


CHAP. XVI.

HIGHLANDERS AND HIGHLAND DRESS.

Preparations for the Moors. — The Shooting-cart. — Highland Roads and Carriages. — Ossian's Chariots. — The Head-Keeper. — The Dogs. — Old Viscount. — A teetotal Highlander. — Old Rudd. — Our little Weaknesses. — A Whiskey Formula. — A Cross-examination. — Old Rudd offended. — Ditto the Scotch Cook. — Archie. — Barley-sheaves and Whiskey. — The Shooters' Departure. — Rarity of the national Dress. — Scotch'd but not kilt. — The Poetical and Practical. — The Scotch Bonnet. — A royal Example. — A kilted Morning-caller. — Detractors of the Dress. — Age of the Kilt. — An extravagant Bishop! — Mr. Pinkerton's Modesty shocked. — Royal Toleration. — The ancient Briton and modern Highlander. — Heraldic Tartans. — The Cantire Farmer and his Wardrobe.



IT is a fine morning at Glencreggan; and, as we look from our bedroom window across the Atlantic, the sails of the distant vessels turn to us their sunlit sides. Below us, in the garden, the two peacocks are taking an airing with their wives, and no longer scream to us prophecies of rain. By the time that we have assembled for breakfast, it is apparent that the shooters must have made up their minds about the

weather; for their dress shows that they must have made their morning toilette with thoughts intent on grouse. The keeper and beaters are also seen about the house, and there is a commotion at the kennels. The gun-room is visited, and its murderous weapons critically examined. John Macallum, the head-keeper, makes his appearance clad in Highland costume, which of itself is a clear proof that he has made up *his* mind about the weather, for, if it had been a wet or unfavourable morning, he would have been in an ordinary English dress. The two beaters, Rudd and Archie, do not aspire to the Highland costume.

The acreage of moors rented by our host was somewhere about sixteen thousand, more or less, for it is impossible to be precise in a case where the owners of the property themselves cannot tell you the extent of their estates to a few hundred acres; and the shooting consequently extended for so many miles behind, and on either side of Glencreggan, that a vehicle is necessary to help on such of the shooters as do not ride on ponyback, together with their paraphernalia, towards the spot from whence it has been determined to commence the day's beat. Now, as no gingerbread vehicle on delicate springs would have the slightest chance of returning alive from those moorland "roads," which are in a complete state of nature, and worn and washed into mighty ruts that form so many water-courses for

the mountain streams ; therefore it of necessity follows that although an omnibus-carriage may be found very useful to convey our host and his guests along the high road, yet the shooting-cart must be a strongly-built machine on wheels, put together for use and not for show, and with a hanging-seat for "the gentlefolks," made as comfortable as may be by the aid of plaids and rugs.

In the argument whether the Ossian poems belong to Celtic Ireland or Celtic Scotland, a strong point has been made against their Highland parentage from their frequent mention of chariots and of battles wherein chariots were largely used in a way utterly at variance with the mountainous nature of the country, and which would have necessitated the existence of roads, of which not the slightest evidence or trace remains. Indeed, among the miracles performed by St. Columba, it is expressly mentioned by his early biographer Adamnan, that he travelled for a whole day in a chariot without a linch-pin ! and, although this remarkable and miraculous feat was performed in a plain, it sufficiently demonstrates the impracticability of any chariots up to the period of the sixth century being able to career over the road-less territories of the mountainous Highlands.*

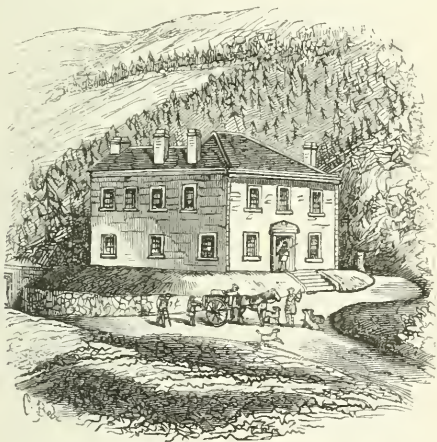
* This "miracle" happened on *Irish* ground (says St. Adamnan), during a visit of a few days that the saint paid to Ireland. His servant

As there is no Columba to act as charioteer to the Glencreggan shooting-cart, you may be sure that the linch-pins have been properly attended to, and that the cart is warranted to bump and plunge and jolt in a resolute and not-go-to-pieces way, that may perchance dislocate the limbs of its riders, but will do no damage to its own. It comes round from the stable-yard, drawn by a Roman-nosed steed that has seen better days, and managed by a light-weight jockey of a lad. John Macallum and his satellites group around; and, while guns are being looked up and examined, game-bags brought out, the prog-basket packed for luncheon, and flasks and sandwich-cases filled, I wander forth pencil in hand and sketch the out-door preparations.

