RAMBLES IN SKYE,

WITH SKETCH OF

A Trip to St. Kilda.

BY

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THESE Rambling Sketches were written while the Author was spending a few months' holidays in different parts of Skye, during the summer of 1882. The Rambles first appeared in the columns of the *Ayr Observer*, and in compliance with the urgent request of several friends they are now re-published in book form.

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RAMBLES IN SKYE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM DEESIDE TO DUNVEGAN IN SKYE.

HAVING arranged to spend some time with a friend, a well-known clergyman, and his family in Skye, I left Deeside, where I had sojourned for some months in quest of improved health, and enjoyed many pleasant rambles on the banks of the beautifully clear and swiftly-flowing river Dee, from its entrance into the German Ocean below Aberdeen, to the famous Linn of Dee. Early on a Saturday morning near the end of May, 1882, I left Aberdeen by the 7 a.m. train for Strome Ferry, accompanied by two friends. It was a beautiful, bright, clear, bracing day, and we had a very good view of the surrounding country as the snorting, puffing iron-horse carried us swiftly up along the wide and beautiful valley of Strathdon, and down Strathbogie, across the Spey, and on to Inverness, where we halted for over an hour.

Prompt at 2 p.m. we started for Strome Ferry, where we arrived at 5.30, and stayed there over Sunday. Strome is a retired, secluded spot, overlooking Loch Carron. There is a handsome station, a commodious pier, a recently erected hotel, a very neat tidy-looking house

occupied by Mr Baxter, stationmaster, a merchant's store, and a few small erections occupied by railway servants, &c. There is only one road leading from it, which winds up zig-zag a very steep brae for a considerable distance, thence along a narrow gully between two high hills, and on to Balmacara. There is no road or path of any sort along the shore either way from the station. The Ferry is about half-a-mile broad. On the north side there is an inn, and the ruins of Strome Castle, which appears to have been a place of great strength. It was blown up by Kenneth M'Kenzie in 1602. Some 5 or 6 miles up the north side of the loch the village of Jeantown is reached.

On making enquiries the following morning (Sunday) as to the nearest church, we ascertained that the nearest churches were at Jeantown across the loch, or at Plockton, 7 or 8 miles in the opposite direction. My two friends and I drove to the Established Church at Plocktown, a scattered fishing hamlet, with two churches, a small inn, and several little shops. It was only recently that a road was made to the village by Sir Alexander Mathieson, M.P., whose palatial residence, Duncraig Castle, is seen across the bay, straight opposite the village, finely situated on a high, rocky, bosky knoll, commanding magnificent views of the Applecross, Torridon, the front range of the Skye mountain peaks, and Loch Carron, with its numerous little islands in front. The private grounds around the Castle are beautifully laid out. We

had a long walk through the grounds in the afternoon along with a friend—an architect who was superintending some alterations about the Castle—and we were somewhat surprised to see bushes, shrubs, flowers, &c., in such abundance and great luxuriance. The road made recently to the Castle, Plockton, &c., forks off from the Balmacara road about a mile or so from Strome to the right, and for some miles is carried along the base of tremendous precipices of great height and almost perpendicular on our left, with the sea dashing against the rocky beach far down below on our right, Loch Carron spreading out before us like a fresh water lake, engirt by hills and sky-lined by lofty mountains, locked and bounded on the north by the sharp-pointed peaks of Skye.

Monday, 29th.—Left Strome by steamer Lochiel about 3 P.M., half-an-hour behind advertised time. A pretty large number of passengers had come from the south by rail and joined the steamer, the large majority being farmers, cattle dealers, drovers, &c., going to attend the Portree Cattle Market on the following day (Tuesday, 30th May.) Our first place of call was at Plockton, where a considerable number of people joined the steamer, coming out a good long way in boats—there being no pier for the steamer. We next passed on our left the picturesque looking little village of Kyle Akin, with its prominent white lighthouse shining brightly in the rays of the descending sun. The village stands on the Skye side of the narrow strait or sound that divides

Skye from the extreme south-western point of Ross-shire. The strait, which forms an entrance to Loch Alsh, is less than half-a-mile wide, and is traditionally said to have formerly been so narrow, that men leaped over it. There is a hotel and an excellent pier and ferry. Close by stand the ruins of Castle Maoil, said to have been built by a Danish Princess, called "Saucy Mary," who stretched an iron chain across the strait, and allowed no vessel to pass without paying toll. Kyle Rhea, which forms the entrance to Loch Alsh from the sound of Sleat on the west, is a very narrow strait similar to Kyle Akin Strait, but said to be even narrower, and is overhung on the Skye side by lofty mountains rising up to over 2000 feet high. Our next call was at Broadford, where we got a large addition to the number of our passengers, two large-sized ferry-boats packed with people were waiting the arrival of the steamer in the bay, the large majority being farmers and shepherds, accompanied by a regiment of collie dogs. Our next and last call was at Raasay, where we received a number of people evidently bound for the Portree Market also. The Island of Raasay is about 15 miles long by two or three broad. The proprietor's (Herbert Wood, Esq.,) mansion-house is finely situated, overlooking the sound, and surrounded by green wooded knolls. The highest, indeed the only prominent hill-top on the Island is Duncane, 1483 feet high, and from its peculiar table-shaped summit, is a conspicuous object viewed from many parts of Ross-shire,

Skye, &c. On leaving Raasay, the steamer was pretty much crowded, the large majority being big, strong, healthy, hardy-looking men, nearly all arrayed in bonnet and plaid of varied style and colour, each grasping a big hazel Cromak in his "wallie" neive. Several closely-packed groups here and there, both on deck and flat below, were eagerly engaged in animated conversation and discussion chiefly anent the Skye crofters' disputes with their "tyrannical landlords." We were then passing the "Braes" situated along the shore on our left, some six or seven miles from Portree, the scene of the exploits of the picked regiment of Glasgow Police in seizing a few crofters while in bed, some weeks previously. Some of the disputants would now and then bring down their big closed iron fist with a hard "whack" on one of the tables, making jugs, tumblers, and glasses dance and jingle like stoor, to strike home and clinch some important bit of argument or other. Prominent amongst the crowd in the steerage end of the steamer were a lot of noisy show-folks, who had paid repeated visits to the regions below during the voyage from Strome. We overheard a big masculine, red-faced, bold, brazen-looking dame give her gudeman a regular "keelhauling" "afore folk" for daring to treat some other "lady" to some refreshments on the sly. The apparently poor hen-pecked husband submitted meekly to the scathing, scolding tirade of his offended and ill-used partner, without offering a single word in extenuation of

his flirting conduct. I watched with keen interest the proceedings of a number of collies who had collected together, and for some time walked backwards and forwards; round and round, with their bristles raised and tails aloft, and after a good many preliminary growls and snarls, showing off their sharp white teeth, and without any apparent cause of quarrel, all at once commenced a free fight, causing a regular stir and commotion for a time; and altogether, to a stranger from the far south, the scene presented to his gaze on board the steamer—the people, dress, language, and general appearance—seemed quite unique, stirring, and interesting, and apt to make him fancy that he had been suddenly transported to some far off region of the world. We arrived at Portree, the capital of Skye, about 8 o'clock, and went to the Marine Hotel, which stands at the foot of some lofty, overhanging, rocky cliffs, and quite close to the pier. As my two friends had to be at Dunvegan the following morning, in time to catch the Mail Packet which sails daily from Dunvegan pier at 9 A.M. for Uist, &c., I must postpone giving my impressions, or any description of Portree and surroundings till I return, when I intend to spend some days in the capital before leaving the Island.

We started the following morning shortly before 5 A.M. It was a glorious, bright, sunny morning, with a very enjoyable, pleasant, bracing breeze blowing in our faces. And as our rather small-sized, but somewhat hardy-

looking chesnut pair, seemed in good fettle and form, Portree, with its inhabitants still in the land of dreams, was soon left behind, with glimpses of blue sea beyond glittering in the full blaze of the rising sun; and to the left we got a splendid view of the Cuchullin mountains —some ten or a dozen miles off—covered here and there with shapeless, moving, straggling flakes of white mist, their sharp-pointed peaks towering upwards to the blue cloudless heavens above. Straight before us was a wide, circular, sloping heath and heather-clad valley, dotted all over for miles on either side of the road, and all in commotion, with people, and lowing, bellowing cattle, and dogs, slowly advancing from all the airts of the compass towards the market stance situated a mile or two west from Portree. We were much surprised to see such a large number of cattle, and almost exclusively the Highland breed, many of them excellent specimens of the well-formed, shaggy-haired, long and finely shaped horned, hardy old Highland stock, for which Skye has for long been widely famed. We were much amused to see a large number of females of varied ages, from the smart barefooted girl in her teens to the withered, dark-visaged old dame of threescore or more, leading one animal by a rope tied round the horns, and also of various ages, from the gambolling, frisky, plump, curly-coated calf of a few months old, to the lean, dry-haired, aged crummy, with a dozen nicks in her long well-shaped horns. There were also a good many aged men leading

just one beast, probably all the overplus from their scanty stock they had to dispose of. Here and there we observed men rolled up in their plaids lying on the roadside among the heather apparently sound asleep, having probably travelled all night with their cattle; their faithful and trusty collies, curled up with their eyes half-opened, lying close to their master's side. When passing the stance, we observed a peculiarly shaped canvas tent, 'neath whose roof reposed, and to all appearance in soundest slumbers, our somewhat noisy fellow voyagers from Strome on the previous day—the show folks.

For several miles we continued to meet droves of cattle and a few horses, people driving in gigs and carts of all sorts and sizes, all on their way to the market. Some 5 miles or so from Portree we crossed the river Snizort, the largest stream in Skye, which comes down Glen Snizort and falls into the sea at the head of Loch Snizort, which sends a narrow branch of its waters a long way inland. Skeabost House stands at the head of the Loch, surrounded by young plantations. As we proceeded, we passed a number of scattered hamlets on either side of the road, and the population in the district must be very considerable, and, as a rule, housed and sheltered in the most wretched-looking hovels we had ever seen in any other part of Scotland. Nearly all the small patches of cultivated land in the district through which we were passing appeared to be occupied by

small crofters, who evidently cling tenaciously to the extremely primitive system of farming which has obtained from time immemorial, and I have been informed that no amount of advice will induce them to leave the old beaten rut which has been followed by their forefolks for untold generations before them. We made a short halt at Tayinlone Inn—halfway house—and a few miles farther on we passed Edinbain, a tidy looking place, consisting of an inn, a large schoolhouse, several slated houses, and an hospital—a plain but clean, tidy looking building, erected and endowed by the late Kenneth M'Leod, Esq. of Grieshernish, which must be a valuable boon and useful institution to the inhabitants of Skye, who are so far removed from any similar institutions. The village stands at the head of Loch Grieshernish, a narrow arm of the sea stretching a long way inland. Grieshernish House—John Robertson, Esq., an active and well-known man in Skye—is seen a short way below the village on the left side of the Loch, and is surrounded by thriving green woods. After a drive of 24 or 25 miles, we arrived at Dunvegan—which, as the crow flies, is nearly due west from Portree, and right across the island—a few minutes after 9 o'clock, and found the mail packet ready to start with the mails for some of the islands further west. After bidding good-bye, and wishing a safe voyage to my friends, I soon found my way to my friend's manse—the parish minister—and received a right Highland welcome.

CHAPTER II.

A TRIP TO ST. KILDA.

