Isle of Mull from those of the main land; and the navigation in so confined a place, and so sandy, is often dangerous. Having entered the sound, we saw nothing but the barren, uncultivated, and rocky mountains of the Island of Mull: these mountains are entirely covered with heath, and not even the smallest bush is to be seen; during the space of three hours, we scarcely saw a miserable hut on this barren and deserted coast; the other side did not present a more agreeable perspective, in the hills and the rocks of Morvern, the ancient domain of Fingal. This country, celebrated by Ossian for the grandeur of its forests, and to which he has given the epithet of "*the woody Morvern*," has lost all its beauty. At this day, there are scarcely a few young trees to be seen—the descendants of those noble oaks—of those venerable firs represented by the Caledonian Bard, as displaying their light foliage amidst these masses and piles of rocks.

The breeze which impelled us now ceased to blow, the boatmen took to their oars, but we advanced with difficulty, having a strong tide against us, which descends the canal with such violence, as to give to the sea the appearance of a rapid river; it strikes with great force against the breakers along the coast, against the sandy banks of the strait, and covers them with foam and spray. We passed by the foot of the hills of Mull, on which stands the old castle of Duart. It is the abode of one of the tribe of Maclean, still numerous in the Isle of Mull, and its heavy gothic turret well accords with the gloomy aspect of nature, in this district. Near the castle rises on a level with the water the small island

or rock, called *Lady's Rock*; the following, according to tradition, is the adventure which has given it this name. Maclean, Lord of Duart, having married a sister of the Earl of Argyle, and, suspecting his wife of infidelity, he exposed her on this rock to be devoured by the monsters of the ocean, or engulfed by the tide. This lovely and unfortunate victim of the jealousy of Maclean, saw the waves approaching, which were about to bury her in the deep, the sea having already reached the summit of the rock; when a fortunate chance brought a boat into the strait, in which was Argyle himself. The cries of a female led him towards the rock; he recognized his sister, saw her about to perish, and having rescued her, he conducted her to his castle. He did more; he avenged her wrongs by killing her persecutor in a desperate combat, fought in the presence of the King of Scotland.

A great quantity of sea birds were swimming in numerous groups in the strait, and resting themselves on the *Lady's Rock*, and on the small rocks adjoining; these groups were principally composed of penguins, turtle-doves, and sea-gulls.

Along the coast for some distance is a narrow pathway at the foot of the mountains, on which we saw, from our boat, some inhabitants of the Isle passing from time to time.

After sailing ten hours we entered into the little bay of Aros, where two Norwegian vessels were then lying at anchor, and we disembarked in the Isle of Mull on rocks of a fine black basalt, covered by a meadow of sea plants of various species. I felt much pleasure on finding myself at last in the Hebrides, and reflecting that I should shortly behold the famous Isle of Staffa.

On whatever side we turned our eyes, we saw nothing but rocks and heath without a single tree. Aros is only a miserable hamlet consisting of three or four houses, constructed in the same way as all those of the Highlands. A house of better appearance is occupied by the steward of the Duke of Argyle, to whom Aros and its environs belong.

We saw on a rock of basalt in a heap, situated on the banks of the sea, the remains of the Castle of Aros, formerly inhabited by the Macdonalds, kings of the isles. Somerled, ancestor of these insular princes, was, in the twelfth century, the first of that family who possessed the sovereignty of the Hebrides. Before him these Isles, first subjected to the kings of Scotland, were governed by a Norwegian viceroy. One of these viceroys profiting by his distance from the metropolis, declared himself independent, and fixed himself in the Isle of Man. Somerled, already powerful in the province of Cantyre, and become still stronger by his marriage with the daughter of Olave,

king of Man, seized upon the Hebrides and a part of the county of Argyle, there established his dominion, and styled himself king of the Isles. His successors had to struggle against the pretensions of the kings of Scotland, England, and Norway; sometimes happy and independent, and at other times subjected and tributary to one of these great monarchs; the kings of the Isles nevertheless preserved the sovereignty of the Hebrides, and there maintained their sway.

In the fourteenth century the Macdonalds, descendants of Somerled, made a successful effort to gain the independence of the kingdom of the Hebrides. Having acquired considerable possessions in the mother country, these powerful chiefs, at the head of their warlike bands, often alarmed the king of Scotland, with whom they considered themselves upon an equality. The Stuarts, when seated on the throne of England, still paid every respect to these formidable vassals of the crown, which shews what power the Macdonalds exercised at that time in the mountains and Isles; but the revolution of England, and the increasing strength of the monarchy, considerably reduced their strength.

The descendants of the kings of the Isles, although deprived of their feudal power, still possess very extensive property and considerable influence in this part of Great Britain. The Clan-Donald, divided into three branches, has no longer a single chief like the other tribes. One of the branches acknowledges Lord Macdonald for its chief, who possesses a great part of the Isle of Sky; another, Macdonald of Clanronald, to whom several isles belong, besides a considerable district in the main land; the third, Macdonald of Glengarry, whose very extensive domains are situated in the centre of the county of Inverness.

In the wars of 1715 and 1745, the Macdonalds proved themselves zealous defenders of the Stuarts. They were seen to the number of 1500 following the standard of their ancient kings. The family of Clanronald rendered the most eminent services to the young pretender, after his defeat at Culloden, when he wandered as an outlaw in the isles of the Hebrides. A young and beautiful lady of this family, made herself particularly remarkable for her romantic attachment to that unfortunate prince. In the summer of 1746, Flora Macdonald, aged 24 years, learning that prince Charles had fled into the Hebrides pursued by a troop of English soldiers, she hastened full of enthusiasm towards him, and fearless of the rigour of the laws which condemned to death whoever should receive or protect the royal outlaw, she shared his dangers, and accompanied him when he braved the fury of the ocean in an open boat; she then followed him into



the wild glens, where he retired to conceal himself from the pursuit of his enemies. She conducted him across the mountains by almost impervious paths, and braved the fatigues and the inclemencies of the severest climate; she frequently went alone undisguised, in order to ascertain the march of the English, and flew towards those whom she knew were attached to the cause of the Stuarts, hazardously to solicit assistance, which was never once refused. The Prince, under the disguise of a female servant, accompanied Flora, and passed, in the midst of those who pursued him, as a domestic attached to the service of this young lady. The latter twice succeeded by her presence of mind in saving his life, and rescuing him from imminent danger. After having been twice taken, she succeeded in joining the prince and placing him in safe hands; but soon after, victim of her generous devotion, she was taken by the English and conducted as a prisoner to London, where she was detained for a year. At last, delivered from her captivity, she returned to Scotland, where she remained during her life, and is to this day the object of the admiration and respect of the whole Scottish nation.

We did not stop at Aros, intending that evening to reach the Isle of Ulva, and stay at the house of Mr. Macdonald, proprietor of the Isle of Staffa. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance at Edinburgh, where he politely invited me to visit him in his Island. We were told, at Aros, that we had only six miles to go in order to cross the Isle of Mull, and reach the narrow passage which separates that land from Ulva; but the miles here are double the length of the English miles, as I found to my sorrow, so that we had full twelve miles to walk. The part of Mull which we passed through is a narrow, uncultivated, and almost deserted valley, between high and steep mountains; and during the whole of this journey we only discovered three or four scattered huts. After a march of six miles we arrived at an eminence, from whence we perceived at our feet a large lake, surrounded by lofty and picturesque mountains, called Loch-Nagheal, an arm of the sea, which penetrates very far into the Isle; on the opposite shore, the imposing mass of the hill of Benmore particularly attracted our attention, being the highest summit of Mull, terminating in a pointed cone. The route we followed was only a narrow stony path, and very fatiguing. We passed a hut, and being thirsty, we halted for refreshment. It was eleven o'clock at night, the door was open, and the whole family were asleep in the kitchen. A peat fire was burning in the middle of the room, which was so filled with smoke, that it was a long time before we could distinguish any object. At last we per-

ceived a bed, in which was an old man and his wife; their children were scattered from one side of the room to the other, and slept on piles of peats, mats, nets, or sheep-skins. As soon as they perceived us, they rose, and eagerly came towards us; we explained to them the motive for so late a visit, by asking for a glass of milk or water. Two large wooden bowls of milk were speedily brought, but it was with great difficulty that we prevailed upon these poor people to accept some remuneration.

Continuing our journey on the eminence we soon saw in the ocean the Isle of Ulva, beneath us. We had to descend a sharp high hill, before reaching the banks of the sea. Owing to the darkness of the night we lost our path, and severally wandered groping along, some descending from one side, and some from the other, without well knowing where we were going, through rocks and briers, at the risk of every moment breaking our necks, or rolling into the sea beneath us. However, we surmounted these difficulties, and safely arrived on the shore. But this was not all; it was still necessary to cross the small strait, about the distance of a gun-shot, which separates Ulva from Mull. There was no boat on our side, the passage-boat being in the Isle of Ulva. After calling very loudly, we succeeded in waking a boatman, who came towards us in a small skiff. It was midnight when we crossed, and I observed, for the first time during this passage, that the sea was covered with a multitude of brilliant sparks, resembling stars.

We were conducted to Ulva-House, belonging to Mr. Macdonald; all was closed, as at such an unseasonable hour no visitors were expected. At that time we were not aware of there being an inn in the Isle of Ulva.

15th August. On going to salute our hosts, we were not a little confused at the trouble which our arrival the evening before had occasioned; but the most cordial welcome, and the politeness with which we were received, soon put us at ease. Many travellers, abusing the hospitality which they receive, have thought proper to publish their observations on the inmates of the families in which they have had the good fortune to be admitted. The greater part, warmed by gratitude to their hosts, have thought it worth while to enrich their books with interesting portraits, and with the recital of little incidents which the society furnishes. These details and peculiarities certainly render a work more *piquant* and more amusing; but is it not to be feared that the most merited eulogiums wound the modesty and delicacy of those who are the objects of them, when they are exposed, against their will, to the notice of the public.

The situation of Mr. Macdonald's house is so remarkable that I was astonished at first sight of it; the edifice is built in a handsome style, and presents a singular contrast with the aspect of the surrounding country. Firs have been planted on the barren rocks which environ the house; and notwithstanding all the obstacles of this climate to the growth of trees, the latter appear to succeed very well. A beautiful cascade precipitates itself from the top of these rocks, and falls on the bank of the sea, forming a fine object in the landscape. From the windows of the house we could plainly perceive the mouth of Loch-Nagheal, opposite to which Ulva is situated. This gulph, interspersed with islands, washes the foot of lofty and barren mountains, the most remarkable of which is Benmore. This enormous mass raises its pyramidal summit to the height of nearly 2700 feet above the level of the sea; and its steep declivity is every where covered with heath and marshes. The top of Benmore is almost always enveloped with clouds, which the winds bring from the sea. I have often seen also, in a fine evening, the setting sun colouring the heath-covered summits of the mountains with the richest tints of violet and purple; nothing is then more magnificent than the contrast of the brilliant colours of the mountains with the dark grey of the basaltic hills and the deep green of the ocean.

The want of trees in all these grand prospects, instead of having an unpleasing effect, rather give these rocks a character of grandeur well according with the majesty of nature in these regions. We must not expect to find smiling landscapes in these deserted districts, nor the richly adorned banks of the lakes of Switzerland;—no groves of olives, flourishing oaks, citrons, or palm trees, embellish the declivities, bathed by the peaceful waves of the Mediterranean Sea, under an always clear and serene sky. It was feasible enough to endeavour to plant trees in the places which immediately environ Ulva-House, but there were many obstacles to contend with; not only the violence of the winds and the humidity of the climate, in a country where it rains more than three quarters of the year, oppose the success of plantations, but it likewise appears, that the sea air is liable to check the growth of trees. When a rock or wall shelters the young trees, they flourish for a time; but as soon as their upper branches grow above the shelter they begin to fade, and the tree decays. Mr. Macdonald has planted a great number of firs and larch, at the foot of the high rocks which protect his house from the westerly and southerly winds; the trees being still young, and consequently not lofty, they have, as yet, succeeded admirably; and if these trees can resist the sea air and impetuous winds, they

will one day form a charming amphitheatre round the habitation; thus, a dreary and barren hill, which now presents bold lines of rocks and heath, will be changed into a well-wooded hill. Fine grass-plots, and a large garden containing fruit and vegetables of every kind, immediately surround the house.

August 17.—The sky being serene, I considered myself fortunate in being able, so soon after my arrival at Ulva, to set out for Staffa, with favourable weather: many travellers, constantly thwarted by rains, the winds, and the sea, find themselves obliged, after waiting several days, to quit Scotland without reaching that island, even after having approached so near. We embarked at an early hour in the boat which had been prepared for us; the piper accompanied us with his bagpipe, and the echoes of the neighbouring rocks resounded with the noisy sounds of the *pibroch*, or the March of Clanronald. Every laird in the Hebrides has his piper, who accompanies him in his sea excursions, or plays the marches of his tribe during his repasts, while he remains in his castle. We were regaled with this music at Ulva House every day during dinner, and although the piper was placed outside of the house, it was almost impossible to hear the conversation.

After a passage of fifteen miles in two hours we arrived at Staffa, the place I had so long wished to behold. We descended from the boat on high basaltic rocks, in round masses. The loose stones and blocks of basalt on which we marched, by their number, immense size, and spherical form, indicate the force of the ocean, which continually besieges this isle, and breaks in pieces the hardest rocks. On this shore are embarked and disembarked the herds which are brought every spring into the isle, and taken away at the commencement of autumn; this operation is attended with considerable danger and difficulty.

We ascended at first by a gentle acclivity to the summit of the isle: its surface does not form a plain, as it appears at a distance; but the ground is disposed into small risings, which present varied undulations. A fine meadow covers the whole summit, where sheep find an excellent pasturage. The view of the ocean and of the neighbouring isles from this spot, is at once grand and imposing.

However, we had not yet seen any basaltic pillars, and were anxiously looking for the Cave of Fingal; but our boatmen reserved us this pleasure for the last, knowing that after having seen that fine cavern every thing in the isle would, in comparison, possess very feeble interest. They showed us the vestiges of a hut, in which a family formerly lived during eight years, for the purpose of watching the flocks; they were

the only inhabitants of this isle. Sir Joseph Banks and M. Faujas speak with horror of the wretchedness of this miserable abode. At present the hut is destroyed, and the island is completely deserted.

One of the boatmen who conducted us passed a part of his youth in this solitary habitation, and the account he gave of the life of inquietude and anguish which he led there deeply affected us. He recollected with terror those sad moments in which his companions and himself heard nothing around them but the howling of winds and agitated billows.

When the tempest began to rage on the sea, which is the case for more than three-quarters of the year, the wind then blew with such violence, that every moment they were afraid of seeing the house carried away like the leaf off a tree. The sea rolled its immense waves with such intense fury, that in breaking against the shore, floods of foam gushed out upon the enormous rocks which surrounded the isle, and entirely inundated it. The waves, forcing a passage into the Cave of Fingal, and the other caverns of the isle, struck against the walls with a noise resembling thunder. Staffa was shaken by the shocks of the furious sea, as by an earthquake. In the evening, whilst these poor men, seated in their miserable hut, have been listening with alarm to the terrible commotion of the elements, they have often seen the very rock on which their peat fire was burning move with the ground which trembled under their feet at every shock of these mountains of water, which seemed as if they would have reduced the whole isle to atoms. We might wish to have for a moment witnessed such a scene, to judge of the entire power of the ocean; but the bare idea of men living there for eight years filled us with horror.

We again descended to the sea-shore near the place where we had disembarked, and we arrived on a small promontory entirely composed of basalt, the long and very irregular prisms of which are disposed nearly horizontally, or at least are only straight at their two extremities, on one side towards the sea, and the other towards the interior of the isle. We ascended along these pillars as on a staircase, and on reaching the summit of the rock, an astonishing spectacle presented itself to our eyes. We saw from every part nothing but basaltic prisms displayed in every possible form; some vertical, others horizontal, or inclined in every direction, and under an infinity of angles. However, this mixture of so many directions and different inclinations does not produce the effect of a confused mass. The prisms are formed in distinct groups, in which each pillar has a parallel direction to those which accompany it. Each group, thus composed of pillars perfectly regular, having

all an uniform position, presents a very regular *ensemble*; but each has its particular forms, and does not resemble those which environ it.

Marching from pillar to pillar, we descended towards a small cavern, called Clamshell Cave, near which we perceived the Isle of Booschalla, which a narrow canal of no great depth separates from Staffa. At length, we arrived at the entrance of the Cave of Fingal. I shall not repeat here the circumstantial details which preceding travellers have given, on the form, the height, and the diameter of the pillars. The descriptions of Sir Joseph Banks and of M. Faujas have appeared to me generally exact, and those to whom the short sketch which I am about to give of this wonderful cavern does not appear sufficient, I refer to the works of the celebrated naturalists, above-mentioned.

Figure to yourself a vault of 250 feet in depth, and 117 in height; supported on each side by close groups of prisms, some with six faces, others with seven or eight sides, rising vertically to a height of more than 50 feet, preserving always the most perfect regularity. On entering the Cave of Fingal, we felt an indescribable impulse of admiration. The grandeur and majestic simplicity of this vast hall, the obscurity which reigns there, and which increases still more the solemnity of the basaltic pillars, the rolling waves striking against the walls, and which in breaking against the bottom of the cavern produce a noise at times similar to the rolling of distant thunder, the echoes resounding from the vault repeating and prolonging all the sounds with a kind of harmony;—all these features united produce in the mind a sensation which invited us to meditation and to religious awe.

The greatest silence reigned amongst us, each fixed on some piece of pillar; absorbed by the imposing view which we enjoyed, we could hardly cease contemplating the black walls of the cavern, the vast ocean, the mosaic pavement, and the ocean, which is seen prolonging at a distance across the gothic arch which forms the entrance of the vault. If all these united objects excited a lively interest in us, although previously prepared by the descriptions of former travellers, and the fame which it has acquired, what must have been the surprize and rapture of Sir Joseph Banks, when, on the simple report of an English gentleman, whom he met in the Isle of Mull, he discovered, we may say, Staffa and its cavern! Travelling through the Hebrides on his way to Iceland, Sir Joseph, (accompanied by the Bishop of Linkoppinck, the learned Troil), was induced to turn aside a little from his route to view this remarkable island, which was then only known by very few persons; he went to it, by daybreak, and finding himself at the foot of those

superb natural colonnades, he saw the Cave of Fingal, illumed by the first rays of the sun. So unexpected a sight naturally excited the greatest enthusiasm in the illustrious travellers. How were they to announce to the world this original discovery; in what terms were they to paint their impressions, and describe this wonder, in a manner so as to give a just idea of it. The remembrance of the finest antique temples, of the most majestic gothic cathedrals, presented itself to their mind; they compared the master-pieces issued from the hand of man with the fantastic works of nature, and both, in contemplating this simple and noble architecture, the outlines of which have been traced by no human hand, turned with contempt on those baubles (for that is their expression) which the most exquisite art has been able to produce. Notwithstanding I perfectly comprehend the sentiment which called forth such a comparison, I cannot entirely concur with their opinion. The perfect regularity of each basaltic pillar of which these rocks are composed, may, it is true, recal in the first instance the idea of architecture; but this simile must not be carried too far, as it cannot be supported by profound examination.

The great natural monuments may, like this, present regularity in their details, but there is never symmetry in the whole; there always reigns an infinite variety, a certain picturesque disorder, which is like the seal of nature; to wish to compare them with the works of men, is, if I may so express myself, to mar the object of our enthusiasm, since it is to invite us to judge of it by the rules of art. The two kinds are so different, that I cannot see how the admiration for the one could prevent the enjoyment of the other; and I am not of the opinion of Troil, who says, that when we have seen Staffa, we can no longer admire the colonnades of the Louvre, of St. Peter's at Rome, or of Palmyra.

In addition to the pleasure I experienced from the beauty of the cave, were several impressions which added still more to its charm. Among these are the sentiments excited by its situation in the midst of a tempestuous sea, and sheltered from the destroying hand of man in a small isle, for a long period unknown, and continually beaten by floods and tempests: the idea of the possibility that subterraneous fires might formerly have contributed to its formation: the distant view of the isle of Iona: but, above all, the idea recalled to the mind by the name of FINGAL! Fingal, Ossian, and his bards assembled perhaps in former times under these vaults; the heavenly music of their harps accompanied the sound of their voices, and mixing with the hoarse winds and waves, it has perhaps more than once echoed through these cavities. Here they sung their wars and

their victories; here they commemorated the deeds of those heroes whose shades their imagination depicted to them by the pale light of the moon at the entrance of this solitary cavern!

Whilst we were indulging in these reflections, the *piper*, who entered the cave with us, made it resound with the wild and powerful notes of his bagpipe; this instrument well accorded with the character of the scene, and the notes prolonged by the echoes, produced an effect altogether analogous to that of an organ in pealing through the vaulted aisles of a vast cathedral.

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## CHAPTER III.

### ISLE OF IONA, AND RETURN TO STAFFA.

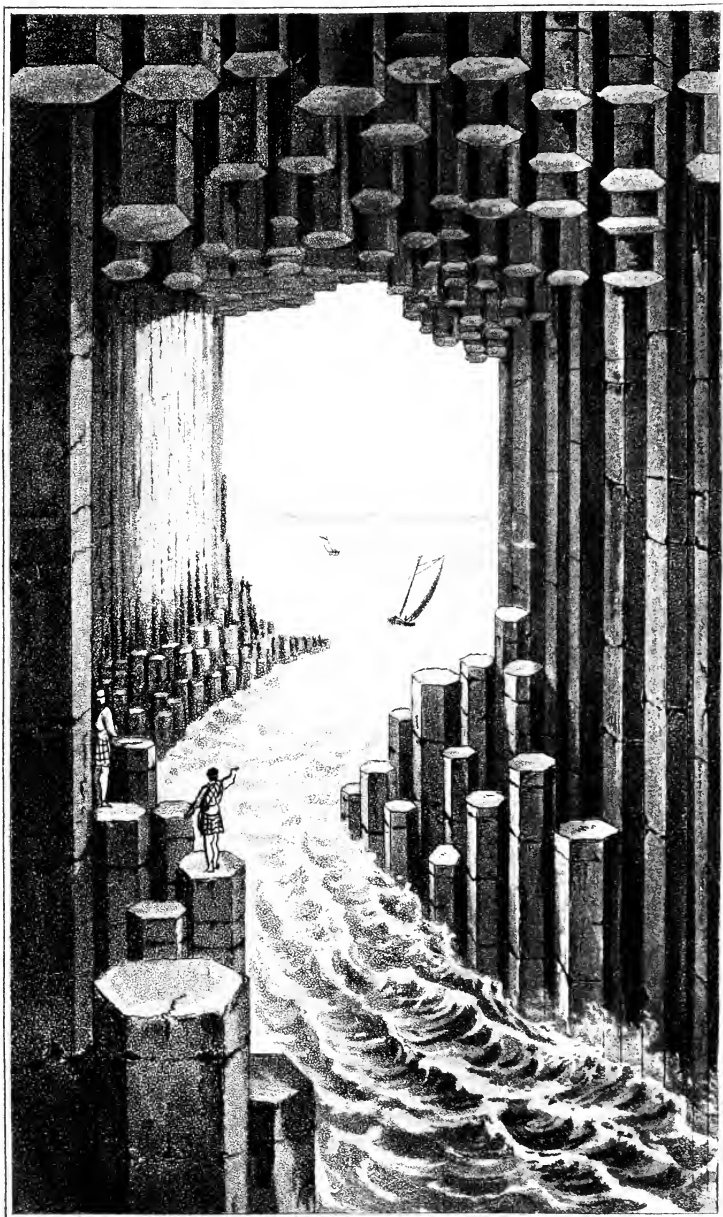
*Monastery of I-Colm-Kill.—Interesting Antiquities in Iona.—Ridiculous Story related by Pennant.—“World’s End Stones.”—Highland Dance.*

ON quitting Staffa, we directed our course towards the Isle of Iona, which lies about fifteen miles to the south. We enjoyed first, an extensive prospect along the basaltic range, extending from the Isle of Booschalla as far as the Cave of the Cornwarrants, situated to the west of the Cave of Fingal.

The wind having fallen, our boatmen took to their oars. Joyous and animated by their Gaelic songs, and by the whiskey, which we poured out to them in bumpers, they ran over a space of fifteen miles in two hours. We entered into the Sound of Iona, an arm of the sea, scarcely a mile and a-half wide, and three miles long; it separates the Isle of Mull on the east, from the small Isle of Iona or I-Colm-Kill on the west. We soon perceived on our right, the ruins of the ancient cathedral of I-Colm-Kill, and afterwards the village, or collection of huts, in which all the inhabitants of this small isle reside; this place, seen from the sea, appears in the form of an amphitheatre.