First, in order and importance, comes John Macallum in his Highland dress and kilt of light grey tartan, well suited to the moors. He is girt with powder-flasks, and will presently be further laden with a game-bag and gun. His dog-whip is in his hand, and before him are the dogs, all impatient for the fray, but controlled by voice, and eye, and sight of whip. There is Alba, the beautiful white setter, with a coat

Columbanus, or Colmanus, had neglected to furnish the chariot with the linch-pins (*necessariis obicibus*). Macculloch twice refers to this "miracle" (vol. i. p. 86; vol. ii. p. 203), but appears to have quoted from Adamnan at second-hand; for he says it does not "follow that this was in the Highlands. If it was not in Ireland, it must have been in the low country, and in the Pictish dominions."

like satin ; and old Viscount, sitting sedately upon his haunches, but ready for action, and uncommonly reminding one of another old Viscount in his seat in the House of Commons ; like him, too, juvenile in spite of years, game and plucky to the last, with more work in him than many of his more frolicksome and thoughtless youngsters ; a fine old dog and handsome, and, alas ! his last season on these moors. That his biped



GLENCREGGAN HOUSE. — (OFF TO THE MOORS.)

alter ego may be preserved for many seasons yet to come, to sport over his Commons with unflagging tact and powers, is the hope of many a one (like the writer) whose difference of politics cannot quench their admiration and respect for the man. And there is Bacchus, betraying all the restless impatience of youth ; while

Lady and Countess complete a canine group, to depict which makes me ardently long for the skill and grace of Frederick Tayler.* Their keeper is a good-looking fellow, and no bad subject for the pencil of artist or amateur. Old Rudd grins over my shoulder at the pictured likeness, and pronounces Macallum to look “varra snug,” whatever that encomium may mean; and some “chaff” ensues in Gaelic, and therefore out of my ken. John Macallum is worthy of special mention, not only because he is a very honest, superior, and civil man, — though that last point is not so extraordinary, for, as Sir Walter Scott says, “there are few nations who can boast of so much natural politeness as the Highlanders,”† — but because he is a High-

* As a matter of course the sketch (which has been reproduced in colours and forms the frontispiece to the second volume) was far too elaborate to be completed with the speed of a photograph; but “by poetic license” I speak of it here as though it were finished “at one sitting,” like the laying of an egg.

† Christopher North, too, says that the Celts are “gentlemen in manners, wherever the kilt is worn; for the tartan is the symbol of courtesy, and Mac a good password all the world over between man and man.” “Scotch Highlanders,” says Mr. Campbell, “have faults in plenty, but they have the bearing of nature’s own gentlemen, the delicate natural tact which discovers, and the good taste which avoids, all that would offend or hurt a guest. The poorest is ever the readiest to share the best he has with the stranger. A kind word kindly meant is never thrown away,” (a golden rule!) “and, whatever may be the faults of this people, I have never found a boor or a churl in a Highland bothy.” — *West Highland Tales*, vol. i. p. xxxii. And Dr.

land gamekeeper who never touches whiskey. The Total Abstinence Society might do worse than engage him as a "deputation," for, in his Highland costume, he would be much more picturesque and healthy-looking than Messrs. Gough and Co.; and though he might not be able to compete with the transatlantic teetotallers in astounding narratives and Yankee yarns, yet his experience would be much more serviceable to the cause of truth and temperance. Like the prisoner at the treadmill, John Macallum's turning was the result of conviction: he saw so much abuse of whiskey going on around him, that he determined to dispense with the use of the spirit, if possible, and drink instead the real mountain-dew that flowed from the hill-side. He did not take any unnecessary "pledge" imposed by man, but followed out his own reading of the Word of God, and acted upon its precepts. It is now three years since he abstained from everything in the shape of malt liquor and spirits, and he finds himself none the less fitted for those arduous duties that his profession demands. All honour to a man like this, who, without making a parade of his tem-

John Campbell, in his "Description of the Highlands of Scotland" (1752), says: "It is commonly said of the Venetians that they are all noble; but it can without the least deviation of truth be said of the Highlanders that they are all gentlemen, seeing that they are entire strangers to every mean and dishonourable action" (p. 7).

perance, can preserve himself victorious amid perpetual temptations.*

Would that I could say the same for old Rudd, who is grinning over my shoulder. Like Mr. Colquhoun's Sandy †, old Rudd "likes his whiskey raw, but is very fond o' a drap water after 't;" and an uncommonly homœopathic modicum of water is sufficient for him. His formula is, — as much whiskey as you like; and every drop of water after will spoil it. To parody the language of Baillie Macwheeble, old Rudd was as sober as a saint if you only kept whiskey from him and him from whiskey. Most people have their little weaknesses: Napoleon the Great inclined to a profusion of snuff, and the great Johnson to an immoderate use of tea; the cruel and ferocious Charles IX. of France, the hero of St. Bartholomew, delighted in working a forge, shoeing horses, snaring hares, and chopping live animals to pieces with a sharp sword; the great Condé, as a boy, loved to bore out the eyes of a pet canary with red-hot needles; Mr. Carlyle's hero, Frederick the Great, was attached to drink, wooden furniture, gigantic

* Mr. Weld, in his work on "The Highlands," pronounces "tea, without milk or sugar," to be "the most refreshing beverage during a long and fatiguing day's shooting;" an opinion which I have heard confirmed by experienced shooters. A pound of tea at 3s. 6d. goes as far as a gallon of whiskey at 16s.