HAVING arrranged to combine with my visit to Skye a trip to St. Kilda, I joined the Dunara Castle on Saturday morning, the 10th of June, at Dunvegan Pier at 9 A.M. A few other passengers joined the steamer —or trip—at Dunvegan, including Miss Macleod of Macleod, from Dunvegan Castle, sister of the proprietor of St. Kilda, with a lot of luggage, as she intended to remain on the island for some time. But owing I presume to the threatening aspect of the weather, and seeing such lots of white sea-horses careering up the Loch, she left us just as the steamer was about to start. Mr. M'Kenzie, factor for St. Kilda, with several tradesmen who were to remain on the island for a time to do some repairs on the cottages, &c., came on board, and also another rather important and prominent personage, namely, Colin Campbell, a well-known piper belonging to Skye, which at one time was widely famed for a race of excellent pipers named M'Crimmon, and had a sort of college near Dunvegan Castle, where young men were sent to learn to play the bagpipes. Colin Campbell, who

was for years piper in one of our gallant Highland regiments, is a very good specimen of a genuine old Highlander, with white locks and a flowing beard, a well formed stalwart frame, and neatly arrayed in full Highland garb, his chanter nicely adorned with gaudy tartan ribbons waving and fluttering in the stiff morning breeze. We left the pier a few minutes after 10 o'clock, under the stirring strains of the bagpipes, with the gale straight in our teeth. Our first call was at Stein, a small village near the head of Loch Bay, where we cast anchor, and were detained nearly a couple of hours landing about a dozen passengers big and wee, all natives, and discharging cargo, consisting chiefly of oatmeal and flour. The only cargo we took on board was a few boxes of eggs. The sea being rather rough, the process of discharging goods in small boats was somewhat tedious. While the passengers were being landed, I observed a considerable amount of kissing going on among the natives, and in the good, plain, old-fashioned style, rather different from the more modern, cold, formal style sometimes witnessed at meetings and partings of friends. After rounding the long outstretching point of Vaternish, the steamer's course was steered for Uig Bay, where we again slipt anchor, and were detained for a good while discharging a miscellaneous cargo, but chiefly, as at Stein, oatmeal and flour. Uig is one of the prettiest spots I had as yet seen in Skye. The picturesque little village consists of two churches—no manses here yet—a large

schoolhouse, a hotel, a few white slated cottages, and conspicuous on a green grassy knowe is seen an erection in the form of a round tower—which I was informed was the landlord or factor's office, where rents were collected —situated round the one-half of a beautiful, deep, indented, horse-shoe shaped bay, protected and guarded at the entrance or gateway by bold, lofty, pillared headlands; and round the curve of the other half the Bay is thickly studded with crofters' huts, long narrow stripes of arable land rising up from the seashore with an even gentle slope, the different tints of colour of the various crops—which were looking remarkably well, and forward—lending to the place a nice picturesque appearance. The houses are built in a row along the base of a very steep green clad brae, which extends round the whole curved bay, the cultivated land extending from the houses to the beach, and altogether presenting from the deck of the steamer, anchored about the centre of the bay, a singularly unique and picturesque picture of a quiet, sequestered, rural hamlet.

After leaving Uig Bay, the steamer's course was steered straight across the Minch for East Loch Tarbert, and on entering the Loch the steamer took a sudden sweep in among some small islands, and soon came to a halt and dropt anchor, and in a jiffey a large ferry boat from the Island of Scalpa, which had been waiting the arrival of the Dunara in the bay, was alongside to receive some odds and ends in the way of groceries from the

south. We were detained only a few minutes, and were soon scudding up the loch—as calm as a sheet of glass—and arrived at Tarbert, where there is a good substantial wooden pier, about 8 o'clock. The village, consisting of a church and manse, schoolhouse, post office, a pretty large hotel, several little shops, and a row of white-slated houses, stands at the head of a narrow pointed creek, shaped like the letter A, forming the west end of East Loch Tarbert, and separated from West Loch Tarbert by a narrow neck of land only a few hundred yards broad, and overhung by steep, lofty mountains of bleak, barren rocks, from which almost every particle of soil had been washed entirely away, and which stand out bare and blanched in their savage wildness, presenting a striking contrast to the green verdant hills of Skye. All the berths being occupied by passengers who had left Glasgow and Greenock by the steamer, I went to the Tarbert Hotel—Hornsby—and unexpectedly I got about the largest, best furnished, and most comfortable bedroom I ever got in any hotel before. Other two passengers who had driven from Portree and joined us at Uig, came up to the hotel later in the evening; one of them, Lord Provost of the capital of one of the northern counties, an exceptionally well-built, big, jovial, frank gentleman, and evidently bent on fully enjoying his first trip to St. Kilda, and who, I have no doubt, fills his dignified position with credit to himself and his fellow-townsmen.

Sunday turned out a fine, bright, sunny day. On making enquiries about churches, we soon ascertained that the Parish Church was close on 20 miles off, and that there was only one church—a Free—in the village, a circumstance which, I believe, ought to be regarded as a special boon and blessing by the villagers and people in the immediate district; because any one visiting many districts in the north of Scotland, Skye, &c., can hardly fail to observe that church affairs are one of the chief and most engrossing topics that permeate the whole social fabric, and the direct cause of a large amount of unfriendly feeling and bitter strife amongst, in many cases, poor uneducated Highlanders, encouraged and embittered, I have been told, in not a few cases by illiberal narrow-minded ministers, who profess to preach the glorious gospel message of peace, goodwill, and brotherly love amongst professing Christians. A number of us went to the Free Church, and heard a very long, dreich, dreary discourse—the sermon alone lasted an hour and a-half—and I never remember seeing such evident and unmistakeable signs of weariness and impatience on the part of a congregation, a considerable number of whom came from Scalpa. Several yachts steamed into the bay in course of the day with parties on board for the Dunara. The Marquis of Ailsa, after landing from his yacht early in the day, went direct to the hotel, where he took up his quarters for the rest of the day. He seemed a very pleasant unassuming

gentleman, dressed in a plain light Tweed suit. Miss Macleod of Macleod, and a Miss Ashley, had crossed from Dunvegan in a steam yacht, and came on board the steamer shortly before 12 o'clock. We left the hotel at 11 o'clock and went on board the steamer, and found the large majority of our fellow-passengers had retired to their bunkers. There were about 50 passengers for St. Kilda. Everything being put in order and in good trim, we left Tarbert prompt a few minutes after 12 o'clock. Acting on the advice of some friends whom I had met at the hotel, I lay down in one of the clean tidy bunkers arranged in the saloon cabin, screened off by nice green curtains, intending to get a comfortable snooze, but, alas! alas! However, there is little use describing too minutely my disturbed and sleepless experience during the time I remained below. Several jovial elderly gentlemen were sitting chatting, sipping, and enjoying their steaming hot "nightcaps" before retiring to their cribs. By and by all disappeared, and for some time after leaving Tarbert things went on comparatively smooth, but on entering Harris Sound the steamer began to pitch and roll a good deal. At length, while turning round to call at Obbe, a big rolling billow struck her a tremendous broadside, which nearly tumbled her over on her beam end, and left her shivering like a leaf from stem to stern, and pitching sundry loose articles, such as portmanteaus, boots, shoes, &c., hither and thither, caused a terrible rumbling-tumbling din. A

gentleman in one of the cribs on the opposite side of the cabin was suddenly roused from his snoring slumbers. I am not quite sure whether it was the Provost or not, at anyrate it was evident that it was some one accustomed to preside at public meetings, for he roared out in a commanding tone, "Order, order! Gentlemen, order! Ge—— ——" The rest of his speech was cut short, as the steamer made a sudden lurch, pitching the speaker against the curtains, then against one of the upright pillars, and finally landing him with a heavy thud on the floor, where he lay for a time groaning, sad to say no one taking the slightest notice of him. I observed from my crib the ever busy bustling head steward, whose duties seemed never to come to an end, seize one of his assistants—evidently a raw hand—by the cuff of the neck, and give him a good rough shake, saying, "What the d——l are you bok-boking for?" The only call the steamer made was at Obbe, which stands on a sheltered nook on the Harris side of Harris Sound. Several passengers, all natives, left us in a ferry-boat, but it was too rough to land any goods. The steamer's course was then steered direct for St. Kilda, some 60 odd miles off, and encountering the full force of the fierce gale blowing in from the open Atlantic, the Dunara, her gallant captain, officers and crew, were put on their metal, and did their duty nobly. The Dunara is a first-rate sea-boat; indeed, I never saw a steamer behave better in a storm. About 7 A.M. we were close on the group of islands

forming St. Kilda.

> "Far in the watery waste, where his broad wave
> From world to world the vast Atlantic rolls,
> On from the piney shores of Labrador
> To frozen Thule cast her airy height,
> Aloft to heaven remotest Kilda lifts,
> Last of the sea-girt Hebrides that guard
> In filial train Britannia's coast."

The first glimpse I got of the nearest island—Borerra—reminded me at once of Ailsa Craig, and on a closer view of the group as if there were half-a-dozen Ailsa Craigs ranged around and standing out like huge grim sentinels guarding their bigger brother of St. Kilda from the full force of the giant rolling billows of the Atlantic main. Although the wind was from the most favourable point—north, with a point north-east—for landing, on approaching the bay opposite the little township, it presented the appearance of a collection of moving, shifting, small islands, caused by the tremendous rolling surge. It has sometimes been remarked that the formation of the principal island somewhat resembles the shape of a huge leg of mutton, with some slices cut out to form the bay. On the east side of the bay the Hill of Oshival rises sheer up to the height of over 1200 feet, its sea-front precipitous, bare, scaured rock. The rounded side next the village, although very steep and thickly covered with light greyish stones, is of comparatively easy ascent. The west side of the bay is formed by the "shank" of the "leg" (the Dune) stretching away for a

mile or more into the sea, and consists of a narrow, lofty ridge of bare, precipitous, jagged rock, with some big open holes or apertures through and through, the surging waves dashing through them with a terrific thundering noise. The scene, more especially round the extreme point of the ridge, was something not easily described, but terribly wild and impressive as wave after wave dashed with loud thundering thuds against the precipitous, hoary rock, as if bent on shattering it to its very foundations. "If one would see nature in her giant gambols, let him go to St. Kilda when the liquid foe, which knew no opposition from the time he left the North Pole—except, perhaps, an unfortunate ship which he had swallowed—sees St. Kilda determined upon breaking his lines; he retires a little, swelling as he retires in sullen wrath, and hurling with him stones, or rather fragments of rock, some of them twenty-four tons in weight; then, with these rude bullets in his grasp, hurling them against the rocks, he makes one desperate charge as if in hope to push the island from its seat. The war is vain, but the noise would drown a thousand thunders. The purpose of the assailant is answered, however, in so far that, having mounted a rampart 1500(?) feet high, he gets down over the island in white spray, dropping salt tears of disappointment upon the natives as he passes. His old grudge may also be satisfied so far that these fragments of rock thus battered have literally perforated the island through and through at

its foundation." At one part there is a narrow passage right through the ridge, with overhanging cliffs on either side, just sufficiently wide to allow a boat to pass through. The steamer was steered slowly round the point, and we got into the lee of the island, and hovered about for an hour or two, keeping well out from the rocks; and although comparatively sheltered from the blast, there was such a tremendous jumbling surge that the steamer tumbled about like a big cork. There were several fierce showers of hard hailstones, which rattled against the steamer like leaden pellets. Immediately on getting round the point of the narrow ridge of lofty rock called the Dune, we were surrounded by immense flocks of sea birds of all sorts and sizes—

> "Above, around, in cloudy circles wheeled,
> Or sailing level on the Polar gale,"

—their separate and varied-toned jabberings, shrieks, and croaks, blending with the whistling, whirling blasts, forming a curious and stirring noisy concert. The shrill cries of some of the flock resembled Gorog or grog—grog—grog; others Bir-bir, Beer—beer—beer—beer. The only one I specially observed who did not appear to be in the slightest degree affected by sea-sickness was one of the few ladies on board—Miss Ashley—who continued busy sketching the whole time we were about the islands, an active nice-looking young lady, who, I understand, spends a good deal of her time in her steam yacht. She seemed to handle her brush to good purpose.

By-and-bye, to the surprise, I daresay, of every one on board, a boat was observed coming out of the bay manned by a crew of five men—four rowers and a steersman—with a small white flag fixed at the stern and fluttering in the breeze. I had often both read and heard of the St. Kildans being indifferent boatmen or sailors, but I have formed quite a different opinion as to their prowess in this direction. I never before saw a boat handled with such rare pluck and skill; indeed, I never saw a boat venture out in such a sea. No doubt all on the Island would be very anxious for the arrival of the Dunara, her trip being the first this year, and would be sure to bring to them many necessaries and news from the outside world. On observing the boat, the steamer was steered to meet it, and after a good deal of manœuvring, got the boat on its lee side, where a long rope was thrown out, which was quickly seized by the steersman —the rowers did not move from their positions—and made fast to the bow of the boat. It then rose up like a little toy on the crest of a big wave, but being suddenly dragged down into the deep trough of the sea, it was very nearly swamped, and in all likelihood the next wave would have engulphed the boat and all it contained, but the helmsman had the presence of mind to snap or throw off the rope, and the boat and its gallant crew were left to make the best of their perilous position. The steamer then steamed slowly and cautiously up the bay till within a short distance of the shore, and slipt her anchor in 10

or 12 fathoms of water, with good holding bottom. Many, like myself, looked eagerly for the boat, but for a time we could see no trace of it, and I really feared that both it and its occupants had gone to the bottom, but, by-and-bye, we got a momentary glimpse of it like a dark speck on the top of a wave. It took them more than an hour to reach the lee side of the steamer, to which it was secured by ropes, and the crew came on board and received a warm and hearty welcome, besides a varied assortment of parcels and packages in the shape of presents from the passengers on board the Dunara. They were all middle-aged men, ranging from 35 to 45 years of age, not very tall, but stout, sturdy, and healthy-looking, three of them reddish-haired, the other two dark, and great talkers—their tongues never stopped the whole time they were on board—in Gaelic. They could speak no English. They waited an hour or two to see if the storm would calm down a little, but instead of improving it seemed to be getting fiercer than ever, so the crew got into their boat, and got so far loaded with sundry boxes, containing groceries and other odds and ends from the south.

