

## CHAP. XX.

## GROUSE-LAND.

Highland Herd-girl. — Her pastoral Charge. — Not cowed by Bulls. — Highland Cattle. — Stots and Kyloes. — Rosa Bonheur. — Highland Raids. — Winter Beef. — A sharp-witted Lad. — Highland Rams. — Auld Hornie. — Scotch Mulls. — The Collie — His Attainments and Duties — Some wondrous Anecdotes thereupon. — Shooting. — Game-Bags. — True Sport *versus* Battue Slaughter. — Gentlemen not Game-keepers. — The Pleasures of Grouse-shooting. — St. Grouse vindicated. — The Fox-hunting of shooting.



NEVER tired of their beauty and infinite variety, again am I high up on the Glencreggan moors, and in the middle of grouse-land, with Mac, the Skye terrier, for a companion. The shooters are out again to-day, and I have my usual gun and bag in the shape of pencil and sketch-book.

Here is a lassie herding cattle, a very bonny lassie too, bare-footed, of course, and very short-petticoated, but *mirabile dictu*, not bare-headed. Like Christopher North's Girzie, "she is what is delicately called a

*strapper*, rosy-armed as the morning, and not a little of an Aurora about the ancles." Indeed, there is plenty of muscle, as well as colour, about them; they are not at all of the strawberry-and-cream-complexioned school like that Gleaner of Mr. Frith, but have very positive and vivid reds and oranges on their surface, that show they have been exposed to the sun and wind from their earliest years. Her cheeks are much the same, and prove her to be no child of the pale-faces, and (like the majority of the Argyleshire peasants) she looks more of the gipsy, or Spaniard, than a Scot; for her eyes are large, dark, and deeply-fringed, and her hair is of the hue of the raven's wing, as the rhymers say. A loose bonnet of white calico, a looser jacket of pink calico, and a dark petticoat, complete her wardrobe as exhibited to the world. If this maid of tartan-land wore tartan, Burns' lines would correctly describe her petticoat and its longitude:—

"Down flowed her robe, a tartan sheen,  
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;  
And such a leg! my bonny Jean  
    Could only peer it;  
Sae straught, sae taper, tight and clean,  
    Nane else cam near it." \*

But she has only the leg without the tartan. She has her wand of office—a long stick—in her hand, and she

\* The Vision.

is lolling about in an extremely natural and *dolce far niente* style, on the soft grass amid the blooming heather. Thus I sketch her, and she does not shrink



HIGHLAND HERD GIRL.

from the ordeal. Jenny Macallum, she tells me, is her name, and she has “nae been drawit afore.” But she is nothing loth to be *drawit* now; so with a genuine

blush, rising superior even to the sunny colouring of her cheeks, and also with some genuine vanity, she stands up that I may sketch her in a perpendicular, instead of a horizontal, attitude. Certainly, one might have a worse subject for the pencil than this Highland herd-girl, from the crown of her head, or bonnet, down to the bare soles of her feet, so fearless of the hard bent, and rough roots of the heather.

A little conversation is carried on the while, though with some difficulty, not only from mutual bashfulness, but also from mutual inability to understand each other's speech. Jenny tells me she can't read, she has "had nae larning," so she has no chance of whiling away the time by a perusal of the last fashionable novel. She bides up the brae, she says. And what does she do all day? "Just tends the beasties." She does her duty, in short, and let us hope she gets a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. Her pastoral charge is over about thirty oxen, and two or three bulls, great, swarthy, long-haired fellows, with sharp horns and wicked eyes, who, when Mac and I came suddenly upon them, looked so remarkably as if they ought to have been labelled "dangerous," that we considered discretion to be the better part of valour, and beat a hasty retreat to the knoll where Jenny was lying. She was not afraid of them, not a bit! and when one of those big black bulls was evidencing a tendency to roam to

further pasture, the lassie speedily ran after him (Mac and I ready to take to our heels if he came our way), and with voice and action, but above all, with hearty thwacks of her oaken staff, compelled him to return to his appointed spot. Hither to some part of the moor, where there were irregular patches of grazing-ground amid the heather—she brought her beasts at early morn; and here, through the long day, she kept them together, and then at dewy eve took them back to their farmstead.