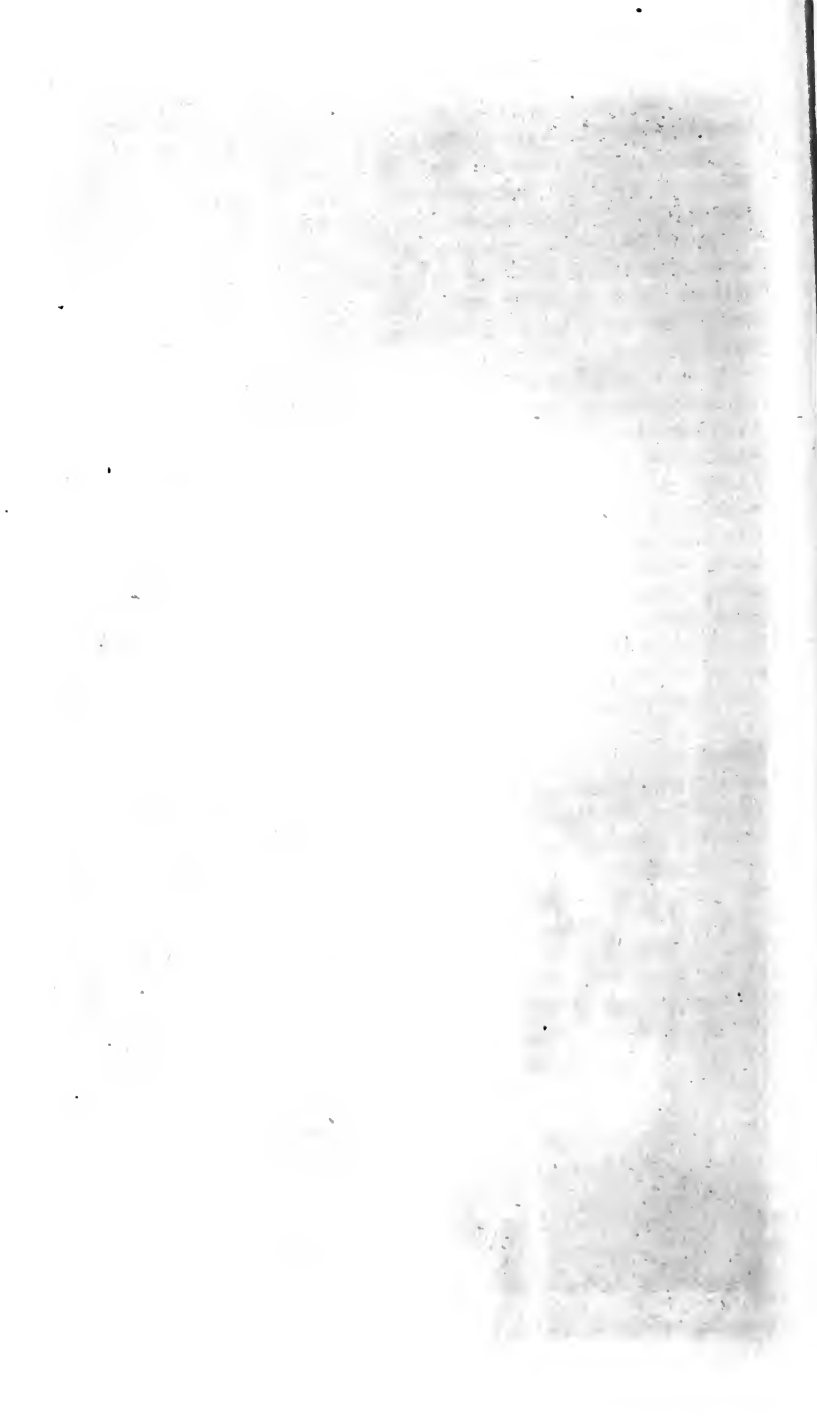
A little before we arrived, the piper, according to custom, played one of the marches of the Macdonalds, and soon a number of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, sallied forth; while some remained at the door of their huts, and others advanced to the shore to see us land. We leaped on the shore, and were presently surrounded by a multitude of chil-





W. Wood, 1850

*Fingals' Cave!*



dren, presenting us small pebbles of a yellow serpentine, hard and transparent, which they gather on the sea shore.

These stones, known by the name of *Iona Pebbles*, are much sought after by lapidaries, who cut them for ornamental jewellery. The schoolmaster, who is at the same time steward of the Duke of Argyle, the proprietor of Iona, and to whom these two offices give the first rank in the island, offered himself as our *Cicerone*; but, before proceeding further, it may be proper to give a sketch of the history of this interesting island.

It appears, from the most ancient chronicles, that before the establishment of christianity in that portion of Great Britain, the Isle of Iona was the abode of a College of Druids, and that it bore the name of *Inish Druinish*, the Druids' Isle. It may also be conjectured, that the *Ithona* of Ossian, a name signifying, Isle of Waves, was the isle known at present under the same name; for in the Gaelic language, the *th* not being sounded, *Ithona* is pronounced *Iona*. After the arrival of St. Columban, and his pious disciples, had conferred a great celebrity on this isle, among the northern christians, it took the name of *I-Colm-Kill*, or isle of the burying ground of St. Columban. At present, it is called indifferently *I. Iona*, or *I-Colm-Kill*.

We must not confound St. Columban, the founder of the Abbey of Iona, and the first christian preacher among the wild Caledonians, with a saint of the same name and country, who, in the commencement of the seventh century, founded the celebrated Abbey of Luxen in Franche Comté. It is very probable that the latter, who lived half a century later, was one of the disciples of the religious order of *I-Colm-Kill*. However this might be, the elder St. Columban was born in Ireland, and having embraced christianity, he was remarkable for the austerity of his manners. Irritated by the persecutions which he experienced, or urged on by an ardent zeal for the propagation of christianity, he quitted Ireland, his native country, vowing not only that he would never return, but even that he would never establish himself within sight of that island. Having entered into a large boat, with some new converts, who partook of his zeal and his projects, he abandoned himself to the winds, which drove him towards the Hebrides; he landed at first on the Island of Otransay, but having remarked, that from the top of the hills of this isle the Irish shore was still perceptible at a distance, he hastened to re-embark, and at last arrived at Iona, where, according to the Saxon historian, Beda, he fixed himself in the year 565. Bridius, who reigned at that time over the Picts, being converted

by him to christianity, gave him this island for the establishment of a convent; here Columban founded an abbey of regular canons, of whom he was the first abbot. Respected and venerated throughout Scotland for his piety and learning, he raised Aydanus to the throne, and placed the crown on his head with his own hands. "The authority of this man," says Buchanan, "was at that time so great, that neither the kings nor the people would enter upon any affair, without having first taken his advice." Having left Iona, in order to crown Aydanus, he profited by the occasion to address exhortations to the king and the nation, prescribing to them their mutual duties; and after having conjured them to remain faithful to the worship of the true God, he returned to his monastery. He again quitted it, a few years after, to appease a terrible war which was then raging between the Scots and the Picts; the sway which his virtues and talents gave him, even over the ferocious minds of these northern barbarians, displayed itself in this manner on all important occasions. After having crowned Aydanus, he instructed Eugenius, the son of this king, who was to succeed him, and endeavoured to inspire him with a taste for letters—the love of peace and religion. He died in the beginning of the seventh century; his death was to the King Aydanus, already oppressed with years and sorrow, a loss which he did not survive.

Notwithstanding this event, the kings of Scotland endowed this abbey more richly than ever; a female convent was established; a number of small isles were given to these monasteries, and I-Colm-Kill became the sepulchre for sovereigns, and the most powerful nobles of the mother-country and the isles. Faithful to the doctrine and precepts of their founder, the monks of Iona, at the same time that they preached to these uncivilized tribes the dogmas of the christian religion, dissipated by their learned labours the thick mist of ignorance and error which, at that epoch, reigned over all the north of Europe. In this state of obscurity, one of the smallest isles of the wild Hebrides shone alone with a brilliancy, which it was one day destined to spread to a distance, and afterwards to see extinguished in its own bosom.

Numerous missionaries set out from this interesting community, for the purpose of diffusing the light of the gospel and the knowledge of letters among the remotest, and at that time the most barbarous regions. Many of these missionaries penetrated into Gaul, into the countries of Germany, bordering on the Rhine, and even into the Alps of Switzerland; there founded monasteries, subject to the laws and discipline of I-Colm-Kill, and under the jurisdiction of its abbot, as far

as regarded spiritual matters. Among the holy missionaries of Iona, I shall only mention St. Gallus, who, in 614, established a monastery, in the place where the abbey and the town of St. Gall, in Switzerland, now stand ; and St. Columban, the second of that name, founder of several convents in France, and in particular of the fine Abbey of Luxeu, in Franche-Comté. - All the ecclesiastical historians agree in rendering homage to his courage, learning, and piety.

During this time, those of the monks who remained in the Abbey of Iona divided their time between prayer, study, and the cultivation of the land ; accustoming the wild islanders to derive their subsistence rather from the culture of the soil than from the wearisome and precarious occupation of the chase. The labours of the mind also occupied these laborious cenobites ; a rich library was formed in the convent, where were found collected, besides the works of the monks themselves, the archives and registers of the Kingdom of Scotland, and many important manuscripts. It also appeared, from what Boëthe says, that this library received from the Scottish sovereign, a considerable chest of manuscripts, which Fergus II., who accompanied Alaric and his Goths to the plunder of Rome, had taken in that capital of the world. Such learning and virtue, in so barbarous an age and country, inspired the people with veneration for the monastery of Iona, and those who inhabited it ; many of the monks were placed in the rank of saints, and their names figure in legends at this day ; but what will be believed with more difficulty, is, that the isle itself has been canonized, and adored under the name of St.-Columb-Killa : of this, however, we are assured by the judicious Pennant. Is it not more probable, that the name of the isle has been confounded with that of St. Columban, and that this holy man has been at once adored under these two denominations ?

All these titles to the homage and admiration of the faithful, did not prevent the Court of Rome from pronouncing strong censures against the canons of Iona, who, observing that the laws of the monks of the west differed from those of the Roman church as to the tonsure and the celebration of Easter, Pope Gregory sent into Scotland, an ignorant and fanatical Augustine friar, as legate, in order to reclaim the Christians of Caledonia to the obedience of the Holy See. Buchanan justly deploras the fatal effects of this mission, which, on account of some slight differences in the ceremonial, changed a pure and enlightened religion for a multitude of superstitious and useless practices.

An invasion of the Danes in 807, was still more fatal to the

Abbey of I-Colm-Kill; many of the monks were massacred, the rest took to flight, and the monastery remained several years abandoned and deserted. After the expulsion of these devastating hordes, it was restored to its ancient destination; benedictines of the Order of Clugny replaced the canons, and lived in possession of I-Colm-Kill until the Reformation. At a later period, the Bishop of Sodor and Man established his residence at Iona, and contrary to the ecclesiastical usages, then in vogue, this prelate subjected himself to the supremacy of the abbot of I-Colm-Kill. In short, the Reformation put an end to the ancient splendour of this small isle, as the monks were not only expelled, but the religious edifices were devastated and left in ruins. The tombs of so many monarchs, prelates, and chiefs of Hebridean tribes, abandoned to the destructive nature of the elements; the churches and chapels, in part destroyed, still attest the fanatic zeal of the sectaries of Knox; and the Isle of Iona, formerly so celebrated and enlightened, but now ignorant and semi-barbarian, presents a sad monument of human vicissitudes. The library, in which so many documents on northern history were found collected, has not, if we may credit some authors, been totally destroyed; a considerable portion was transported to the Scottish College of Douay in France, and another to the Scottish College at Rome. Should these ancient works have again escaped the revolutionary vandalism of our era, we may justly expect some interesting discoveries on many important and obscure points of the history of the middle ages.

The family of Argyle, at the epoch of the Reformation, or rather that of the abolition of episcopal dioceses, entered into possession of several domains which had belonged to the clergy in that portion of Scotland, and Iona now forms part of the vast domains of the Duke of Argyle.

This isle is three miles long, and its greatest breadth does not exceed a mile and a half: it is divided into small farms, which the inhabitants hold from the Duke of Argyle. The population of Iona amounts to 350 souls. The houses, instead of being placed on the farm grounds, are all built in the form of a village, in the eastern part of the isle. Thus the inhabitants live very near each other, and often at a considerable distance from the place they cultivate: this custom is justly considered as disadvantageous to themselves, and to the prosperity of the isle in general. It fosters idleness, and consequently misery, and I was painfully struck, on arriving at Iona, to see the indolent manners of its inhabitants; some among them, it is true, are attached to fishing, the environs furnish a prodigious quantity of fish. On all sides there are

shelves, in which swarm various kinds of the cod fish, flounder, &c. These fish are, in general, of an excellent quality, and attain a considerable size; but if the fisheries are not more encouraged than they are at present in the isles of Scotland, fishing will only, at the most, be able to support the bare existence of the inhabitants, instead of being the means of furnishing an abundance of provision.

We now pursued our ramble towards the monuments of antiquity in this small isle. We particularly remarked, in the middle of the village, a cross placed upright, such as is generally seen in catholic countries. It is called St. John's Cross; it is composed of thin stone, of an elegant form, and there are still to be seen the remains of sculptures, in bas-relief, with which it was covered, but which time has partly destroyed. If we are to believe tradition, 360 similar crosses were formerly raised round the cathedral of I-Colm-Kill; there exist, at this day, only two, all the rest having been destroyed at the epoch of the Reformation. What appears to me surprising, is, that the two which remain were spared: I cannot conceive the cause, and no reason is given for that preference.

On leaving the village, we arrived at the ruins of a chapel consecrated to St. Oran, a disciple of St. Columban: the walls are still entire, but there is no roof. Near this chapel is to be seen the famous burying-ground which encloses the bones of so many illustrious dead. In this little spot, surrounded by walls, and in a great part covered with grass, are the tombs of forty-eight Scottish kings, from Fergus II. to Macbeth, four kings of Ireland, and eight kings of Norway, or, which is more probable, vice-roys, who governed the Hebrides during the time these islands belonged to Norway. No inscription or exterior decoration indicates the tomb of any of these monarchs. Donald Monro, Dean of the isles, who travelled over the Hebrides in 1549, says, at that time, in the midst of the burying-ground, where are interred the chiefs of the Hebridean nobility, three mausoleums were elevated at no great distance from each other; on the western face of each was a stone, bearing an inscription, which indicated its destination. That of the middle was entitled *Tumulus Regum Scotiæ*, another *Tumulus Regum Hiberniæ*, and the third, *Tumulus Regum Norvegiæ*.

But not even the trace of these monuments now exists, and in the multitude of tombs with which the ground is covered, we sought in vain for those of the kings. It is probable, however, that their coffins still exist, but they are, perhaps, deposited in subterraneous vaults, the entrance to which is unknown, but which may be one day discovered. The school-

master, who accompanied us, pointed out to us a stone of red granite, on which a large cross is sculptured, without any inscription. This tomb is of granite (all the others are of a grey free stone), and it is said that a king of France was interred there. Several modern travellers have spoken of this king without once mentioning his name; this circumstance appears to me very doubtful, and the more so, as neither the Dean of the isles, nor Buchanan, who has copied him, make any mention of it in their descriptions of the burying-ground of Iona.

If the tombs of the kings are no longer to be found, those of the Hebridean chiefs are there in great number, and many more might be seen if care was taken to pluck up the grass which covers a great part of these tomb-stones. It is much to be regretted that more attention is not paid to keeping in repair, and preserving the interesting antiquities, which are contained in Iona.

The greater part of these stones are ornamented with sculptures, either in alto or bas relief; some are entirely covered with arabesques, or fantastic ornaments in the gothic style; others are engraven with armories: in short, there are some in which are seen represented warriors on foot and horseback, players on the harp, dogs, stags, and other animals; nearly all of them have Latin inscriptions, written in gothic characters. Among these rudely constructed monuments, by which we may judge of the state of the arts at so remote an epoch, and in countries which are yet in a state of barbarism, we particularly remarked three tombs contiguous to each other; on each lies a full sized figure, in a sleeping posture, representing a warrior in complete armour, and clothed in the antique costume of the Gaels.

Pennant mentions these warlike statues, and attributes them to three chiefs of the tribe of Maclean; viz., Maclean of Loch Boay, Maclean of Durat, and Maclean of Coll. These three figures, although rudely sculptured, may be considered worthy of notice, as they give a perfect idea of the costume of the ancient Hebridean chiefs.

We entered the chapel of St. Oran by a small gothic door, by the side of which the holy basin may still be seen: the interior of this small building is filled with tablets, covered with ornaments and inscriptions in gothic characters. Here lie several of the chiefs of the divers clans or tribes who inhabited these islands. We noticed a stone which forms the tomb of a Clanronald, chief of the Macdonalds, and that of a Mac-kinnon, chief of the Clan Alpiu, a tribe renowned for its antiquity, and from its reckoning among its chiefs many of the



most ancient Scottish kings. On these stones are sculptured the *claymore*, or long two-handled sword, which the Gaels formerly used, as well as the ancient Swiss; also the shield, emblazoned with the arms of the warrior. In short, in the middle of the chapel, the stone was shown us which covers the grave of St. Oran: it is entire, and without any inscription. In speaking of the chapel of St. Oran, Pennant relates the following story:—

“The legend,” says he, “informs us, that this edifice was the first which St. Columban endeavoured to build, but a malignant spirit caused the walls to fall down according as they were built. After a consultation among the monks, it was decided, that the walls would not be solid until a human victim was interred under them. Oran, a companion of the saint, generously devoted himself, and was interred. At the end of three days St. Columban had the curiosity to cast a last look upon his ancient friend, and caused the earth which covered him to be removed, when, to the great surprise of all the assistants, Oran arose, and began to reveal the secrets of his prison; he declared, that every thing which had been said of hell was only a pleasantry; but Columban was so shocked with his impiety, that he very prudently ordained him to be again committed to the earth. Poor Oran was engulfed, and thus for ever ended his gossiping.”

Pennant has gone laboriously out of his way to relate a story so absurd, and so contrary to the character of St. Columban. It is clear that this tale is of modern invention; for Buchanan, who detested the monks, would not, had he known it, have spoken in such honourable terms of St. Columban, and of the pious and learned monks of I-Colm-Kill.

The ruins of the cathedral have nothing remarkable in them; they, however, serve as a contrast, by recalling the splendour of this edifice with the dreary and barren aspect of the isles and rocks which surround it. This church, as well as other gothic cathedrals, is built in the form of a cross, in the middle of which rises a square massive tower, and without ornament. The whole of this edifice, and those which surround it, are built of red granite from the neighbouring bank of the Isle of Mull. I cannot conceive where Dr. Johnson was able to find traces of Roman workmanship in a building evidently gothic, and above all, in an island into which the Romans have never penetrated. The architecture of the Cathedral, if we except the great window towards the east, does not display, however, those light and varied forms, those innumerable and often elegant details, which the great gothic monuments present in other parts of Great Britain: here, all is heavy and massive.

The interior of the church is, however, more carefully worked than the exterior ; we still see there the colonnades terminating by arches, which separate the lateral chapels from the body of the church ; the chapters of the pillars are short and thick, and contain rude representations, in bas relief, from some passages of the holy scriptures, such as the expulsion of our first parents from paradise, as well as fantastic arabesques and imperfect designs. There are also to be seen in the church, the tombs of two abbots of Iona, of the names of Mackinnon and Mackenzie, or Mackenneth ; both are represented in a sleeping position on their tombs, and attired in their pontifical robes, with mitres on their heads and crosses in their hands. The statue of the first of these prelates is in a remarkable state of preservation ; and although the epitaph, which is engraven in gothic characters round the grave-stone, bears the date of the year 1500, this figure appears recently sculptured.

At the foot of the walls of the abbey we were shown the stone which covers the grave of St. Columban, but it bears no inscription nor sculpture. Near it is a statue of black marble, in a mutilated state, which is called the *Black Rock*. The chiefs of the Hebridean [tribes laid their hands on this block when pronouncing the oath of allegiance to the sovereign of Scotland. We also remarked the beautiful cross, named the Cross of St. Martin, or Maclean. It still stands before the entrance of the church, its form is elegant, and it is sculptured on both sides ; one bearing fantastical ornaments, the other representing the serpent and Adam and Eve receiving the apple.

Our guides would not allow us to quit these ruins without showing us the *clacha brath*, or " world's end stones," which are deposited in a part of the wall between the cathedral and the burying-ground of St. Oran ; these are three stone balls, contained in a basin of the same material. The tradition is, that the end of the world will arrive when the basin shall have been completely worn by the friction of the balls ; and it is in order to hasten that solemn moment, that all who come to Iona believe themselves obliged to whirl round the ball three times in the direction of the sun's course.

We cannot be astonished, that a people naturally superstitious, should attach ideas of fatality to these ruins and tombs, and to so many monuments which recal the vanity of all human grandeur : thus, we find that the inhabitants of Iona greatly surpass in credulity those of the Hebrides. The idea of the " world's end stones" is ancient, and appears to have prevailed at the time that the monks inhabited the abbey. According to Mr. Sacheverel, governor of the Isle of Man, who

visited Iona in 1688, there were, within the abbey, three fine globes of white marble placed in three stone basins, which were the objects of the same belief as the *clacha brath* of the present day, and were destroyed by order of the protestant synod of Argyle. An ancient Gaelic prophecy, which is still repeated, shows the idea of the Hebrideans as to the superiority of the small isle of Iona over all the neighbouring countries, and of the part it was to act in that terrible moment, when a new deluge would inundate the earth. According to this prediction, when all the surrounding isles, when Ireland itself shall have disappeared under the waters, the holy I-Colm-Kill will still proudly raise its head, during the period of seven years, above the liquid plain.

Beyond the village are to be seen the ruins of two convents of canons and canonesses, the bare walls of which still remain; we were shown the chapel of one of these convents, and some tombs of abbesses, monks, and priests. The stones, half covered with earth and turf, are loaded with sculptures and inscriptions in gothic characters. If the view of these mausolea of the middle ages, in the dreary churches of remote centuries; if these great figures, extended on their tombs with clasped hands, their countenances turned towards heaven, and their prostrate bodies, produce a strong and solemn impression on the mind of the traveller, who surveys the gothic vaults of edifices still consecrated to worship and to prayer, how much more will he experience, when he contemplates these rude monuments amidst a mass of ruins, in a wild and barren country, and on the banks of a boundless sea;—when he sees the ground strewn with grave-stones, exposed to the atmosphere from the time the vaults which enclosed them have ceased to exist;—when, in fine, the sea winds, by agitating the stalks of the nettles and wild grass, discover, at times, the great figure of an old warrior, or the immoveable statue of a venerable prelate!

On viewing the ancient I-Colm-Kill, so changed and so fallen, I was overcome with melancholy reflection; thus we involuntarily look back to the past;—we seek to efface, by reflection, the ravages of time;—to re-establish those ruined edifices, and wish to see them again, such as they were formerly with their pious inhabitants. In these churches and convents, formerly enriched by the gifts of sovereigns, where precious metals and rich stuffs once decorated the altars, and vaulted roofs re-echoed with the sacred melody of organs, we no longer hear any sounds but the rolling of the floods, and the howling of the winds, through ruins and deserted cloisters. Formerly, at every hour of the day, and even night, the Eternal

was adored in Iona; but, at this day, worship is no longer celebrated, and the inhabitants are obliged to go to the church in the Isle of Mull, at a distance of several miles. Ignorance and idleness have succeeded labour and study, and the gardens, which were formerly cultivated by the friars, are now become waste. Formerly, a vessel, when navigating by night in the canal of Iona, was guided by the sound of the bells of the abbey; whilst the glimmering lamp which burned in the cell of a monk,—laboriously occupied in copying an ancient manuscript, served as a beacon to the pilot to direct him in these dangerous latitudes. Overtaken by the tempest, or wrecked upon the rocky shore, he was sure to find an hospitable asylum and consolation amongst these good fathers,—remedies for all his misfortunes. At present, the poor inhabitants of Iona would willingly share all they have with a stranger in distress, but they have scarcely sufficient for their own wants.

Strangers have often testified their regret on seeing the inhabitants of this place, so well known for their religious habits in former times, compelled to go out of their isle to a place of worship. Pennant, Johnson, and Knox, have strongly expressed their surprise at this striking contrast; and they have also deplored the want of the means of instruction for youth. This latter circumstance, at least, has been taken into consideration, and at present I-Colm-Kill possesses a school; the master who directs it appears to be a well-informed man. I was agreeably surprised to hear him speak of Mont-Blanc, in Switzerland, of its ice and perpetual snows, and address to me some very sensible questions on objects so remote from these districts.

We promised to reward our boatmen for their past zeal, by treating them with a dance at Iona, in the evening, as dancing is the favorite amusement of the Hebrideans of all ages. They brought us a fiddler, and we invited the inhabitants of the village to a dance in our hut. We much admired the gaiety, the liveliness of their national dances, and the address with which they avoided the deep holes of the ground on which they leaped. The luxury of floors is unknown here, and in the interior of the houses the inhabitants still tread on a damp and rough soil. We plied the dancers with *toddy*, and in the intervals between the reels they sung several Gaelic songs in full chorus. Although these songs, as well as those we heard on the sea, consisted of a solo and chorus, they differed little in the rhyme, but the words were different; the airs composed to be sung on the water, and accompanied by the noise of the oars, are called *jorrams*, the others bear the name of *Oran luathaidh*, and are only sung on land to amuse the workmen

in their labours ; they are a species of ballads, or recitations of adventures, sometimes heroic or tragical, and at other times of a comic and burlesque character.

The men and women seated themselves in a circle and joined hands, or held, in couples, the end of a handkerchief, with which they kept time during the chorus. Two of our boatmen, who were the leaders, made all kinds of grimaces and apish tricks whilst singing, striking themselves on the head one against the other with all the dexterity of Italian buffoons, while the rest of the company were convulsed with laughter. This scene greatly amused us, and we were astonished to see, under so foggy an atmosphere, in so dreary a climate, a people animated by that gaiety and cheerfulness, which we are apt to attribute exclusively to those nations who inhabit the delightful countries of the south of Europe.