Two gentlemen—the Marquis of Ailsa and an English gentleman—insisted, against the advice and entreaties of their friends, to go in the boat and land on the island, where they were well warned they might very likely have to remain for weeks or perhaps months. However, they persisted in going ashore with the boat. The crew

seemed quite delighted to have the two gentlemen with them—although neither of them could speak a single word of Gaelic—and rowed for the landing place in the bay. The boat's progress was watched with keen and exciting interest by all on board the steamer, and, I daresay, with equal interest and anxiety by the inhabitants of the island, who were all, at least the large majority of them, congregated on a rocky knoll close on the beach, waving their handkerchiefs and making other signs of welcome and delight at the long-expected visit of the Dunara. There is no pier or landing-place of any sort whatever on any part of the island; about the only place where a landing is ever attempted is in the bay before the village, and the usual mode of landing even in the most favourable weather is simply to wait close on the shore and watch for a good big rolling wave to carry the boat high up on a ledge of the rocky beach, and leave it there to be instantly surrounded by a crowd of the islanders to pull it higher up and make it secure. When embarking, just the same process is reversed. The boat with its seven occupants soon reached to within a short distance of the shore, where they meant to hover and watch for a favourable big wave to lift them on to the rocks on the beach. However, there was very little prospect of them succeeding, as wave after wave was chasing each other in rapid succession along the whole course of the bay, dashing their foamy white spray away up over the beach. After waiting for more than an hour for a

short lull, they were obliged to return to the steamer with the two passengers, who were evidently very glad to get on board again. We then bade good-bye to the boat and its plucky crew, who, in all probability, unless the storm would somewhat abate, would be compelled to keep in their boat all night, as they could neither land, nor on any account attempt to leave the bay, where they could ride amid the rolling surge with comparative safety. Their chief danger would be the wind shifting a few points round to the south. While the steamer rode at anchor she swung round and round, sometimes her stern, and then her stem, next the shore to within a stonecast of the rocky beach. It was very tantalizing for Mr. M'Kenzie, the factor, and his tradesmen, to be so close on the island and not allowed to land. Like many of my fellow-passengers, I have no doubt, I was much disappointed at being unable to land on St. Kilda, as I had looked forward for many years with keen interest to see both the lonely ocean-girt island and its inhabitants, having known several natives who now hold respectable positions in several parts of Scotland, and from whom I heard many interesting reminiscences of their dear, native island home; and, besides, I was aware that I had a considerable number of namesakes among the St. Kildans —indeed, either the second or third most numerous name on the island—and was curious to find out if any of them were distant kinsmen. I believe there are only five surnames, Gillies, Ferguson, M'Donald, M'Kinnon,

and M'Queen. The race of M'Crimmons, who were for long the hereditary pipers of the M'Leods of Dunvegan, have disappeared. John, Neil, Donald, and Finlay; Catherine, Rachel, Anne, and Mary are the most common names on the island. However, I carried away with me a rough sketch of St. Kilda and its surroundings which I will ever retain in a prominent corner of memory's mysterious storehouse, as one of the grandest and most striking pictures my eyes ever gazed on. My preconceived idea of the place was quite upset on seeing it. For one thing, I had no idea it was so large. The Island of St. Kilda alone extends to rather more than three miles in length, by two miles broad, and including the adjacent islands, the group comprehends from four to five thousand acres, or about six square miles. Two of the other islands—Soa and Borrerra—are about the same size, and each affords excellent grazing for about three or four hundred sheep. All the other islands—except the Dune, which has some little grazing—are bare, barren rocks, the favourite haunt of sea-fowls of all sorts and sizes. Except at the village bay, St. Kilda is surrounded by stupendous perpendicular cliffs, rising sheer up out of the dark Atlantic. These lofty towering cliffs are deeply indented by numerous fissures and caverns, presenting a very remarkable and striking aspect. There are four distinct hill tops; the highest—Conagher—rises sheer up from behind the village to the height of some 1500 feet, from its base to its very summit

clothed, on the village side, with a beautiful green grassy sward, with its finely-rounded conical peak, standing proud monarch of the singularly unique surrounding scene. The island of Borrera is somewhat different from the others; its sea-front round and round is almost perpendicular, but flat on the top, and clothed with fine rich grass. When landing sheep on it, they are carried in boats to the base of the rock, then slung in ropes and hauled to the top, and when taking any off the island, the same process is reversed. The whole stock on the island consists of about 1200 sheep and 50 head of cattle. There is not a single member of the horse tribe on the island. The proprietor's charge or annual rent for a sheep's grazing on St. Kilda is 9d per head, and 6d in the other islands, and for a cow's grass, 7s per annum. Each tenant has his own stock, and no two the same number, instead of the stock being held in common, and the wool and the carcasses equally divided. They sell neither cattle, sheep, nor wool. The wool is made into tweed cloths and blankets. The islanders consume a good deal of mutton. Several sheep are killed by each family for the winter supply. The price paid by the factor for tweed cloths and blankets is about 3s and 2s 6d respectively per yard or ell of 4 feet 1 inch. The cloth is a light, good, natural colour, without any dye, and is said to wear remarkably well. They also sell a considerable quantity of oil made from sea-fowl, for which there is great demand, as it is much used by sheep

farmers in Skye and other islands, being found very suitable for the purpose of mixing with tar for smearing sheep. Sometimes four to five hundred gallons are sent off at a time, the price being about 2s per gallon. The price paid for feathers is about 5s or 6s per stone of 24 lbs. The factor, Mr. M'Kenzie, who is well known and much respected on the island, resides at Dunvegan, Skye, and usually makes three trips to St. Kilda during the season in the smack Robert Hadden—a smart craft of 60 or 70 tons, belonging to the proprietor of the island, M'Leod of M'Leod, Dunvegan Castle.

For many centuries the number of the inhabitants has averaged about ninety odd souls—the largest number at any time being 110, the smallest 71. At present the number is 78. In 1856, 36 members of the community emigrated to Australia, which made a large gap in their numbers; and early in April, 1853, a boat left the island with a favourable wind for the Long Island, with seven men and one woman on board, and when last seen from the cliffs was careering on her way with a favourable breeze, but was never seen or heard of again, which caused great grief and sorrow among the islanders.

While the Dunara was riding at anchor in the bay, we got as good a view of the little lonely hamlet as we could wish. The township, as it is called, consists of a circular row of 18 cottages, standing a good bit apart, in the form of a crescent, running parallel with the curve of the bay. There are 16 tidy-looking houses with zinc

roofs, with front door and a window on either side, and a chimney on each gable; the other two are thatched, and occupied respectively by a bachelor and an old maid. At the east end of the village there are four white-slated erections. The one next the village is the factor's house, and sometimes occupied by Miss M'Leod of M'Leod, who pays occasional prolonged visits to the island, and is a special favourite and greatly esteemed by the St. Kildans. Next comes the church and manse close together, then the store near the head. Immediately behind the village stands the small kirk-yard, surrounded by a high drystone dyke, containing the mouldering remains of many successive generations of the far-off lonely hamlet's dead.

> "Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
> Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
> Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
> Or waked to ecstacy the living lyre."

As regards house accommodation the St. Kildans are far ahead of the inhabitants of Skye and some of the other islands farther west, and from all accounts I have often heard from those who have lived amongst them, I believe that as a rule they lead exceptionally pure and innocent lives.

> "But, ah, o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,
> On whose bleak rocks, which brave the wasting tides,
> Fair nature's daughter, Virtue, yet abides,
> Go, just as they, their blameless manners trace."

I have been often told by some natives and others who had resided on the island that there is not a single bagpipe, fiddle, or musical instrument of any sort whatever to be found. They have no poetry or song, and sing nothing except psalms and hymns, and any books sent to them must in the first place be examined by the minister or catechist, and if not found proper or suitable reading, are sent off from the island. The islanders are all adherents of the Free Church.

After staying some seven or eight hours under the friendly shelter of St. Kilda, and seeing no indication of the storm abating, the anchor was hauled up and everything put in trim to face the fierce, whirling, raging, foaming sea, around and outside the islands. I had never witnessed such a wild sea before, and as a proof so far that it was no ordinary storm, I overheard one or two of the passengers who had sailed round the world, and crossed the broad Atlantic more than once, declare that they never had experienced such a hurricane before. But although, like most of my fellow-passengers, I suffered severely from sea-sickness, I had the satisfaction of seeing the Atlantic in one of her wildest and grandest moods. Before leaving the bay, I selected a position on the lee side of one of the funnels, and took hold of an iron rod, and held on there for four or five long hours, until we entered the Sound of Harris, and came to a halt at Obbe, where the anchor was thrown out in comparatively smooth water. Here a number of passengers left

in a ferry-boat, intending to proceed to Tarbert, about 20 miles distant, by road along the side of West Loch Tarbert. On leaving Obbe, the steamer's course was steered direct across the Minch for Loch Dunvegan, and reached Dunvegan Pier about 10 o'clock.

CHAPTER III.

A DAY AT GLENDALE.

On leaving the Manse, the road for Glendale goes round the extreme south end of Dunvegan Loch, thence along the haunch of a heathery moor, with the promontory of Ugunish on our right. After proceeding a couple of miles, we reached the hamlet or township of Skeenadin, which extends for a mile or two along the side of Loch Dunvegan, with its cluster of small green-clad islands, dotted all over with sheep and lambs. The crofters of Skeenadin made an effort to get these islands—which is just opposite their crofts, and divided by a narrow arm of sea—added to their grazing land. However, they seem to have had the good sense not to take possession of them by force, as some of their neighbour crofters did. After passing the village, we got a good view of Husobost House (Dr. Martin's), nicely situated, overlooking Dunvegan Loch. The little hamlet of Borrarick, probably one of the most out-of-the-way inhabited neuks in Skye, is situated a few miles beyond Husobost House, on the way to Dunvegan Head, and consists of a cluster of small huts of the usual Skye cabin style of architecture

and small patches of land under crop. The newly-erected school-house stands out prominently in the district. The school is superintended by a clever, active female teacher —Miss Campbell—who, I fancy, must have a pretty difficult and irksome task to teach and keep in order her 60 or 70 bare-footed, bare-headed Highland "Arabs," almost none of whom can speak a word of English. I have no doubt Professor Christie, of Aberdeen, who was in Skye a few weeks ago inspecting the schools in regard to religious education, would find his examination of the Borrarick School rather a ticklish duty, and with probably no very satisfactory results, as the Gaelic branch of the much respected Professor's education had been sadly neglected in his young days. A short way beyond the school-house is a famed magic stone called Clach-na-phog, or, Stone of Manners. Sitting for a short time on the stone is supposed to greatly improve one's manners. Many go a long way to sit on the magic stone. On reaching Colbost, the road takes a sudden turn to the left, passing the Colbost School and preaching-station in connection with the parish church of Durinish, and is carried up a remarkably steep ascent, along a deep-clefted narrow gully, over a sharp mountain ridge which runs down for some distance, and terminates in the bold headland of Dunvegan. On gaining the summit of the narrow ridge, we all at once get a splendid view of Glendale, looking as if it were a quiet secluded little world by itself. It is a pretty extensive glen, with its river, a

considerable stream which takes its rise at the head of the gully which separates two mountains, "M'Leod's Tables," the two most conspicuous mountains in the northern portion of Skye. The river flows pretty rapidly down the middle of the long valley, and for nearly a couple of miles before it enters the sea at Loch Pooltiel, through a flat haugh of good rich land, forming many curious serpentine loops and links, and falling into the sea over a cascade through a narrow channel or gateway, which looks as if it had been neatly cut through the solid rock, almost perpendicular on both sides, and of considerable height. The river discharges its waters over the cascade into a large, dark, and remarkably deep pool, in some parts close on thirty feet deep. At full tide the sea adds several feet to its depth. The gentle slope rising up from the banks of both sides of the river, to the base of the dark heather-clad mountain side at the back, is occupied by the crofters' huts and cultivated land, which is cut up and divided into small strips and patches, and looks as if a long web of tartan of various hues and colours had been stretched from the sea for a good many miles up the glen on both sides of the river. The various crops were marked with different tinges of colour, from the dark green potato plot to the patch of oats thickly mixed with a most luxuriant crop of yellow gowans, taller than the corn. Here and there were plots of grass, intersected by numerous, rocky, heathery knolls and verdant knowes, on which cattle were tethered, but