Not only on the Glencreggan moors, but elsewhere in the Highlands, we saw many very small children thus engaged in tending cattle; but probably there were no bulls in their droves. The oxen were of the small Highland breed,—those stots, or kyloes, with whom Rob Roy was wont to do such a good business,—mild-eyed little gentlemen, who in their rough, shaggy coats looked like so many door-mats or carriage-rugs, and altogether innocent of foray and black-mail. They were placable enough; and, so that you did not prevent them from eating, you might pull, or poke, or stroke them as you liked, without the smallest provocation being felt or shown. The innumerable droves of these small Highland cattle that one sees out on the moors and hills, are by no means a detraction to the picturesqueness of the scenery. What with their wild look and general shagginess, no less than from their

diversity of colour,—for their coats show every possible variety of hue that can be made up of white, black, red, brown, grey, and yellow-ochre,—they are in singular harmony with the moorland landscapes wherein they make so conspicuous a feature. In Tartan-land they are “the cattle upon a thousand hills;” for throughout the Highlands, wherever there is a hill, you may feel sure there will be some scores of Highland cattle.

What companions Rosa Bonheur must have made of them ere she could have represented them with such wonderful fidelity! Her affection for them, indeed, is well indicated in her portrait, where she leans so confidently on the neck of one of her favourite kyloe models. A few favoured ones were taken back with her to France, as her *compagnons de voyage*; and no doubt she found them very intelligent fellow-travellers, and worthy of her repeated study. Her pictures of them, and her equally faithful delineations of the landscapes in which she first painted them, transport the spectator to the very heart of the Highlands. The magic wand of her brush can raise up all the spells of the scene, and place before our eyes the moors of Scotland with their shaggy verdure and shaggier denizens. In none of her kyloe pictures has she done this with a greater degree of illusion than in the wonderful picture of the “Highland Raid,” exhibited during the past summer (1860). The scene is laid late in the year, when the heather is dead

and brown, and the steaming herd of shaggy bulls and kyloes are coming towards us through the heavy, misty, rain-charged atmosphere, wet, dirty, mud-splashed, wet-nosed, and *audibly* bellowing. Wonderfully true and powerful was this picture, painted with such a free, and dashing, and masterful hand ; wonderful in every respect, more especially when the picture was compared with its Spanish *pendant*, equally truthful and powerful,—where all is glaringly sunny, broiling hot,—shadows dark and sharp, road white and dusty, sky intensely blue. It was quite a relief to turn from Holman Hunt's more wonderful than pleasing picture to Rosa Bonheur's misty Scottish moor and dirty bellowing kyloes.\*

The Cantire kyloes have, in olden time, played their part in many a Rosa Bonheur "Raid," in which they have formed the *creach*, or plunder. It would seem that beef was considered as great a Christmas necessity in Cantire as it is in England ; and, when November came, certain raids were accustomed to be made, which resulted in a supply of Christmas beef. The foggy season of the year, additionally severe in Scotland,

\* Flat heresy, no doubt, to express such an opinion. But, to my mind, Hunt's picture will be more acceptable as an engraving, where its miraculous minutiae of detail may be studied with greater relief to the eye, and where plain black and white will somewhat tone down the elaborately-washed and enamelled countenances and limbs of the figures, and will take off the gloss of unworn newness from the dresses, all of which have evidently just left the loom and embroiderer.



enabled the marauders to carry on their carrying-off designs with the more completeness. The kyloes that were driven off and destined to death were termed *Feoi 'lgheamhruidh*, or "winter beef." \*