It required all the fatigue of a long journey, replete with a thousand interesting scenes, to enable us to pass the night in our miserable abode ; some of our party were glad to find a wretched bed, without either mattrass or sheets ; others were obliged to content themselves with a bed of straw, spread on the cold damp ground.

*August 18.* At an early hour we quitted our miserable bed, and again embarked on our return to Ulva. The waves threw upon the coast the wrecks of several ships. These wrecks belong by right to the Duke of Argyle, as grand admiral of Scotland, but he generally yields them up to the proprietors of the isles on which they have been found, which at times produces a considerable revenue to the latter ; since, by these means, they not only acquire a great quantity of wood and iron-work, which are valuable in the Hebrides, but frequently some casks of wine, forming part of the cargo of vessels lost in the Atlantic. The sea brings also, we were told, extraordinary foreign seeds and fruits. From what they said, I suppose they meant the American fruits, of which several travellers have spoken, and the arrival of which, on the coasts of the Hebrides and Norway, has been often mentioned, as a proof of the existence of a great current which crosses the Atlantic, from the eastern coasts of America to the shores of the northern countries of Europe.

After passing near the rocks of Inch-Kenneth, we returned to Ulva, where we had the pleasure of engaging Mr. Macdonald, the brother of Clanronald, who was at Ulva-House, to accompany us in our visit to the isles, which belonged to his brother. During the last three days of my residence at Ulva-House, English travellers were continually arriving. They all

wished to see Staffa, which is generally the term of their maritime excursions, and passed by Ulva, most of them alighting at Ulva-House.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM ULVA TO COLL AND TIREE.

*Port of Tobermory.—Proofs of the Existence of the great Current from the Shores of America to the Hebrides, &c.*

*August 28th.* It was with much regret I quitted Ulva-House, and took leave of its amiable inmates. Mr. Macdonald gave me letters of recommendation to all the proprietors of the isles which we were about to visit; he also took care to procure us excellent horses and a guide to conduct us to Tobermory, across the mountains to the north of Mull. We set out pretty late in the morning, and witnessed the manner by which horses are conveyed across the strait of Ulva; they are fastened by the head to the boat, which they are also compelled to follow by swimming. Having arrived in the Isle of Mull, we mounted on horseback, and first passed through the fine farm of Laggan-Ulva; by following a narrow path along the shore, we passed near the cascade seen from Ulva-House. This cascade, already rendered exceedingly terrific by the height of the basaltic rock from which it rushes, had been much swollen by the late rains. A few miles further we passed the beautiful estate of Torloisk, on our right, belonging to Mrs. Clephan-Maclean. The house is a handsome structure, and stands on a fine eminence clothed with verdure, and covered with trees and shrubs. Having reached Balachroi, a small village belonging to Mr. Maclean of Coll, we next passed over a chain of hills covered with heath, and arrived at a narrow and dreary lake, designated in the map by the name of Loch-Friza, surrounded by barren and deserted mountains. After climbing up a second chain of hills, and discovering other lakes as dreary as the former, the fine Port of Tobermory suddenly burst upon our view, and it was not without an agreeable surprise that we saw the charming village of that name, which, by the beauty of its situation, the cleanliness and even elegance of the houses, strongly contrasted with the uncultivated regions we had just quitted. Tobermory signifies in Gaelic, Mary's Well, and was formerly celebrated for a foun-

tain consecrated to the virgin. It is a small town situate at the northern extremity of the Isle of Mull, and owes its existence to the efforts (unfortunately too feebly supported,) of the Society for the Encouragement of Sea Fishing in the Hebrides. When Pennant and Knox visited these isles, the Port of Tobermory was not in existence; for both travellers, who speak with admiration of the beauty of the bay, take no notice of the village. It is probable that what is at present a small town, then much resembled those poor hamlets which are every where seen in the Isle of Mull, and was too insignificant to attract the attention of travellers. At the present day a line of elegant stone houses, of two stories, and covered with slate, rises between a hill and the bay. A handsome quay, of hewn stone, separates them from the sea, and allows trading vessels to approach the shore, so as to load and unload their cargoes. At Tobermory we found a good inn and shops, seldom to be met with in these districts; there is altogether an air of comfort and cleanliness in this place, which is very rare in the Hebrides. The prohibitory laws which exist in Scotland, particularly those relative to commerce and to the manufactory of salt, are the principal and notorious causes of the deplorable state of the fishery in the Hebrides, and why this sea port, which was intended to develop the industry of the inhabitants and diffuse abundance in this part of Mull, has not produced such effects, is rather irreconcilable. The united efforts of the Hebridean proprietors, and of the Society for the Encouragement of Fishery, have not yet succeeded in obtaining from the legislative powers the revocation of those laws so strongly called for by all the islanders.

The bay of Tobermory has acquired some celebrity in history, by the shipwreck of the Spanish frigate, the Florida, which belonged to the famous Armada. It is said that the body of the vessel still remains at the bottom of the water; several persons have been often employed to draw up the effects which it contains, and many precious articles have been discovered. I saw in the house of Colonel Maclean, in the Isle of Coll, some specimens of very fine foreign wood, which has been obtained from this vessel, and converted into chimney ornaments. I was assured also, that at the time of the shipwreck of the Florida, in 1588, some Spanish horses, which were on board, succeeded in escaping and gaining the shore; that they had multiplied in the Isle of Mull, and that the intermixture of this foreign race, with that which previously existed in the country, had produced the beautiful species of small horses which are now seen in Mull, and which are more esteemed than all others in

the Hebrides; I cannot, however, vouch for the truth of this statement.

*August 30th.* We set sail for the Isle of Coll, and after having sailed six hours, in the finest weather, we cast anchor in the small bay of Brakalla. Leaving our vessel, we took the small boat and landed on the rocks, from whence we proceeded towards the house of Mr. Maclean, the proprietor of Coll, whom I had the pleasure of knowing in Edinburgh. We learned with great regret, that he had set out with his family, the evening before, for the Isle of Sky. Mr. Maclean's steward, who came out to meet us, hastened to invite us, in the name of his master, to fix our abode at his house as long as we staid at Coll. He offered to accompany us wherever we chose, and was in every way anxious to make himself agreeable to us.

The house of the Laird of Coll is modern, elegantly built, and situated at some distance from the bay; we still perceived, on the banks of the sea, the ruins of the ancient Castle of Coll, the former residence of the family of Maclean before the new house was built. The apartments are not spacious, but they are very convenient, and furnished with much taste and neatness. There is a good library, which is a valuable object for a family, who often pass the whole year in a place bereft of all the pleasures of society.

The Isle of Coll is destitute of those grand scenes which distinguish the Hebridean landscapes; having no high and picturesque rocks or mountains, the absence of all kinds of trees is also still more felt. Although the land is in general barren, it is nevertheless, in many places, covered with fine meadows and rich pasturage. Mr. Maclean possesses, to the westward of his house, a vast plain which produces hay of an excellent quality; I witnessed the harvest which had just commenced; this rural occupation, which every where presents an animated scene, has a more pleasing effect in the Hebrides, as it is to be met with there. Agriculture and fishing occupy the inhabitants, whose number is upwards of a thousand. In all our walks we had ample reason to congratulate ourselves with their hospitality. The Gaelic language is more generally spoken than the English, and many of the inhabitants do not understand the latter. The following may be considered as a striking instance of the scrupulous attachment of the inhabitants to the custom of remote ages. When a stranger enters the hut of a peasant, and asks for milk, the man or woman fills a wooden bowl, and after having first tasted it, presents it to the applicant. This is a method of convincing him that the drink contains nothing pernicious in



it; such a precaution might have been necessary when the armed clans were engaged in interminable and cruel wars, and when a Highlander, on entering a strange hut, was ignorant whether it was the dwelling of a friend or an enemy.

Mr. Maclean is not the sole proprietor of Coll; the Duke of Argyle possesses a third, in the northern part of it. The greater part of the inhabitants belong to the tribes of Maclean and Campbell. The isle is divided into two parishes, each of which has its church and school.

At Coll we clearly ascertained the existence of the great current, which, after sweeping the coasts of America, runs through the Atlantic, and beats the western coasts of the northern countries of Europe. Every winter foreign seeds and pieces of American wood are thrown upon the shore. I saw at Mr. Maclean's house the entire trunk of a mahogany tree which had been thrown on the coast by the current; I was also shown a beautiful tortoise-shell and two or three cocoa-nuts, which the sea had thrown up, and which are preserved as curiosities.

*September 3d.* We set out at an early hour, accompanied by Mr. Maclean, the steward, in order to visit the Isle of Tiree, situated to the south of Coll. These two isles are separated by a strait of five miles in breadth, in the midst of which the little Isle of Guna is situated. Having reached the southern extremity of Coll, we took a small boat which two boatmen drew with great difficulty from the sand in which it was wedged. The canal between Coll and Guna is very narrow, and dangerous, from the quantity of sand-banks and shallow places with which it abounds; and our boatmen were frequently obliged to jump into the water to push the boat from the sand-banks. Having surveyed the Isle of Guna, consisting entirely of rocks of gneiss, we were an hour in reaching Tiree, after sailing with very fine weather and a calm sea.

Tiree presents the most agreeable appearance after passing a rampart of sands which border the shore. It is, undoubtedly, the most fertile and cultivated of all the Hebrides; its length is twelve miles, and its greatest breadth, three. This isle belongs entirely to the Duke of Argyle, and the number of the inhabitants is upwards of 2,400. The northern part where we landed is, like the south of Coll, very sandy; we passed by the foot of several high banks of sand, formed by hurricanes, but soon reached a fertile region, covered with meadows and cultivated lands, where barley, oats, clover, and potatoes grow to great advantage. One half of the surface of Tiree is worth cultivation. The small villages which we passed through, appeared to me cleaner and more com-

pact, than those of the other isles; the habitations are better constructed, and the roofs built with more care. The walls of the houses are extremely thick, and tastefully built with stones placed together without any cement. A multitude of plants, of a fine foliage, grow in the interstices of the stones, and overshadow the entrance into the houses with a canopy of the finest green. In other respects, the interior of these habitations generally resembles the huts of the Hebrides.

We entered a village situate on the eastern coast, where a small port, with a fine pier, has been built. The vessels of Scotland and Ireland engaged in the coasting trade may refit here, in case of bad weather, and find the necessary articles to repair their damage. We saw several sloops in the port, waiting a favourable wind. From thence we entered a plain, of three square miles in surface, the largest and most level plain in the Hebrides, and which is every where adorned by the finest verdure. We passed through a part of it in order to arrive at the farm of Balaphaitrich, belonging to Mr. Campbell. The house is small, but built in a good style, and stands on the western side of the isle, on the banks of the sea, and at the entrance of the great plains on the sea shore.

In the south of the isle, we perceived a rock, on which an innumerable multitude of sea birds build their nests. No species of serpents or reptiles is known here. I asked one of the natives if there were any wild animals. "Yes," he replied, "we have a great quantity of rats, which commit much damage; the rat is the largest, and perhaps the only wild quadruped in Tiree."

In the winter of 1806, a storm cast ashore at Tiree no less than eighty young whales, the largest of which measured twenty feet in length; but the inhabitants not being provided with the necessary articles to collect the oil, could only derive a very small profit from it.

We passed the rest of the day and night at Balaphaitrich, where Mr. Campbell received us with all the hospitality of the ancient Hebrideans. During the repast, which lasted all the evening, a peasant, successor of the ancient bards, came and seated himself near a window, and sung, or rather recited, in a monotonous tone, several Gaelic poems, very different from the wild *Jorrams*, as the latter have at least in their discordant harshness, a peculiar expression, which is not altogether without its attractions.

*September 4th.* We quitted Balaphaitrich in order to return to Coll, accompanied by Mr. Campbell and Mr. M'Coll, pastor of the Isle of Tiree, who accompanied us as far as the village, where we found a boat ready to cross the strait. Be-

fore embarking we stopped a few minutes in a hut. An old man, who lived there, recited to us the fragment of a Gaelic poem, which Mr. M'Coll translated to me in English; I at once recognized, from the literal translation which he gave me, that the subject was the death of Oscar, such as has been published by Macpherson in the First Book of Temora. I particularly remarked the touching episode of the two dogs, Bran and Luath, howling at the feet of the heroes who had just expired.

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## CHAPTER V.

### FROM COLL TO CANNA.

*Scour Eigg.—Horrid Cruelty exercised by the Macleods against the Macdonalds.—Portrait of an ancient Highlander.—Isle of Rum.—Compass Hill.—Protestants of the Golden-headed Cane.*

September 8th. We set sail from Coll at 10 o'clock, with a slight wind from the north-west. The weather was very fine; and having cleared the bay, we enjoyed a most enchanting prospect. On the north we saw the Isles of Rum and Eigg, towards which we steered; and on the east, the Isle of Mull and its high mountains. Whilst we slowly proceeded, with a slight wind, along the eastern coast of Coll, we perceived, at a little distance from us, the back of an enormous whale. Our sailors estimated its length from fifty to sixty feet; it showed itself two or three times in succession, and then disappeared altogether. I had never before seen a whale, and this one did not appear to me of an extraordinary size; but having before me such objects for comparison, as the sea, immense mountains, and entire islands, it is by no means extraordinary that this animal appeared to me less than it really was.

The night, although fine, was very cold, and we easily perceived, by the temperature of the air, that we were sailing in a latitude far advanced towards the north; we had in fact passed the 57th degree of latitude. Having descended into our cabin, we found a good peat fire, and after a light repast, we retired to rest, and slept until the moment the sailors roused us to announce that we had anchored in a small bay of the Isle of Eigg. It was one o'clock in the morning when we stepped

into the boat. By the light of the stars, we could distinguish the bay, surrounded nearly on all sides with rocks; and the mountain of Scour Eigg, the highest summit of the isle, rising like an imposing shadow above our heads.

Guided by our sailors, we groped, in the dark, across the rocks, till we came to two or three butts; when we knocked at the door of one of them. An old man rose to admit us; and notwithstanding the early hour, he gave us a hearty reception. A large bottle of whiskey, and some bread and cheese, were immediately set before us; and during this frugal repast, a small neat chamber was prepared for us, where we slept. Clanronald is the proprietor of the Isle of Eigg, and we resolved not to inform our host, till the next day, that he had the good fortune to lodge the brother of his Laird; fearing that were this known sooner, we should not have had a moment's repose. The good old man was a Macdonald, an ancient soldier; he had fought at the battle of Quebec, and by the side of General Wolfe. He also recollected, in his infancy, following his father at the battle of Culloden, where he served in the army of Prince Charles Stuart.

*September 9th.* The secret was already discovered before we arose, and the good man, who had learned from the sailors, that the brother of the chief of the Macdonalds was in the house, hastened, as soon as we were dressed, to pay his respects to him; his wife clasped him in her arms, and our breakfast, in some degree, proved the effects of their joy, for they gave us all they possessed. These good people never once kept their eyes off Mr. Macdonald, and more than once blessed the happy day on which he entered their hut.

Accompanied by our host, we commenced operations by ascending the Scour Eigg, which is, as I have said, the name of the highest summit of the isle. The rocks, of which the Scour Eigg is formed, rise gradually from the western part of the Eigg, in the form of an inclined angle, its highest elevation being towards the east; this angle is suddenly terminated by a precipice of many hundred feet. From the base of this immense rock, the ground descends by a gentle declivity towards the sea. I cannot give a better idea of the figure of the angle which forms the summit of Scour Eigg, than in comparing it to the crest of an ancient helmet; and the ground under the rock to the helmet itself. From the hut of Macdonald, which is on the eastern side of the isle, we had, looking westward, the view of Scour Eigg in the foreground. From this situation, the mountain presented a most singular appearance, and resembled an enormous tower, rising to a great height above all the surrounding hills. These hills are



*The 'Lair of Egg' from the East*



every where covered with thick heath, except in the hollow and steep places, where the rock is here and there bare. On this rock, are thousands of small regular pillars, forming the long ridge which bound the Scour Eigg, extending from east to west, to a length of nearly two miles. Having reached the eastern part of the ridge, on the summit of the perpendicular rock which terminates it, we suddenly burst on a most magnificent view. Standing on the top of this rock, we were surrounded on the north, the east, and the south, by deep precipices. The wind blew hard, which would not allow us to remain here long, to enjoy, as much as we wished, so fine a panorama, which the serenity of the sky enabled us to discern in its full extent.

Among the numerous caverns on the sea-shore, there is one which is but too celebrated in the history of this small isle. The Macleods, a tribe who inhabited the Isle of Sky, having had a quarrel with the Macdonalds of the Isle of Eigg, resolved, according to the custom of those warlike tribes, to terminate their difference by the force of arms. Having formed a project of attacking the Macdonalds by surprise, in their isle, and of attaining the most decisive revenge, they collected all their boats, and filled them with armed men. Favoured by the wind, this formidable expedition set sail, and soon appeared in sight of the Isle of Eigg. The Macdonalds, alarmed at the approach of an enemy, so superior in numbers, despaired of being able to resist by force, and began to conceal themselves in a cavern of their isle, the entrance to which could not easily be discovered, being low and overgrown with briars. The Macleods disembarked in the Isle of Eigg, but to their great surprise, finding their project defeated, that the isle was deserted, and all the inhabitants had disappeared, they re-entered their boats, and again set sail for the Isle of Sky. In the interval, the Macdonalds judged that it was now time to leave their retreat: they imagined that the Macleods were entirely gone, and sent one of their party to a neighbouring rock, in order to watch the progress of the enemy. From an elevated spot, the spy was soon discovered by the small flotilla, which instantly turned round. Suspecting that the inhabitants of Eigg had found some retreat in their isle, the Macleods again disembarked. The imprudent Macdonald, seeing them return, entered into the cavern; but unfortunately, the trace of his foot-steps, on a recent fall of snow, indicated to their enemies the fatal cavern; they approached towards it, and being unable to enter it by force, they conceived the horrible design of suffocating at once the whole of these unfortunate people. They kindled an enormous fire at the entrance of the

cavern, the smoke of which, driven by the wind, soon filled the interior, and destroyed all those who were within! This atrocious act is well calculated to afford an idea of the hatred which formerly existed between those island savages.

We could not at first perceive the entrance to the cavern, which was concealed by briars and thorns; it is so low, that we were obliged to crawl on our hands and knees, in order to penetrate into it; but after advancing a short distance, we found ourselves in a spacious cavern. Having lit a flambeau, we penetrated as far as we could into this long and narrow cavern. The sight of the walls, still blackened by the smoke, and, above all, the quantity of human bones and skulls scattered on the ground, were for us too striking proofs of the truth of that horrid catastrophe; and the effect produced on us by the unexpected discovery of these human skulls, and the horror which momentarily overcame us, can be easier imagined than described.

We employed the rest of the day in visiting the farm of Laig, occupied by one of Clanronald's farmers, named also Macdonald, to whom we had a strong recommendation, as being a representative of the ancient Highlanders, &c. preserving all their manners and customs to this day: we soon perceived this by the cordial reception which the good old man gave us. He detained us to dinner, but before the cloth was laid, he made us drink a full glass of whiskey to the health of each. The dinner was simple, but very good. From the time we left Ulva we had not tasted bread till now, having been accustomed to eat oatmeal cakes: thus nothing was wanting for our comfort. Our host related to us many interesting stories of Prince Charles, respecting whom he could not speak without visible emotion. He designated the Duke of Argyle and the Earl of Breadalbane by the simple appellations of Breadalbane and Argyle. It was not, however, with him a mark of familiarity or of disdain; but he followed the ancient Scottish custom of designating nobles, proprietors, or farmers, by the names of their fiefs, their domains, or their farms, without adding that of their family or any other title. According to this custom, the boatmen of Mr. Macdonald, of Staffa, whether in speaking of, or addressing themselves to him, called him simply Staffa, as the most respectful title.

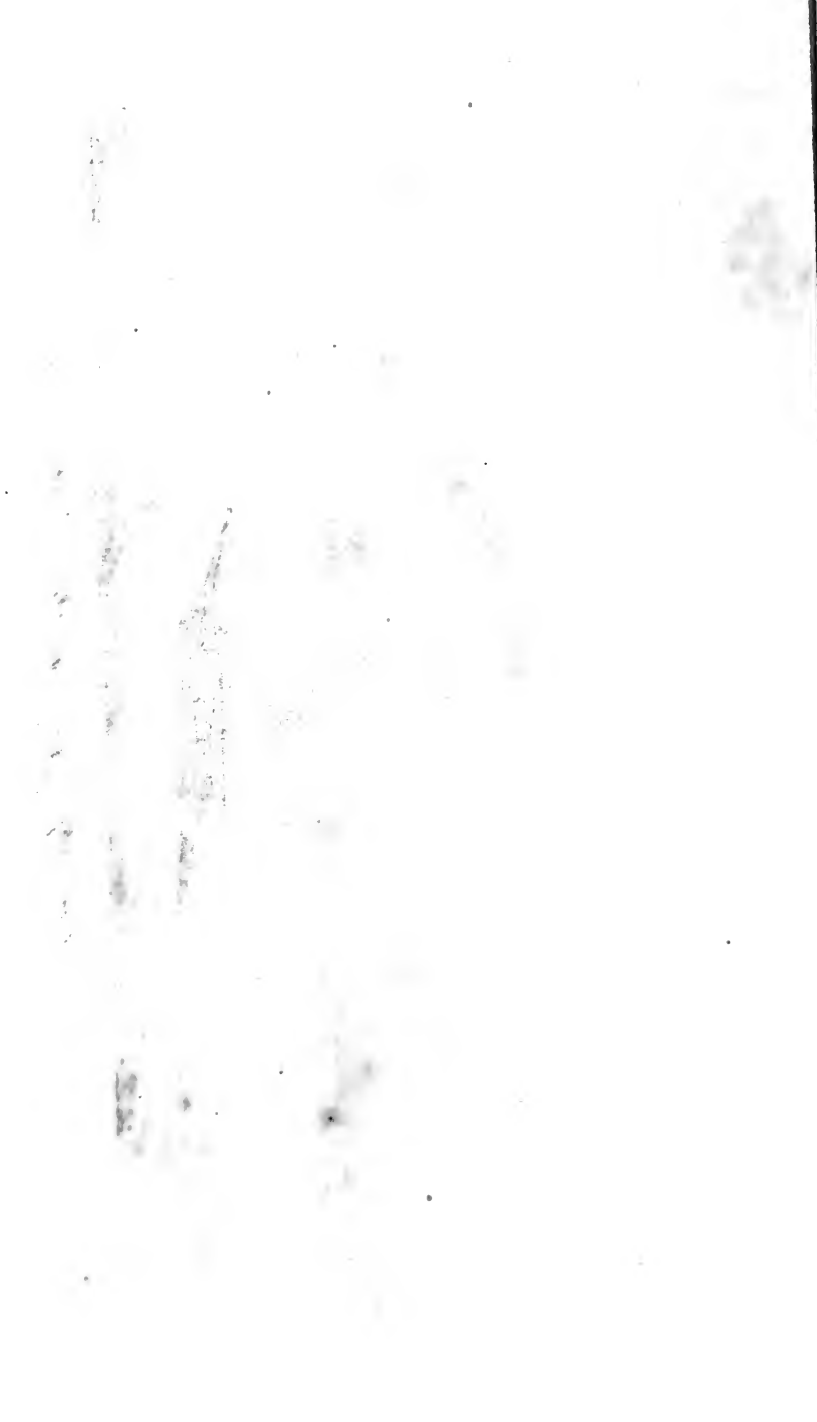
When the old man mentioned the Campbells, we discovered in his conversation some traces of that animosity which formerly existed between the two tribes. But to hear him, all the peers of the kingdom were nothing by the side of Clanronald, his chief, whose name was repeated every instant in his conversation. Upon the whole, nothing was more singular





W. Read, Sc.

*The Sails of Egg from the South East.*



than his whole deportment; it was the tone, the manners of an epoch which had long passed away, and of a generation almost extinct.

After dinner, according to custom, he gave several toasts; the first was to the King, the second, in a bumper, to Clanronald. He also diverted us greatly by singing some Gaelic songs; and as he was famed for knowing the airs of the bagpipe better than any professed piper, we begged him to give us some specimens. He then sung some pibrochs, with all their difficult passages, pleasingly imitating with his voice the sound of the bagpipe.

The greatest curiosity at this good man's house was a Gaelic manuscript, which, he told us, was written by his grandfather. It was the only manuscript of this kind which I had yet seen, and was written in peculiar characters, long since out of use. I could not ascertain the contents of this manuscript, but at least I was convinced that the Gaelic, whatever may be said of it, was formerly a language possessing very peculiar characters.

On our departure, the good old Laig accompanied us to the door of his house; there, filling a glass of whiskey, he first drank himself, and then pouring out a bumper to each in succession, we emptied it, at the same time testifying our gratitude for his hospitality. This little ceremony is a very ancient custom denominated *Door Drink* (*Deoch an Dorus*), and is similar to the parting cup amongst the natives of Switzerland. After taking leave of our excellent host, we returned to the pastor of the Isle of Eigg, who had kindly invited us to accept of his house during the time that we remained in the isle.

*Sunday, September 13.* We were conducted to an ancient ruined chapel, enclosing numerous tombs; these tombs are sculptured like those of Iona, and all bear the arms of the Macdonalds. I returned to the parsonage in order to prepare for our departure, and to pack up and label the specimens of minerals which I had collected; but, to my extreme regret, this circumstance gave great offence to the inmates of the house, it being Sunday. But the people were still more shocked when they learned that Mr. Campbell was gone out to collect some mineral substances, although to avoid all reproach he had not taken a hammer with him. Such is the strictness of custom in this part of Scotland, that every thing having the least appearance of labour is strictly proscribed on that day.