chiefly calves of various colours—from the jet black to the light dun—their tether just long enough to allow them to approach the very edge of the tempting young oats and clover. The milch cows and other cattle were seen in droves browsing athwart the mountain side higher up among the blooming heather, which is held in common, and I don't know how many collie dogs, sauntering about with their curling bushy tails aloft and wagging, with apparently nothing particular to do. In almost every direction a lot of women were seen—as a rule in pairs, with their head covered with a white napkin, or cloth of some sort—descending from the moor with a big creel on their back filled with peats. Altogether, the Glen, as we drove slowly down the long brae, which descends in a slanting line to the river, spanned by a bridge at the commencement of the level meadows, presented a most interesting, unique, and picturesque landscape picture. About half-a-mile beyond the bridge, at the base of a short range of bosky crags, stands Hammer House, the residence of the proprietor—Hugh M'Pherson, Esq.—who is a minor; and the estate is at present under the management of trustees, Professor M'Pherson of Edinburgh, the young Laird's uncle, being one of them. But within a year hence, the heir, who is much respected in the district, will be of age, and get the reins into his own hands. A few hundred yards farther on the school-house, a large and really handsome building, is seen close on the

roadside. The large number of newly-erected school-houses, under the management of the different school boards, form a prominent feature throughout the island, studded here and there amidst the surrounding wretched-looking abodes of the inhabitants. Our coachman being in some way related to the miller of the glen, on arriving at his house, which is pretty close to the mansion-house, the horse was unyoked and unharnessed, and sent to a field close by to graze, where he was left knee deep amongst rich green grass until late in the afternoon. We left coachee with his friend—the sturdy, jolly, jovial miller—who is a "bachy," and has but "verra wee Engleesh whatever," and his housekeeper not a word. But—

"Behind the door stand bags o' meal,
And in the ark is plenty;
And gude hard cakes his housemaid bakes,
And many a sweeter dainty.
A gude fat soo, a sleeky coo,
Are standing in the byre,
And winking puss, wi' mealy mou',
Is playing round the fire."

We had a good look at the miller's tidy meal mill, which stands in a sharp angle or neuk of a precipitous lofty rock, towering far above the mill top, and which completely screens and shelters it on three sides. It is driven by water, which has a fall of some 40 or 50 feet over the vertical rock to the big outside bucket wheel. Besides Glendale proper there is another small glen or

scooped-out little valley beyond the mansion house, and running so far parallel with Glendale, separated by a narrow, dark, heath and heather-clad hill ridge. The mountain stream flowing down the glen enters the sea quite close to the Glendale stream. The head of this little glen is bounded by the rounded summit of Peak More, or Vaterstein Head, one of the highest, if not the very highest headland in Skye, and is seen very prominently from Uist, Harris, &c., or from on board ships or steamers sailing up or down the Minch. It has a remarkable formation, and looks just as if an ordinary-sized mountain of over a thousand feet high had been cut straight down through the middle, and the one half left with its bold, lofty, and almost perpendicular sea front, to face the giant rolling billows of the broad Atlantic. The land side of the headland forms a gentle slope, covered with a beautiful, rich green sward, mixed with an abundant crop of gowans and buttercups, wild clover, &c., presenting a very pleasing contrast to the dark heathery moorland lower down. Walking up this green grassy slope to the top, one is startled on coming suddenly to the very brink of a dizzy precipice, and hearing the thundering roar of the Atlantic waves as they dash like battering rams in their wild fury against its base far below. Occasionally some of the cattle grazing on the hill venture too near the brink and topple over. This fine green inland slope of Peak More forms part of the grazing farm of Vaterstien, of

which the ill-advised crofters of the township or hamlet of Meala-Veg took forcible posssession, driving all the sheep off to the adjoining farm, and putting on their own cattle, without, so far as I could ascertain, the slightest title or claim to do so. The farm in dispute has been from time immemorial let as a separate farm, and the crofters' only plea simply was that they wished to have the farm in addition to the grazing hill they have hitherto had in common for grazing their cattle; and as the proprietor refused to let it to them, they foolishly took it by force, although any one with a grain of common sense might have told them that their forcible possession would be of very short duration. The Glendale shootings, which are reported to be very good, and used to be regularly rented, are unlet this season, incurring a considerable loss to the proprietor. I believe that owing to the crofters' ill-advised squabbles with their landlords, parties in the south did not care to venture amongst them; and I have been repeatedly informed by hotel-keepers that the crofters' doings have been the direct cause of preventing many tourists visiting Skye this year—probably the dullest season experienced for years by hotel-keepers. I know from personal knowledge that not a few parties in London and the south had written to friends asking them if they thought it would be safe to visit Skye this summer. The crofters may have grievances that require redress, but using violence or force is not the mode their best friends would advise

them to adopt to obtain it. As a rule, they appear to be fairly well fed and clad, and I fancy that their greatest drawback and discomfort is the wretchedly miserable hovels of houses they live in, which, however, with a small amount of labour and taste, could be greatly improved and made more comfortable. I have been in several of their houses, where I saw aged people tortured with rheumatism, sitting amidst thick volumes of blinding peat reek, the only window in the apartment being an open aperture in the wall without any glass, the wind blowing in and whirling the reek hither and thither, and out at the door. I have spoken to several, and told them how easily their houses could be made more tidy and comfortable. The most plausible, and I daresay a very strong plea or excuse for not improving their dwellings that I have heard offered, is that they are only tenants at will, or rather yearly tenants. I have not come across any crofter or cottar who has a tack or lease of his holding longer than a year; and they say that although they were to improve or even to be at the expense of rebuilding their houses, their landlord might eject them from their house and land at the next yearly term, which would clearly be unjust, and a grievous wrong; and the sooner the law between landlord and tenant in respect to compensation for improvements is amended the better.

A considerable number of well-to-do small farmers or crofters, in many districts throughout Skye, have

erected comfortable tidy-slated dwellings entirely at their own expense, but have no title or guarantee of possession for more than one year. On our way up to Vaterstein Head, we saw a pretty large number of the crofters' cattle browsing on the hillside, and all the Highland breed, many of them excellent specimens of the good old Highland stock, and in very good condition. The Glendale district consists of ten hamlets or separate townships, as they are usually called, the farthest north being Meala-Veg, and the farthest south Skeinadain. The township or scattered hamlet of Meala-Veg has of late become better known than the others, on account of the crofters of that hamlet having taken possession of the neighbouring farm of Vaterstein. The inhabitants of Skeinadain made a faint-hearted attempt to get possession of a number of small islands opposite their crofts which formed part of a neighbour's farm, but failed to obtain the coveted green clad little islands. It would be difficult to give anything like an accurate idea of the extent of the crofts or small holdings, as they vary very much in size. But the average rent is from £3 to £7 —the most of them have two or three milch cows and some young cattle. I believe that out of the ten townships there are only some three or four, including the two schoolmasters and the miller, who pays about £20 for his mill and small farm, that are entitled to vote at a Parliamentary election. There are no "upper ten" nor middle-class people, neither clergyman, doctor, nor big

shopkeeper, in all the Glen. All, as near as may be, move on the same platform or level, but

> "Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
> Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
> Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
> The short and simple annals of the poor."

Although the Laird, with the assistance of law officials, got possession of the farm in dispute in July last, while all, or, at any rate, nearly all the able-bodied men of Meala-Veg were absent at the herring fishing, it is generally believed in the district that when they return they will endeavour to re-take possession of the farm again. Probably there are few, if, indeed, any districts in broad Scotland where one meets with so many aged people who are unable to speak a word of English. I had occasion to be at the marriage of a young couple, both belonging to the Glendale district, and I soon found that neither of them could speak a single syllable of English ; and they seemed both surprised and delighted when I addressed them in their native dialect, the more so, I daresay, as they had no idea that I could "spoke" the Gaelic. However, by-and-by, this will be a characteristic of the past only, as all, or at least nearly all the children and young folks can speak English more or less fluently. I met with not a few whose travels had never extended beyond the limits of their fondly-cherished sea-girt island home. Some of them, I daresay, have never even seen Portree, the capital of

the island. The burial-place of the district, on a raised, rounded hillock or mound, is situated about the middle of the level haugh at the foot of the Glen, and is seen very conspicuously from almost any part of it. It is enclosed by a drystone dyke, coped with turf. The small wooden entrance gate, secured by a little wooden sneck or button, is about the most primitive affair one can imagine. I have had occasion to see a pretty large number of rural churchyards or burial-places in almost every county in Scotland, but I don't remember of having ever seen one of "God's acres" kept in such a disgraceful state—nearly all covered over with a most luxuriant forest of coarse, rank nettles, four to five feet high, and other weeds. I made an attempt to wade through it, but was compelled to give it up. I went round a good part of the outside, but did not see a single tombstone either erect or flat of any sort whatever. I think it is quite a disgrace to the inhabitants of Glendale to leave the last resting-place of their departed kith and kindred in such a shamefully neglected condition. While wending our way towards the miller's house, after spending most of the day visiting various parts of the district, we observed our coachman standing on the top of a knowe on the look-out for us. He waved and made signs to us to come down to the miller's house, and, on entering, we at once saw that the kindly-hearted and hospitable miller had prepared a sumptuous dinner for us. Mountains of mealy tatties laughing in their jackets, and

fresh-boiled salmon, sufficient to satisfy the inner-man's cravings of at least half-a-dozen hungry mortals of ordinary capacity, lots of nice sappy barley bannocks, and thick, crispy oatmeal cakes, jugfuls of thick sweet milk, or rather cream, from the miller's Highland cows that daily browse among the bonnie, blooming Highland heather. After partaking of an excellent dinner we had a long crack with our kind host, who told us that the last time he was beyond the boundaries of his native Glen was on the occasion of the last Parliamentary election, when he got a "hurl" in a carriage and pair to Portree, where he was entertained for a couple of nights and driven home again. He would not tell us, however, who he had voted for, or whether he was a Radical, Whig, or Tory.

I happened to be staying for some days under the same roof with Mr Machugh, who was generally supposed to be in the service of the Irish Land League, but was in reality sent to Skye by the Land League or Society in London to teach the Skye crofters how to treat their landlords; but I fancy he did not find his mission a pleasant one, and was finding the place becoming too hot for him, and would not be sorry to leave it after a sojourn of several months. He complained bitterly about the unfriendly tone of several newspapers against himself and his mission. The following is an extract from one of them :—

"Skye—Discomfiture of the Land League Agent by a Lady.—Our Uig correspondent, writing on the

5th inst., sends us the following narrative:—Mr E. Machugh, the emissary of the Irish Land League, has made several visits to the Uig district of Skye, but his progress, I may tell you, in attempting to convert Skyemen to Irish ideas, has been so slow and unpromising that he has been completely discouraged. He confined his last two or three visits to merely coming here, smelling the air, and living at the hotel for a day or two. The people will have none of him or of his ideas. His last visit was on Saturday. He remained till Monday evening. He would, it is said, have gone to Stenscholl, and possibly other places hereabout, and we would probably have seen a good deal more of him, but for a scene that occurred of quite a dramatic character—one which has ruined his prestige here, and one which has made both him and the Land League a laughing-stock for a time. Mr Machugh was having a hot argument with a number of people near the Hotel about Irish affairs, and, of course, he babbled to overflowing, as all these people do, about Government cruelties, and so forth. Just as he was in the heat of his denunciations of the Government, he was somewhat taken aback by a well-known lady coming up to him. "I am a Free Church minister's widow," she said, "and I can tell you the people thank you very little for coming here to teach them false views. Major Fraser and family are much esteemed, and we don't want an Irishman here to make a schism, and to make people become victims of foul murders and other outrages, such as are committed in Ireland. For the past, we have taught by example and precept the people of that dishonoured country to behave themselves, and I have no doubt we shall also do so for the future." As I have said, Mr Machugh was rather taken aback, but he replied—"Madam, you don't know what I am here for." At this the lady increased in warmth, and brandishing her umbrella in his face, said—"I know you are here from the Irish Land League, and you have been in other places preaching your pernicious ideas. I

have eight years' experience of Skye, and I know that what I have said is true." At this stage the people who had gathered together cheered the lady to the echo. Her opponent attempted to speak, but it was of no use. The people hissed and hooted him just as heartily as they cheered the lady, and amid these hisses he turned away. He was "bottled up," and he disappeared. Soon thereafter he was seen making his way towards Portree. I have no hesitation in saying that the Land League, their views, and actions, are most heartily detested in Skye. Mr. Machugh, I believe, was sent to Skye simply because no Highlander could be found who would undertake the job.