There is a tale told of three men who lived near to each other in a sequestered glen in Cantire, who made a joint-stock partnership in these November forays for winter beef. One of the three died out of the partnership, leaving the two survivors to carry on the trade. When they had gone on their annual November trip, the widow of their late partner was bemoaning her destitute state, and lamenting that she had now no person to supply her with winter beef, when outspoke her son, a brave lad of twelve, "Do not weep, mother! I shall soon be grown up, and then you will not want; and it may be that I can supply you this same year with the *feoi 'lgheamhruidh*." With that he took down his father's gun, loaded it, and went away. He was aware of the errand on which his late father's partners had gone, and he knew the road by which they would return, so he concealed himself behind a bank and lay in wait for them. The night came on, and at length, by the light of the moon, he saw them drawing near, and driving before them a fine fat cow. He waited till they came underneath him by the bank, and then bang

\* There is a Gaelic proverb, "There are long horns on cattle in mist."



went his gun over their heads. Away they ran in a terrible fright, leaving the cow to shift for herself. As soon as they had cleared away, the brave lad came from behind the bank, and led the cow by a roundabout road to his mother's shieling; and very glad was she, and very proud was he when he pointed to the cow and said, "Mother, you shan't starve *this* winter. Here is your *feoi 'lgheamhruidh!*"

The Cantire marauders were not content with making raids upon their neighbours; for it is said that they often went further a-field, and extended their freebooting expeditions to their brother Celts in some of the glens in Ireland. These raids were conducted on a grand scale; the men were strongly armed to repel resistance, and were attended by the pipers, considered so indispensable to blowing them on to victory. There is a Cantire legend that, in one of these Highland raids on Irish ground, their piper was friendly to the Irish women, and that he played a tune called *A mhnaithan nan glene gu'r milhe dhuibheirigh*,—"Ye wives of the glens, 'tis time ye should rise!" The women were sharp enough to take the hint, and, by the time the freebooters had swooped upon them, had driven away the cattle to a place of safety.\*

\* Sir W. Scott, in "The Two Drovers" in "The Chronicles of Canon-gate," has given us a very minute account of the Highland herdsmen, and their peculiar fitness for the drover's trade. Sir E. Landseer has depicted them in his "Highland Drovers departing for the South."

What with these Highland kyloes and the immense flocks of horned Highland sheep (which have depopulated many places and driven thousands of emigrants to distant lands), the Scotch cattle are like the Scotch landscapes, remarkable for their picturesqueness. Wordsworth's "Ram" will be called to mind : --

" Most beautiful,  
On the green turf, with his imperial front  
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,  
The breathing creature stood."



"STRANGE THINGS COME UP TO LOOK AT US!"

They certainly look magnificent fellows, and withal have a touch of the terrible in their horned heads and black faces which, when unexpectedly presented over the side of a rock right in the face of a nervous sketcher, may tumble him from his camp stool with a sudden accession

of horrible memories of "Auld Hornie," and the verses of Burns thereupon. Their horns are very large, massive, and twisting, and are greatly used for "Mulls,"—that is, receptacles for snuff. Indeed, the head and horns often form one *mull*, the horns being left for ornament and tipped with silver, while the interior of the skull is fitted up for the rappee, the lid being on the top of the head, and made of silver and cairngorms.\* The spoons and other instruments that pertain to a well-appointed mull depend from the head by a chain, like a lady's *chatelaine*, and the whole affair forms into an expensive ornament that is peculiarly national. The prevailing stock of sheep on the Cantire moors consisted of the black-faced breed (said to be originally imported from Moffat), and, as a large proportion were horned, a goodly number of mulls might be furnished by their "wreathed horns superb." The small breed of the old white-faced Highland sheep, whose flesh was considered so tender and delicate, and whose wool was so superior in quality, is now said to be extinct. Landseer, and other animal painters of Highland scenes,—but more particularly Ansdell,—have made Englishmen familiar with the aspect of these black-faced, horned sheep.

Nor must the claims of the collie-dog for picturesqueness and sagacity be forgotten; although his master was

\* See sketch in vol. i. chap. v. for a mull of this description.

by no means that picturesque and theatrical-looking personage that certain artists had led me to anticipate. For example, the accompanying sketch of a "Scotch Shepherd" is taken from an etching by no mean artist (W. H. Pyne), published in a work that professes to give the costumes of the inhabitants of Great Britain.\*



THE SCOTCH SHEPHERD OF FANCY.