The Isle of Eigg is about five miles long, and three broad; its population is 400 souls. Mr. Macdonald, the proprietor of Eigg, possesses no house where he can reside. A steward manages his domain, and levies the annual contributions from the great farmers, or *tacksmen*, who here, as in all parts of the

Highlands, hold leases, directly from the proprietor, of the portions of land which are cultivated by *cottagers*, to whom they under-let, together with a hut, and some acres of land for their own use. The parish in which Eigg is situated consists of the Isles of Muck and Canna, which renders the pastor's charge equally painful and dangerous. Nothing can be more satisfactory than the manner in which Mr. Maclean, as well as other ministers of isles, fulfil this difficult vocation. Although his residence is at the Isle of Eigg, he does not neglect his pastoral duties in the other isles belonging to his charge. He exposes himself to the dangers of storms and perilous seas, in order to visit his parishioners at Muck and Canna, whenever the winds permit him; and this respectable ecclesiastic even braves the most stormy seas, in an open boat, in order to administer the consolations of religion to those pious souls committed to his charge.

I learned with astonishment that nearly one half of the inhabitants of the Isle of Eigg profess the Catholic religion. They have a priest of their own persuasion, and a church which is consecrated to them. This priest is a Scotsman, who has been educated in France. Although the inhabitants of the two kinds of worship live on good terms with each other, I nevertheless heard in this small island several animated discussions on religious controversy. This is a subject of conversation which is treated with much warmth and spirit, but without bitterness or intolerance. We heard, with surprise, a repetition of arguments, and a kind of logic, which, in all the rest of Europe, have for many ages become obsolete.

*September 14.* Although the wind blew violently from the north-west, we set sail from the Isle of Eigg. The roaring of the winds, and the waves striking with fury the sides of our small vessel, and seeming at every moment ready to dash it in pieces, the noise of the pump, which was continually working, and the surges breaking over our heads, did not fail giving us some uneasiness, and, above all, when we heard the cries of the sailors, whom the tempest had prevented hearing each other. However, towards evening, as we approached the Isle of Rum, the wind abated a little, and the sea being lower, I went upon deck, and witnessed the North Sea, at the approach of winter, in all its severity.

We had near us, on the west, the high and wild mountains of the Isle of Rum; on the north, the fine mountains of the Isle of Sky, with their tops covered with snow. The sea rolled its high billows, and broke against the rocks; whilst innumerable flights of sea-gulls, penguins, and other birds inhabiting the icy seas, were swimming, plunging, and flying, forming groups similar to swarms of bees, in all directions where shoals of

herrings, swimming at the surface of the waters, presented an abundant and easy prey. In the centre of these groups of noisy birds, we saw from time to time rising above the water, the enormous back of a whale, which was also in pursuit of herrings. Our vessel, which passed more than once through these groups of birds, never alarmed them; they flew in the midst of our rigging, uttering plaintive cries, without fear or suspicion, whilst one or two whales, infinitely larger than our vessel, rolled from one side to the other, raising their immense backs, of a brownish colour, and surmounted by a large mass of flesh, which serves them for fins. The Hebrideans do not engage in whale-fishing, it being too dangerous in such latitudes. Whale-fishing can only be practised in large seas, remote from land and isles. The *sun-fish* is sometimes pursued in the Hebrides; but not having seen this animal, I cannot say to what species it belongs.

At nine o'clock in the evening we entered the Bay of Kinloch (Isle of Rum). There we cast anchor, and landed at a small village, where we intended passing the night.

Colonel Maclean, of Coll, is sole proprietor of the Isle of Rum. The number of inhabitants is 443, all of whom are Protestants. It is said, that when the ancestor of Mr. Maclean took possession of the Isle of Rum, all the inhabitants were Catholics. The new proprietor, a zealous Protestant, seeing that the Catholic worship was established in one of his domains, entered the church one Sunday, during mass, and having driven out all the inhabitants who were assembled there, he shut the door, put the key into his pocket, and threatened with his golden-headed cane all those who dared to return to hear mass: from that moment all the inhabitants of Rum embraced the Protestant religion. The other Hebrideans, when alluding to this new mode of conversion, have continued ever since to call them the Protestants of the Golden-headed Cane\*.

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\* It is curious to reflect what trifling circumstances have occasioned the change or preservation of the established religion in certain places of Europe. At the time the Reformation penetrated into Switzerland, the government of the principality of Neufchatel, wishing to leave to the inhabitants an entire liberty of conscience, voted in each parish for and against the adoption of the new mode of worship. In all the parishes, except two, the majority of suffrages declared for the Protestant communion. The inhabitants of the small village of Creissier also assembled, and finding their votes equal, they were at a loss how to act. One of the inhabitants being found absent, viz. the shepherd who guarded the flocks on the mountains, they sent for him, in order to decide by his vote this important question; but he, being no friend to innovations, gave his voice in favour of the established religion, and thus this parish remains Catholic to the present day, in the midst of the Protestant cantons.

The islanders of Rum are reputed the happiest of the Hebrideans; both on account of the low rent which Mr. Maclean receives for his farms, and because the isle furnishes a great number of large and small cattle, which supply them all with meat. Their principal occupations are the care of cattle, fishing, and the gathering of sea-weed, which they burn for the purpose of extracting alkali.

After remaining all night in the village, the next morning we got into a fishing-boat, in order to pass over the narrow canal which separates Rum from the Isle of Canna. We landed near the house of Mr. Macneil, of Canna, who superintends the island for the proprietor, Mr. Macdonald, of Clanronald. Mr. Macneil received us with that cordial hospitality which is every where to be met with in the Hebrides, and we found in his house an excellent abode for the night.

What chiefly excited my curiosity in Canna was the *Compass Hill*, celebrated by all the seamen of the country for its action on the needle of the compass. We begged Mr. Macdonald to conduct us to it, and our sailors brought the compass from the vessel. After passing from terrace to terrace, and from rock to rock, as far as the top of Compass Hill, we tried our compass. In the first moment, and when we laid it on the ground, the needle turned towards the north; but on following along the ridge of the hill we reached a spot where the compass began to deviate, and the needle soon lost all magnetic power; we saw it sensitively point to the south, north, east, or west. Further, it indicated only the south-west; further still, the south; and at last we saw it again take its accustomed position towards the north. This phenomenon is owing to the quantity of magnetic iron which the basalt of this hill contains, in such a quantity, that a morsel detached from the basalt is at times sufficient to move the needle: it is also owing to a vein of magnetic iron in the interior of the rock. This phenomenon, besides, is far from being so remarkable as I was led to believe from the accounts of the country people, and those of ancient authors: it was also pretended that the effect of this hill was felt at a distance, and that mariners, navigating in the arm of the sea between Sky and Canna, saw the needle of their compass turning itself against the latter island.

I have nothing particular to say respecting the inhabitants of Canna, the number of whom amount to 300. They are all Catholics, with the exception of two or three families, among whom is that of Mr. Macneil, who profess the reformed religion.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FROM CANNA TO SKY.

*Kilbride House.—Benbecula.—Reception of a Clanronald.—St. Kilda.—Isle of Sky.—Talisker House.—Cullen Mountains.—Departure from the Hebrides.—Isle of Eriskay; famous for being the Landing-place of Prince Charles Stuart.*

September 17. Our sailors came at an early hour in the morning to inform us that the weather was fine, and the wind slight, but blowing towards Long Island. Curiosity to see this island, and the pleasure of traversing a country which no traveller had yet visited, made us forget the distance, the advanced state of the season, the uncertainty, and perhaps the danger of returning. We gave orders to get all ready, and immediately embarked. We coasted some time along the basaltic rocks of the south of Canna, then, after doubling that island, we steered towards the west, where we perceived the blue hills of South Uist, like a mist in the horizon. We were eleven hours at sea, and during this long but agreeable passage we saw nothing worthy of attention, with the exception of two or three vessels, in full sail, coming from Norway or the Baltic, and destined for the south. We arrived at sun-set on the banks of Long Island, which is an assemblage of different isles, Barra, Eriskay, South Uist, &c. all similar in appearance, and separated from each other by narrow arms of the sea. We now reached the small isle of Eriskay, a rock about a mile in diameter, on which are some houses and pasturage, where Mr. Macdonald, of Boisdale, proprietor of a part of South Uist, breeds some cattle.

We there met the proprietor himself, for whom his brother, Mr. Macdonald, of Staffa, had given me a letter: we met with the most friendly reception from him; he offered us places in his boat to repair with him to his abode at Kilbride-house, in the Isle of South Uist. He was at first, on seeing us at a distance, astonished at the appearance of strangers in this district; before even knowing who we were, his reception was at once polite and hospitable. He conducted us to the shore, where his boat was waiting to convey us across the dangerous strait of Eriskay; but the beauty of the weather, the serenity of the sky, and the perfect calmness of the sea, removed all idea of danger.

The Isle of Eriskay has acquired great celebrity among the  
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classic sites in the history of Scotland. It was there that Prince Charles disembarked, in June, 1745, when he arrived from France, in a brig of eighteen guns, and repaired to the western coast of Scotland, followed only by seven intrepid companions, with some arms and a little money. Like a brave hero, this prince, with such slender means, began the expedition which at first was so brilliant, but ended in so disastrous a manner. After the battle of Culloden had ruined all his hopes, he was seen an exile and a fugitive wandering in the same isles where he had formerly presented himself as a warrior thirsting for glory and battle. The inhabitants of these isles, not less heroic for their noble and generous attachment to their unfortunate prince, than for the valour with which they had aided his triumph on the fields of Falkirk and Gladsmuir, braved the greatest danger in order to rescue their prince from the troops which pursued him from isle to isle, and from cottage to cottage.

We landed at Kilbride, a handsome country-seat, situate on the sea-coast, in the southern part of the Isle of Uist. Mr. Macdonald now introduced us to his family; no words can describe the pleasure a traveller feels when, in the midst of these retired and wild countries, he finds himself, as if by enchantment, transported into the most amiable and elegant society, where he might imagine himself at the extremity of the world, and far from every vestige of civilization. These are contrasts which particularly strike the stranger who travels through the Hebrides. For upwards of six weeks the inmates of Kilbride-House had received no intelligence from the rest of the world; thus we had many public events to relate, of which, but for our accidental arrival, they would for a time have remained in ignorance. The want of communication with the mother-country, is, perhaps, the greatest inconvenience experienced by the resident proprietors, and in no place is this inconvenience more felt than in this portion of Long Island, where, for want of regular packet-boats, a person may be several months in succession without the arrival either of letters or friends. As a proof how far the inhabitants of the Hebrides are in arrear for news, we could not find, during the whole of our journey, a newspaper of a later date than that which appeared in Edinburgh, on the evening of my departure from that city.

The country surrounding Kilbride-House is perhaps one of the most barren and uninteresting to be met with; there are no trees, and hardly any verdure; scarcely any thing is to be seen but rocks and sands; yet, notwithstanding, thanks to the sea, we there enjoyed an interesting prospect. At the west, we



saw the unbounded ocean, as no land rises between this island and the continent of America. At the south, the strait of Eriskay appears like a large river strewed with rocks and isles; beyond this rises the Isle of Barra, and several other small islands of sand, among which, that surmounted by the venerable ruins of the ancient Castle of Weavers, is particularly to be remarked. In fine, at a short distance from the house, we could see, at the east and at a distance, the Isle of Canua, and those of Rum and Sky, with their bold and picturesque mountains. Thus a residence in these wild places still presents to the lover of nature many sites capable of inspiring his rapture and admiration.

*September 19th.* We travelled through the Isle of Uist, in order to reach Benbecula, and during a route of nearly twenty-one miles, we scarcely saw more than three or four villages, or rather assemblages of poor huts, so thinly is this large island peopled. In fact, a surface of twenty-one miles in length, and nine in breadth, contains only 2500 inhabitants. Of all the Hebrideans, these islanders are the wildest, and civilization appears to have made but little progress among them. They only speak Gaelic, and do not understand a word of English. They still preserve all the customs, manners, and superstitions of the ancient Highlanders. The women wear the ancient costume, which I did not meet with elsewhere. It consists of a short petticoat of grey woollen, similar in shape to the Highland *kilt*, or to the short petticoat of the female peasants of Gougisberg, in Switzerland. Their feet and knees are naked, and the calves of their legs are covered with pieces of grey woollen stockings. The upper part of the body is clothed with a mantle or bodice, and above that they wear a small cloak of striped stuff of various colours. This dress is not altogether unbecoming, and would suit handsome women extremely well. The women of South-Uist have not however a single fine feature; their coarse faces appear discoloured by labour, whilst the greater part wear their flat and greasy hair hanging in long bunches over their foreheads and shoulders.\*

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\* The lower class of Highlanders are generally ugly, the characteristic traits of their figure are projecting cheek-bones, and clearness of the eyes and hair; their physiognomy is in general fine and intelligent. With the exception of the inhabitants of certain vallies, famed for the beauty of their figure, the Highlanders are of small stature, but they are well proportioned, and their limbs are nervous and vigorous; those of the higher classes, particularly the females, in the beauty of their figure and complexion present a striking contrast to the ugliness of the peasants. One might believe that they were two distinct races. The very different kind of life of the two classes is perhaps the cause of this contrast in the figure.

With this extraordinary plainness, they have, notwithstanding, an expression of candour and goodness, which is principally shewn in the hospitable reception they give to strangers; the reception which our fellow-traveller Mr. Macdonald met with surprised us. The northern portion of South-Uist, as well as Benbecula, belong to Clanronald, and the inhabitants of these isles had never seen either the Laird or his brother. Their joy on seeing him cannot be described. As they knew he was in the midst of us, they threw themselves before him, kissed his hand, surrounded his horse, and those who were not tall enough to reach his hand, embraced his legs with emotion and respect. The arrival of a Clanronald was for these poor people an occasion for a national fête. The pride of our English fellow-travellers appeared to revolt at these demonstrations, which, according to them, seemed degrading to the dignity of man. For my part, I only considered them as a proof of an ardent and natural testimony of sincere attachment to a family, which from time immemorial protected, and were a blessing to the inhabitants of these districts; consequently, that respect and consideration which the Scottish nobles formerly enjoyed in the midst of their vassals, did not emanate from a servile and interested sentiment, but from that profound admiration for the chief of their clans, which the parents took care to inspire in the minds of their children from their earliest infancy.

We saw several of the inhabitants on the shore occupied in burning sea weeds, in order to extract alkali. For this purpose, they form in the ground, a square basin, the walls of which rise three feet above the soil, and in this basin the combustion takes place; when it is finished, they move the basin, and at the bottom is found a large cake of impure potash, mixed with ashes and earth. The sea weeds grow in such abundance on the shores of Long Island that, if we may credit the country-people, Clanronald derives 20,000*l.* sterling annually from his isles of South-Uist and Benbecula, by the sale of potash. A ton of impure potash sells at five pounds.

We crossed, in a fishing-boat, the strait which separates South-Uist from Benbecula, and repaired to the house of Clanronald, a fine modern building situate on the banks of the sea, and then inhabited by the steward. We could perceive from Clanronald's house, and about five miles to the westward of Benbecula, the small Isle of Inch-Na-Monich rising above the waters. From the top of the hills of Benbecula, the famous St. Kilda may be seen, on a clear day, but the sky being covered with thick fogs we made no attempt to discern it. St. Kilda, a small island, or rather a high and steep rock, lies sixty miles

to the west of Benbecula; it is the westernmost of all the Hebridean isles, and is inhabited by a small colony of about 150 souls, who live there almost without any communication with the rest of the globe.

The perilous seas in these stormy latitudes, the innumerable difficulties which await vessels landing at the foot of those enormous rocks, prevent travellers visiting St. Kilda. I should have felt much pleasure in going there, but it would have been rashness to have undertaken in autumn a voyage, which is even formidable in the finest time of the year. In addition to this, we should have been several days at sea before we could have reached this island, and it would have been necessary to have waited several days more for favourable weather to embark; we should then have been obliged to quit our vessel, for there is no port in the Isle of St. Kilda, and consequently we must have trusted ourselves to the waves in an open boat, at the risk of seeing the ship which brought us driven, by the south-west winds, from the island where we should have been detained.

All these circumstances prevented our visiting St. Kilda, which has till lately belonged to the chief of the tribe of Macleods, who levied there an annual rent, paid in oxen and sea birds' feathers, as well as in fish and small cattle; for the simple inhabitants of that island were not aware of the use of money. One of these islanders some years ago embarked for the East Indies, where, by his labour and industry, he succeeded in acquiring a considerable fortune; on his return to England, his first wish was to re-visit his wild native country, and to share the wealth he had acquired among his compatriots; for this purpose he addressed himself to the Laird of Macleod, and obtained from him the rock which contained all the objects of his affection. This interesting individual, now proprietor of St. Kilda, justly commands respect and consideration throughout all this part of Scotland, by his virtues, and the benefits which he is continually bestowing on the companions of his infancy, now become his tenants.

We quitted the house of Clanronald, to return to Kilbride, by the same route which we had followed the evening before; but how great was our astonishment, when, on arriving at the southern part of Benbecula, we no longer saw the strait which we had the preceding day crossed in a boat. The tide was down, and the isles of Uist and Benbecula, formerly separated by an arm of the sea, now formed one and the same island. This remarkable fact may give an idea of the force and height of the tides in these western regions. The same phenomenon took place to the north of Benbecula, and the strait which separates that island from North-Uist remains also dry during

low water. Thus, twice in twenty hours, South-Uist, Benbecula, and North-Uist are united, and form only one long island; and twice they are divided into three distinct islands.

*September 23rd.* Having passed two days very agreeably at Kilbride, we reluctantly quitted the amiable family from whom we had experienced such hospitable treatment. The weather was foggy, and a violent south-west wind blew in squalls: this wind was very favourable to our reaching the Isle of Sky, where we intended going in the course of the day. At noon we set sail, proceeding at the rate of nine miles an hour, and at half-past five we arrived at the foot of the enormous rocks which surround the bay called Loch Brakadale. This bay is distant sixty miles from the strait of Eriskay. It advances some distance into the Isle of Sky, in the direction S.S.W. and N.N.E.; and its breadth, at its entrance, is five miles. The isle to which we were going is classic ground; the name of each rock, mountain, and lake, being connected with some fact related in the traditions of which the poems of Ossian form a part. Whilst we were entangled in this bay, the wind blew with increased violence, and we were in danger of running against a small vessel which was steering the same course. The master of this vessel told us that he came from Balachroi, in the Isle of Mull, in search of Mr. Maclean and his family, who were at Talisker, and to bring them back to the Isle of Coll. We congratulated ourselves, on learning that we should still find Mr. Maclean at Talisker, and acquaint him with the amiable reception which we received in his house during his absence.

On our arrival at a lone house in Talisker, we sent our guide before us to solicit hospitality for strangers overtaken by the night, and wandering in an unknown country. We anticipated the reply: in fact, we were invited in the politest manner into a small neat parlour, where three aged persons, and a young man, were seated round a good fire. They hastened to offer us seats; they next brought in tea, wine, and liquors; and, in truth, supplied us with every thing necessary for our comfort. At supper, we had the pleasure of hearing some very interesting conversation; they gave us all the information requisite for our journey, entertained us with an account of the Isle of Sky, the antiquities and natural curiosities contained in this wild and poetic country, and the traditionary poems recited by the inhabitants; they likewise entertained us with some amusing anecdotes respecting Dr. Johnson, whom they very well recollected to have seen at the time of his Travels in the Hebrides. The anecdotes which we heard, fully justified the reputation for rusticity which that great lexicographer had acquired. Thus we separated for the night, without their

knowing who were the strangers whom they lodged under their roof, and without our having once thought of telling them. We found excellent beds, and after blessing our generous hosts, we retired to rest.

*September 24th.* At breakfast this morning, we hastened to repair our omission of the preceding evening, and to introduce ourselves to our hosts. The moment I said that I came from Switzerland, Mrs. Macleod (our hostess) testified the joy which she felt on seeing a native of that country. "For," said she to me, "I lived for a long time in Holland with my husband, who was colonel of a Scottish regiment in the service of that Republic; and I knew many officers of Swiss regiments, with whom those of our regiment were always so intimate, that they used to call each other *brother mountaineers*.\*

*September 26th.* Mr. Macleod, of Talisker, being informed of our arrival in the Isle of Sky, sent horses and a guide to conduct us to his house, and after two hours route on wretched roads, we arrived at Talisker-House, where we were received, (thanks to Mr. Maclean, of Coll, and thanks, above all, to Scottish hospitality,) as ancient friends. This fine house, surrounded with trees, is situated at the bottom of a little valley, which opens on the south upon the sea; the environs are fertile, and well cultivated; a small rivulet, which takes its rise in the rocky and basaltic hills in the neighbourhood, runs, winding around the house, after forming a beautiful cascade, at the foot of which the road passes.

During dinner, the piper played, in the hall, on the bagpipes, the Pibrochs, or marches of the tribe of Macleods; and these romantic airs, for a long time resounded in the vaults of the castle of Talisker.

After taking leave of the amiable family of Talisker, and my fellow-travellers, I proceeded as far as the *Cullen mountains*, a name which is derived from the King Cuchullin, sung by Ossian, who reigned over the inhabitants of the Isle of Sky. I amused myself in the association of these sites with the ancient heroes who had once inhabited them, and of the bards who sung their exploits. I figured to myself, these inspired poets, walking through the obscure and deep vallies,

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\* I have here departed from the rule, which I laid down, never to introduce the public into the domestic concerns of those families who received me into their houses; but the pleasure which I feel in making my countrymen partake of the emotion which was excited in my breast by this amiable reception, given to a Swiss, will, I hope, serve as an apology; it was besides, an occasion for showing the true Scottish hospitality in all its perfection.

their imagination revelling amidst these imposing scenes, and thinking they saw in the mists and light clouds which fly around these high mountains, the departed spirits of their forefathers and heroes, still wandering near the places where they had long dwelt. It was an interesting task for me, to trace, in a country which presents such striking and sublime traits, the germs of poetry so strongly characteristic of its finest features.

I continued my route, reflecting with regret that I was the next day to quit the interesting ground of the Hebrides: those islands which had afforded me so many hours of real enjoyment, and where I had found in all subjects, and above all, in objects of natural history, food more than sufficient for my curiosity. I regretted the more leaving those honest islanders who had received me so well, all of whom obliged me according to their means, constantly anxious to anticipate my wishes, and who, by their hospitality, succeeded in smoothing all the difficulties incident to foreigners in such wild districts. I reflected with much satisfaction on what I had seen, and on what I had accomplished; I also felt, that had time and the season allowed me, I should have been able to have seen much more, and to have rendered these travels much more complete; I lamented having been detained by the wind eight days, in the Isle of Coll, and five in the Isle of Eigg, whilst I could not stop in the Isle of Sky, which presents so many interesting objects hitherto undescribed. But the fine season was over, the continual rains of autumn, and the tempests, would have rendered my return dangerous, if not impracticable. The family of Mr. Maclean, of Coll, acknowledged to me the prudence of my departure, and only those remained in the isle who intended to pass the winter.

Plunged in these reflections, I arrived, on a very dark night, at a lone house on the banks of the sea, which was called "Sconser Inn." Here I found a good fire; a neat chamber, an obliging host, and a good supper.

*September 27.* My host, being informed by my guide of my intention of returning to the mother country, prepared a small fishing-boat, provided with two boatmen. The weather being calm, we set sail, and coasted along the northern shores of the Isle of Sky. The sun was advancing towards the horizon, and with no small degree of sorrow, I saw the moment which was about to terminate my last navigation in the Atlantic Ocean. With painful emotion I bade a last adieu to the Hebrides, from which I was removing, probably, for ever; and, on quitting them, I implored heaven, with my most sincere prayers, for the happiness and prosperity of their worthy inhabitants.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The Author's Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Scottish Highlanders.*

The isolated state in which the Highlanders of Scotland have lived until the middle of the last century,—the little connexion which they have kept up with the rest of Europe, and even with the other parts of Great Britain,—their position in the midst of mountains, and in islands separated from the rest of the world by stormy seas,—are all circumstances peculiar to this nation, which have prevented it following the various gradations of civilization through which every country in Europe has successively passed.—In a region almost unknown, or at least forgotten by the rest of the world;—in a country which had never been subjected to the conquests, nor convulsed by the revolutions which have at various times changed the face of other countries, we should not be surprised to find that the manners, the customs, their ancient language, should have been preserved almost without any alteration, and transmitted from generation to generation, for ages, until the present day.

The origin of the state of things in the Highlands at that epoch, when by the suppression of a general rebellion the English power was definitively established in this country, is lost in the womb of time. In comparing the most ancient writers on this people, with the state of civilization, manners, and customs of these Highlanders at the beginning of the eighteenth century, we are struck with the few changes which a lapse of many centuries has produced in their social economy. Whilst events, as general as they were striking, by their consequences, have divided the history of every country in Europe into three precise periods, known under the names of Ancient and Modern History, and that of the Middle Ages; the people who inhabit the northern extremity of Great Britain reckon no more than two distinct periods, viz. their Ancient History, the beginning of which is lost in antiquity, and terminates at the great revolution which that country experienced in 1745; and their Modern History, which is only begun, and which has, before the lapse even of a century, already presented the picture of changes, as astonishing as they are rapid, in the political and moral constitution of the country.