Being favoured with a beautiful bright day, we enjoyed our trip to Glendale very much, and, after a pleasant drive of nine or ten miles, we got back to Dunvegan pretty late in the evening.

Since writing the above, I have had one day's angling on the Glendale river—with the permission of both proprietors—and had very fair sport. It is one of the best, if not the very best fishing stream in Skye.

CHAPTER IV.

PEN AND INK SKETCH OF DUNVEGAN.

A SPLENDID view of Dunvegan and surrounding district is obtained from one of the picturesque craggy heights immediately behind Dunvegan Castle, which for ages has been the principal residence and stronghold of the M'Leods of M'Leod, proprietors of a large portion of Skye. For a long period very nearly the whole island was owned by the two Lairds or chiefs, M'Leod of M'Leod and Lord M'Donald. Duntulm Castle was for long the principal seat and stronghold of the M'Donalds. But Duntulm Castle, which stands pretty near the farthest north point of Skye, is now a ruin, and the present Lord M'Donald resides at Armadale Castle, situated on the farthest south point of the island.

Dunvegan Castle, which is said to be one of the oldest inhabited castles in Scotland, is finely situated at the head of a deep indented creek or bay off Loch Dunvegan, and stands on a rounded vertical rock of considerable height, surrounded on three sides by the sea, protected and sheltered in front from the billows of the often raging sea by a narrow rocky promontory

running out on the opposite side of the deep, fine little bay, immediately in front of the Castle. For greater security, the only entrance to the Castle was from the sea, so that vistitors who came by land were under the necessity of getting into a boat and sailing round to the only place where it could be approached. The ponderous entrance door in the face of the rock is still to the fore. But some time ago the deep moat or gully behind the Castle was spanned by a substantial arch, and the main entrance now is from the back or land side of the house. A considerable mountain stream comes tumbling down from the glen above along its shelving rocky channel, and a short way from the house there is a beautiful and romantic waterfall or cascade. Its continual murmuring noise is said to have a wonderful effect in sending any one within hearing to sound sleep. Any inmates of the Castle, who may be afflicted with sleeplessness, have only to occupy one of the bed-rooms next the waterfall, and no sooner do they get below the blankets than they are in the land of Nod and sleeping as sound as a top. The stream, after tumbling over the fall, passes round the base of the lofty rock on which the Castle stands, and falls into the little bay in front.

The oldest part of the Castle is said to have been built in the ninth century; another large portion, with a square tower, was added several hundred years afterwards by Alastair Crotach, or the hump-backed son of William, who was slain at the battle of the bloody Bay

of Mull, and was head of the clan in 1493. It is a massive, imposing, castellated pile, and with its lofty square tower and round turrets, with a row of cannons bristling from the lofty battlements pointed seaward, and surmounted by a tall flagstaff with its varied coloured flag fluttering and waving in the mid-day breeze, forms a very prominent feature in the surrounding panorama of sea and land, green-clad hills and dales, bold precipitous-pillared headlands—the blue Loch, with its cluster of green islands straight in front, and in the distance across the Minch a long stretch of the Outer Hebrides.

Adjoining the Castle grounds on the north, the fine green, sloping, grazing farm of Swordale is seen, which was occupied at one time as tacksman by the great grandfather of the late Dr. Norman M'Leod, the widely-known and much-esteemed minister of the Barony Church, Glasgow, editor of "Good Words;" and within a gunshot of the Castle stands the old parochial schoolhouse of Dunvegan, at present occupied by a shepherd and his family—where Norman's grandfather was for some time parochial schoolmaster, who was said to have been the biggest and finest-looking man in Skye. After being licensed to preach the gospel he was appointed to the Parish of Morven in Argyleshire, where he continued the beloved minister of the parish for about fifty years, and when gathered to his fathers at a good ripe old age, he was succeeded by one of his sons, the late Dr John M'Leod, the well-known and highly-

esteemed "High Priest of Morven," one of the noblest looking men I ever saw, standing six feet nine inches in height, with a finely-formed herculean massive frame.

I have a very vivid recollection of hearing him preach a most eloquent sermon—a good many years ago—in the parish church of Row. He was on a visit to his brother, the late Dr Norman M'Leod of St. Columba Church, Glasgow, who was residing at the time at Shandon. Dr Lawrie Fogo, minister of Row Parish, was rather short in stature, and I believe used a stool while preaching in his pulpit. He had asked Dr John M'Leod to preach for him one Sunday. I don't think almost any of the congregation knew he was to preach, and as he walked in from the session-house and up the pulpit stair with a firm elastic step, with his abundant crop of silver locks, fine ruddy complexion, full clear bright eyes, and arrayed in Dr Fogo's silk gown, which simply covered his broad shoulders just like a short tippit, and as he stepped on to the stool in the finely carved pulpit, the assembled congregation looked up with evident surprise and astonishment on the giant divine towering up in the pulpit, presenting such a striking contrast to its usual occupant. He continued the revered pastor, warm-hearted friend, and sage adviser of his attached Highland flock at Morvern for the long period of fifty-eight years, till he arrived at the end of his pretty long earthly journey in May last (1882), when he bade a last "Farewell to Fuinary."

The farm of Swordale is now joined to the adjoining farm of Cleggan, occupied by Dr Martin of Glendale. Tacksmen were a class of middle-men who rented large tracts of land, which they sub-let to small tenants, and were for long looked up to as the gentry of Skye. But gradually the proprietors began to let their land direct to the small farmers—or employed factors—and there are no tacksmen in Skye now-a-days.

The Castle is completely hid from the adjoining hamlet of Dunvegan by a curved narrow hilly ridge covered with wood. The circular scooped-out little valley behind the Castle is covered with wood of various kinds—some very old trees—and the most extensive woods in Skye. The nearest house to the Castle is the Post Office, and the Postmaster's (Mr. M'Kenzie) handsome villa residence. The pier, at which steamers can call at any state of the tide, is situated immediately below the Post Office at a narrow strait of the Loch. Straight opposite, on the west side of the Strait, Uginish House (Captain M'Leod) stands prominently out on one of the finest sites for a house in all Skye, surrounded by a series of picturesque knolls overlooking the Loch. Next the Post Office is the parish (Durinish) church, quite a model of a country parish church both outside and inside, and finely situated on a green grassy knoll at the foot of a range of romantic bosky crags overlooking the Loch. It is a comparatively modern erection. The old parish church of Kilmuir, as the district is sometimes

called, stands in the centre of a pretty large kirkyard—the only burying-place in the district—a few hundred yards from the present church higher up on a hillside, but roofless and in ruins. A short way south from the church is seen the Dunvegan hotel, a merchant's store (Mr M'Lean) and his neat, tidy dwelling-house. Just in front of the hotel the Portree road forks abruptly off to the left. The Struan and Sligachan road continues for some distance in a pretty straight line, and the scattered hamlet is seen along either side of the road—and at the extreme south end of the hamlet, the Free Church and Manse, surrounded by dark moss and heather-clad moorland, and beyond in the distance the Coolin mountains are seen. Kinloch House (the Parish Manse) is seen very prominently at the head of the Loch, surrounded by one of the largest, if not the very largest, glebes in Scotland. Although the size of the glebe has not been accurately ascertained, it is generally reckoned to extend considerably over a thousand acres. The arable land is of fair average quality, and produces fairly good crops. My respected friend, the minister, keeps a pair of good horses, close on a score of cattle "big and wee"; but I don't think he knows exactly the number of black-faced sheep—including ewes, lambs, gimmers, two and three-year-old wedders, tups, &c.—he has on the hill. The glebe is bounded for some distance on either side by a river, an ordinary-sized stream, holding at all times native yellow trout, and at certain seasons of the year is

"hotchin" with sea trout, and occasionally a "biggish" salmon. The fishing and shootings, which consist chiefly of grouse, and is completely surrounded by strictly preserved moors, is let this year at the very moderate rent of £25 for the season. When the minister takes a fancy for a dish of nice fresh herrings during the herring season, he has only to set his net into the sea close to his garden wall to secure a tidy haul of both herrings and sea-trout, and I have seen not a few of them gasping and wagging their tails after being taken to the manse. The minister has several tenants (crofters) who, I believe, pay their rent in labour on the glebe.

The parish (Durinish) is also one of the largest in Scotland, about 20 miles by 14. Its sea-board extends to over 60 miles, and contains about 4,500 inhabitants. There are two preaching stations besides the parish church at Dunvegan, one at Edinbain, and the other at Colbost, in the Glendale district. M'Leod's Tables, the two highest mountain tops north of the Coolin range, slope down to the west boundary of the Glebe. The Tables are seen very prominently from almost any part of the Island north of the Coolins, which forms by far the largest portion of Skye. An extra supple, swanky chiel can climb either of the Tables easily in about an hour or so, but any ordinary climber can do it in an hour and a-half. Although not quite so supple as I have been, I managed to reach the summit of the highest in an hour and twenty minutes from the Manse, which is the nearest

house to the best point to start from. Although not nearly so high as the Coolin and Blaven mountains in the south end of the Island, there is no mountain top in all Skye that commands a more extensive and magnificent prospect. A distinguished Englishman has said that the five finest things to be seen in Scotland are Edinburgh, the Trossachs, Loch Lomond, Falls of Foyers, and the Hebrides from a good standpoint. I believe there is no standpoint at all to be compared to M'Leod's Tables for seeing that far-stretching Archipelago of dark, variously and curiously-shaped Islands, rising out of the sea in their wild and fantastic beauty, from the Butt of Lewis in the North to Barra Head, the extreme South point of Barra, Rum, Coll, Tyree, &c., farther south; and a wide sweep of the Atlantic as far as the eye can carry, dotted here and there with gallant ships with their full-set white sails shining in the blaze of the mid-day sun, ploughing and battling their way through the ceaseless, rolling, tossing, tumbling billows of the mighty main. A very striking feature connected with the Hebrides is the curiously fantastic-shaped clouds that may often be seen rising up above the sea-girt islands. At one part we saw what seemed to be a mimic duplicate of the city of Edinburgh, with its grim, hoary Castle, Salisbury Crags, and Arthur's Seat towering up above the city. On another occasion we saw a facsimile of a beautifully-modelled steamship, with a finely-formed stem and figure-head, funnels, &c., which I fancied to be a striking

mimic picture of the "City of Rome," probably one of the finest models of a large steamship afloat. Looking round from the Table in the opposite direction, a long stretch of the Ross and Sutherland mountains is seen, and nearer hand the whole of Skye, except the Sleat and Broadford districts south of the Coolins, and a splendid bird's eye view of Glendale from end to end immediately below. The two Tables are separated by one deep indented gully. On the west side of the gully the Glendale river takes its rise, and on the east side the Ostle River, which falls into Loch Dunvegan at its extreme south point close to the Manse. The formation of the Tables is rather remarkable. Both are very nearly the same height, only a few feet of difference, of a rounded conical formation, and look just as if 1000 feet or so had been neatly cut off the top of a lofty Ben. Their summits are almost quite flat, with a slight rise from the edge of the Table towards the centre, which is a dead level, and covered with a green grassy sward. The walk along the brink or the edge of the Table extends over a mile in length, and round and round the same steep slope, down which for half-a-mile or so is clothed with a beautiful green verdant sward, forming a very pleasant contrast to the dark, mossy, heather-clad hillsides lower down. There are two beautiful spring wells pretty close to the very summit. One day shortly after I arrived at Dunvegan I called by appointment, accompanied by my friend, the parish minister, to see the old Castle. We were received very

courteously by Miss M'Leod of M'Leod, a lady who spends a large portion of her time and means visiting and ministering to the wants and comforts of the sick, the poor, and the needy in the neighbourhood of the Castle, and is much respected and esteemed by all the folks about Dunvegan of whatever creed or station. After being regaled with wine and cake, Miss M'Leod very kindly accompanied us through all the house, and seemed to take a keen interest in showing us all the various old and evidently much-prized relics of the long past, including the celebrated ancient drinking cup or horn mentioned in one of Robert Burns's songs—

> "'By the Gods of the Ancients,' Glenriddel replies,
> 'Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
> I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rory More,
> And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er.'"