In the original plate, which is coloured, the gentle shepherd wears a coat of scarlet tartan, and a plaid and philabeg of green. He holds in his hand a mull, shaped like a scorpion, while a liver and white-coloured dog, of

\* "The World in Miniature; England, Scotland, and Ireland," by W. H. Pyne. 4 vols., with 84 coloured engravings, Ackermann, 1827.

no particular breed (unless it be that of the thoroughbred mongrel), meditates a sneeze.

But the real Collie, with his long silky coat, bushy tail, and intelligent head, is a far more picturesque quadruped.

The Scotch shepherd's dog is no more like the English sheep-dog than Monmouth is to Macedon, and is as much its superior in value, intelligence, and beauty



THE SCOTCH SHEPHERD OF REALITY.

as a high-born Scottish lassie is to a Hottentot Venus. His attainments and duties have been never better described than by the late Mr. Gisborne; and as his account is remarkably clever and lifelike, and so well delineates what one is constantly seeing from day to day in the Highlands, I think I cannot do better than quote it, instead of treating the reader to "poorer parritch" of my own.\*

\* The passage occurs in the graphic description of "A Falkirk Tryst," in Mr. Gisborne's four "Essays on Agriculture." He was

“To any inquiry of a Scotch shepherd as to the race of one of his faithful ministers, you would receive the answer, ‘Hout! he is jist a collie!’ But this designation is far too indiscriminate, for it is applied equally to the malapert animal which, at the sound of your wheels, rushes from every black hut, and, having pursued you for a few score yards with his petulant yaffle, gives his tail a conceited curl and trots back to inform the family that he has driven you off the premises. Far different is the sheep-dog. Whether employed in driving on the road, or herding on the hill, his grave and earnest aspect evinces his full consciousness that important interests are committed to his charge. When on duty he declines civilities, not surlily,—for he is essentially a good-tempered beast,—but he puts them aside as ill-timed. At an early age the frivolity of puppyism departs from him, and he becomes a sedate character. At home he shares his master’s porrich; lies on the best place before the fire; suffers with complacency the caresses of the children, who tug his ears and tail, and twist their little fingers into his long coat; and, without inviting familiarity from a stranger, receives him with dignified courtesy. When accustomed

remarkably well qualified to write on the subject of Highland and Lowland sheep-farming, and his opinions may be accepted as those of an authority; while he treats his subjects so clearly, and with such power, originality, and humour, that even by a non-agriculturist his “Essays” may be read with the fascination of a romance.

to the road he will, in his master's temporary absence, convey the flock or herd steadily forward, without either overpacing them or suffering any to ramble; and in the bustle of a fair he never becomes unsteady or bewildered. But the hill or moor is his great theatre. There his rare sagacity, his perfect education, and his wonderful accomplishments are most conspicuous. On the large sheep-farms a single shepherd has the charge of from three to six or more thousand sheep, varying according to the nature of the country and climate. In performing his arduous duties, he has in ordinary seasons no assistance except from his dogs. Those shepherds who have studied political economy introduce the principle of division of labour into their kennels. When on the hill they are usually accompanied by two dogs: of these, one is the driving out and the other the bringing in dog. To the first he points out a knot of sheep, and informs him by voice and action, that he wishes them to be taken to a distant hill. The intelligent animal forthwith gathers the sheep together, and acts according to his master's instructions. By similar means he informs the second that a lot of sheep, on a distant hill, are to be brought to the spot on which he then stands; and with equal certainty they are shortly at his feet. To either dog he indicates the individual sheep which he is to catch and hold. The eagerness and impetuosity with which the dog rushes at the neck of his captive



would lead you to suppose that the poor animal was in great danger. Nothing of the sort. The dog follows Izaak Walton's precept, and handles him as if he loved him. The hold is only on the wool. The sheep stand in no habitual terror of the dog; though within a few yards of him, the elder will quietly chew the cud, and the younger shake their heads and stamp with their feet, provoking him to frolic or mimic war. We have spoken here simply of the daily occurrences of the sheep-walk—milk for babes—for we fear that the more staggering, but not very ill-authenticated, instances of canine shepherding, with which we might fill our pages, would prove too strong for southern stomachs."