† "Rocks and Rivers; or, Highland Wanderings," by J. Colquhoun, p. 22.

grenadiers, and greens and bacon ; and Peter the Great was devoted to dram-drinking. Old Rudd's devotion resembled that of Peter the Great. His passion was for a glass of whiskey, made according to that formula which forbids the intermixture of any other element. When he was out on the moors, he had a habit of lagging behind when he ought to have been to the fore ; and his punishment for this neglect was, at luncheon time, to mix his whiskey with water instead of supplying it to him neat. Old Rudd didn't at all like this. His invariable excuse for lagging behind and not being up to the birds when he was wanted, was that "he had been took bad;" which meant that he had stopped to enjoy a quiet smoke, though it suggested that a modicum of whiskey to relieve his imaginary qualms would be esteemed a favour.

By this time I have turned from sketching John Macallum, and am engaged on old Rudd himself, who is by no means picturesque or national in his costume, save a pair of blue trousers very much the worse for wear ; but what can you expect from a gentleman who spends all his pocket-money in whiskey? He leans upon a gun, and looks at me with a cunning twinkle.

"D' ye do that when ye 're at hame?" he says, as he watches the movements of my pencil. For Mister Rudd is by no means troubled with bashfulness, and loses nothing for the want of asking.

I assure him that I do so.

“D’ ye get yer bread by it?” he asks.

“Well, — not exactly.”

But Mister Rudd is not to be put off with half answers, and follows me up with all the persistency of an old Bailey practitioner cross-examining a reluctant witness. “Then what d’ ye get yer bread by?”

I satisfy him on this point.

“Aye, aye! the best trade of all!” is his commentary on my answer.

Just before I had commenced sketching him there came a message from the kitchen that the cook wanted him to skin a hare. “Skin a hare, indeed!” cried the indignant gentleman; “does she tek me for a flesher!” meaning a butcher. And he was so hurt by the supposition that he refused to go; and Archie (who was glad to abscond from the sketching through motives of bashfulness) was sent in his place. Archie forthwith carries the news of the portrait-painting into the domains of the kitchen, and so arouses the interest of the Scotch cook, that she wishes me to introduce her portrait into the group; and, on my declining to do so (on the ground of inappropriateness, no less than inability to do full justice to her charms), goes off in a huff; which I sadly call to mind afterwards when taking a turn on the sea-shore, where my memory, like an insane bee flitting over poisoned blooms, touches

upon the many dreadful stories that I have read, in which offended cooks have wreaked their vengeance by placing poison in the soup. I therefore make up my mind to avert any such impending calamity, by politely requesting the cook, at the first opportunity, to sit for her portrait as a present to her "gude mon."

Archie has come back red-handed, and takes his turn to be sketched, which he does sheepishly, and places his profile to me, as though he were Cardinal Wolsey himself. He stands by the head of Romanose; his bonnet, white jacket, and blue bathing-dress trousers being the most salient points in his attire. Both he and old Rudd will have to strap on the game-baskets presently, and get themselves into full marching order. The harness, like the cart itself, is not made for show but for rough work. The rugs and plaids are spread over the swinging-seat, and will partly protect the two gentlemen who will ride there-upon from any abrasions that might have been received from the mad plunges that the cart will make when it comes to the pitfalls and ruts of the moorland roads. There is room in the cart for the prog-baskets, and for the dogs, if they will lie close. The barefooted gillie, in his white jacket and blue bonnet and trousers, has taken his station on the cart, and will get a lift on the shafts.

So much for the figures in the near view. As for

the landscape, — before us is an uneven stretch of meadow-land, with the rock cropping up every here and there : a stone wall divides it from the high road. Then come two more fields with their stone fences, and their sheep, and Highland cattle feeding up to the edge of the cliffs, the Atlantic tumbling in below. The ground dips to the right, where the high road descends to the sea-shore in the direction of Muasdale, and the meadow-land rises sharply up the hills towards the moors at our back. There are many corn-fields that chequer the green with bright patches of gold, where the reapers are at work, with the women in their white caps, and pink jackets, and short petticoats, looking very picturesque amid the barley-sheaves. Ten to one but those sheaves will be converted into whiskey ere another twelvemonth. Campbell, with a touch of truth and national knowledge of the subject, even makes “poor Caledonia’s mountaineer,” among the Indian hills of Wyoming, not forget the Highland use of a barley-sheaf: —

“And plied the beverage from his own fair sheaf,
That fired his Highland blood with mickle glee.”