It may be supposed, however, that the introduction of Christianity in the sixth century of our era, and the Reformation adopted in the sixteenth century, must have been events of

sufficient importance to have considerably influenced the destiny and social state of these warlike people. We find, nevertheless, that the Reformation changed nothing in their civil and political organization, nor in the reciprocal relations of the chiefs and vassals. The domains belonging to the churches and convents experienced no more from that great revolution than a change of masters, without any thing new being introduced into their administration. From such an example, it is very probable, that the transition from Paganism, or the religion of the Druids, to Christianity, did not modify in a more marked manner the political state of the people; we are besides ignorant of what they were before receiving the light of the gospel, and consequently we cannot form an idea of the effect which the introduction of the Christian religion produced among them. The most ancient historical documents do not go farther back than that epoch; and the times which preceded it may be regarded as the heroic and fabulous ages of Caledonian history.

One single remarkable event appears distinctly in the obscurity of these remote ages; viz. the vigorous and successful resistance which these warlike and savage tribes opposed to the formidable armies of the Roman emperors. But Tacitus, who has transmitted to us the history of these wars, does not throw much light on the government, manners, and language of those hordes of barbarians, of whom he appears to have had but a very imperfect knowledge;—hordes, which always resisting every conquest and invasion until the year 1745, preserved their independence and national character. We cannot, in fact, consider as a conquest the kind of homage which the Hebrides for some time rendered to the crown of Norway, as the interior state of the country does not appear to have experienced any revolution on that occasion, and as the Norwegian viceroy was generally some powerful Hebridean chief. The Danes, during their frequent incursions into the Lowlands of Scotland, sometimes passed the limits of the district of mountains; but they did not establish themselves, nor were they able to penetrate into the centre of these regions, at that time almost inaccessible.

The uniform accordance between the earliest historians, until the middle of the last century, proves the unchanged manners and character of the Highlanders during a long succession of ages. Solinus and Isodorus, writers of the Lower Empire, represent the Scots as a warlike nation, frugal, inured to fatigue and privations, passionately fond of warlike games and the chase, and unceasingly taking up arms against their neighbours of the plain and the southern countries. Jean de Fordun, who



wrote in the fourteenth century, has, as we have already said, judiciously distinguished the two different races who inhabit the High and the Low Lands of Scotland, and he has characterized that of the Highlanders by striking traits, which are also to be found in the description given by Buchanan in the sixteenth century; and in that of Pennant and more recent authors. The greater part of these traits are evident to the traveller even at this day, notwithstanding the great changes which have taken place at the epoch of the last rebellion.

Wishing to give an idea of the social and political existence, and of the customs of this remarkable people, which until lately were but very imperfectly known, I have consulted Buchanan, Pennant, and an English Engineer, who in "Letters written from the North of Scotland towards the year 1730," has given the most circumstantial details on the manners of the Highlanders. To these historical documents I have joined all the information which I have collected on this subject, and my own observations on the mountains and islands, where the inhabitants still religiously preserve the habits of their forefathers. We shall, therefore, designate this people by the name of Gaël, by which they are styled in their own language: they were called by the Romans, *Caledonians*; by the historians of the middle ages, *Scots*; and by the English, *Highlanders*.

Much dispute has already arisen on the origin of this people, but the most ancient historians agree that the Highlands were first peopled by a colony from a foreign country. Still, on this important question, a variety of opinions have been raised, attacked and defended with so much the more ardour, on the one side and the other, as the subject was obscure, and as no certain document could guide the historian through the darkness which envelopes these ancient times. For want of monuments, annals, or medals, some have had recourse to traditions, others have employed their own imaginations, and have formed the most absurd hypotheses, of which the following may be considered a specimen. It is said, that a certain Dioclesian, King of Syria, had thirty-three daughters, and that these daughters having killed their husbands on the day of their nuptials, were put by their father into a boat, and driven by the winds as far as the coast of Great Britain, an island at that time deserted, or inhabited only by evil spirits. From the union of these women with the demons was born a race of giants, who also inhabited the whole island, until the time when a certain man named Brutus, a descendant of Æneas, arrived there. This Brutus had involuntarily killed his father with a spade, and being obliged to quit his native country, he

was, by the advice of the oracle of Diana, confided to the sea and the winds, in order to find a near country. Having arrived in Britain after a voyage of ten years, and followed by a host of companions, he drove away the giants, and portioned out the island among his three sons, giving to Albanactus, Scotland; to Cambrus, Wales; and to Locrinus the rest of the island, or England. It is impossible, on reading this tissue of absurdities, to conceive that an historian of good sense could seriously give to the world and defend such an opinion.

Some authors, abandoning the mythological and marvellous part, have lessened the absurdity of the tale. They have supposed that a colony of Egyptians, conducted by a chief named Gathel or Galyel, husband of Scota, daughter of the King of Egypt, after having embarked on the Mediterranean, visited the coast of Africa and the great islands of Italy; and having passed the straits of Gibraltar, were established in Portugal, at that time a desert, the name of which, according to them, signifies the Port of Galyel; that Iber Scota, son of Galyel and Scota, disdaining a state of idleness, obtained permission from his father to take with him part of the colony, and arrived in Ireland; and that, from thence, after a certain lapse of time, a part of the new inhabitants spread by the north of the island into the Hebrides and the western mountains of Scotland, which were not yet peopled, but were not long in being so, owing to new emigrations from the north of Ireland.

Buchanan, Camden, and in fine, Gibbon, have supposed that the Gaëls, as well as the other inhabitants of Great Britain, came originally from the Gauls; they are supported in this opinion by the connexion of manners and language which exists between the Gaëls and the ancient Gauls or Celtes. Allowing this idea to be probable, still in so difficult a matter we ought neither to be too hasty in forming an opinion, nor decide too peremptorily. The examination which we are about to make of the manners of the Gaëls will furnish us with some interesting peculiarities of their connexion with certain customs of the ancient people of the East; without pretending that such coincidences are sufficiently multiplied to authorize us to consider them as proofs, these resemblances are striking enough to deserve consideration by those who, from henceforth, undertake the laborious and difficult task of elucidating the origin of the Gaëls. Considering then the ancient tradition of the first inhabitants of this country having arrived from the East, and of the analogy of the Gaelic language to the Hebrew and other Eastern languages, the opinion of those who consider Scotland to have been originally peopled by colonies of Gauls, still merits notice, in estimating the history of the pretended

Gathel and Scota, as an allegory, destined to transmit by tradition the remembrance of the successive emigrations of the great nation of the Celtes, originally from the East, and to which the Gauls and the Gaëls equally belonged.

I shall not pretend to engage in this labyrinth of discussion, nor shall I endeavour to decide which of the populations of Scotland and Ireland owes its origin to the other, a question some time debated between the antiquaries of both countries, and to which a national selfishness has attached much exaggeration and importance.

Assimilated as they are by their geographical position, as well as by their manners and their language, the latter of which can scarcely be considered a different dialect from the other, these two nations were for some time considered as compatriots, and equally belonging to the race of the Gaëls: they are still distinguished in the Gaelic language as *Gaëls Albinich*, or Gaëls of Scotland, and *Gaëls Éirinich*, or Gaëls of Ireland. The name of Scotland was even in the middle ages given equally to the two countries; Ireland was called Great Scotland to distinguish it from Little Scotland, which still preserves its name.

This question appears to me so much the more idle, as in all times communications have existed between the north of Ireland and the west of Scotland, by that chain of islands so near each other which extend between the two countries; and as no monument nor any historical document can ever throw light on the successive emigrations which might have taken place from one coast to the other, we may interminably discuss this point of history. One of the principal characteristic traits which distinguishes the Gaëls from all the people of Europe, is the interior and political regime which reigned among them. They were divided into a certain number of clans or tribes, each of which had its chief, and which were considered as forming communities, and almost small independent states.

The name of *clan* in Gaelic signifies family or children. In short, all the members of the same clan bear the same name, and these names, ordinarily preceded by the word *Mac*, signifying son, seem to indicate still better that they all descended from one common stock: thus the Macdonalds were the sons of Donald; the Macgregors the sons of Gregor, &c. The chiefs of these tribes or families were considered as descending in a direct line from the common stock, and representing the elder branch; and the poorest, the lowest of the clan, boast of belonging to the chief by a degree of parentage more or less remote. This form of government, which may be called patriarchal, has given the people character, habits, and a manner of living altogether peculiar.

The relations which existed between the chiefs and the members of the same clan imposed upon them reciprocal duties and obligations. To honour and love their chief, as their common father, as the representative of the great family, as the most ancient and the greatest of the name, was the first precept given by the parents to their children. In exalting the chief they knew it was raising the lustre of the family; and as one of the greatest titles of glory for the poorer tribes was to be allied by blood to the powerful lord who marched at their head, they felt that the more they surrounded with honour and respect him who governed them by right of primogeniture, the more it would reflect eclat on the whole family, and on every individual composing it. The same sentiments induced them to show consideration and respect for the subaltern chiefs of the various branches which composed the clan.

Thus their attachment was cemented: each man was always ready to shed his blood, to give his life, for the sake of his chief, for the honour of his tribe, and for the defence of each of its members. The most perfect obedience and confidence in their lord, was regarded as one of the most sacred and one of the greatest duties. The chief consequently possessed an unlimited authority over his tribe; and if any one refused following him to battle, or to pay him the rent and taxes which he imposed at will in certain circumstances, that man dearly expiated his disobedience, being exposed to the severest treatment, and sometimes even scouted from the clan by common consent.

To swear by the chief of the clan was one of the most solemn oaths among the Gaëls, and the meanest individual of the tribe considered himself as personally insulted, if he heard any epithet in the least injurious to his chief: such an offence could only be effaced by blood. Similar provocations caused incessant quarrels among the neighbouring tribes. To demand of a Highlander the name of his chief, and thus to intimate to him that he had none, was the most pointed affront, and the anger caused by such an injury could only be atoned for by the life of the aggressor. On the other hand, the chief in some measure depended on the members of his clan for protection against every foreign aggression; an insult given to the meanest individual of the tribe was resented by the whole, as an outrage on the honour of the name and family: thus, the chief espoused all the quarrels of his subordinates, whatever was the justice of the cause. For the same reason, he would never suffer any foreign jurisdiction to pursue an individual of his clan. Powerful chiefs have often been known not only to refuse Scottish officers of justice permission to seize those of their comrades who had manifestly been guilty of some offence, but to make part and cause for them, and afford every

defence in their power, without considering the nature of the offence of which they were accused.

When one of his vassals was reduced to misery (which frequently took place in a country where the soil could not support one half of the inhabitants, who were likewise unaccustomed to labour) the chief was bound to provide for his subsistence; also, when expedient, he frequently remitted his poor farmers the rent of their farms, and their arrears.

Liberality and hospitality towards the members of his tribe were indispensable qualities to the chief of a clan. In his ancient castle he had always a spacious hall, where several times in the course of the year he assembled all the men capable of bearing arms, and invited them to a grand festival. On such an occasion, when seated at the head of a long table, covered with rich viands, and surrounded by his nearest relatives and inferior chiefs, he presided with becoming dignity at the banquet, at once patriarchal and military, where all the guests were armed and clad in the national costume, the colour of which being uniform among all those of the same name, indicated the tribe. Those of an inferior rank, who could find no place at the table of the chief, were equally well provided for at other tables; in fine, the poorest classes were admitted into the courts of the castle, and received a distribution of victuals. The whiskey flowed in great abundance, and the noisy sounds of the bagpipe re-echoed the warlike marches of the clan. The bards sung in extempore verses the exploits of their ancestors, the famed deeds of their tribe, and the praise of their lord and master. Such fêtes contributed not a little to strengthen the attachment between the chief and his vassals, and to maintain the ardour which was excited for the honour and glory of the clan.

With the view of inspiring still more consideration in their subordinates, and of maintaining their rank around the chiefs of other clans, as well as of exalting their pride, already flattered by the testimonies of respect and admiration which they received, these petty princes were fond of being surrounded by a certain kind of court or suite. Each of them had his staff or body guards, *Luichtach*, which he chose from among the most robust and the most devoted of his clan.

When he undertook an excursion to the mountains, or paid a visit to some chief of equal rank, he was followed by a cortège of officers, attached to his person, and charged with various duties; this suit was composed as follows:

- 1st. The *Henchman*, or Squire.
- 2d. The *Bard*, or Poet.

- 3d. The *Piper*, or Player on the Bagpipe.
- 4th. The *Bladier*, or Orator.
- 5th. The *Gilliemore*, who carried his Sword.
- 6th. The *Gillie-Casflue*, who bore the Chief on his shoulders when he had to ford the rivers.
- 7th. The *Gillie-Comstraine*, who conducted his horse in dangerous roads.
- 8th. The *Gillie-Trushanarnish*, who carried the baggage.
- 9th. Lastly, the *Pipers-Gillie*, a boy who carried the bagpipe.

The *Henchman* was the confidential officer; he was ordinarily the foster-brother of the Chief, and filled this honourable place in consideration of the services of his mother, and on account of his education, which had been more carefully attended to, the foster-brother being generally educated with the young Laird. The *Henchman* was at the same time a kind of secretary, and superintended over the personal safety of his master, whom he never quitted during the repast, but was ready to risk his life, in case of attack or insult.

An English engineer, who first published these interesting details on the private life of the Highland Chiefs, relates the following trait, as an instance of the attachment of these Squires to their masters. An English officer dined one day with a Chief, and some other Highland gentlemen: after drinking freely of whiskey, the conversation grew warm; the young *Henchman*, who stood behind the chair of the Chief, not understanding English, and imagining that the officer insulted his master, seized his pistol, and presented it at the head of the stranger, who owed his life entirely to chance, the pistol having missed fire.

The *Bard*, or Poet, was generally charged with the instruction of the young Laird. He was also required to amuse the Chief while he was at table, by singing or reciting poems composed often *extempore* in honour of the Chief; he also repeated poems which were composed by his predecessors to celebrate the ancestors of his master, or preserve the recollection of memorable epochs in the history of his tribe. The poets also sang ancient verses to perpetuate the memory of the exploits of Fingal and his heroes.—Those fine poems collected by Macpherson have been justly admired throughout Europe; they were transmitted also from Bard to Bard, during a long succession of generations, and served to give, or maintain a taste for fine poetry, which harmonized with the features of this mountainous country, and to the lively spirit of this chivalrous race. The exploits of the ancient Caledonian heroes, commemorated in verses full of poetic fire, were associated with

the names of Fingal, Ossian, and Oscar, in the meanest cabins, and such recollections inspired the descendants of these formidable warriors with a love of glory, and language full of imagination and poetry; all which distinguished them from the rest of the vassals and peasantry throughout Europe.

The *Piper* was also one of the great officers of the Chief, and he paid no rent for his farm: this office was often hereditary in the same family. There were, in the Isle of Sky, two famous schools where the candidates for this place learned to play on the bagpipe.—One of the privileges attached to the office of Piper was to accompany the eldest son of the Laird in his travels. The Piper was required to know all appropriate airs; to play when the Chief was at table, and when he sailed in a boat on the sea, or on the lakes; he accompanied him also to battle, and his music was heard at the funerals; for the bagpipe, the national instrument among the Gaëls, was heard in all the principal scenes of life, whether in rousing the courage of the warriors, or enlivening the festivals, or lastly, in honouring the memory of the dead, and mingling its plaintive sounds in the funeral ceremonies with the mournful airs of the Coronach.

Besides this cortége of officers particularly attached to the person of the Chief, a numerous suite of gentlemen of his tribe, his nearest relations, as well as a host of persons of inferior rank, generally accompanied him in his travels. He was much pleased with this parade, which tended to raise his rank and importance in the eyes of his dependents.

Vanity was not however the only, nor even the principal motive which induced the Scottish Chiefs to place the greatest value in having so great a number of vassals; the frequent feuds among the neighbouring clans, the repeated rebellions against the sovereign authority of the kingdom, in which the greater part of the Chiefs were involved, an ancient passion for arms,—all obliged them constantly to be in warfare, and to be surrounded by a trained force. The value of a domain in the mountains was estimated less at that time, from the pecuniary revenue which could be derived from it, than from the number of men capable of bearing arms, whom the proprietor could maintain with their families.

Every thing was disposed and calculated in advance for a state of war. The Chiefs inhabited castles flanked with towers surmounted with battlements, and capable of resisting a long siege. They kept a guard there, and men were posted on the summit of the towers, to watch night and day, in case of an attack. They could thus in a few hours collect all the war-

rriors of their clan, to oppose them to the enemy, or conduct them on an expedition.

When there was occasion for putting all the men under arms, the Chief caused the fire-cross, (*crois taradh*) to be displayed, an appropriate signal on such an occasion; it was a cross of wood, the extremities of which had been burnt, and afterwards extinguished in the blood of a goat sacrificed for the purpose. A faithful and diligent messenger was charged to carry this signal of alarm in all haste to the neighbouring hamlets; he remitted it to the most considerable person of the place, and also acquainted him with the place of rendezvous: the latter lost not an instant in transmitting, by another messenger, the cross and the watchword to a more distant hamlet; thus the notice of general danger was sent from village to village, and from cottage to cottage, and the command of the Chief circulated with incredible rapidity throughout his territory, and even among the neighbouring and allied clans, when the same dangers menaced them, or when the expedition was made in concert with them. This method, by its great promptitude, had the advantage of mystery, so necessary among a people where the great art of war consisted principally in surprises and sudden attacks. The moment the fire-cross appeared in a hamlet, the inhabitants ran to arms, and ranged themselves under the orders of their subaltern chiefs; they then repaired by the shortest road to *Carn-an-Mhuinn*, the general place of arms for all the warriors of the tribe.

Every man, from the age of sixteen to sixty years, was obliged to obey this summons; the signal which called them indicated the fate that awaited them in case of refusal. The designation of the "cross of shame" threatened them with being abandoned to infamy, and that of the cross of fire, with being exposed to see the enemy carry fire and sword into their country, if they preferred disgraceful inactivity to the honour of following their Chief and their clan to battle. But among a people of such warlike habits, such threats were unnecessary to excite their ardour and courage; since the invitation to arm and to march was always received by the brave Gaëls with transport.

The last time the fire-cross appeared on the mountains of Scotland was in 1745: in this manner the clans assembled which were to be conducted by Prince Charles Stuart to replace James III. on the throne of his ancestors. This signal in three hours passed through all the district of Breadalbane, the extent of which is thirty-three miles. The celebrated Sir Walter Scott assures us, that Mr. Stuart of Invernahyle, has been heard to say, that at the epoch of this rebellion he had



passed the fire-cross in the district of Appin, the coasts of which were at that time menaced by two English frigates, and that notwithstanding the absence of the flower of his clan, then in England with the army of Prince Charles Edward, the old men and children ran in such numbers, and were animated by such enthusiasm, that the English were obliged to renounce their project of disembarking.

I have already alluded to the picturesque effect produced by a Gaelic army, with its ancient costume, and the lively and brilliant colours which distinguish the clans. I ought now to give some details on the dress of the Gaëls, and their various arms. It appears that in the most ancient times the Highlanders had only for their whole clothing a large *plaid* or *breach-dan*, viz. a piece of woollen stuff, eight or nine ells long, which covered their whole body, descending down to the knees, and was tied round the waist by a leathern belt; this clothing, which they named *feile mhòr*, resembled the Roman tunic, or the dress of certain oriental nations; they found it, however, more convenient to divide it into distinct pieces, and from thence is derived the actual costume of the Scottish Highlanders. It consists of a *kilt* or *feile bheag*, which comes from the waist to the top of the knee, a waistcoat and a jacket, all made of *tartan*, a light woollen stuff similar to the camlet. This stuff is of various colours, according to their tribes. The upper parts of the legs are naked; they wear half stockings of a red and white stripe, and *cuaran*, or *brogues*, coarsely made of cow leather, with the hair on the outside. At present they wear shoes. The *sporan* is a purse made of goat's, or sea-calf's skin, with the hair outside, and ornamented with tassels. This purse is worn before the kilt, and is tied by a leathern strap round the waist.

The *breach-dan*, or *plaid*, was preserved to use as a mantle; they wrapped themselves up in it to screen them from the cold, or rain, and during fine weather they threw it over the shoulder. The head was covered with a small bonnet of blue cloth, of a cylindrical form. The Chiefs were distinguished by a single feather from an eagle's wing, with which they adorned their bonnets. They have since substituted a black ostrich feather.

The arms of the Gaëls formed part of their costume, as they always wore them: these arms were offensive and defensive. To judge of them by the figures of warriors, sculptured on the tombs of Dalmally and Iona, the iron helmet was in use among these people, and Buchanan tells us, that they also wore cuirasses; but these means of defence were abandoned soon after the invention of fire arms, and they have only pre-

served the *targaid*, (*target*) a little round buckler, made of light wood covered with leather, and generally bordered with a band of brass or iron. They often placed a point in the centre of it, and the leather was covered with heads of gilt nails. The buckler was worn during the march, suspended behind the left shoulder, and during action it served to cover the front of the left arm. They made use of it in 1745. The Gaëls employed also, until the end of the seventeenth century, the bow and arrows with bearded points, (very dangerous arms, by the deep wounds which they made) as well as the formidable battle-axe, named *lockaber*.

The *claymore*, (*claidh-more*) a large two-handed sword, similar to that worn by the ancient Swiss, was particularly formidable in the hands of the robust and warlike Gaëls: it is often mentioned in their poetry, and in the description of their battles.

They attach to their waists a long poignard, or *dirk*, which they hold in one hand to parry the blows of their adversaries' swords, whilst with the other they attack with the *broad sword*. This sword, smaller than the claymore, was in use a considerable time; the Scottish regiments in the service of England are still armed with it at this day. A steel or brass guard, of beautiful workmanship, encircled the handles, and protected the hand from the blows of the enemy. The Highlanders wielded their arms with remarkable adroitness; and besides the dirk, a steel pistol was usually suspended from the waist.\*

Every time I have seen a Highlander thus armed and clothed, I have been struck with the fine air, military gait, and picturesque appearance of such a costume; but a similar spectacle becomes every day more rare at present. The country people, who alone habitually wear this ancient dress, have rarely the costume complete; they are often seen clad with the tartan kilt, the colour of their clan, with a waistcoat and jacket of the same colour. They frequently exchange the bonnet for a hat, and, besides, carry no arms. The Scottish soldiers have also altered their original costume; they have changed the dress of their tribe for the English red uniform, and have covered their bonnets with a mass of black feathers, which resemble those of the grenadiers.

The Chiefs of the clans, now reduced to the rank of manor proprietors, have altogether thrown aside the Scottish costume: a few still wear it in the country, being more convenient for hunting. They formerly knew how to derive advantage from

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\* It is curious to remark, that the Albanians, the Egyptians, and other eastern nations, carry at this day the same arms.

this imposing costume, by displaying in their clothing both taste and richness, which made them advantageously distinguished. They ornamented their *sporans*, *dirks*, and pistols, with gold, silver, and precious stones, fastened their plaids with rich clasps, and used silk stuffs for their colours instead of woollen, worn by their inferiors. In this manner they appeared at the court of Holyrood, and even at St. James's, when their country was united to England. Sometimes in place of the *kilt* they wore large tartan trowsers, called *trews*.

When the clans were led on to battle, the bagpipes at their head animated the soldiers, by playing the ancient marches which had conducted their forefathers to victory;—the attack was then terrible. After a discharge of fire-arms, the Highlanders threw away their pistols; then unloosing their plaids, they attacked sword in hand, and rushed upon the enemy like a furious torrent. Each Chief had his watch-word, which was repeated by the whole clan, and mixed with inarticulate clamours. The watch-word of the Grants was *Craig-Alachie*, the name of a high mountain, which rose in the middle of their district; that of the Mackenzies, was *Tulachard*, the name also of an eminence in the county of Ross; and the watch-word of the Macdonalds was *Fraoch*, signifying a heath, and likewise rage and fury. The chiefs had also their particular banners, on which were represented the arms of the family.

The clans were almost always at war against each other: ancient feuds between the tribes, the rivalry of different chiefs, depredations committed by some clan on the territory of another, were motives for taking up arms; but a single combat did not terminate these quarrels, as the hatred was handed down from generation to generation, and the cause of the chiefs was warmly defended by their meanest vassals; from thence arose not only general wars among the clans, but quarrels not less bloody and sanguinary among individuals. Hereditary resentment became matured in the tribes; the Macdonalds were enemies of the Campbells; the Macintoshes of the Mackays, &c.; and the different parties which the chiefs of the various Scottish clans embraced in the long struggle of the Stuarts, if they were not the effect of previous animosities, served at least still to envenom the ancient animosity. The history of all these petty wars, of those victories so warmly claimed even at this day by the divers tribes, must be familiar to those who know the places and the Gaelic people; but this history would not attract general attention so much as it shows the spirit of the people and of those times.

The reader has been able to judge, by the traits which I have quoted in another part of this work, such as the mas-

sacre of the Scholars of Dumbarton by the Macgregors, and the horrible destruction which the Macleods committed on the unfortunate inhabitants of the Isle of Eigg, to what a point of ferocity and barbarity these savage people sometimes carried their hatred and vengeance. Among such excesses, I was astonished to meet with traits of generosity, disinterestedness, and grandeur of soul, which would do honour to the most civilized nations. There existed among the various clans a kind of national law, which, however imperfect, was not less an efficacious barrier to that devastation, which would have been committed by a mass of men who recognized no other right than that of the strongest, and no other law than their caprice and their passions. This common law, which was neither recorded, nor ratified by the parties interested, was however very scrupulously observed.