I certainly witnessed some "instances of canine shepherding" that *were* staggering. For example—in one of these flocks of thousands, where the shepherd called his sheep by their own names and knew their individual faces, and where he walked before his flock in a way that most forcibly realised the Scripture scenes of shepherd-life, he would say to his dog, Go into the flock and fetch me out so and so, mentioning many names. Whereupon, the dog would dart into the flock, and single out here one, and there another, until he had got together a certain number of sheep. Of course I had to believe that they were the very sheep designated by the shepherd; but, at any rate, it was curious that the dog should fetch them from

various parts of the flock. What the shepherd wished me to believe was, that his dogs knew the names and faces of the sheep as well as he himself did; but he told me that only two of his dogs would do this. Whether or no he was humbugging me (I forget what is the equivalent word in Tartan-land) I must leave the reader to decide.

On another day the same shepherd found that about two hundred of his sheep were missing. He searched for them with his dog till nightfall, without success. I was with him when he came back. He explained to the dog — with similar words and manner that he would have used in addressing a fellow-being — that the sheep *must* be found, and that he (the collie) must manage the business as best he could. With that he dismissed him. The collie answered with an intelligent look and wag of the tail, and bounded away into the darkness. The next day the shepherd renewed his search, but neither sheep nor collie were to be seen. In the afternoon the shepherd had reached a distant moor, and heard every now and then the faint barking of a dog. Guided by the sound, he advanced up a glen that narrowed at its farthest extremity into a small plot of ground, guarded on every side but one by lofty rock-walls. There, at the outlet, was the faithful collie, giving signal barks, but not daring to stir from his post; and there, before him, hemmed-in

by their rocky fold, were all the sheep. Not one was missing. This glen was between four and five miles from the spot from whence the flock had wandered.\*

This same collie showed his nationality by evincing a particular weakness for milk; and (among many other performances) he had been taught to help himself to his dainty beverage in the following way. First he took (with his teeth) a saucer, or plate, from the table, and placed it on the floor. Then he reared himself with his fore-paws on the table, and, by the aid of his teeth, took the milk-jug by its handle, and carried it down to the saucer; and then, with the milk-jug still held by his teeth, he poured out the milk into the saucer. This was the most difficult part of his performance, as it obliged him to hold his head on one side with extraordinary care, and with an agonised expression that would have gone to Landseer's heart; for if poor collie spilt one drop of milk in the process, he was forbidden his dainty. But he had brought his performance to that degree of perfection that a failure and disappointment of this kind were very rare.

But let us leave collies, and sheep, and cattle, and our Highland herd-girl; and walk on a little further into grouse-land. The Skye terrier, who is our companion, is leaping among the heather, scarcely able to

\* A like circumstance is recorded of the Ettrick Shepherd's dog, "Sirrah."

keep his head afloat over its blossoms, and is "putting up" grouse and black-game, with all the ardour of a keen sportsman. There they go in a level flight, with a whir-r-r-r! their glossy blue-black plumage gleaming like metal in the fierce sunlight, and their crimson moons flashing vividly as they stretch out their necks with a hoarse cry. They have reason to thank Mac for driving them from their lair, or by this time they might have been food for powder; for here come the sportsmen.

They are having good sport to-day. Besides dealing with black-game and grouse, they have paid a visit to a lonely tarn, lying far away in the hollows of the hills, on whose black and solemn waters, half-full of reeds and rushes, the wild-duck and teal do love to congregate, and from whence they fly out in streaming lines that assume a wedge-like figure. Christopher North would have made sad havoc with them with his muckle-mou'd Meg; and there is one at least of the present party who would do the same. They have also passed some boggy places, where the woodcock and snipe have presented to them those long bills which they have endeavoured so promptly to meet.