And no small proportion of these Cantire sheaves will be transformed into “fire-water.” We are on too high ground, and too far back from the face of the cliff, to have a peep at the shore and the shingle ; but we look

over the blue width of waters, flecked by gulls or the ruddy sails of fishing-boats, and there are Gigha and Cara, with the long range of Islay and Jura for a mountainous background. Highest of all the hills rise the Paps of Jura, and, from this point, their shape directs us to the origin of their name.

By the time the sketch is made the preparations for the departure of the shooters have also come to an end; and after much difficulty in repressing the too buoyant spirits of Lady and Bacchus, and compelling them to an unwilling ride in the cart, where the intelligent head of old Viscount is seen resting against his master's knee, the old Roman-nose has collared to his work, and the cart, and the keeper, and the beaters, and the dogs, have vanished "over the hills and far awa'," and are already disturbing the grouse ere they have arrived at the scene of action. As I see the last of John Macallum striding through the purple heather, I agree with Mr. Rudd (and the more readily as I don't quite know what he means) in pronouncing his appearance to be "varra snug," taking that expression in a general sense to be a high commendation, although its precise meaning is hid from me. And I wonder why Macallum should so rarely wear the dress, and why Highlanders should shirk the Highland costume.

Indeed, one of the things that especially struck me during my stay in Scotland, was the prevalence, among

the men, of the English dress. With the exception of the bonnet there was little to mark the nationality of the Scotch dress. During a tour of many hundred miles, including a sojourn in the two great cities of Scotland, and a visit to other spots where men most do congregate, I saw the full Highland costume of plaid, philabeg, sporan, naked knees, and stockings, only six or eight times.* The first was the Glencreggan game-keeper, who simply wore the dress as a livery, and on Sundays, and when off duty was clad in common English costume; two others were bagpipers who, of course, sported the dress as a portion of their stock-in-trade; and the others were gentlemen, to the manor, as well as "to the manner, bred," and who wore the costume, perhaps, because they were lairds, and perhaps because they had well-made legs and figures, and thought they looked particularly captivating in the costume; which undoubtedly they did; and why so picturesque a dress, and one which harmonises so well with the surrounding scenery, should be discarded in favour of the tasteless costume of an Englishman, is to me a problem difficult of solution. I am told that the dress is more common in the Northern than in the

* "Even among the children we did not see a single *kilt*, though, indeed, *where* is it to be seen, except in picture-shop windows, or at a 'gathering,' or other-like got-up affair." — *Old Church Architecture of Scotland* (1861), p. 218.

Western Highlands, which it certainly may be, and yet not be quite so common as heather-bells on a moor, or the flocks and herds upon the hills, or the herring-shoals in Loch Fyne; and I am also told that every Highland laird has his Highland dress, more or less bejewelled and cairngormed, and laid up in lavender for state occasions. But it is this habitual laying aside the dress by those who have every right to wear it, and the assumption in its place of those "troublesome disguises that we wear," as Milton calls clothes (surely with a prophetic eye to nineteenth century fashions), that, to me, betrays both a want of taste as well as national spirit. The Highland snake of the present day may be scotch'd, but it is certainly not kilt; and one would suppose that the act of 1747 was still in force, and that no man or boy, under any pretence whatever, was "to appear in the clothes commonly called the Highland clothes, viz. the plaid, philabeg or little kilt, trowse, shoulder-belts, or any part whatsoever of what peculiarly belongs to the Highland garb; and that no tartan or parti-coloured plaid or stuff should be used for great-coats or for upper coats."

This habitual modern disuse of the national dress may be a sinking of the poetical in the practical and commercial, and may partly proceed from a dim consciousness that a man of business has no business with

the Highland costume, unless his profession be that of arms, and he an unit in the 42nd, or 92nd, or one of those three seventies, where he can serve his queen and country, and cock his bonnet, and wear his kilt, and show the naked development of his knee-pan, and be considered by the strictest man of business as quite *en règle*, and not a mere “amateur Highlander, white as to the legs and sensitive as to the cuticle.”* Yet one misses — or at any rate *I* very much missed — this picturesque garb, which artists have done their best to instil into our minds as a necessary part and parcel of Scottish scenery †, for from its variety of folds, and its sparkles, and diagonal lines, and above all from its brilliant “strife of colours,” ‡ it is certainly a most becoming, convenient, and picturesque costume. As for the Highland bonnet being worn with an English costume, it is a thing as incongruous as a plaided and kilted Highlander would be in a chimney-pot hat with a tasselled stick in his hand, or, worse still, with an umbrella. This dreadful apparition, however, of a Highlander with an umbrella has been already imagined by poetic fancy, — an English poet, as we may

* See “Blackwood’s Magazine,” Oct. 1822, p. 493.