The Scottish chiefs, like the European princes, had no right to invade the territory of the neighbouring tribes, without preceding their hostilities by a declaration of war. They even, rather than disturb the harmony among the tribes, treated at first in an amicable manner; similar negociations are still preserved, as well as treaties of peace made between the chiefs of the clans, which have altogether the form and the style of those of sovereign princes.

Whilst, by these contracts, the Gaëls showed the good sense, peace, and brotherhood, which reigned among them, they did not in return extend the benefits of similar institutions to their neighbours and countrymen, the Scots of the plain, or Lowlanders, whom they always considered as strangers, new comers, and consequently enemies of their country.

The latter, more industrious, and more civilized, presented to their cupidity irresistible attractions in the productions of their commerce, their labour, and their fertile soil. The name of *Sassenach*, or Saxons, by which in the Gaelic language the Highlanders style those of the Lowlands, recalled always to this warlike race, proud of their antiquity, the comparatively modern origin of their southern neighbours: which, joined to the difference of the language, was in the eyes of these semi-barbarian tribes a sufficient motive for indifference, and even disdain. The Lowlanders, among whom the cultivation of the arts of peace had taken the lead of the study of arms, appeared to them degenerate effeminate beings, and of a race very inferior to themselves.

The Gaëls, besides, had not forgotten that their ancestors once possessed a great part of those fertile plains from which they were then removed. These recollections were preserved

among them by an ancient tradition, and the names, derived from the Gaelic, which many rivers, hills, and even villages, in the Lowlands bore, were identifying proofs. In attacking the Scots of the plains, in devastating their crops, and seizing their cattle, they thought they were but using reprisals, and imagined they were only recovering the property which legitimately belonged to them. In this persuasion the *creach*, a name given by the Highlanders to expeditions, the object of which was the pillage of the property of the Lowlanders, appeared to them not only excusable, but was even regarded by them as an honourable exploit, and as a mode of displaying their bravery and military talents. The young chiefs frequently undertook a *creach*, at the head of their clans, in honour of their *belles*, and on their return laid at their feet the spoils of the unfortunate Lowland husbandmen. Such chivalrous motives did not always actuate the Highland chiefs; these enterprises were influenced more frequently by the love of plunder, which animated their savage dependants, destitute of all the comforts of life, and which the chief was obliged to satisfy in order to conciliate the good-will of his tribe. Necessity sometimes constrained the chief himself to have recourse to such means, as he was obliged to provide for the subsistence of his numerous vassals. By this obligatory hospitality towards his clan, he supplied the expences incurred by the suite which was necessary to the high rank which he occupied.

These neighbours were very formidable to the peaceable inhabitants of the plains, at the foot of the mountains. In the long nights of autumn, famished hordes would rush from the high hills into the flat country, carry away the cattle, harvest crops, money, and valuables; and as they were as superior in audacity and agility to their neighbours as the latter surpassed them in civilization, these Highlanders, loaded with their plunder, disappear before the break of day, and would reach their wild glens and inaccessible rocks before the Lowlanders even thought of pursuing them.

The great and rich proprietors were always obliged to have a troop of men armed, to defend their domains; but such was the boldness of the Highlanders, that they often amused themselves in attacking and pursuing these guards even to the walls of their castles. The farmers and small proprietors, who had not the means of guarding their lands, were continually exposed to these destructive incursions. They could not escape, except by consenting to pay an annual tribute to the chiefs of the neighbouring clans. This tribute was known by the name of *Black Mail*. The chiefs who received it en-

gaged to protect the property of the Lowlanders who paid it against all aggression, not only from their clans, but from all others. These engagements were always scrupulously adhered to: and the effects stolen were restored to the proprietors in some distant place, where they could be easily concealed. Those, who from pride, or any other motive, refused the tribute, were sure to have their domains invaded and pillaged by troops of savage Highlanders.

In modern times, when the daily increasing wealth of the Lowlands became an object of still greater inducement to the poor Highlanders, they formed themselves into bands of foragers, who, under the direction of a subaltern chief, adopted the form and discipline of clans, although composed of individuals belonging to different tribes. These *Catherans* or robbers, living only by pillage, were determined and daring men; they braved every peril, and were the terror of the peaceful proprietors of the Lowlands; inhabiting caverns and places, rendered nearly inaccessible by high mountains, steep rocks, and furious torrents, in a country where there were neither roads nor bridges, they thus bade defiance to the ineffectual revenge of the unfortunate Lowlanders, whom they had plundered. The great chiefs of the tribes, in the territory where they were established, might easily have put an end to them, but far from endeavouring to oppose the formation of bands of *Catherans*, they seemed rather to favour them, and there were few Chiefs who had not similar troops, to whom they assigned the deserted vallies and bye places in their vast domains for their abode. When they harboured any animosity against a clan or neighbouring chief, and when they wished neither to declare war nor openly to commence hostilities, they sent the *Catherans* to pillage their territory. They also made use of them to compel the Lowlanders to pay them the *Black Mail*; as on receiving this tribute, they engaged to prevent the *Catherans* from committing further depredations on lands which were under their protection.

One of the most famous chiefs of the *Catherans* mentioned in history, was Rob Roy Macgregor, who every year saved the Duke of Montrose the trouble of collecting the revenue of his domains. Notwithstanding the credit of that great nobleman, and although in consequence of the frequent rebellions of Rob Roy against the sovereign authority, the tribunals of the country outlawed him, and set a price on his head, he succeeded, owing to the protection of many powerful Highland chiefs, in escaping from every pursuit, and died in peace at a very advanced age.

Ludovick Cameron, grandson of the celebrated Sir Evan Cameron of Lochiel, did not lead his bands in person to plunder, but authorized them to pillage on his own account, and largely recompensed those whom he placed at the head of similar expeditions; he amassed great wealth, but the termination of the Rebellion in 1745 ruined him. Macdonald of Barrisdale, went still further in deriving advantage from the *Catherans*, of whom he maintained a troop. He levied the *black mail* on the proprietors, engaging to deliver them from the brigands, whom he himself paid. By means of these tributes, he enjoyed a revenue of £500 sterling: he always fulfilled his engagements with great exactness, and frequently restored flocks of cattle, which his men had carried away by mistake, to those proprietors who paid him the tribute.

The government could not, without pain, see the turbulent clans of the Highlands fall with impunity on the peaceable possessions of the fertile regions of the south, and of the east, continually fomenting new rebellions, and making their mountains perpetually resound with warfare and strife. Thus we find the kings and parliaments frequently issuing forth thundering decrees against these undisciplined and rebellious subjects. We find them also, but nearly always in vain, endeavouring to restore order among these savage tribes, who would recognise no masters, except their chiefs, and no laws, except their ancient customs. Protected by the nature of the country where they dwelt, by their habits of warfare, and their military manœuvres, the clans even braved with impunity the threats of the sovereigns of the United Kingdom of England and Scotland. To judge of the nature of the decrees issued from the throne, we must consult the *Writ of Fire and Sword* of King Charles II. against the tribe of the Macleans, (who had seized by main force upon some possessions belonging to the Campbells), a decree given at length in Pennant's Travels, Part II., Appendix, p. 443. We find there a direct injunction on the clans of Campbell, Macalister, Macdonald, and Macleod, to arm and march against the chief of the Macleans; the orders were to take him dead or alive, to pursue him to the utmost; for this purpose granting them every authority in their power—freeing them of all obligations from the existing laws which might enthrall them; in short, declaring them safe from all the consequences of violation of property, destruction of crops, houses, &c. committed during such expeditions. These violent measures intimidated, perhaps, for a time, the insurgent clans, but the effect was of short duration. We have seen that, the terrible proscription decreed by James VI. (James I. of England) against the tribe of the Magregors,

did not prevent this clan from proving themselves stronger than ever in subsequent revolts. The numerous decrees of William and Mary to repress the incursions of the Highlanders into the Lowlands, produced no change in the situation of the unfortunate inhabitants in the vicinity of the mountains, but only served the more to prepare the minds of the Highlanders for the rebellion which burst forth in 1745.

The chiefs exercised the most absolute authority as to the administration of justice over all their clans; an ancient Scottish law had even recognised this great stretch of power, by rendering the chiefs personally responsible for depredations committed by their tribe, and by obliging them, in extraordinary cases, to give one of their sons or nearest relatives as an hostage.

When a Highlander was accused of a crime, he was conducted before his chief, who was assisted by a council, composed of the principal members of his tribe: he judged according to his conscience and the laws of equity, and it is asserted, that the sentences rendered by so arbitrary a tribunal were rarely unjust. Although for some time no written law had existed, there was, however, a penal code founded on custom, and recorded by tradition; it was committed to writing in the Isle of Sky about the middle of the seventeenth century, and every year it was read to the people assembled before the doors of the church. These laws were as severe and cruel as are those of the first legislators of all savage nations; but the necessity which obliged the chief to render himself popular among his tribe, the influence of that relationship, and innumerable ties which existed among every individual of the same clan, greatly soothed the rigour of the laws.

The patriarchal regime, established from the most ancient periods in the mountains and isles of Scotland, has been, it appears to me, too often confounded with the feudal system, which existed in the Lowlands, in England, and in the greater part of the countries of Europe. Although these two modes of government possessed some similar forms, nevertheless the essentially different nature of their origin rendered the connexion between the governors and the governed altogether dissimilar, and the condition of those under the jurisdiction of the chief of a clan was certainly much less oppressive than that of the vassals of a feudal lord. Whilst the latter derived his power from the right of conquest, and regarded his vassals as his property—as slaves which belonged to him by the laws of war, the Scottish chief knew that he was indebted for all the advantages he enjoyed to the ancient right of primogeniture; that the members of his clan were also those of his family, and that they were



not slaves, because they had never been conquered. No distinction existed among the nobles, the commoners, and peasants of the Gaëls. All the members of the same clan, regarding themselves as descendants from one common stock, thought themselves on a par with their chief, and consequently expected to be treated in an appropriate manner: they recognised no other distinction than the greater or less proximity of their degree of parentage to their common ancestor. There was, in short, this difference between the feudal system and the regime of the clans; that whilst a noble was obliged to render homage to his sovereign, and to receive from him the investment of his fiefs, the laird enjoyed his power by personal title derived from natural right, without any superior being able to deprive him of it, and without being subject to any kind of contribution whatever.

We find, it is true, at more recent periods, the chiefs of clans demanding feudal charters of the crown, in order to increase their power; but so little could they be constrained, that many lairds refused with disdain to accept such titles, saying, that they never wished to hold their right by a miserable sheep's skin, for thus they called the parchments delivered by the king. In addition to this, families to whom the king had granted certain domains, to the prejudice of the chiefs of clans who possessed them, were for many ages unable to make good these titles, and probably they never would have participated in the enjoyment of their property, if the ancient lords of these lands had not been dispossessed of them in consequence of a rebellion.

Those individuals are much deceived who, in assimilating the government of clans to the feudal system, attribute to the former the inconveniences and abuses of the latter. Not only was it the strict duty of the laird, as chief of the great family, to treat with kindness and esteem those whom birthright had placed under his command, but he had a particular interest in making himself popular. As the right which placed him at the head of his clan was, to a certain extent, founded upon the good opinion of his subordinates, it was necessary, in order to maintain the distinction, that he should at once support the dignity and character of a paternal guardian, by scrupulously promoting the common interests of those over whom he claimed so distinguished a pre-eminence. Thus he sought by every possible means to conciliate their good-will; he assisted the poor, and treated all with unbounded hospitality. So far from repulsing them by *hauteur* or reserve, he assumed affability and habitual familiarity with all the members of his tribe. He never met one of them without taking him

by the hand, and without interesting himself in all his concerns, being always anxious of concealing the master, under the exterior deportment of the friend and relation. Notwithstanding the changes which have taken place, this interesting custom is observed to this day in many parts of the Highlands and in the Hebrides. I have seen great and rich proprietors amicably touching the hands of the poorest of their peasants every time they met them; and it is thus, indeed, they still preserve in substance that influence and superiority which the law at present refuses them.

It cannot then be said that the Gaëls were unhappy; for the deep regret testified by them on the dissolution of the clans, after the rebellion of 1745, proves that this regime was neither so oppressive nor insupportable as some modern authors represent.

Each family possessing a farm, which had been transmitted by inheritance from father to son, enjoyed the property; a kind of heritage which is possessed by few English peasants, and which forms one of the greatest emblems of prosperity, and even of morality, among the inhabitants of Switzerland. The rents which the Gaelic farmers paid to their chief were but trifling, and if they ever became reduced by misfortune so as not to be able to meet their obligations, he generally cancelled their debts. An active and military life, divided between the precarious toils of sea-fishing and the perils of war, gave great animation to their existence; and the repose which succeeded these days of toil was not troubled with the painful reflection of any further care. Although little accustomed to labour and to the sedentary occupations of an industrious people, the Gaëls were not a prey to *ennui*, which, among other nations, proceeds from idleness, and gives rise to so many disorders. Constantly interested for the honour and safety of the tribe, they felt animated with that public spirit and ardent patriotism which elevates the soul into its highest sphere. Passing from a calm to a tempest, and from a profound repose to the tumult of a battle, they united all the mildness of family ties, with the interesting habits of maritime life—which latter can scarcely be thrown off when once adopted.

There is, however, a great error in supposing these people enslaved and brutalised by obedience to an absolute power, and assimilating that state to a nation groaning under feudal despotism. If education had not developed the strength of the mental faculties; if industry and commerce had not yet enlivened those uncultivated valleys; and if the people had not strove for those luxuries of life, which ultimately become real wants among nations more advanced in civilization; if, in

short, they had only miserable habitations, poor clothing, and mean and insufficient food, still, every feature which could excite their vivid imagination was strikingly exhibited among them, while those comforts which partake more of the nature of luxuries seemed to be of secondary consideration. They listened with transport to the recital of the exploits of their ancestors, and were passionately fond of poetry and music. The heroic songs of their bards, from time to time repeated in their wretched cottages, always transported their souls and inflamed their enthusiasm. Proud of their ancient origin, and of their military exploits, they boasted their descent from those Caledonian heroes who had vanquished the conquerors of the world, and they delighted in recalling such glorious recollections. An ardent love of military glory, their attachment to their clan, and a lively sentiment of honour, all tended to keep up a moral dignity among them; a species of national pride, which raises them in their own estimation, and induces them to regard with disdain the more polished nations of Europe.

If this spirit was manifested among men of inferior rank, the character of the chiefs, who received homage from so many devoted subjects, may be easily conceived, and thus a Scottish pride, which has become proverbial, may be reasonably accounted for. One of these petty Highland princes, said one day, that if he had his choice, between the domains of the Duke of Newcastle, which produced £30,000 sterling a year, and his wild possessions, which were not worth £500, he would not hesitate to take the latter, provided that he at all times preserved the suite or little court, which is one of the appendages of a chief or great Highland proprietor.

I shall give a few more instances, to shew to what extent the Gaelic chiefs preserved the prerogatives of their rank.

The first Marquis of Huntley, chief of the clan of Gordon, on being presented at the court of James VI., King of Scotland, did not bend the knee before his sovereign; when he was demanded the reason of this neglect of the customary form, he replied, he had no intention of shewing a want of respect for the king, but he desired to be excused, as he came from a country where every one bent before himself.—The King of Great Britain having offered the title of nobility to the chief of the Grants, the latter refused it by saying, "*And wha would be the Laird of Grant?*" In general, many Scottish chiefs would have thought it derogatory to accept a foreign dignity; and even at this day, many Hebrideans have been displeased with one of the most powerful chiefs of the isles, for having accepted an Irish peerage.

Among the good qualities which eminently distinguished the Gaelic people, one of the first, and that at the present day, is hospitality. This virtue was so generally diffused in the Highlands, that every where the doors of the houses were left open, at all hours, as a general invitation to strangers\*.

They never demanded the name of him who claimed their hospitality, without having previously offered him refreshment. Without this precaution, the stranger would always have found some reason for refusing assistance in a country where revenge among the clans is so frequent, and carried to such atrocious excesses. So long as a stranger remained in the house they protected and defended him from all assault, as if he had been a member of their family. Bravery, love of glory, attachment to their Chiefs, the strictest fidelity in fulfilling their engagements and protecting those who confided in them, were qualities peculiar to all the Gaëls. I shall quote some further instances which will serve to exhibit the characteristics of this people.

Under the reign of James V. the clan Chattan was in a state of revolt, and the Earl of Moray, at the head of his vassals, having beaten the insurgents, made 200 prisoners, whom he condemned to death in order to intimidate the rebels. As they were conducting them to the scaffold, the Earl offered them pardon, on condition that they should discover the place where their Chief was concealed; but these brave men unanimously replied, that even were they acquainted with it, no torture could force them to betray the confidence reposed in them.

Towards the beginning of the last century, the county of

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\* Hospitality was one of the first virtues of the Hebrews, as it is still of the Arabs, and of some eastern nations. It has been said, but erroneously, that hospitality is the virtue of all savages; how many colonies have been found, in newly discovered islands in the South Seas, who are cruel, distrustful, and inhospitable; whilst among certain nations who have attained a high degree of civilization, this quality has constantly remained an honour. The characters of nations differ in this respect as in many others, without it being possible to assign a plausible reason for such differences. Those who seek to depreciate this interesting and benevolent disposition, repeat with exultation, that in isolated and savage places, hospitality turns more to the profit of him who exercises, than of those who are the objects of it, since it gives him an opportunity of diverting himself from the *ennui* which he must feel, and of satisfying his curiosity in the society of strangers. If this assertion were true—if hospitality were only a calculation of egotism, the Scots would not be seen sacrificing their comfort, their repose, and even their fortunes, to fulfil that which they regard as a duty—the reception of strangers. There is in this respect, such a sentiment of duty, that the Highlander receives even his enemy, when the latter claims his succour, and is obliged to entertain him and his suite during the whole time of his residence.

Inverness was infested with a band of *Catherans*, or robbers, commanded by one John Gunn, who levied contributions in every quarter, and came under the walls of the city, to bid defiance to an English garrison which defended the castle. An officer who went to Inverness, bearing the pay of the troop, and escorted by a feeble detachment, was obliged to pass the night at an inn, thirty miles from the city. In the evening he saw a man of a good figure enter, wearing the Scottish costume, and as there was only one room in the inn, the Englishman invited the stranger to partake of his supper, which the latter reluctantly accepted. The officer judging by his conversation that the stranger was perfectly acquainted with the defiles and bye-paths throughout the country, begged him to accompany him the next morning, made him acquainted with the purport of his journey, and his fears of falling, together with the depôt which was confided to him, into the hands of the celebrated John Gunn. The Highlander, after a little hesitation, promised to be his guide; they, in fact, departed on the following day, and in crossing a solitary and barren glen, the conversation again turned on the robberies of John Gunn. "Would you like to see him?" said the guide, and immediately gave a whistle, which was re-echoed by the rocks; in a few moments the officer and his detachment were surrounded by a body of Highlanders, armed from head to foot, and sufficiently numerous to render every effort of resistance fruitless. "Stranger," said the guide, "I am that same John Gunn whom you are afraid of, and not without reason, for I came yesterday evening into your inn to discover the route you meant to take, in order to carry away your military chest; but I am incapable of betraying the confidence which you have put in me, and having now proved to you, that you are in my power, I shall send you on your way without loss or damage." After giving him the necessary directions for the journey, John Gunn disappeared with his troop as suddenly as they had arrived.

Prince Charles Edward, when pursued in the mountains of Scotland, found among all the inhabitants, even from those who had not joined his party, an asylum, assistance, and the most inviolable secrecy; and that frequently among men, who were poor and accustomed to pillage, even at a time when the enormous sum of £30,000 sterling was promised by the English government, to whoever should deliver up the young Prince, dead or alive. Among the innumerable and admirable traits of devotion which distinguished that memorable epoch, the following fact is worthy of notice. A youth named Roderick Mackenzie, concealed in the mountains after the defeat of

Culloden, was discovered by the soldiers sent in pursuit of the Prince. His age, his shape, even his figure, deceived the soldiers, who believed they had found Charles Edward; they were about to seize him, when Mackenzie, who perceived their mistake, resolved to render himself useful to his Prince. He drew his sword, and the courage with which he defended himself, convinced the English that he must be the Pretender. One of them fired; the young man fell, and while expiring, cried out "You have killed your Prince!" This generous sacrifice, in suspending for a moment all pursuit, gave time to Charles Edward to escape from his pursuers.

The life pursued by the Highlanders rendered abstemiousness and frugality necessary. They set out for a long journey, across high mountains and uncultivated vallies, with no other provisions than a small bag of oatmeal, which, mixed with the water of the brooks, formed their only nourishment; in this manner the Arabs and the Moors of the desert take with them some handfuls of their *couscoute*, when they prepare for a journey of several days across their immense plains of sand.

Thus, few people have carried their detestation of effeminacy and luxurious living to a greater point. Cameron, of Lochiel, surprised by the darkness of the night, on the return of an expedition, was, together with the men of his suite, enveloped in their cloaks, and extended on the snow, at that time on the ground. He soon perceived that one of his grandsons had made a ball of snow, to support his head during sleep: the old chieftain, irritated by what he considered an indulgence, rose up, and with his foot driving away the ball, "For shame," said he to the youth, "are you so effeminate as to have occasion for such a pillow?"

If the active and military life of the Gaëls developed that energetic character which distinguishes a warlike people—intellectual improvement, industry, and respect for property, qualities so essential in a period of more advanced civilization were but as then in embryo. It would be, however, unjust to judge them with too much severity on this head; we ought to take into consideration their particular position relative to the existing mode of government, the nature of the soil, and the geographical situation of the country.

If, in fact, they hesitated in applying themselves to manual labour, and if they only cultivated such a portion of land as would serve to support their families, it was owing to the habits which the Chiefs had acquired of assisting the indigent of their tribe, and of liberating them from the payment of their rents; assuring them, that they should never entirely want the means of subsistence. They consequently found

more satisfaction in following their Chiefs to battle, than labouring in cultivating a barren and unproductive soil. In addition to this, it was not reasonable that they should employ the whole of their time in cultivating the soil, when the probable attack of an enemy's clan might carry away the fruits of many years labour. In short, the Highlanders had no market in the mountains, where the labourers and agriculturists could dispose of their commodities; they had neither high roads nor bridges to communicate with the Lowland towns, from which they were separated by high mountains and deep rivers.

If we may judge of the character of the Gaëls from their continual depredations among the Lowlanders and the tribes of their enemies, we shall be apt to consider them as lawless bands, regardless of all respect for the right of property. This was not, however, the case: a theft committed by an individual of the same clan, or of an ally, was punished with the greatest severity. But it must not be forgotten, that each tribe constituted a distinct and independent state; and in time of war a Highlander made no more scruple in carrying off the cattle of an enemy's tribe, or those of a cultivator of the Lowlands, (who was always regarded as an inferior), than a general commanding an army would in levying contributions in an enemy's country, or a captain of an English vessel seizing a Spanish galleon in time of war. When Prince Charles was pursued in the mountains, a man named Mac Ian, or Kennedy, who had several times exposed his life for his prince, and who, notwithstanding the greatest misery, and the reward of £30,000 sterling, had not been induced to betray him, was executed at Inverness for stealing a cow! A little before the execution he took off his bonnet, and returned thanks to God, that he had never failed in his engagements, nor done any injury to the poor, nor had ever refused to share all that he had with the indigent and the stranger.

The ignorance of this people was not the result of idleness and inactivity; they displayed great avidity to learn and to enlarge their ideas, which induced them to question with inquisitiveness every stranger whom they met: they, however, wanted instruction, as at that time the institution of parochial schools was but just commenced in the Highlands.

It was found very difficult to reconcile the military manners of the Highlanders with the patience and tranquillity necessary for study. Besides, at that time, the Gaelic language was merely in manuscript, the Bible having only been circulated in that tongue within the last fifty years. The singular orthography used in this language renders the reading it very difficult; and I have known many Scotsmen who spoke and understood

it, but could never learn to read it. Since the change which have taken place in the administration of the Highlands, the zeal of the Highland Society, and, above all, the one which has for its object the diffusion of Christianity, as well as the care of an enlightened clergy, have succeeded in vanquishing those obstacles, which could not previously be surmounted, owing to the political and inland state of the country. At this time there is scarcely a village in the Highlands where the children do not learn to read and write in Gaelic, and the Holy Scriptures are in the hands of every Highlander.

Ignorance, which is the parent of credulity, and a vivacity of imagination, unceasingly kept up by the imposing phenomena presented by nature in a mountainous country, and on the banks of a dangerous sea, have produced among the Gaelic people a multitude of superstitions, each of which is considered very singular. Among the number of superstitious practices of this people, some appear to be the remains of the Catholic faith, and many are evidently derived from paganism and the religion of the Druids, which prevailed in Scotland before the introduction of Christianity; there are some, in short, which are analogous to certain religious customs of the Jews. In addition to the superstitions spread among the lower classes of every nation in Europe, the Scottish Highlanders have also many which are peculiar to their own country.

They have inherited from the Catholic religion a sort of veneration for places formerly consecrated to that worship, and they go in pilgrimage to certain springs and caverns, which still bear the names of saints, in order to be cured of their diseases. Thus there is at Strath Fillan a well called St. Fillan, which, it is said, possesses the virtue of curing several maladies in those who plunge into it: there they conduct lunatics; the latter deposit their clothes on a heap of stones, round which they make a procession in the direction of the sun's course, after which the invalid is plunged three times in the well; he is afterwards bound in a chapel, where he is left all night. If they find the next morning that he is loosened from his bonds, the saint is said to be propitious to him, if not, his cure remains doubtful; but it more frequently happens that death terminates his sufferings, in consequence of so dangerous a treatment.