This famous horn holds as much as three ordinary-sized bottles. The ceremony of quaffing claret from Rory More's horn at the inauguration of each successive chief of M'Leod is still continued, but I believe that an artificial bottom is now inserted on these occasions in order to reduce the libations to a moderate draught. There is another very ancient cup at Dunvegan, one of the greatest curiosities in Scotland. It is fully and very minutely described by Sir Walter Scott in his Notes to "The Lord of the Isles." The family tradition bears that it was the property of Neil Ghlune-dhu or Black Knee, but who this Neil was no one seems to know. The cup is formed of

black oak, and beautifully carved and mounted, and inscribed in Saxon black letter characters. In a large glass case there is a small portrait of Flora M'Donald, with a number of trinkets and odd articles which belonged to the Heroine of Skye, and also a vest, &c., worn by Prince Charlie. The walls of several spacious rooms are covered with family portraits, representing the unbroken flow of many successive generations, which we examined with much interest. There is a large portrait of the renowned Rorie More, who was knighted in the reign of James VI. If the various artists did justice to the originals, several of the M'Leods were not by any means very good looking; and as a proof so far that the race is not deteriorating, by far the most striking and finest portrait we saw in the castle was a portrait of the present chief of the M'Leods, dressed in full Highland garb. I am not sure who was the artist, but it is a splendid painting and an excellent likeness. By a narrow spiral stair we reached the "Fairy Room," in which Sir Walter Scott slept while on a visit at the Castle. This apartment is situated in the oldest part of the Castle, and the walls are of enormous thickness, with a splendid lookout seaward. The principal dungeon in which the M'Leod's immured their prisoners is also situated in the most ancient portion of the building. It is a large, dark, dingy, eerie-looking place, which was evidently cut out of the solid rock. I daresay the most valued and highly-prized relic within the

walls of the ancient Castle is the famous "Fairie Flag," the palladium of the M'Leod's, mentioned and described by Sir Walter Scott in the diary of his Hebridean voyage. It is made of yellow silk, and now a good deal tattered and decayed, but preserved with great care in a strong lockfast glass case.

The history of this miraculous magic banner seems to be somewhat shrouded in the hazy mist of antiquity. Some historians suggest that it may have been taken by a M'Leod in some battle in the Holy Land. But according to the popular tradition amongst the old folks about Dunvegan, it would appear that a chief of the M'Leod's had fallen deeply in love with a beautiful Fairy Queen, with long golden ringlets, soft dark blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and "cherry mou'," and usually dressed in a green satin gown, with a lot of neat narrow flounces on it, and which she wore rather short, in order to show off her neatly-shaped little feet and finely-turned ankles. The M'Leod used to meet his pretty Fairy sweetheart about the gloamin' at the well-known fairy knowe, situated a short way west from the castle. He promised to marry his fairy love, and one night she gave him a yellow silk flag, telling him that when either he or any of his race were in distress the flag was to be unfurled and waved, and relief would be certain. The magic flag was only to be unfurled on three great occasions. When the clan was in eminent peril in battle, when the heir of the family was at the point of death, or when the M'Leod's were on the verge

of extinction, in which emergency the clan would be saved by unfurling the mysterious flag. But on its being unfurled for the third time some invisible being would seize and carry off the flag and standard-bearer, never more to be seen. It would appear that a family on the island filled the dangerous office of standard-bearer, and held by it three farms in Bracadale. The cruel-hearted M'Leod deserted his fairy sweetheart and married a woman. When the fairy heard of the marriage she was in a great rage, and cast a spell over the M'Leod's country, and all the women brought forth dead sons, and all the cows dead calves. The M'Leod was in great distress as the wailing cry of his people reached him in his castle, and he unfurled and waved the fairy flag, and next day heard the joyful tidings that over the whole country there were living sons and living calves. On another occasion, when hotly engaged in a terrible and bloody battle, and on the point of being over-whelmed, and his army cut down, he once more unfurled the miraculous magic banner, and immediately the tide of the raging battle was turned, and the M'Leod gained a great victory over his enemies. The fairy flag can only be unfurled once more, and woe betide the unfortunate standard-bearer on that occasion. The Fairy Knowe, which is still familiarly known in the district by that name, is situated close to the ruin of the Dunostle Watch Tower, which stands on the summit of a conical-formed whinstone rock. The building was quite circular, following

the natural rounded formation of the lofty rock on which it stands. Its massive walls, 10 to 12 feet thick, are built with huge blocks of stone, with a series of subterranean passages apparently cut out of the solid rock. Immediately below the old ruin, close to the side of the road that winds along its base, may be seen the Fairy's famous magic well, said to be possessed of healing virtue of miraculous power. The well is quite close to the wayside, but like many other things to be daily seen in Skye, has not been kept in very tidy order. For although there is a considerable flow of water—indeed, sufficient to supply a whole village —it used to be rather difficult for either man or beast to get a drink from it; but it has been greatly improved recently by a stranger who was on a visit to the district, and who, it would appear, took a special and keen interest in the many strange eerie stories he had heard related about the fairy tribe; but whether or not he had met any of them, and was asked to repair the well, I am not quite sure. At any rate, one day, while rambling round the old ruin, he observed a peculiarly-shaped stone—maybe left there by the fairies —about 2 feet high and 8 inches thick, and forming half a circle, corresponding exactly with the circular small space in the rock from which the spring issued, and with the assistance of a strong "toosy" Highlandman, who hadn't a single word of English, he got the stone neatly fitted into the rock, bedded with Roman cement. The well is now fully 18 inches deep, circular-shaped, and

contains a considerable body of water. When fairly finished, he procured a piece of half-inch pipe, which he got fitted into a small groove over the stone. One end of the pipe is placed in the well about a couple of inches below the rim, the other end several inches lower on the outside, from which the pure water issues in a beautiful little spout or stream, on the syphon principle. Some of the natives, who had not studied hydrostatics, were greatly puzzled how the water rushed up the pipe, over the top of the stone, and down the other side. He wrote the following lines on a scrap of paper and nailed it to a stick :—

"This is the Dunvegan Fairies' favourite verdant knoll,
And at its base their famous magic purling well ;
Here the weary traveller may sit doon and tak' a rest,
And drink from the pure fountain spring to quench his thirst."

The well is situated at the base of a nice, green, grassy knoll, on the summit of a hill ridge, with a long brae on either side. The view from it is very fine. A short way from the spring a pretty large coffin-shaped stone might be seen, partly buried amongst grass and heather, quite flat on the top. It was used in olden times for resting coffins on, while those accompanying the funeral processions were taking a rest on the little knoll and a drink from the Fairies' Well. The stranger got the stone placed on the top of the knoll, and it now forms an excellent seat for any weary traveller on his way to or from Glendale.

Dr. Samuel Johnson and his friend Boswell were hospitably entertained at Dunvegan Castle for a week during their tour through the Hebrides in September, 1773.

CHAPTER V.

A WALK TO M'LEOD'S MAIDENS.

BEING bent on seeing the famed Maidens, I intended to have gone in a sailing boat from Roag or Orbost, but found some difficulty to procure a proper boat and rowers; and, besides, it is not every day that a small boat can approach the exposed point where the Maidens are situated. So I resolved to walk, and started one fine, clear, sunny morning, about 9 A.M., my only travelling companion a Skye terrior named Garry—a special favourite at the Manse, and deservedly so; for although I have often seen a far prettier dog, I have rarely met with a more sagacious and plucky little fellow.

On leaving the Manse we went along a footpath for a mile or more through the glebe; thence for another mile or so along the private road leading to Orbost House, which stands on a splendid site, finely sheltered from the northern blasts by a series of wooded craggy knolls, with a very fine seaward view. The estate of Orbost, which consists of a pretty large arable farm—some very good land—and extensive range of hill grazing, is in the hands

and farmed by the proprietor, John Robertson, Esq. of Greeshirnish—or rather managed by him for the proprietor, his son, who is still a minor. Here I observed by far the largest dairy of Ayrshire cows I had seen in Skye. A cart road is continued for about another mile beyond the mansion house and large farm steading to the head of Orbost Bay, where I observed several fragments—steering gear, &c.—of a large vessel which had been wrecked in the locality some time previous. After rounding the head of the bay, the cart road terminates, but there is a sort of rough sheep track or footpath higher up along the top of the precipitous rocky coast, all the way to the sharp and exposed headland or point of Idrigil, close to where the Maidens stand. The view seaward all the way is magnificent, looking down from the dizzy cliffs on Lochs Bracadale, Roag, and Caroy, dotted here and there with curiously-shaped islands, Tornish, Wie, Oronzo, Tarner, &c., and further south Tallisker Head, one of the boldest and loftiest headlands in Skye, and in the distance a stretch of the Outer Hebrides. On the right we passed a series of scooped-out, lonely gulleys or glens, dotted all over with Cheviot sheep—about the best stock I have seen in Skye—with dark, tarry, woolly coats, and pure white hornless heads, looking just like a lot of eerie brownies peering over the brink of some craggy knolls. Their lambs were congregated in groups here and there on a green grassy knoll—romping and playing at some of their games, some trying their hands or rather

their "hummeled" young heads at boxing, and some trying to have a ride on another's back.

> "They frisked and played all young and cheery,
> Bleating their joys in thanks and praises
> Among the yellow buttercups and daisies."

After crossing a narrow hill ridge, we came suddenly face to face with a big, dark-brindled Highland bull, with a long, finely-formed, sharp-pointed head of horns, shaggy mane, short-set legs, deep chest, fine straight back, a long bushy tail, and powerful, well-formed frame. The day being hot I had my coat off, and was carrying it over my arm, with a good oak cudgel in my hand. The proud haughty Highlander on seeing us, raised his head aloft, giving us a surprised stare, and uttering a suppressed bellowing roar, began to scrape the ground with his fore-feet. I did not at all like his threatening aspect. Garry was quite prepared at once to challenge the noisy Highlander to mortal combat, but I peremptorily ordered him not to think of such a foolish thing as to offer battle to such a huge and formidable opponent, and just to keep a quiet "sough." I took a hurried glance round and round to see if there were any place of shelter near, in case the big fellow might make a sudden rush towards us, but I could see none, unless we attempted to scramble down the steep lofty cliffs fronting the sea. However, we pretended not to be the least alarmed at his scraping and roaring, and proceeded on our way, making a slight

detour off the path close to where the big Highlander was standing; and we were soon out of his sight.

After proceeding a couple of miles or so on our way, we came on a herd of Highland cattle, chiefly two-year-old stots and queys, who on seeing us seemed quite timid and scared, and at once scampered off with heads erect, whisking their bushy tails, along the hillside like a herd of wild Highland deer. The only other little incident worth relating was with a large adder, by far the largest I ever remember seeing, which would measure close on three feet in length, with beautiful bright golden spots and rings round its body. I thought I would have little or no difficulty in securing it and bringing it home as a trophy, and aimed a blow at it with my staff; but the force of the repeated blows was so far broken by the stunted scraggy heather, that although badly bruised, it managed to wriggle into a crevice of a rock, and escaped.

From the time we left Orbost till we reached the Maidens, we did not meet or see a single human being, except two fair-haired toddlin' bairns amusing themselves chasing some butterflies and gathering gowans close to a shepherd's humble, solitary cot. Not a single neighbour was within many miles of it in any direction. In front of the lowly hut there were lofty perpendicular cliffs, and beyond, a wide expanse of blue sea; behind, terrace above terrace of scaured, bare, pillared rock, the slopes between clothed with heather and a luxuriant crop of green brackens, while high above was heard the eerie croaking

scream of the lonely, sullen raven, as he soared slowly along from crag to crag, mingled with the varied, shrill, jabbering shrieks of large flocks of sea-birds flying hither and thither along the brink of the stupendous cliffs.