† Thus, in a page wood-cut of “Edinburgh Castle from the Grass-market,” in the “Illustrated News” for August 18, 1860, the artist has introduced at least twelve kilted figures.

‡ The variegated stuff of which the tartan is composed is called *cath-dath*, “war colour,” or “strife of colours.”

readily conjecture, for no Scotch bard could conjure up such a monstrosity. Wordsworth, in one of his sonnets, has spoken of —

“The umbrella spread
To weather-fend the Celtic herdsman’s head.”

Highlanders and umbrellas also caused a theme for the English satirist on the occasion of her Majesty’s first visit to Inverness-shire. She landed, said the cor-



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respondent of the “Morning Chronicle,” “under cove of a goodly umbrella, carried by her own royal hands. There was a tolerable muster of the men of Lochaber, with plaids, kilts, claymores, and *cotton umbrellas*, who waved glittering blades and dripping ginghams, and shouted Gaelic salutations to ‘the wife of the King.’” On this was founded a parody of the song “Cam’ ye by Athole, lad wi’ the philabeg?” which commenced thus: —

“ Cam’ ye by Badenoch, lad wi’ the paletôt ?
 Saw ye the Highlanders, loyal, good fellows ?
 Wrapp’d in their dripping plaids, wiping their rusting blades,
 ’Waiting their Queen under cotton umbrellas ! ”

and ended with —

“ Wet Caledonia ! who wouldn’t drown for thee ?
 Are not your sons loyal brave-hearted fellows ?
 Keeping their powder dry, while with a smother’d cry,
 Comes a damp welcome from under umbrellas ! ”

The Scotch “ bonnet,” we may remember, was once adopted in England, in order to encourage the woollen manufacture ; and, in the thirteenth year of Elizabeth’s reign, an act was passed that all above the age of six (nobility excepted) should, on Sundays and holidays, wear these woollen caps or Scotch bonnets. Hence they are called “ statute caps ; ” and, as such, are mentioned by Shakspeare : “ Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps ! ” says Rosaline, in “ Love’s Labour Lost.” Major-General Stewart says, that “ the Basque wear a blue bonnet of the same form, texture, and colour, as that worn by the Scottish Highlanders ; and, in their erect air, elastic step, and general appearance, bear a remarkable resemblance to the ancient race of Highlanders.” * By themselves, however, these Scotch bonnets are the reverse of ornamental, if worn in conjunction with an English dress ; but “ the Highland

* Sketches, vol. i. p. 13.

garb," says Mr. Logan, "when worn by one who knows how to dress properly in it, is undoubtedly one of the most picturesque in the world."* Now that the male members of the royal family have done their best to popularise the Highland costume, it is somewhat singular that the example so worthily set should not be more generally followed, and not localised, or assumed only at certain times,—for a gathering, or for Highland games, for instance, just as an English gentleman would put on a scarlet coat, with its *et cæteras*, when he appears in the hunting-field.

To a Southron eye it is certainly a striking sight, when one is making a morning call at a Highland home to see another gentleman also bent on discharging the like social civility,—a gentleman who as *Punch* says, is not only entitled to bear arms, but also to bare legs,—it is a sight, I repeat, "gude for sore e'en," but still a striking sight to a Southron's eye, to see this morning caller walk into the room in his full Highland dress †,

* History of the Highlanders.

† By "full dress" I do not, of course, include the celebrated brace of pistols, like to those worn by the last Glengarry at the coronation of George IV., which excited such a rumpus, occasioned by the nervous lady's belief that he had come to shoot the King. To allay the excitement he was obliged to suffer himself to be disarmed by the Garter-King-at-Arms; and the only remedy that he had for this public disgrace, after travelling six hundred miles (no joke in those days) to do honour to his sovereign, was that still existing safety-valve for wounded dignity,—a letter to "The Times." The anecdote is narrated in Mr.

the sunlight glancing from his cairngorms, and the silver tips of his sporran tassels. The knowledge that this gentleman is not dressed for a charade, or *bal masque*, but is wearing his ordinary clothes, and the costume to which he is entitled both by birth and position, this knowledge soon checks our surprise, and leaves us only the delightful task to admire. The



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accompanying illustration is a sketch from life, of a brother of the present Earl of Morton, and shows the Douglas tartan, one of the most ancient and famous in Scotland. But black and white give but a poor idea of the "strife of colours," and fail to represent the reds,

Weld's "Two Months in the Highlands," pp. 306, 398; and more fully in "Blackwood's Magazine" for August, 1821, pp. 22, 24, where Glen-garry's letter is given entire.

and blues, and greens, which make the costume so showy and attractive.