Altogether they have made good bags, although not such as would cut a good figure in a newspaper paragraph, or compete with the wholesale slaughters of battue shooting. There is plenty of game on these

moors, but there is also plenty of walking and hard work required for their shooting. Therefore the daily average and the grand total at the end of the season, while they satisfy the true sportsman, will not present any very exaggerated display of arithmetical numbers. The bad weather must also be taken as a very serious set-off against the number of birds; for what avails any amount of game if the Scotch rains and Scotch mists shall succeed each other, with the unvarying monotony of the steak-and-mutton-chop and mutton-chop-and-steak dinners of a country inn? We have already seen what the weather is like at Glencreggan: it is often "varra coorse;" and this "coorseness" must be set on the *per contra* side, when the subject of shooting and the prevalence of game in this portion of grouse-land is taken into consideration. By universal consent — indeed, it was a fact sufficiently proved by figures, — our host at Glencreggan was *the* shot of the party; and his best day's sport, in one day, in that season (1859) was eighteen-and-a-half brace. In the season of 1860, however, which was at first a remarkably good one, the figures were higher; and, in the first three hours of the first day's shooting, eighteen brace fell to "the master's" gun\*; and in the first nine days, 156 brace, besides hares, snipe, &c. The weather

\* One of Purdey's guns. The eighteen brace were bagged with forty-one shots.

at that time was all that could be wished ; and though the season in England had been so remarkably wet, yet it was agreeably the reverse in Cantire, where the crops were looking famously. But October brought a change ; and high winds and “coorse” weather was the rule, and a tolerably fine day the exception ; so that in three weeks there was only two days’ shooting on the Glencreggan moors. As a matter of course this considerably diminishes the game-book’s grand total for the season, although its numbers on certain days may be large. The “saft days” were the best friends that the birds had.

But what says Christopher North ? — “ We do not admire that shooting-ground which resembles a poultry-yard. Grouse and barn-door fowls are constructed on opposite principles, the former being wild, and the latter tame creatures, when in their respective perfection. Of all dull pastimes, the dullest seems to us sporting in a preserve. The sign of a lonely way-side inn in the Highlands ought not to be the Hen and Chickens. Some shooters, we know, sick of common sport, love slaughter. From sunrise to sunset of the First Day of the Moors they must bag their hundred brace. That can only be done where pouts prevail, and cheepers keep chiding ; and where you have half-a-dozen attendants to hand you double-barrels *sans* intermission, for a round dozen of hours spent in a per-

petual fire. Commend us to a plentiful sprinkling of game, to ground which seems occasionally barren, and which it needs a fine instructed eye to traverse scientifically, and thereof to detect the latent riches. Fear and hope are the deities whom Christopher in his sporting jacket worships, and were they unpropitious, the moors would lose all their witchcraft. "A gentleman," says this authority, "ought neither to shoot like a gamekeeper or a bagman, neither kill or miss every bird; but, true to the spirit of the Aristotelian doctrine, lean with a decided inclination towards the first rather than the second predicament. If we shoot too well one day, we are pretty sure to make amends for it by shooting just as much too ill another; and thus, at the close of the week, we can go to bed with a clear conscience. In short, we shoot like gentlemen, scholars, poets, philosophers as we are; and, looking at us, you have a sight

‘Of him who walks in glory and in joy,  
Following his dog upon the mountain side.’”