After a smart walk of fully three hours we got the first glimpse of the M'Leod's famed Maidens, consisting of three lofty spires of rock rising out of the sea, and said to have a wonderful resemblance to the form of female figures, around whose feet the blue foaming billows of the Atlantic are continually tossing, tumbling, forming, floating, and disappearing. I got a very good view of the three figures from different standpoints from the surrounding projecting cliffs. The tallest and the shortest stand several hundred feet out in the sea from the base of the over-hanging cliffs, and one fancies he is gazing on a tall giantess holding a stripling young maiden by the hand, both being joined at one point. The third Maiden stands at a considerable distance from the other two, and just at the very entrance gate as it were to one of the most remarkable and extraordinary creeks I have seen anywhere. It extends probably to from two to three hundred yards in length, and looks just as if it had been quarried clean out of the solid, dark, iron-coloured rock, and just sufficiently wide, especially at the entrance, to admit an ordinary-sized ship. Both sides, and round the end, is almost perpendicular, in some parts slightly overhanging, and several hundred feet high.

The middle-sized Maiden has by far the most striking resemblance to a female figure. It stands on a level ledge of rock just at the entrance to the wild, narrow gorge. The flat pedestal on which the figure stands appears quite level, and looks as if it had been neatly dressed with mallet and chisel. In front, it goes sheer down plumb into the deep, dark waters below. If a sculptor were to touch up the head and face the figure would be almost perfect, with its finely-formed neck, rounded shoulders and arms, full expanded breasts, and well-shaped waist, the skirts of her gown much fuller and wider than what has been the rage and absurd fashion with the young maidens of the period for some time back. Those to whom the Maidens may have been pointed out from the deck of a passing steamer, sailing along many miles off, can have only a very faint conception of what the M'Leod's Maidens and their immediate surroundings are like. As there are no mile stones to be seen along the wayside I am not quite sure as to the exact distance from Dunvegan to the Maidens but I guessed it to be about ten miles more or less. It is well worth going a hundred miles even to enjoy the walk and splendid view of sea and land—

"Lone 'midst Nature's mountain wilds."

CHAPTER VI.

PEN AND INK SKETCH OF A SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION AT THE FREE CHURCH, DUNVEGAN.

BESIDES the church at Dunvegan, there are other two preaching stations in connection with the congregation, one in Glendale, and the other at Vaternish, both about the same distance—eight or nine miles—from the regular church at Dunvegan. The minister, who has no assistant, preaches at these stations once every month or so. On the Fast-day (Thursday) divine service was held in the three places of worship, conducted by three brother clergymen who had come from a distance to assist at the communion—one of them from another district of the Island, the other two from some of the adjacent Islands—all three well known Gaelic preachers throughout Skye. The following day (Friday) is called Latha na Bodach, or "Speaking to the Question Day," and is looked forward to with special interest, not only by the regular congregation, but by the large majority of the Free Kirk folks throughout the Island. The Communion, which is held only once a year, seems to be considered *the* great annual event in Skye, and any one

residing in any of the populous districts will readily observe the unusual stir and preparations for the occasion —extra washings, scouring of blankets, redding up, and decorating with newspapers (illustrated and otherwise), the black houses, putting in an extra store of provisions and other dainties to regale the many friends and visitors expected from the most distant neuk and corner of Skye, in many cases seen only once a year at the Communion. I was informed by several parties, on whose veracity I could fully rely, that no fewer than sixteen visitors had dined in one of the black, thatched cabins, near the church on the Friday.

Having heard so much about the Friday's meeting, I resolved to go and see it, and I set off shortly before 11 a.m., accompanied by my little friend Garry. After a walk of over a mile, partly through a heath and heather-clad moor, we reached the Free Kirk. As is customary at the Communion time, divine service was to be conducted in the open air, as the church, a very plain, ordinary-sized edifice, would not hold a fourth of the congregation assembled. The tent, a very plain erection, was placed on a small circular, green, grassy lawn, formed by a sudden bend or link of a mountain stream of considerable volume. The back of the tent was quite close to the bank of the purling, murmuring stream, which was a good deal swollen by heavy rains on the previous days. Beyond the green plot in front of the pulpit rose a

sloping, crescent-shaped mound, clothed with heather. The congregation was seen slowly advancing from all the airts of the compass, some along three converging roads, and others coming over the moor, wading knee deep among the long heather. A large number had come from a distance in vehicles of various descriptions, which were left along the roadside in a long row. The horses —many of them mares with their foals following them— after being unyoked and unharnessed, their forefeet tied together with a piece of rope, were left to feed among the blooming heather. I was amused to see a considerable number of frail, aged folks, of both sexes, sitting in their little "carties," some in old arm chairs, others on four-legged stools of the plainest and most primitive description imaginable. When passing the foot of the gravel walk leading to the Manse, I observed one of the clergymen coming along the path, carrying an old ricketty kitchen chair in his hand. He was a pretty tall, spare gentleman, and rather past middle life, with a somewhat grim, stern, approach-me-not aspect. After exchanging a few commonplace remarks about the weather, &c., he told me, in what I fancied not a very friendly tone, that there was to be no English service there that day. I presume that the decent man had jumped to the conclusion that I was some ignorant *Sassenach* or Lowlander, who could not speak or understand the Gaelic, as he seemed a little surprised when I told him that I was quite aware of the fact that there was to be no

English service, and that I had come specially to hear a Gaelic sermon. He then asked me where I had learned my Gaelic, and some other questions as to where I had come from, but not caring to be very communicative on such an unimportant topic as my own uneventful previous history, we soon parted. When wending our way along the bridge towards the tent, which was on the opposite side of the river from the church, and a good bit off, I observed a lot of plain delf plates placed here and there on a stone or dumple of turf to hold the "bawbees" (collection). Having arrived close to the tent sometime before the service commenced, I saw that a goodly number had taken their seats immediately in front of the pulpit. There were a few rude, narrow wooden planks, supported at either end by a stone or turf on each side, and in front of the tent intended for the elders, deacons, &c., all the rest of the congregation sat on the damp green sward, some few on a small cutty stool or chair which they had carried with them. Having a special objection to sit for several hours on the damp ground, I went down to the river side, and selected the best stone I could find for a seat, and carried it up. After navigating my way among the as yet thin meeting to a good position, straight in front of the tent, I sat down on my hard seat. Garry lay down all his length beside me, his head resting on his outstretched forepaws, looking as staid and sober as a judge. Prompt at 12 o'clock the service was commenced by praise and prayer

in the usual way, by the rev. gentleman whom I had met a little while previous. During his first prayer, which was a very long one, he kept his eyes half open, and looked in different directions, apparently watching with much interest the congregation slowly approaching in crowds from all the airts the wind could blow. By the time the prayer was finished, the assemblage had largely increased. He preached an excellent Gaelic sermon. I considered him by far the best Gaelic preacher of the four ministers present, as I heard them all afterwards. Although my Gaelic is somewhat rusty, I had not the slightest difficulty in following him from beginning to end. The other three, specially two of them, I found the greatest difficulty to follow, or understand a syllable of their discourse, their style of preaching, which sounded more like a monotonous rhyming or singing than preaching, was quite peculiar and new to me. At the close of the sermon, the clergyman who had preached stood up in the pulpit, and invited any member of the flock to stand up, select a passage of scripture, and give his views or expound it to the best of his ability. A big, towsy-headed, elderly man, rose up close to the tent, and read out in a pretty loud key the first three verses of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, and after a few preliminary little coughs to clear his throat, commenced:—"*Mha chairdin*," . . . and discoursed very fluently for 20 minutes or more. After he sat down, other five members of the congregation stood up, one after the other,

and discoursed from the same passage. Their style of oratory and action differed very widely, and so far as regards force of language, vigorous action, fluency of speech, and eloquence, some of the speakers far outstripped any of the clergymen present. They were all middle-aged or elderly men, and, like the large majority of the male portion of the congregation, dressed in rough, plain, home-made clothes, with one most conspicuous exception, namely, a stout, well-made, vigorous-looking gentleman, who was rigged out with exquisite taste and scrupulous care, in the very top of fashion. I readily noticed him prominently among the crowd when the congregation were assembling, with his stylish white hat, dark bottle-green surtout, with black velvet collar, a broad showy light blue tie, with fringes at each end, shining white shirt, and glittering gold or diamond studs, light coloured vest and trousers, and patent leather boots, very light yellow kid gloves, and carrying a neat silk umbrella in his hand. When he stood up in front of the tent to address the large assembly, he held up his umbrella in his left gloved hand above his head, and in his right dangled a white handkerchief, and without the slightest preliminary or hesitation, launched out on his discourse in an exceptionally loud, vigorous key, which was re-echoed from crag to crag athwart the hillside, his big parasol bobbing up and down, hither and thither, at a great rate, and his "waly nieve" grasping his white napkin, making vigorous assaults on some unseen object

in the air. He was compelled to pause now and then, not for the want of words, but for want of breath. He spoke with great fluency and apparent earnestness. Being somewhat curious to know who the eloquent dandy was, I enquired at some of the folks beside me, who told me that he was a retired military gentleman who had greatly distinguished himself at the wars, and was a great credit to his native island—Skye—although I never happened to hear of him before. I was somewhat amused with the next speaker—the last I heard. He was a pretty old looking man, and did not appear to be at all strong or in good health. He had long, flat, iron-grey hair, hollow cheeks, and a pale, sallow complexion, and although he seemed to think it sinful to address his assembled brethren with his bonnet on, had evidently no compunction to try and cover his head so far with an old blue woollen cravat, which he repeatedly stretched across the top of his bare pow, but the bothersome cravat seemed to have a knack of shrinking back when he gave it a tug downwards. After repeated efforts to get his head-dress put right, and a good many little coughs, he commenced his discourse:—"*Mha chairdin*," in a very feeble, indistinct voice, in complete contrast to the previous speaker.

I observed that the four clergymen, who were all in the tent, differed pretty much in their general appearance.

> One was very round and stout, and jolly-like;
> One was very, very thin, and rather white;
> The other two, in size about a pair,
> Only one was rather dark, the other fair.

I sat patiently listening with deep interest to the various amateur preachers for about three hours and a half, on a very uncomfortable seat, and cramped position. Immediately in front of me sat a solemn, demure, dark-visaged, elderly dame, with an arm resting on each knee, and her head resting on her open hands—now and then rocking herself to and fro. I was kept in constant fear lest I might disturb the old lady by stretching out my legs, which, from my long cramped-up position, I was much inclined to do. Having arranged to be back at the Manse by 4 o'clock, I rose, and made my way as quietly as possible outside the dense mass of people. I had missed my "freen" Garry some time before; he had slipped quietly away without giving me the slightest hint that he was going, and found his way home long before me. I went back to the meeting in the afternoon to see the conclusion of the day's service, but was rather late. The congregation was being dismissed as I arrived at the meeting-place. However much they may have felt benefitted in a spiritual sense, I am confident the long-continued—over five hours—sitting or lying all their length on the damp ground would not be conducive to their bodily health; and I believe there can be little doubt that not a few of them would suffer from its effects afterwards. On Saturday, as on the two previous and following days, there was a prayer meeting in the Church at 7 A.M., and in the evening. The open-air service commenced at noon, but there was not nearly so large

a turn-out as on the previous day, and comparatively few had come from a distance. When approaching the tent one of the elders or deacons came forward to meet me, and very kindly invited me to a seat on a narrow plank quite close to the pulpit. I remained to the end of the first sermon. The day, although a bright sunny forenoon, got dark and overcast, and several loud rumbling peals of thunder were heard in the distance, and shortly after 2 P.M. the rain came down in torrents. On Sunday the service commenced at 11.30, and except a short interval after the tables were served, which was late in the afternoon, they continued till 9 o'clock at night. I went pretty early, and got the same seat I had the day before, and was soon surrounded and hemmed in on all sides by the closely-packed assembling congregation. There was a large turn-out of people, even more than on the Friday. It would be difficult to give a correct estimate of the number present, but I was informed by several intelligent parties that there were over 3000, or close upon 4000 people present. I had often been at similar meetings when much younger than I am now, in a different part of Scotland, but I do not remember witnessing such a large assemblage engaged in public worship in the open air on a hill-side before. The characteristic features of many of the regular attenders became quite familiar to me, and I would readily know them again wherever I might happen to meet them. As a rule they appeared a strong,

healthy, hardy-looking race, and all fairly well dressed. The females, especially the younger portion, were even rather gaily rigged-out, particularly in the bonnet department, many of which were evidently split-new and got for the occasion, decked with gaudy ribbons and flowers. Generally the men sat the whole time during the service with their heads uncovered, and all seemed to have a strange fear of wearing their bonnet or hat, although they appeared to have no scruple about covering their heads with shawls, or napkins, or even their topcoats. Several of the elders had a white shawl or some cloth round their heads while serving the tables, giving them a peculiar ghost-like appearance. A goodly number of elderly women had a white cloth, evidently made for the purpose, tied round their head. This particular style of head dress is very common in Skye, and is usually worn by women, old and young, while working outside making peats and hay. I was much struck at looking over such a large number of men, not a a few of them long past the allotted span of three score and ten, to note that there were almost none bald-headed, and the large majority with an abundant crop of long, toosey hair. Indeed, they looked as if there were neither a barber or a "reddin" comb on the island. Anyone attending some special meeting of elderly well-to-do gentlemen in one of our cities, often sees one forest of bald pows, and one with a good

head of hair the exception and not the rule. Probably the explanation so far may be, that the men of Skye never think of loading their hair with oils or anything of that sort, and do not smother it with a warm covering. Many of them go bareheaded, summer and winter, till well up in their teens. I occasionally engaged a very active, intelligent, nice-looking youth (Kenneth M'Leod) as gillie, when I went to fish, and who, although 14 or 15 years of age, never had a bonnet or covering on his head, and yet had a very abundant crop of hair, which seemed to be growing straight up. I never saw him with boots or shoes on. I was surprised to see such a comparatively small number of comunicants, probably not more than 160 or 170, out of such a large congregation. The parish has a population of about 4500, or close on 5000. I went back to the evening service, but was rather late, and had to take my seat on a heather-clad knoll on the outskirts of the crowd fronting the tent. It was a beautiful, clear, calm, cloudless evening, with an indescribable gorgeous sunset, the pale, crescent-shaped, young moon shining brightly in the blue heavens above.