And yet, as with everything else, the dress has had its detractors. Some, like Sir John Sinclair and Mr. Pinkerton, have sought to pass it off as a novelty. The former (and Macculloch takes up the wondrous tale) declares that the kilt was invented only a century and a quarter ago by an Englishman, who thought that it would be more decent for the workmen employed in cutting down the Lochaber woods, to wear a short petticoat than nothing at all; from which we may draw the inference that Pope may have looked nearer at home for his "naked savage" of the woods. It is certainly a most remarkable fact (as has been pointed out by Mr. Planché,) that the dress was not mentioned by any writer, either native or foreign, for the space of a thousand years; and it was not until the time of Leslie and Buchanan, about three centuries since, that any particular attention was directed to the costume of "*Messieurs les sauvages Ecossois*, dat is, gentilmans savages," as Monsieur le Beaujeu termed those who wore "the garb of old Gaul." But, even without dubbing the kilt of the Celtic (*i. e.* kilted) nation with the antiquity of the Roman tunic, and thus making

"The chiefs that lead old Scotia's ranks,
Of Roman garb, and more than Roman fire;" *

* Campbell.

and without viewing

“The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy,”

as Wordsworth says, yet it appears to have been referred to rather more than six hundred years ago, in some canons of the Scottish Church, which prohibited the ecclesiastics from wearing red, green, and striped clothing, and garments that were shorter than the middle of the leg.* What would they have said to our modern Church dignitaries, and to the Bishop of Barchester with his apron? Indeed, an anecdote is told of one of our English bishops, whose out-of-door episcopal costume was so little understood in the Highlands, that the natives censured him for extravagance in wearing the trows and the kilt at the same time.

Captain Burt, the author of those curious “Letters from Scotland” (from which I have already quoted) written in 1754, describes what he terms the *quelt* as being “a small part of the plaid, set in folds and girt round the waist to make of it a short petticoat that reaches half way down the thigh . . . so that they make pretty near the appearance of the poor women in London, when they bring their gowns over their heads to shelter them from the rain.” This *quelt* (he says) is adopted for various reasons; it is very convenient

* Dalryell’s “Remarks on the Chartularies of Aberdeen.”

for travelling; “they would not be so free to skip over the rocks and bogs with breeches, as they are in the short petticoat;” also “it would be greatly incommo-
dious to those who are frequently to wade through waters, to wear breeches, which must be taken off upon every such occurrence, or would not only gall the wearer, but render it very unhealthful and dangerous to their limbs to be constantly wet in that part of the body, especially in winter time, when they might be frozen;” but, above all, the *quelt* commends itself for its cheapness.* This high recommendation is accepted by those cavillers of the Sinclair-cum-Pinkerton *genus*, who assert that the Highland costume was invented by the natives, because they could only clothe themselves in a patchwork of rags, and that it exhibits the nakedness of the land and the people. There certainly must be occasional personal discomforts attendant upon the wearing of the kilt; for, what says the poet?

“There was a short-kilted North Briton
Who promiseously sat on a kitten;
The kitten had claws —
The immediate cause
Of much pain to the short-kilted Briton.”

The excessive modesty of Mr. Pinkerton appears to

* Some curious anecdotes about the *quelt* are related by him in Letters xix. and xxii.

have received a severe shock * by his unfortunate meeting with a full-dressed Highlander, whom he regarded as equally as much *un*-dressed as a modern ball-room belle would be by Mrs. Beecher Stowe †, or by a young lady of any period between the times of the

* "A story is told," says Mons. Esquiros, "that when the 84th Highlanders were quartered in Nova Scotia, a ball was given to the ladies in the neighbourhood; some of them, on entering the room and seeing the naked legs of the Scotchmen, protested against it in the name of modesty. 'She must be a very indelicate woman to have such thoughts,' said a young Indian squaw (!) present, 'for are not her own arms naked to the elbows?' The truth is, that the dress of the Highlanders does not at all diverge from the laws of masculine and severe decency." (*English at Home*, vol. ii. p. 268.) "During the last war in India, the 93rd regiment consented to exchange the kilt for trews, which defended them better against the stings of the mosquitoes; but, at the moment they advanced on Cawnpore, they asked as a favour to have the kilt given them again, as they could not fight so well in any other garb." (Vol. ii. p. 270.) Dr. John Campbell, in his "Description of the Highlands" (1752), after giving a very minute account of "their native dress, called kiltine," says, "it is an active dress, seeing they have nothing to do when entering action but to throw off their plaids and draw their swords and pistols; and, as they wear no breeches, and tie their garters below their knees, they are much more alert than those who are bound up like so many dolls." (P. 9.) The "thralldom of the breeks" is ludicrously shown in Serjeant Archy Stewart's adventures and mishaps when first placed in his regimentals and bid to "step out." See Sir T. D. Lauder's "Legendary Tales of the Highlands," vol. i. p. 40. For many particulars of the Highland garb, see Stewart's "Sketches," vol. i. part i. § 5; and, for its suppression, vol. i. part i. § x.