Among the Gaëls, as among the Hebrews, a woman, after being delivered of a child, was considered as impure until she had made the tour of the church three times in ceremony. The Highlanders also caused the new-born child to pass three times through the fire in the chimney, after the manner of the Israelites, who, in order to purify their children, made them



pass through the fire on the altar of Moloch. They believed in evil spirits, and to deliver themselves from their power, they employed all kinds of charms and talismans. One of the most efficacious, according to them, was a circle formed by a switch of oak, with which they girt their bodies. It was evidently, as Pennant observes, a remnant of the religion of the Druids, and of the veneration which these priests had for the oak, which they regarded as a sacred tree. They also used a circle of mistletoe to preserve them from accidents and disorders. Analogous practices still exist in Lower Brittany, and some other provinces of France, which were formerly inhabited by the Druids.

The Gaëls believed also in ghosts and apparitions, imagining likewise that they saw and conversed with them; indeed, the mists and clouds, which in these mountainous regions take a thousand fantastic forms, might often appear like shadows and human figures in the eyes of heated imaginations. The imposing spectacle of nature, in her rudest forms of high deserted mountains, furious torrents, howling winds, and vast solitudes, must have inspired a sentiment of fear and respect in the weak minds which daily contemplated them. They attributed to supernatural causes a variety of phenomena which astonish, and often alarm, the inhabitants of mountainous countries. Thus they imagined their deserts were inhabited by a host of malignant spirits, and divinities of an inferior order. Each solitary and dreary valley, every high and lofty mountain, and every remarkable spot, had its evil genius, the figure of which was represented as ludicrous and frightful in the extreme—the character wicked and cruel. The lakes and torrents were inhabited by the demons of the river, similar to the kelpy of the Lowlanders.

Among those fantastic beings who act so great a part in the imagination of the Highlanders, we must not omit the *Daoine shi*, or Men of Peace. They are regarded as small ghosts, living under ground, and under small mountains covered with verdure. During the night, and by the light of the moon, they imagined they saw them dancing and celebrating their orgies on the horizon of the hills; and without being wicked, they were jealous and envious of the happiness of mortals.

Some vestiges of the religion of the Druids, or Paganism, are still recognized in the ceremony annually celebrated by the Highland shepherds on the first of May. This sacrifice *champêtre* is known under the name of *Bealtuinn*. The shepherds assemble, kindle a large fire, and after dancing round it, they cook a mixture of eggs, butter, milk, and oatmeal; before tasting of this dish they pour out libations on the ground, they

then take oatmeal cakes, break them, and turning their faces towards the fire, they throw morsels behind them over their shoulders, saying, "This is for thee, preserve my horses; and this for thee, preserve my sheep," addressing themselves to the spirits who watch over their flocks. They, in like manner, invoke noxious animals: "This is for thee, O Renard! deign to spare my lambs; and for thee, O Hawk! and for thee, O Eagle!" The divinity *Bel*, whom they originally worshipped, was the spirit of the sun; perhaps the god Baal of the Israelites. Gruagach, or the young man with fair hair, was also, among the Gaëls, one of the names of the gods of the sun, the Apollo Chrysocomes of the Greeks. On those huge blocks, called *Gruagach Stones*, which the Druids raised on places where they celebrated their religion, tradition informs us that they poured forth libations of milk.

Every great family in the Highlands had its tutelary genius, who watched over the destiny of each of its members. When one was at the point of death, the genius appeared, or uttered his mournful lamentations. The familiar spirit of the chief of the Grants was a fairy named *May Moulach*, "the Daughter with hairy arms;" she always announced by her presence or her cries the death of the laird of Grant, or some great disaster which menaced his family. It was the same with *Bodach an dun*, "the Spirit of the Mountain," for the Grants of Rothiemurchus. Other families had *Benshie*, old fairies with floating hair, and covered with blue mantles; they predicted by their tears, sighs, and groans, the approaching death of some one of the members of these families. Besides, a train of light, variously coloured, when seen at night, was the sign of a similar event, and its direction indicated the place of the funeral. The death of a Maclean, of Loch Buy, was announced to his parents by an apparition of the spectre of one of his ancestors killed in battle.

When they set out on a journey, they were very attentive to the presages, which they formed from the first objects they met with. If these augured unfavourable, they returned home, and postponed their journey till another day. They had many modes of consulting their destiny. The most remarkable method was the *Taeghairm*. They enveloped a man in the skin of a bull, fresh killed, and placed him near a cataract, at the bottom of a precipice or wild place; having left him there all night, the next day they went to interrogate him, and his answers were received as inspired by the spirit of the place.

The most known and the most general superstition of the Gaëls is that which they call *Taishitaraugh*, and the English, *Second Sight*. It is the faculty of discerning objects invisible

to other persons. Those who were gifted with it were called *Seers*, and in Gaelic *Taishatrim*. On this subject Martin, who travelled through the Hebrides in the beginning of the last century, at the time when the belief in *second sight* was much more general than at present, gives us the following information:—

The vision made such an impression on the *Seer*, that he was at the instant entirely absorbed by it. He stood with his eyes fixed on the shadow, which he pursued, and could not turn his attention from it. Every one is not endowed with the power of contemplating these supernatural apparitions, and those who possess it cannot transmit it to others; nor can it descend from a father to his children.

These apparitions, or visions, are of various natures; they have always some signification relative to him who sees them, or to those who accompany him. The *Seer*, after the nature of his vision, predicts events fatal or encouraging, and the hour, more or less advanced of the day in which the apparition presents itself, serves him to fix the epoch when his prediction will be accomplished. If he sees a sheet round the body of a living man, he announces his approaching death, and this prediction, the believers say, never fails of being accomplished. If a chair which is occupied, appears to him empty, it indicates the death of him who is seated in it. He can see absent friends appear, and also those who have just died in a distant country. He foretels the persons who are to arrive in the village, or enter the house where he is; and although they are entire strangers to him, he describes their figure, shape, form, and the colour of their clothes. It has been said also, that *Seers* have seen in caverns and deserted places, houses covered with tiles; also, villages, and verdant meadows, and have foretold several years, that these places would be peopled and cultivated.

Martin (who places implicit faith in these superstitions), pretends having seen the prophecies of the *Seers* accomplished several times. Dr. Johnson, who has shown so much scepticism relative to the authenticity of *Ossian*, was not averse to believing in *second sight*. Boswell, his biographer, says, that he sought palpable proofs of the existence of spirits, in order to combat the progress of the doctrine of materialism with more effect.

I have several times heard very respectable men in the Highlands of Scotland, mention examples of *second sight*, of which they asserted themselves to have been witnesses; and they gave these narratives with the utmost assurance and the best faith. Among an infinite number of fantastical pictures which

were presented to an inflamed imagination, it was sufficient if one had some relation with a real event, with men fond of the marvellous, who forgot the quantity of dreams which had no relation nor connexion with the future. They placed reliance on a single trait which appeared to be realized, and the person whose predictions were verified, was proclaimed a prophet.

History has recorded two remarkable instances of *second sight*, the most ancient of which is mentioned in the history of St. Columban. It is affirmed, that this abbot announced to his monks of I-Colm-Kill, a victory of the Pictish king on the very day the battle took place, although the field of battle was in the south of Scotland, upwards of 180 miles from the convent of Iona, where St. Columban then resided.

The second is of a much more recent date, and, according to Pennant, excited a great interest in Scotland at the time. Shortly after the battle of Prestonpans, in 1745, the Lord President Forbes being at his residence in Culloden, with a Scottish nobleman, the conversation turned on that battle, and its probable consequences; after having a long time discoursed on the subject, and exhausted every conjecture, the President, turning himself towards a window, cried out, "All that may happen, but rest assured, these troubles will be terminated on the very spot where we now are." This prediction of the battle of Culloden, several months before it took place, and when the victorious army of the Pretender was marching into England, produced a prodigious effect, and confirmed many Scots in their superstitious belief.

Before terminating this exposition of the ancient state of the Gaels, it only remains for me to speak of their funeral ceremonies; and in these we again find some additional resemblances to those of the ancient Oriental nations.

On the evening after the death of a Highlander, the parents, relations, and friends of the deceased, come into his house, followed by a bagpipe or violin; then the nearest relative of the deceased opens a funeral ball, known by the name of *late-wake*. Nothing is more singular than this mixture of dancing and weeping, music and doleful cries, which continues till break of day, and is renewed every night while the body remains uninterred. When the coffin is carried to the earth, it is followed by a numerous group of relatives and friends of both sexes. The women pour forth the most frightful cries, tear their hair, and sitting round the tomb, sing with loud voice the mournful *Coronach*.

This funeral lamentation, which is the same as the *Hullulu* of the Irish, consists only in cries and inarticulate groans, but

generally it is a mournful and wild air, to which the bards have composed poems in honour of the deceased. His virtues, exploits, hospitality, and noble origin, are recalled; and the grief of his family and his clan are expressed in a touching and poetical manner. After the ceremony is finished, the relations invite all the persons who have assisted in it to an abundant repast. Whiskey flows in great abundance, and the days consecrated to mourning generally terminate as a festival, by revelry and intoxication.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Remarkable Changes operated in the Manners and Customs of the Highlanders.*

IT appeared to me almost incredible, that such a state of things as I have described in the preceding chapter; that manners so different from our own should have existed little more than half a century ago, at a distance of 450 miles from London—the capital of one of the most civilized and enlightened nations of Europe:—had it not been attested by accredited historians, and had I not recognized in the manners, customs, and mode of life, of the inhabitants of the Hebrides and western coasts of Scotland, numerous and unequivocal traces of the same constitution. Such a state was so incompatible with the progress of learning, mode of government, and manners of the British nation, that we cannot believe it could still be preserved for a long time, when even such great events had not hastened its close.

These tribes resembled so many small independent states, in a single monarchy, and would not submit to laws emanating from the government; thus, the interminable wars among the clans, and the audacious depredations among the peaceful and industrious inhabitants of the plains, were sure, sooner or later, to awaken the attention of the legislative power.

But the still more alarming rebellions which were manifested in the mountains, made the government feel the urgent necessity of extinguishing that focus of discord and civil war, which the enemies of England and the partisans of the Stuarts, ceased not to foment.

Already since the rebellion of 1745, many powerful chiefs had paid, even with their property and their lives, their chivalrous devotion to their ancient and unfortunate sovereigns. Those confiscations and executions for a moment, restrained and in-

timidated a turbulent population; but as nothing was changed in the system of the clans, the chiefs still preserved all their power. Defended by the inaccessible barriers of their mountains and torrents, they were still able, when the time arrived, to prepare for new incursions at the head of their formidable bands, which had been vanquished, but not entirely subdued. This happened effectually, in the famous expedition of Prince Charles Edward. In the twinkling of an eye, the whole population of the mountains were under arms; they inundated the southern part of Scotland like a torrent, destroyed the troops of the line which were opposed to them, and penetrated into the heart of England. The capital was in consternation, and expecting at every instant to see a formidable and savage army enter within its walls.

The imminent danger in which the government found itself at this period, proved the necessity of adopting prompt and vigorous measures to prevent the repetition of similar events, and radically to destroy even the cause of those frequent insurrections; viz. the patriarchal and military government of the clans.

For this purpose, new executions and confiscations took place in greater number than ever; and a general disarming of all the Highlanders was proclaimed and executed by force.

Military roads were opened from all parts across the defiles and (at that time) inaccessible vallies, to enable the troops and artillery to penetrate easily into the very heart of the deserts. Ancient forts were repaired, and new fortresses were constructed, and guarded by strong garrisons, to restrain the still formidable, although disarmed, population. In short, the power of the chiefs was abolished; the chain of clans was broken, and all jurisdiction was taken away from the chiefs. Justices of the peace, sheriffs, and other judicial officers, similar to those which were for a long time established in the Lowlands, were charged with maintaining order and executing justice in the Highlands after the laws of the kingdom. The chiefs were no longer considered otherwise than proprietors of land, and the vassals as their farmers. It required much firmness and vigilance to introduce among the Gaels a system so different from that to which they had been habituated from time immemorial; but the conquerors overstrained the means for attaining that object. The soldiers committed great excesses, and displayed a rigour which often bordered on cruelty; and many unwarrantable abuses were committed on the conquered, now a prey to hatred and revenge.

The government were likewise guilty of a gross fault:—too much influenced by the recent alarm which they had experienced,

they made laws in order to *destroy the natural character* of this people, and not content with having deprived them of their arms, they prohibited their particular costume. They even forbade the use of their vernacular tongue, and absolutely wished to create momentarily an English colony, as if it were possible to deprive high-minded and brave people of their whole inheritance of glorious recollections. Every method, in short, was employed in the Highlands, which the most absolute despotism could suggest, that the power of the chiefs of the clans might be superseded by the power of the law. The latter, without means of defence, and opposed by immense forces, were not in a state to resist, but their pride disdained a yoke which they were unable to shake off. They sought every means of eluding the laws which appeared to them humiliating, and in defiance of their oppressors, they preserved their ancient customs as much as they were able; these were become much dearer, from the endeavours which had been made to efface the memory of them.

Removed from public employment and military command, and treated as rebels, the Highlanders were, for a long time, neglected in their dreary mountains, by the British court and parliament. The celebrated Lord Chatham having succeeded to the ministry, quickly felt that such oppression was very unfit to reconcile them with the new order of things, and attach them to one common country; and he foresaw all the advantages which the English government might derive from that race of heroes, as he styled them, if once he could gain their affections. For this purpose he employed mild and conciliatory measures as being the most probable means of restoring tranquillity. All the rigorous laws were revoked, the Highlanders were allowed the free use of their national dress, and the minister restored them their arms to use in the service of England. Thus, this great Statesman knew how to profit by these warlike people, to serve the cause of his country; and by degrees, succeeded in attaching them to the House of Brunswick, by the bonds of gratitude and affection. Restored also to their customs, and to their national manners, and at the same time, to peace and repose, deprived of the means of plundering their neighbours, and of fighting among themselves, the Highlanders displayed a new character, still more interesting, than that which had distinguished them in their ancient state. They preserved the virtues of a savage people, and threw aside the vices and ignorance by which they are generally accompanied.

Patriotism, loyalty, hospitality, and religion, continued to flourish amongst them; respect for property was no longer, as

formerly, confined to the possessions of the same clan; they accustomed themselves to respect all Scotsmen, to whatever tribe or district they might belong, as countrymen and brothers. Thus the same men, who sixty years ago lived almost entirely on pillage, are now proverbial for their morality; and of all the inhabitants of Great Britain, they give the least occupation to the courts of assize. Faithful to their sovereign, they know also how to display in regular armies that attachment and heroic courage which animated them in their petty intestine wars. Rigorous observers of their religious duties, they afford this day an example to all Christians of that active piety which induces them, in order to assist in divine service, to brave the tempestuous climate, and undertake long journeys in a country beset with rocks, across dangerous precipices and boisterous seas. The ministers second their zeal by astonishing efforts and the warmest attachment; for they are to be seen braving the fury of the ocean in small boats to carry the consolation of religion into the most distant parts of their parishes.

The number of parishes too limited in proportion to their extent, is the cause why the pastors, notwithstanding their zeal, cannot discharge all the functions required by their ministry. In order to remedy this inconvenience, members of the church have been delegated under the title of missionaries, to aid the pastors in preaching the gospel. They go at certain periods to celebrate divine service in the vallies, and the most remote districts; but the salaries of these respectable ministers are far from being proportioned to their utility and devotion.

Not only has the succour of religion been augmented, but a Society for the propagation of Christianity has founded establishments for the education of children. Every village in the mountains and isles, however small, possesses at present a school where reading and writing are taught, in Gaelic and English. Thus that ignorance into which a military life had for a long period plunged this people, is dying away, and with it those superstitious practices and creeds which have long been prevalent in the mountainous districts of Scotland.

Notwithstanding the Chiefs have lost much of their power by the abolition of the patriarchal regime, they have, however, in general preserved a great influence over their farmers, who were formerly their vassals; this influence is due to the property of extensive domains. They let the farms at low prices to those whom they protect; and as they can withdraw these benefits at pleasure, their farmers are thus entirely dependent on them. Although the law deprived the Chiefs of that hereditary jurisdiction which they formerly exercised, yet, as the



offices of "Justice of the Peace" are always confided to great proprietors, and as the distance of the mountains and isles from the centre of government renders arbitrary measures more easily carried into execution, than in England and the south of Scotland, the lairds thus preserve a much more extensive power over their tenantry than that of other proprietors in Great Britain. When the laird makes use of his prerogative only for the good of his subordinates; when he applies himself, like his ancestors, to conciliate their respect by offers of services and kindness; when, in short, he endeavours to keep up among them that spirit of clanship, or family love, so powerful in former times, he again finds among the farmers the same attachment—the same devotion which they formerly entertained for their chiefs. But, in this respect, all the Highland proprietors have not followed the same course, and hence have resulted very different effects in the prosperity and happiness of those Highlanders who are not proprietors. This is what I shall endeavour to describe; for in this particular are included the most striking results which the transition from a military regime to a commercial system has occasioned.

It should be recollected, that before the abolition of the regime of clans, the interest of the landed proprietor was to concentrate in his domain the greatest possible number of men capable of bearing arms; hence it followed, that the population was no longer identified with the produce of the soil, and that the land was divided into a very considerable number of small farms, on each of which a whole family resided. In general, the proprietor reserved for himself a part of his domain, where he placed the men of his suite, his servants, and all those who were more particularly attached to his person. Some vassals paid no rent for their farms, others paid their leases partly in money, and partly in personal or particular services to the profit of the proprietor. The portions of his domain which the chief did not use himself were let to a few of the principal members of his tribe, his nearest relations, designated under the name of *tacksmen*; the latter divided the lands again among the small tenants, and the *cotters*, or labouring people. The farms which these last occupied were not considerable: they paid no rent in money, but they worked for the *tacksmen*, and were their servants.

When the chiefs were deprived of their authority over their tribes, and being no longer petty independent princes, so great an armed population was become useless to them, and no longer procured them, as formerly, that consideration and power which were the objects of their ambition; they, therefore, felt the necessity of maintaining their rank and credit by

different means, and those which were most obvious were the employment of their lands in augmenting their fortunes. It was necessary for this purpose to increase the revenue, and to make the soil yield a greater pecuniary profit. The system of administration of domains pursued until then in the Highlands was the least likely of all to procure these advantages. The rent of the farms had been invariably held extremely low, and the entire produce of the soil was consumed in supporting that population which was of so little service to agriculture. There remained no surplus for disposal in a market; consequently there were no markets, and the farmers exported no kind of provisions from their domains which could be sold. The proprietors, therefore, having no longer any thing in view but their pecuniary interests, must consequently have felt the necessity of augmenting the extent of their farms, by the diminution of their number. By that, the same labour, which formerly employed a multitude of hands, was now easily executed by a single farmer; the space of ground which at that time maintained all these small farmers being now cultivated by one individual, there remained for him a certain surplus which he could realise by carrying it to market.

Those who had until then held small farms were dispossessed in great numbers, in proportion as the proprietors, always more anxious for large revenues, were convinced that to convert their mountains and valleys into pasture for sheep, was much more profitable than the cultivation of land. Farmers from the south of Scotland, and from England, whose chief occupation was the propagation of sheep, having discovered that the mountains of Scotland supplied pasturage of as good a quality as those of the *Cheviot Hills* and of England, and that they could farm them out at a higher price, made the Highland proprietors better offers than they had received from their ancient vassals, and consequently they obtained the preference. The great farmers of the mountains, or *tacksmen*, witnessed the enormous profits which these new comers made at the fairs of the south, by the exportation of their sheep reared in the Highlands, which were more considerable, as they had neither the expense of labour nor of implements that the agriculturist had, and a single shepherd was sufficient to guard the largest flocks in the most extensive district.

This success awakened the attention of the large farmers, and they likewise resolved to undertake the breeding of sheep; they dispossessed their small tenants and their *Collers*, and by the profits which they made, were able to pay the proprietors a higher rent for their farms, which they could thus preserve. The system of sheep pasturage became more established every

year; the competition which was established between the English farmers or Lowlanders, and the *tacksmen* of the Highlands, prodigiously augmented the revenue of land in the latter country. The proprietors attained the object they had in view: they enriched themselves by the progressive and rapid increase of their rents, and many of them quitted their mountains and their now deserted vallies, to expend their newly acquired fortunes in Edinburgh, and in London; seeking to gratify their vanity by a display of luxury, as they formerly did, by exhibiting the savage pomp of a numerous suite of devoted vassals.

What then became of the tenantry and labourers, who by these measures were deprived of farms, which a long hereditary possession had accustomed them to consider as their property? Filled with despair, and burning with resentment against their chiefs, who ought to have protected them, and whom they accused of ingratitude; being unable to remain in a country, where, in order to procure the necessaries of life it was indispensable to possess a small portion of land; and destitute of all resources, they were finally obliged to quit those vallies and mountains which their forefathers had inhabited, and which recalled to their minds so many interesting and glorious associations. Those of the tenantry who possessed cattle and agricultural implements hastened to sell them, and with their produce they paid their passage from England to America, where they emigrated in vast numbers with their families. The working people, who had no other resource than their own labour, flocked to the manufacturing cities of the Lowlands, with the firm determination of labouring incessantly in the factories, in order to obtain funds adequate to the cost of their voyage to America; and the moment this was done, they eagerly set off to join their countrymen in a foreign land.

In addition to the number who had already been turned out of their farms, was the emigration of those who felt that a similar fate awaited them; depending no longer on the attachment of their ancient chiefs, and subjected, while the latter were amusing themselves in great cities, to all the vexations and severity of overseers, who were frequently strangers, sent to manage the estates during the absence of the proprietors, they preferred throwing up their farms, before the leases were expired, and profited by the first favourable opportunity to undertake the voyage.

Thus, a great emigration took place, by which the English government saw thousands of faithful subjects removing into

foreign countries—honest and brave men, who were formerly considered a nursery of intrepid soldiers.

A general cry of disapprobation was raised in Scotland against those proprietors who, deaf to the voice of nature and of pity, and looking only to their personal interests, sacrificed to their cupidity a host of men who had exposed their lives for them, and whose fathers had more than once generously devoted themselves to their ancestors. "What are become," said these unfortunate people in their distress, without asylum and without protectors—"what are become of the family ties, which our chief formerly delighted to preserve among us, when he had occasion for our arms? Are we no longer his tribe? Are we no longer the children of one common father—now that we claim his protection?" Happily for the tranquillity of the kingdom, these melancholy scenes were by no means general in the Highlands; for if the fermentation which followed, and which on some occasions manifested itself otherwise than by complaints—if this discontent had burst forth in all the districts at the same time, the public safety would have been grievously compromised. But more fortunate for humanity, there were found many proprietors, who preferred the happiness of diffusing benefits around them, to the allurements of gain; and instead of augmenting their revenues, sought to ameliorate the condition of their subordinates. There were also some who were far from desiring to disinherit their ancient vassals, yet, nevertheless, could not resist the temptation of the high prices offered them for their farms; these last, therefore, endeavoured, without making corresponding sacrifices, to retain them in their service.

Efforts were now making throughout Scotland to procure resources for those who had been sent away by their hard-hearted proprietors; but these efforts were not sufficiently followed up; they were rarely complete, and often the plans adopted in order to procure them the means of subsistence entirely failed. Thus, when war presented no obstacles, emigration continued, and went on increasing from year to year. These symptoms of depopulation at length began to spread alarm among those who felt interested in the mountains of Scotland.

Many authors have written on this subject. A respectable association, The Highland Society, took these circumstances into their serious consideration, and were actively occupied in seeking resources, even in the Highlands, in order to retain those who were disposed to emigrate.

They, in consequence, claimed the interference of the legis-

lature, to oppose the emigration; and what is most remarkable, the proprietors who were the cause of the evils, and who alone could provide an efficacious remedy, were those who most anxiously demanded authority from government to restrain the emigrants from embarking. They were doubtless persuaded, that such an emigration was injurious to the country, and perhaps also, they were conscious, that to them would reasonably be imputed the expatriation of so many brave men. But what could the legislature do? They could not compel the proprietors to dispose of their domains against their own will, nor could they infringe on the right of every inhabitant of a free country, to transport himself to the place which appeared to him the most suitable for the developement of his industry. They tried, therefore, by persuasion, to retain those who wished to emigrate, by offering them lucrative resources in their own country, and it was in a great measure for this purpose, that the Caledonian canal was undertaken, and which, in fact, has employed a great number of workmen. The parliament also ordered the opening of new roads; but these labours, although considerable, were not sufficient for the great number of men who were out of employment; besides, there were many, who feeling that these resources were only temporary, and excited by examples, as well as by the hope of making their fortunes, and by the attraction of possessing lands of their own, persisted in emigrating to America.

Thus emigration continued, and at the termination of every war, numerous groups of men, women, and children, embarked for the new world. Those who have witnessed the departure of these unfortunate people, have painted in lively colours the distressing scenes which were unceasingly renewed when so many poor Highlanders bade an eternal adieu to the huts and vallies of their native country.

Among the numerous works which have been written on the emigration of the Highlanders, the most remarkable is that of Lord Selkirk, who, in truth, is the only author who has approved of the expulsion of small farmers, and who has considered emigration as favourable to the developement of industry in Great Britain. He has treated this subject entirely as a question of political economy, and enforced his arguments with great acumen. This work, it appears to me, was so much the more dangerous, as its tendency was to abandon all attempts to ameliorate the situation of the unhappy Highlanders, as being unprofitable and even injurious; thus encouraging the proprietors to study their own self-interest, in driving from their homes an intelligent people, who were warmly attached to their duties, to their laws, and to their sovereign,—for the pur-

pose of supplying their places by flocks of sheep! I trust I shall be excused endeavouring to oppose some reflections to the arguments by which Lord Selkirk has justified such conduct, and explained his opinions.