A later writer, speaking of the Caithness moors during the season of 1859, echoes Christopher North's opinion, and says:—"And now the sporting reader will be impatient to know the nature of our bags, for this is the true test of the quality of preserves, whether land or water. Well, our chief, who kept the game-books very



accurately, tells me that our sport averaged fifteen brace of grouse per day per gun; but besides grouse, the bags always contained snipe and hares, and occasionally wild ducks and plover. These figures look, it is true, very insignificant by the side of those startling returns which the Scotch papers love to parade of the slaughter perpetrated on certain moors. But I agree with Christopher North in not admiring any shooting ground which resembles a poultry yard, preferring that requiring skill and good dogs to discover the latent riches. Fifteen brace of grouse, as the result of a day's shooting, should satisfy any man; it is right, however, to add, that this number was only obtained by hard work, and that our party shot to so late an hour in the evening, that when we had driven home and changed our clothes, it was generally ten o'clock before we sat down to dinner." \* This was not the case at Glencreggan, where the dinner-hour was rarely delayed to a later hour than seven; for, where there are ladies in the case, gentlemen sportsmen must do their best to be punctual. Thus the opportunity was not afforded them, of shooting on their way home at a late hour in the evening, when the birds were settling for the night, even if they had considered it sportsmanlike to do so.

\* Weld's "Two Months in the Highlands," p. 83. "If at the end of the day I could produce six or seven brace of grouse, they were hardly earned and duly prized." — *Recollections of a Fox-Hunter*, by "Scrutator" (1861 p. 279.).

There they go! They take their range down the valley, and give the dogs the wind. A puff of smoke, a sharp crack or two from the guns, answered by dull echoes from the opposite hill, and then I see the beaters pick up the fallen birds, or take them from the dogs' mouths. It is a pretty sight to watch the dogs working, and doing their work so quietly, while they obey the slightest motion of the hand — for grouse are some of the shyest of game birds, and talking and noise must be kept as far away from the well-regulated grousing-moor as from the scientific whist-table. And there are so many other things that tend to the pleasure of grouse-shooting, beside the delight in watching the working of the dogs — the novelty of the scene, the purity of the air, the invigorating exercise, the excitement of the sport, and the calling into play so much judgment and skill — that one cannot wonder at the sport obtaining such a hold on British sportsmen, or at the twelfth of August being looked forward to as a day that exalts St. Grouse to a far higher estimation in the human mind than many a less-known saint whose name is marked in the Romish calendar.

Nor, although Maxwell should pooh-pooh grouse-shooting as an "operation so common-place, that none but a cockney would find novelty in its detail," \* can I wonder that one who has often trodden the moors, and

\* Wild Sports of the West, Letter XIII.

there done his sportsman's duty, should write thus enthusiastically on the subject:— "There is no department of the chase, wherein the gun is used as the instrument of capture, that approaches, much less equals, it in the quantity of excitement, and of positive enjoyment it affords its followers. The tawny tiger, it is *said*, once having tasted human blood, thirsts for it evermore, and thereafter is dissatisfied with ignobler prey; the modern shooter, it is *known*, once having rejoiced in a perfect day's grouseing, from that day forward places it highest among his affections, sets a lesser value upon all other kinds of fowling, and naturally seeks occasion for renewing the pleasure as frequently as he may, in future." Another writer calls grouse-shooting "the fox-hunting of shooting," from its wildness of scene and game, and its greater excitement over partridge shooting. It has also been called "the aristocracy of shooting," from the expense attendant upon its pursuit, so that it has been said that he who engages in all the cost of moors and their many *etceteras*, will have to pay a guinea per head for his grouse.

The denizen of Glencreggan grouse-land is red and fine. The Argyllshire grouse are larger, but not so dark as those of Perthshire. "The West Highlander," says Mr. Colquhoun, "is a beautiful rich red, and very large," while those that abound in the corn districts of Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, and the Lowlands, are "a

very light brown, borrowing a tint from the stubbles on which they delight to feed. . . . All these birds are so light in colour, as more nearly to resemble partridges." And Mr. Colquhoun adds this interesting observation:—"But, let us take the mountain from top to bottom, and admire the wondrous care of the Divine appointments. The ptarmigan, the colour of its snowy summit in the winter time, and of the grey granite rock in summer; the grouse, lower down, exactly like its own red-brown heather in the autumn; while the partridge, which subsists upon the little patch of corn that skirts the moor, has the yellower shade of the stubble on its wing."