† See her remarks on the full-dress of ladies in "Sunny Memories," Letter xiii.

ancient Britons and those of Henry VIII., during which long interval it would have been the height of impropriety for any lady to appear in public with bare arms, while the display of any portion of the neck was a breach of decency that none probably even dreamed of committing. The sensitive but virulent Mr. Pinkerton, at the sight of that full-dressed or undressed Highlander, felt his modesty so outraged, that he bespattered the costume with such epithets as "grossly indecent, filthy, absurd, effeminate*, beggarly, tasteless, vulgar," &c. The bare knees impressed him "with an unconquerable idea of poverty and nakedness;" so that a "noble Roman" in his tunic, would have appeared anything but dignified to this highly sensitive critic.

But Mr. Pinkerton and his outraged modesty have met with gross imitators even so recently as in January 1860, when, at a meeting of the London Scottish Volunteer Corps, when "the kilt question" was again brought forward, it was found necessary that "the charge of indecency" which had been adduced against the costume, should be "indignantly rebutted;" and it was stated by some wiseacre, that "the Queen allowed her children to wear the dress *even in her own presence!*" a wonderful instance of Royal toleration. And even this astounding piece of information, which

* When the Highland regiments marched into Lucknow, the natives imagined them to be the ghosts of the murdered women.

ought at once to have carried conviction to the heart even of a Cockney, could scarcely silence some would-be purists ; who, if they had had their eyes as widely dilated as their grievance, must, on their way to the meeting, have seen in all the print-shop windows, the then-recently-published portrait of the Prince Consort (from the picture by Philip — “ of Spain ”), attired in a full Highland costume, which it is highly probable was worn by him even in the presence of the Queen.*

But, of the antiquity of the Highland dress there is no doubt, however much the question of the kilt is obscured. Sir Samuel Meyrick shows us, that the ancient Gauls and Britons were dressed in chequered tartans at the time of the Roman invasion, and that their coats were not merely coats of paint, as is generally imagined. And, “ indeed,” says Mr. Planché, “ with the exception of the plumed bonnet, and the tasseled sporan or purse, a Highland chief in his full costume, with tunic, plaid, dirk, and target, affords as good an illustration of the appearance of an ancient Briton of distinction as can well be imagined.” Mr. Timbs should add this example to his “ Things not

* “ Matters have changed for the better. Celt and Saxon are no longer deadly foes. There still exists, as I am informed, an anti-Celtic society, whose president, on state occasions, wears three pairs of trousers; but it is no longer penal to dispense with these garments, and there are Southerners who discard them altogether when they go north.” — CAMPBELL'S *West Highland Tales*, vol. i. p. 39.

generally known." And—only think of this, Mr. civilised Pinkerton! the Romans called us "breeched barbarians," because our rude ancestors wore tartan breeches*, and did not follow their custom of wearing tunics at such times when "the nation of the gown" did not use the toga for its "toggerly"—*id est toga-ry*.

Colonel Stewart, a very good authority on the subject, says, that, "as far back as they have any tradition, the truis, *breachan-na-feal* (the kilted plaid) and philabeg, have been the dress of the Highlanders." †

As early as the eleventh century (according to "The Annals of the Iona Club") the "bare-legged and red-shankled Scottes" are described as delighting in "marled clothes, especially that have long stripes of sundry colours." And Martin, in his "Western Islands," published in 1703, mentions the prevalence of clan patterns, and the varieties of plaids in different islands. The colours of the tartans are said to be heraldic,—as, for example, red for the Stuarts, and black for the Bruces; and fresh colours were introduced on intermarriage with other families.‡ Descent is also

* *Bracæ*, or *braccæ*; Celtic, *breac*, "anything parti-coloured or striped." Whence we get the Gaelic *brakes*, or *breeks*, and the English *breeches*.

† Sketches of the Character, Manners, and present State of the Highlanders of Scotland; with details of the Military Service of the Highland Regiments (1822), vol. ii. Appendix L.