Are we only, I ask, in the first place, to consider this important subject, as the noble author has done, with respect to the pecuniary interests of the proprietors, and of those of the industrious and commercial interests of the nation? Is there not also a much greater question, and one of much higher importance? Ought we not first of all to ascertain whether a man has a right, in defiance of the laws of religion, the rules of morality, and the dictates of his own conscience, to sacrifice to personal advantages the happiness, and even the existence of a number of human beings, who have a just claim on him for protection, and who are entirely under his dependence? Thus, if the real cause of emigration be found in the means employed by proprietors to increase their revenues; and if these means are manifestly contrary to morality, whatever may be their good effects in political economy—whatever brilliant results they may offer in perspective—all the particular and general benefits which might have been derived from it, ought not to have been sought after, as they were evidently founded on an unjust principle.—Lord Selkirk does not appear to have felt this, when he so strongly advocated the utility and the advantages of emigration.

By stripping this subject of the moral question, which indeed is inseparable from it, and by reducing it to a simple calculation of interest, he has collected a number of arguments sufficiently specious, in order to support his conclusion; viz. that, to encourage the system adopted by the proprietors, the emigration which is the consequence of it, is necessary for the public prosperity. But if he has contrived to dazzle the imagination for a time, he has not succeeded in convincing public opinion, nor in persuading those who still consider him as their guide.

It happens here, as on all occasions when systems of political economy are found in contradiction with the laws of ethics, that many persons who are incapable of refuting the arguments employed to support them, reject them from the sole motive that they are repugnant to their own intimate opinions.

Such are the dispositions which Lord Selkirk and other economists tax with prejudice, and which they endeavour to destroy among those whom they address, by always showing them, that the improvement of their fortunes, from whence public wealth is derived, ought to be the sole object of their efforts, as individuals and members of the body politic; every

other consideration being yielded to that point. Those who have till now refused to embrace this system, are only, in their eyes, as superficial observers, who do not consider that these partial evils ought to have the public good as a final consequence.

But, has not the simple and conclusive reasoning which, unknown to them, influences those ignorant and prejudiced pretenders, much more force than that which they are inclined to oppose to them? "You prove to us admirably well," they may say, "what would be the surest and most expeditious means of enriching ourselves, and, on this point, we agree with you: however, in order to attain this object, we must be guilty of injustice, for we regard as such the abandonment of men who have a claim on our protection, and consequently this act is repugnant to our conscience." But the laws of morality, even when they are not dictated by religion, are, from the avowal of every philosopher, founded on the immutable basis of reason. Here is on one side political economy, such as it is considered to be in the present day, which says to us: Follow only your pecuniary interest, it will conduct you to your greatest happiness, to that of your country. However, the voice of morality cries out: Do not unto others that which you would not wish should be done unto you. Do not extinguish in your heart that sentiment of commiseration for your fellow creatures in distress, which is the principal of every social virtue.

From these two modes of reasoning which, on the same subject, lead to results so diametrically opposite, one of them must evidently be false; which then are we to choose? We should not hesitate, as we know from the earliest experience, from the testimony of all philosophers, and, in short, from the light of revelation, that morality is intimately connected with human nature, and forms part of its very essence. We are not so certain with respect to any system of political economy. In this uncertainty we adopt then the conclusions of morality. How much more reason have we on our side than you, who tell us, in the name of political economy, that we ought not to stop at a transient and partial evil, in order to attain a general and permanent blessing,\* when we oppose to this specious and dangerous doctrine so just and true a precept of morality: *Never do an evil that good may result from it!* What a state then would society be in, if an evident injustice were permitted with the mere uncertainty of obtaining some advantage?

With what irresistible force may we apply the answer of a

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\* See Lord Selkirk on Emigration, pp. 133 and 134.

Highland chief, when he was advised to send away his ancient vassals in order to replace them with flocks of sheep—"Their forefathers," said he, "have, at the price of their blood and their lives, conquered and defended the domain which I possess, and I think their children have a natural right to participate in the produce of it."

I have hitherto expressly treated this important question under a dogmatical form, and I have appealed to the laws of morality, which, by common consent, are also those of reason. The partisans who calculate only their own interest, and apply it to all the circumstances of life, repel every argument;—they pretend to regard those with pity, as being weak and infatuated, who throw obstacles in the way of their vast projects for the perfection of the social fabric. But, what would they have said, had I addressed myself to those who yet feel a lively emotion at the recital of the sufferings of their fellow-creatures; had I presented to them these men, whom the economists consider as so many abstract quantities, and of whom they would dispose as the calculator does his figures, but whom I would have shown to have been animated by all the affections and recollections, and a prey to all the impressions of happiness or misery which the Creator has imparted to the human species; had I, in short, opposed to the specious arguments of these bold theorists, the simple and affecting picture presented by a multitude of fathers, aged men, and children, driven by hundreds from their native soil, in order to satisfy the rapacious cupidity and vanity of a single man; who would dare to set his heart against the sympathy which such a spectacle would have excited in a generous breast? These unfortunate beings, driven from their country, without assistance, abandoned by the man whom they had cherished as a father, and on whom they founded all their hopes, and confided themselves to the first adventurer they met with, crowded promiscuously into vessels too small for the number of passengers, and without adequate means of subsistence during the voyage, arrive at last in the new world,—they touch the soil of that promised land; but here again other misfortunes await them. Strangers, destitute of every thing, in an unknown country, the greater part of an age at which it is difficult to serve an apprenticeship to a new kind of occupation, and in which strength is wanting for the laborious exertions which await them,—in this state are exposed to the mercy of rapacious speculators. Lost, in short, in those immense forests, where they must seek their own subsistence, the isolated state in which they find themselves, the depth of those impenetrable woods, and the frightful aspect of the deserts,



seize them with horror; despair takes possession of their souls, and it is only with difficulty that, without a guide, without any direction, they perhaps ultimately succeed in cultivating a piece of ground sufficient for the maintenance of their families. Next their affections are turned towards that country which has abandoned them, but which they still love: they wish to perpetuate, even in a new hemisphere, the remembrance of the places where they have passed their childhood; they designate their little fields, and their cottages formed with branches of trees, by the names of those farms which their ancestors possessed, and which they quitted with so much regret; and the foreigner, wandering in the vast deserts of America, hears at times the echoes of the banks of the Sussequahana and Ontario re-echoing those plaintive airs which formerly resounded in the mountains of Scotland.

But, it will be said, can this emigration be prevented? The legislature cannot oppose it; and must the proprietors abandon their interests altogether, and consent to charge themselves, as formerly, with the burden of a population unused to labour, and disproportioned to the extent of the soil? Is there not then, I would ask, in my turn—is there no intermediate method for a chief between the preservation of his small farmers, and their general expulsion? Lord Selkirk does not seem to believe in the possibility of a medium conduct, as such always opposes the system of sheep pasturage (which, according to him, must one day extend throughout the Highlands), to the maintenance of small farmers and ancient rents, without appearing to discover any other practicable means. He would have reason indeed, if all the resources of the Highlands had been exhausted, and if it were proved that they could not be rendered more productive. But this is not the case: if the population is too large for the actual state of agriculture, it is because the lands capable of cultivation are very far from being all cleared, and because they do not produce all that judicious management might obtain from them; because the sea, that immense reservoir of subsistence, is altogether neglected; whilst it is acknowledged, that the fishery of the Hebrides, on the coasts and in the gulphs of the western isles of Scotland, would alone suffice, were it encouraged, not only to maintain all the actual population of Scotland, but even to enrich it. Thus, it is futile to talk of Scotland being over-peopled, in relation to its produce; it is more likely, that political economists do not know how to draw from it what is necessary in order to support the population.

There are many abuses in agriculture still to be remedied, and these abuses, extending nearly throughout Scotland, pre-

vent the full appreciation of all that its soil is capable of producing. A great extent of arable land is still uncultivated; and, in addition to this, the system of sheep farms has succeeded in laying waste many lands which the persevering industry of certain small farmers had fertilized; because, at the price now offered for pasturage, the proprietor has no interest in cultivating his land.

If then, as Lord Selkirk announces, this system shall end in covering all the mountainous districts in this great extent of country with sheep, we shall soon see not a single field cultivated; the lands even, which at present maintain a multitude of families, will have then returned to their original state. Nevertheless, there are many valleys capable of cultivation. As a proof of this, we may quote the instance of an intelligent farmer near Inverness having transformed, as if by magic, a barren track into a delightful garden.

The system of sheep pasturage, so far from leading to the perfection of agriculture and the amelioration of the soil, has a contrary effect. This branch of revenue, however productive it may appear at the present day, is, notwithstanding, very precarious, since the high price now offered for pasturage proceeds from the great consumption of salt meat which takes place among the number of troops in the army and navy at present in the pay of England, and above all, from the necessity of supplying the British colonies of the two hemispheres with this kind of provision. A considerable reduction in the English forces, and the emancipation of some of her colonies, will not fail, in the course of a short time, to diminish the value of sheep pasturage: what then will become of the Scottish proprietor with his uncultivated lands? He will be obliged to employ farmers from another country, who would not fail to exact onerous conditions, as no other inducement but that of gain will tempt them to establish themselves in a country, the soil of which is unproductive, and the climate severe. How much, then, will the proprietors regret having expelled the natural inhabitants of these mountains, whom some concession would have retained in the country which was the object of all their affections! Accustomed to the severity of their native climate, and inured to fatigue and privations, they would not have required conditions near so rigorous as the farmers of the south of Scotland or England, and would have, at less expence, fertilized land of an equal extent.

Lord Selkirk, it is true, reproaches the Highlanders with the want of that activity and energy necessary for agricultural labour, and with having still harboured that disposition for idleness and indolence which prevailed among them when they were

entirely under the dependence of their chiefs. He reproaches the proprietors also, who have endeavoured to retain their ancient farmers by granting them lands to cultivate, with having by an unfair mode of concession injured themselves in the success of their enterprise. Thus, says he, the leases granted were too short; the farmer not being protected, and receiving no pecuniary assistance, can only profitably cultivate a very small extent of ground, and the prospect of profit presented to him is not then sufficiently encouraging to determine him to invest his small capital in this manner.

These observations, in fact, prove, that the proprietor who wishes to retain his ancient vassals on his domain, by employing them in clearing the land, must for a time submit to some pecuniary sacrifices; but these prove comparatively trifling with the possibility of rendering agriculture a resource for the inhabitants of the mountains. Moreover, experience has shown, that every time the lairds wished, in reality, to offer their farmers advantageous terms, or to put them in a state, either by advances or by granting them extraordinary privileges, in order to provide for the expence of the first establishment, the Highlanders have displayed an activity and disposition for labour of which they could hardly have been thought capable, and the success of similar enterprises has surpassed all expectation. It would be easy to mention many other examples; but I shall content myself with one, which will best prove what a Highland proprietor can do for the good of his country when he does not merely look to his immediate interest.

The Marquis of Stafford acquired, by his marriage with the Countess of Sutherland, the estate of Sutherland, situate at the northern extremity of Scotland. No district at that time appeared less fit for cultivation, either from the nature of the soil, which was covered with rocks, and presented only barren and uncultivated mountains, or from the wild and uncivilized character of its inhabitants, or, lastly, from the severity and variableness of the climate. However, there was a track of land capable of being cultivated in this district; but the indolent Highlanders had scarcely cleared any portion of it, in order to reap the precarious crops of rye and potatoes.

The ancient tenures were just abolished, and the proprietors already began to dispossess their vassals, in order to establish sheep pasturage on their farms. The Marquis of Stafford, unwilling that the ancient tenants of the house of Sutherland should suffer by the change of circumstances which time had brought about, allotted only for the sheep the mountains decidedly sterile, and endeavoured to draw all the population

into the valleys, and to the sea coast, in order to employ them in cultivating the soil and carrying on the fishery.

To attain this object, he allowed each family a cottage, and a piece of ground sufficient to keep a cow. Each man received also three Scottish acres to cultivate, and a proportionate extent for pasturage in the mountains. From that time a spirit of industry was excited among them to an astonishing degree: their thatched huts were changed into buildings of dry stone, and the latter were afterwards replaced by well constructed houses, which the master no longer inhabited, as he formerly did, promiscuously with his cows and horses. It was the same with the fishery as with agriculture: Lord Selkirk rather appears to have sought to depreciate this branch of industry, and to have concluded from the failure of some experiments, that the fishery on the coasts and in the isles would never be a sufficient resource to maintain the Highlanders, when they were dispossessed of their farms. The errors with which Lord Selkirk reproaches the Society for the Encouragement of the Fisheries, and the proprietors who have tried some establishments for sea fishery, prove nothing against the final success of a similar enterprise, when the fishermen know how to avoid the errors which he points out with so much justice. It cannot, however, be denied, that the fishery in the Hebrides, and in the western bays of Scotland, is capable of considerable augmentation. All travellers agree on this point: the inhabitants of the coasts unanimously bear witness to the incredible multitudes of fish which inhabit these seas, and if palpable proofs were necessary, the extraordinary low value of fish in the Hebrides (although that is the principal support of the whole population) would prove the truth of this assertion; whilst the innumerable swarms of sea birds, on all sides in these seas, indicate immense shoals of herrings. In truth, it is well known that formerly the Dutch frequented the Hebrides, and regarded the fishery as the great source of their wealth; they then bought the fish from the Hebrideans in such quantities as to load whole fleets. This traffic formed a grand resource for these poor islanders, but we are ignorant of the cause of parliament prohibiting so advantageous a traffic. From that time, and until the late war, the Dutch, alone, possessed the advantage of fishing in the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and the Shetland Isles.

These considerations, which were of such a nature as seriously to awaken attention, and that above all at a moment when the Highlanders were emigrating in thousands for want of employment and the means of subsistence, engaged many individuals, devoted to the welfare of their country, to form

themselves into a society, for the purpose of giving activity to the fisheries by every possible means; with this view Knox undertook his journey to the Hebrides and western coast of Scotland. He went to survey the fittest places for the establishment of fishing villages, and on his report, the society, with the aid of liberal funds which they had raised in Scotland and England, built several villages along the coasts and in the Isle of Mull. Every man received a dwelling, and implements necessary for fishing. Unfortunately, a circumstance prevented this undertaking having the desired success. Instead of merely allowing the settlers the requisites for fishing, the society thought fit to add to each dwelling a portion of land for cultivation; they were then ignorant of what Lord Selkirk has very ably proved, that agriculture and the fishery are incompatible, as the season which requires agricultural labour is that in which the fisherman ought to be at sea. It is to be regretted that this overstrained precaution should have frustrated the success of a plan which otherwise was calculated to produce the most beneficial results. The establishment of a village of fishermen would naturally have created a new kind of employment; we should have seen them spontaneously building workshops for the construction of boats, manufactories for nets, ropes, and sails, without considering many other less important branches of commerce which must necessarily be favourable to the happiness of a certain number of men, all occupied with the same pursuit.

The cultivator of the soil would have found, in such a village, a sure market for his provisions; in short, these establishments must, according to all probability, have given these districts a new impulse and aspect. Those proprietors who have succeeded in entirely separating the fishery from agriculture, have had their labours crowned with more complete success, as the ardent and enterprising spirit of the Highlanders entirely agrees with the dangerous trade of sea fishing.

The Marquis of Stafford, whom I have already quoted, in 1814, erected a house on his estate of Sutherland, on the sea coast, for the curing of fish; he also built sloops, which he granted to some of his ancient dispossessed vassals. Although totally inexperienced in the fishery, these Highlanders found, at the end of the first six weeks, that each man had already acquired a profit of twenty-seven pounds sterling. Such unexpected success awakened the attention of all the Highlanders of that part of the country, and in the following year, 1815, the number of sloops employed in the fishery already amounted to fifty. Upwards of four thousand barrels of herrings were dispatched, and vessels were loaded for Riga,

and the other ports of the Baltic, and even for the West Indies. Thus, it appears, that in these latitudes the sea presents a rich source of profit to such as are desirous of availing themselves of it.

The principal obstacles to the success of these establishments are the prohibitory laws, and the enormous duties on salt, an article of the first necessity in curing fish. It is to be hoped the legislature will not delay repealing these severe restrictions, and that the English government will at last feel the necessity of extensively encouraging the fishery of the Hebrides. It is really astonishing to see the English neglecting the benefits which nature has put into their own hands, whilst they unceasingly encourage the distant colony of Newfoundland, which has often cost the state much more than it produces.

It was now thought that the manufactures might offer resources to the Highlanders dispossessed of their farms, and be the means of detaining them in the country; but the sedentary and mechanical labour which this occupation requires was not in unison with the spirit and character of this people, and the situation of a workman in a manufactory is regarded with a certain degree of contempt by the Highlanders. Hence it follows, that all the endeavours to establish cotton manufactories in the Highlands have failed; and it is only when under the most pressing necessity, that the Highlanders have engaged as workmen in the manufacturing towns of the South of Scotland. Although there is no doubt that manufactures might be the great means of employing and supporting a part of the redundant population of the Highlands; yet it appears, that nothing would so much prove the want of policy on the part of the proprietors, or the government, so much as their encouragement; and that it would be equally unwise to endeavour to extinguish the feeling which, in this respect, prevails among the Highlanders.

But if the establishment of large manufactories in the mountains does not appear desirable, there are certain works of less extent, and certain occupations which do not require the assembling of so great a body of men, and which occupations may even be combined with agriculture. The encouragement of such pursuits would be attended with the greatest advantage, and might, in being joined to the resources which have already been indicated, enable the proprietors of the Highlands to retain among them their ancient vassals. Thus the Laird of Grant, by granting very advantageous conditions to many of his vassals, has seen rise up a brewery, a multitude of small shops, manufactories of woollen stuffs, linens, and stockings; bleach-fields for wool, as well as workshops for taylor, shoemakers, carpenters, and masons, who all labour for the nume-

rous agricultural population occupying the neighbouring valleys. It is evident, from what I have just said, that the Highlands might furnish means of subsistence to all their inhabitants, and that, by means different from those which supported them when the *régime* of the clans was in full vigour.

But in order to attain this happy result, it is necessary that every proprietor should consent to suffer some temporary sacrifices.

First, a pecuniary sacrifice, by renouncing a portion of the profit which he had derived from sheep farms, and even in making advances for the first expences of the establishment.

Secondly, to give up all inclinations which prompted him to abandon his wild and solitary residence to spend his fortune at Edinburgh or in London. The presence of the Laird on his estates appears to be a *sine quâ non* condition of the success of all attempts at amelioration; first, by his residing in the Highlands, he is enabled to save a certain portion of his revenue, which he might apply to improve the situation of his farmers; afterwards, because of the personal influence which he exercises over those who surround him, he may overcome their repugnance, and other difficulties which generally present themselves in the accomplishment of similar projects.

Without going so far as to pretend, like Lord Selkirk, that a Highlander, once dispossessed of the farm of his ancestors, would still prefer embarking for America to establishing himself on another portion of the domains of his Chief, it must be agreed that there exists, in fact, among the Highlanders, a strong repugnance to changing the place of their abode; but this repugnance is not insurmountable, and must yield to the prospect of an advantageous establishment. Thus we see the domains abandoned by the proprietor to the management of a cruel and avaricious superintendent, who is unceasingly occupied in oppressing the farmers in order to provide for the expences of the luxury and ostentation of his master; in similar domains we see tenants prefer expatriating themselves to the endurance of such exactions, and murmur loudly against a Chief from whom they ought to have experienced quite another kind of treatment.

But we must be very ignorant of the character of the Highlanders, to believe that they would be insensible to the benevolence of their Chiefs, and that they would not feel that those who make real sacrifices in their favour have a right to require, on their part, all the services in their power. But if, notwithstanding the advantages which would be offered to them by their Laird, in order to retain them in his lands, he would still find some men who would regret the ancient state of things, or

who, allured by the ambition of becoming proprietors in their turn, and seduced by the promises of America, would persist in emigrating: in this case, the Chief would no longer be reprehensible for the conduct of those restless and unreasonable men in abandoning their country.

Still attached to his system, that emigration is a beneficial measure, Lord Selkirk, after having invited the proprietors to consult their personal and pecuniary interest, addresses himself to the government, to prove that emigration is not only an admirable measure for the country in general, as it has always been asserted, but that it is decidedly advantageous, and even necessary. I shall not enter into a detail of the arguments which he alleges in support of his opinions; it is sufficient to observe, that in admitting only two possible cases, that of the proprietors persisting in the ancient mode of tenement, and that of the general introduction of the system of sheep farms, Lord Selkirk does not consider the question in all its views, since he does not discuss a third case; viz. that where the proprietor, by making the requisite sacrifices, would seek to retain his ancient vassals by agriculture or fishery; this possibility has never entered into his calculations, and yet, had it been taken into consideration, it would naturally have led him to very different conclusions. In no case would the legislature have been able to compel those to live in Scotland who were determined to emigrate; but it appears to me they ought seriously to have united their efforts with those of the proprietors, in order to retain those individuals who lost their ancient farms by the changes operated in the political administration of the country.

The undertaking of the Caledonian Canal, and the opening of many new roads in the mountains, have, with this view, been decreed by the British parliament: these no doubt were great benefits; but the good effected by them was only temporary, as such enterprises were limited in their duration. An act of much greater importance, would have been the repeal of the prohibition laws, as such a benefit would have caused not only the present, but even future generations to explore with advantage the inexhaustible seas: at the same time perhaps, by premiums of encouragement for the better cultivation of the lands, they might have been able to awaken among the proprietors the desire of retaining their ancient vassals.

It will be seen from all that has been said, that the true cause of the emigration of the Highlanders is the conduct of their Chiefs; instead of misleading the opinion of the proprietors, by holding forth to them emigration as the natural consequence of the rebellion of 1745, and instead of extinguishing among



them the voice of conscience, by encouraging them to be guided only by their pecuniary interest, it would have been more desirable had they considered this important question in the moral point of view which is the most essential, and had they invited them to reconcile their fortunes with the duties which they had contracted towards their ancient vassals.

As the sole object of the proprietors of the mountainous districts was to increase their fortunes, and as they sought only an augmentation of revenue to gratify their vanity by a display of luxury and wealth, being no longer willing to content themselves, as formerly, by that of a feudal suite of numerous warriors, it would have been necessary to appeal to the tribunal of public opinion, to account for that motive which reduced so great a number of men to despair. This opinion would have reached the point where the legislature could no longer act. They would have marked with disapprobation those who sacrificed the members of their tribe to the contemptible ambition of appearing with eclat in the English metropolis, since it would have been much more honourable had they deprived themselves of a portion of their possessions to contribute to the happiness of their inferiors.

It is, however, here necessary to observe, in justice to the pure and liberal intentions of Lord Selkirk, that having once admitted emigration to be necessary, and even indispensable, and this emigration existing in fact, he has performed a great service in seeking to regulate it, and to give it a new course, by directing it from the United States, where it had until then been directed, towards the English colonies of North America, which has tended still to preserve to the British government a number of brave and loyal subjects. He himself accompanied a body of emigrant Highlanders, whom he destined to occupy lands purchased by his lordship for this object in the Isle of St. John, or Prince Edward's Island, in the Gulph of St. Lawrence, near the coasts of Nova Scotia. He has let out to each family, on advantageous terms, a portion of his territory, to clear and cultivate; and has neglected no means, nor spared any expence, for the success of his enterprise. Thus success has crowned his expectations; and the very interesting details which he has given of the establishment, and the labours of this little colony, are, according to our view of the subject, the most useful and important part of his work.

*Conclusion.*

Having now terminated my remarks on the Scottish Highlanders, the reader will perceive that every thing among them,—their manners, customs, language, poetry, and even music, possesses a truly original character. Such are the traits which the lapse of many centuries has strongly imprinted on the soul of every Highlander; and which, uniting an invincible love for his wild native country to long and glorious historical recollections, have given this small nation, confined to one of the least frequented extremities in Europe, a peculiar physiognomy, and, at the same time, a lively sentiment of national dignity. These are the traits, however, so profoundly engraven by the hand of time itself, which a mistaken policy, aided by a parliamentary decree issued at the termination of the last rebellion, imagined could be effaced by a single blow. The illustrious father of the great Pitt felt the cruelty, and, at the same time, the folly of such measures; he hastened to restore the Highlands of Scotland the full liberty of preserving all the ancient usages which were compatible with the state of things recently established in that country. Thus, at the present day, the King of England has not in his dominions more faithful subjects, nor the British Government more intrepid defenders, than the descendants of the ancient Gaëls. A new era has commenced among them; they now proceed with rapid strides in the career which has been opened: may they enjoy that happiness which the prospect seems to promise! The love of liberty among them is engrafted upon the ancient and memorable attachment to their sovereigns and their superiors; education, supported by religion, and wisely directed by its ministers, is diffused amongst them, and must be productive of excellent results; in fine, comfort, and perhaps wealth, will succeed an hereditary poverty; but the very nature of their country, its severe climate, its mountains, its barren valleys, and its seas, will avert luxury and corruption from them. May this estimable people know, like their southern neighbours, how to prolong to a distant period the space of time (frequently so short among other nations) in which learning and the arts of civilization go hand in hand with the sentiments and the energetic virtues of another age!

THE END.

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LONDON:

SHACKELL AND ARROWSMITH, JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