‡ On this subject the following works may be consulted with advantage: "The Costume and History of the Clans," by John Sobieski

believed to be marked in the tartans; the green for those claiming descent from the Irish Celts; the red,

S. Stuart, and Charles Edward Stuart; also the similarly illustrated work of MacIan; Logan's "History of the Highlanders;" and Sir S. Meyrick's "Costumes." Professor Heideloff, in "The Art Journal" for 1851 (p. 281), gives a very remarkable drawing and description of "a Scottish costume of the *eighth* or *ninth* century, after a drawing on parchment extracted from an old book, which, according to the characters on the back, appears to have been written in Gaelic, or Erse." If this account were correct in its statement, the MS. would be contemporaneous with the priceless "Book of Deir," lately discovered by Mr. Bradshaw, and infinitely more valuable than King Duncan's charter of 1095, which is not in Gaelic, but which, prior to the discovery of the "Book of Deir," was the most ancient piece of Scottish writing extant. The drawing of the costume would of course greatly increase the value of this remarkable MS. Professor Heideloff claims the distinction of an antiquary as well as an artist; but, in this case, he has either been terribly gulled, or has simulated one of Homer's nods. His description of the costume of his Scotchman of "the eighth or ninth century," is worth quoting, and may afford amusement blended with instruction. "Our figure represents a Highland chief whose dress is picturesque and extremely beautiful. The Scottish tunic or blouse, checkered or striped in light and dark green, with violet intermixed, and bordered with violet stripes, is covered with a steel breastplate, accompanied by a back-piece, judging from the iron brassarts, positively a bequest of the Romans, by whom the Scots were once subjugated; this, indeed, is also attested by the offensive weapon, the javelin; the sword, however, must be excepted, for it is national, and like that of the present time. The strong shield may also have descended from the Romans, as well as the helmet, which is decorated with the eagle's wing: these, together with the hunting-horn, give to the figure a very imposing appearance. The national plaid is wanting; this was borne by the attendants or squires."

Mr. Worsae, in his work on the Danes and Norwegians in England and Ireland, says of the account given (in the thirteenth century) by

from the pure British Celt; and the yellow from the Danes. But, in this present day, when, by “stating your name and county,” and paying five shillings “for fee and search,” you can obtain “your family arms” by return of post, the heraldic difficulties of the tartan are not considered insurmountable; and new tartans are manufactured for new lairds, with as much ease as “your family arms” are discovered for you “as per advertisement,” — *novi homines* who have no more right to assume the dress and bearing of a Highland chieftain, than those “pawky Lowland lairds,” who were denounced by Glengarry, and the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*: —

“Fat Teil hae you to do wi’ kilts? gae wa’ and get your claes on!

Get out, ye nasty Lowland poys, and put your preeks and stays on;

Ye shanna wear your claes like me, I look on you as fermin;

Ye hae nae mair o’ Highland pluid than if ye were a Cherman.” *

the Icelandic historian Snorro Sturleson, of Magnus Barefoot’s carrying back to Norway the fashionable costume of Cantire and the Western Isles: “It is remarkable enough that this is the oldest account extant of the well-known Scotch Highland dress, whose antiquity is thus proved.” The costume consisted of “short coats or cloaks” and “bare legs.” This is also mentioned by Skene (“Highlanders of Scotland”), who adduces the circumstance in proof of the antiquity of the dress. He says that it also may be proved from sculptured representations on early tombstones; and, that after their date, “there is a complete chain of authorities for the dress of the Highlanders, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.” See vol. i. chap. ix. of his work, where numerous authorities are quoted.

* Quoted in Mr. Weld’s “Two Months in the Highlands,” p. 396.

Since the introduction of steam and the increased facilities of conveyance and intercourse, the private looms in cottages,—of which Pennant gives an illustration, and which were common in his day*,—have disappeared, or are only to be met with very rarely. At one time they were very prevalent throughout Cantire, and the Western Highlands and Islands; but now the cottage-looms have taken flight to Glasgow, although the spinning-wheel and flax-carding may still be seen. There is a Cantire legend to the effect that “once upon a time,” when the great Macallum More was in Campbelton, he called a meeting of the farmers, and, among other things, stated that he had been told that they were now wearing English cloth. He hoped this serious accusation had no foundation in facts. Up jumps a farmer, not indigent but indignant, and replies, “All the clothes that I have on my back at this present moment were made by my wife, except my shoes, which I made myself.” Argyle asked him how many shirts he had? whereupon the farmer answered, “I am sure that I have two, for, when I put off one, my wife always gives me a clean one to put on.” Which was convincing as to the satisfactory state of his wardrobe.

But enough of these reminiscences of Highland cos-

* See his “Voyage to the-Hebrides,” p. 229; see also Lord Teignmouth’s “Scotland,” vol. ii. chap. xxii; see also “Report of the Commissioners on the Condition of the Hand-loom Weavers, 1841.”

tume, and regrets that, in tartan-land, the tartan is so rarely seen. But if we cannot get as much of the true Highland dress as we would desire, yonder are the Highland hills and the Highland heather. There is no mistake about them or their beauty; let us go and make a closer acquaintance with them. The moor where the sportsmen are to finish their day's shooting is away over that glen. Suppose we take a walk there! As Tamora says, in "Titus Andronicus," *

"Now will I hence to seek my lovely moor!"

* Act ii. Scene 3.