> "Up the broad shoulders of the hills
> Soft twilight shadows climb and darken,
> But on their faces, westward set,
> A smile of sunset twinkles yet;
> And there a throstle sings and thrills
> The world below to hearken."

At a short distance, but on the opposite side of the

river, is seen the church and manse, a few humble thatched huts, and a lot of Highland cattle browsing among the blooming heather. Quite close, and sometimes mixing with the outside fringe of the congregation, were a flock of sheep and lambs, which I had observed the two previous days, some of them newly clipped, others with their ragged, tattered, tarry fleece, trailing behind them. The deep, circular pool, immediately behind the tent, was covered with little, foamy, floating bubbles, and all alive with lively trout of various sizes, jumping and splashing, grabbing unwary dancing flies. Such a large number of different toned voices, joining fervently in singing God's praises, on a calm summer evening in the open air, had a singularly solemnising and impressive effect. Before the congregation was dismissed, the whole valley below had gradually become enveloped in a sheet of white mist, apparently rising out of the ground.

> "Far off the cuckoo's plaintive call,
> Scarce separate from the silence, lingers
> In shadow, and the blossoms sleep
> Where white-robed mists arise to keep
> Their nightly watch, caressing all
> With silent dewy fingers."

On Monday the gathering was much smaller, but the service continued from noon till late in the afternoon. The following day (Tuesday) I met a number of frail, aged women, leaning on their staff, wending their way slowly homewards toward Glendale, after spending nearly a week with some friends in the close vicinity of the Free Church.

CHAPTER VII.

A RIDE FROM DUNVEGAN TO LOCH CORUISK.

I LEFT the Manse about 8 A.M. It was a beautiful, bright sunny morning, and turned out one of the hottest days (1st July) experienced in Skye during the summer. Some three miles from Dunvegan I passed the scattered hamlet of Roag, round the head of Loch Roag, and as I proceeded had a splendid view seaward. Loch Bracadale was straight before me, with the sharp, bold headland of Idrigil and the M'Leod's Maidens on the right, and Tallisker Head on the left side of the Loch, and in the far distance a stretch of the Outer Hebrides. Eleven miles from Dunvegan I arrived at Struan Inn, nicely situated in a cosy neuk quite close to the sea, and a good bit off the highway, where I made a short halt to rest and feed my horse. Struan is a nice quiet retired spot, situated at the head of a narrow crooked arm of the sea off Loch Harport. The white, tidy-looking Free Church and Manse, is passed close together on the roadside. The Parish (Bracadale) Church—Rev. Mr M'Lean—is a short way farther on, and also stands close to the wayside. The Manse is seen away up, finely

situated on the hillside high above. After passing Struan the road gradually ascends to an altitude of over 1,200 feet above sea level, and here one of the grandest views imaginable is obtained in every direction. The little hamlet of Carabost, with its well-known distillery (Talliskер) is seen straight across, and near the head of Loch Harport, a large arm of sea forking a long way inland. The famed Cuchullin mountain range, straight in front all the way from Dunvegan to Sligiechan, are seen very prominently from all the northern part of the Island, and from their remarkable formation form a very striking picture in the distance that one never wearies gazing at, specially in the early morning, or when the sun is setting on a fine, calm, bright evening.

"Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
And yonder peak of dread,
That to the evening sun uplifts
The grisly gulph and slaty rifts
Which seam its shivered head—
Coriskin, call the dark lake's name,
Coolin, the ridge, as bards proclaim,
From Old Cuchullin, Chief of Fame."

As seen from the north side, there are some 30 distinctly separate peaks, and supposing a straight edge line were laid across their tops from the sugar-loaf-shaped pinnacle of Scuir-na-Gillean—said to be the highest peak in Skye, and forms the abrupt termination of the range on the east—to the top of Bruach-na-Fray at, the extreme west end of the range, the difference of altitude of all the

summits would be comparatively trifling. The east end peak appears off the plumb, and as if about to topple over into Glen Sligichan. The distance between the two end summits, as the crow flies, is probably nine or ten miles, and the whole range is said to occupy an area of close on forty square miles. "A broken, intricate, dense assemblage of Alpine masses, intersected by rugged ravines, consist principally of hypersthue rock, looking almost as black as cast iron, rise steeply from the intersecting ravines over shattered boulders into peaked or pinnacled summits, draw round them or upon them in most days of the year mantlings of fogs, floodings of rain, or whirlings of storm, and in all points of view are the most utterly desolate, and the most savagely sublime mountains, in Great Britain."

After passing Roag, Ose, Eabost, Geste, and Drynock, and the thinly scattered hamlet of Struan, there are very few houses to be seen along the whole district, which is chiefly occupied as extensive sheep walks, with excellent rich hill pasture, and in many places a most luxuriant crop of beautiful dark green brackens.

After a splendid ride of 25 miles, the road all the way as smooth as a carriage drive, and for long stretches very level, I arrived at Sligichan Hotel about noon. The hotel stands at the head of Loch Sligichan, and on the banks of the river of that name. At the junction of three converging roads there is a mile-stone close to the hotel door, on which the traveller can easily read in neat

plain letters—Inverness, 100; Portree, 9; Broadford, 15; and Dunvegan, 25 miles distant. The river Sligachan flowing past the front of the hotel, forms the division between two large parishes, and also the march in that district between the two most extensive estates in Skye. The one, including the Coolins and the whole district to Dunvegan, belongs to the M'Leods of Dunvegan Castle; the other, including Glamaig, Marsco, and the Blavin mountain range, is occupied as a deer forest, and owned by Lord M'Donald of Armadale Castle.

The hotel, a pretty large but plain-looking building, I found crowded with visitors, chiefly English people, including two landscape painters from London, who made a prominent appearance with their white little tents shining in the blazing sun high up in the glen, busy sketching some of the lofty peaks and lonely eerie corries, for which the locality is so widely known. There is not a single inhabited house of any kind whatever to be seen in any direction from the hotel, and probably there is not a similar house in Great Britain with such remarkable and striking surroundings of grand and wild mountain scenery.

Looking up the glen, Scuir-na-Gillian is seen to the right, with its bare, jagged, sharp-pointed pinnacle rising almost sheer up to the height of 3,220 feet,—the highest peak in Skye—and quite close to it, two brither peaks nearly the same height. On the left side of the glen, and close at hand, Ben Glamaig is seen, and from the

hotel its formation appears quite round and conical, its face quite smooth, with a very steep even slope, without any rocks or stones of any size from its base to its very summit—a large portion of its side quite bare and barren, without any vegetation whatever, and looks just like a huge, lofty pyramid of sand or gravel. On the same side of the glen, higher up, the singularly shaped lofty mountain of Marscow is seen towering to the clouds; between these two conspicuous mountain tops, so widely different in their formation and appearance, there are a series of bare summits; and through a deep clefted gully immediately behind Marscow, a lofty, bare, dark peak of the Blaven range is seen; and in a line with the shed of the glen, in the distance, the round, dark summit of Drumhain, which rises almost sheer up from the edge of Loch Coruisk; to the north-east a glimpse of Loch Sligachan; across the Sound a stretch of Raasay; while to the north rise moderately-sized hills, completely closing the view in that direction. After getting an excellent dinner, and an hour's rest, I started with a guide and a pony for Coruisk. It was a beautiful, bright afternoon, but very hot. The bridle path leading to Coruisk starts immediately in front of the hotel, and winds up the left side of the glen, along the base of the precipitous, overhanging Marscow, to the summit level of the glen, where I observed two small lochs pretty close together, separated by some green-clad little knolls—the one sending its new-born rill down Glen Sligachan,

the other down the glen on the opposite side of the summit ridge. Both the tiny rills are soon joined by numerous mountain rivulets, coming tumbling in a series of cascades down the steep, scarred, mountain sides. From this point there are two paths—the one forks off to the left, and is carried along the base of the Blavens, and leads down to Camasunary on the coast; the path to Coruisk slants across the valley, and thence ascends zig-zag up a very steep mountain side, by far and away the roughest and wildest bridle path I have ever seen. I was quite amazed to see our sure-footed pony scrambling his way along, in some places over bare rock, but with a peculiar rough surface, resembling a steel rasp, or as if studded with small tacks, and not at all slippery—otherwise, neither man nor horse could ascend by the regular path. Indeed, one could hardly slide on it although he tried it. In other places the little pony was wading to his belly in bogs and stagnant dibs of water, and from end to end the pathway is thickly covered with rough stones of all sorts and sizes. After a stiff, tiresome pull, of over three hours—walking most of the way, having found it very unpleasant to ride, my feet and legs coming bobbing against the stones, &c.—we at last gained the summit of a narrow ridge of bare, dark, iron-coloured rock. I repeatedly tried to guide the pony off the trodden path when coming to some level bits, but the hardy little fellow was bent on keeping the regular beaten path, no matter how rough.

On taking one step on to the crest of the rock, suddenly, as if by magic, quite a fresh and new picture opened out before us. Gazing almost sheer down, Loch Dhu and the famed Coruisk is seen, studded with several small green-clad islands; beyond, a long stretch of Loch Scavaig and the Island of Soa; and in the distance the Islands of Rum, Canna, &c.

Of all the well-known scenes and interesting sights to be seen in Skye, which I had often read and heard described, none disappointed my fancied expectations more than Loch Coruisk; and after viewing it from different standpoints from above, my first impression of it was not in the least altered. The Coolins, forming the background, are very grand; but, as a fresh water mountain lake, I don't think Loch Coruisk deserves one-half the glowing and exaggerated descriptions that have been written about it, like some other similarly famed bits of our Scottish scenery, which acquired their fame partly by being incidentally mentioned and associated with the writings of some of our greatest Scotch authors and poets of undying fame. I believe that if any one who has been accustomed to view mountain and lake scenery, and had seen some of the long, narrow-pointed sea lochs in Skye interspersed with numerous small green islands, and had neither heard nor read of Loch Coruisk, were to see it from the rocky heights above, he would very readily fancy that it simply formed the extreme point of one of the eastern head branches of Loch Scavaig,

interspersed with some green, grassy islands. Loch na Nain (the bird's lake), situated on the other side of Drumhain, and enclosed at the base of the Blavens, is in my estimation far more interesting and striking as an isolated fresh water lake than Coruisk. Surrounded on three sides by the Blaven mountains, which rise sheer upwards from the banks of the beautifully sequestered little lake—its waters as clear as crystal—in bold, rugged, fissured cliffs, to the height of over 3,000 feet, terminating in bare peaks, all but inaccessible to human step, and looks just like a stupendous, jagged scaured, shapeless pile of molten lead, without the slightest appearance of vegetation of any kind whatever. The Blavens fill the whole upper part of the Peninsula of Strathaird, between Lochs Slappin and Scavaig. Probably not one in a thousand who have visited Coruisk have ever seen Loch na Nain or Loch na Croich, another beautiful fresh water lake lower down on the same stream, and rather larger than Coruisk. During the summer season a large number of tourists visit Coruisk by Mr M'Brayne's special passenger steamer, leaving Oban every alternate morning for Portree and Gairloch, going once a week (Tuesdays) to Loch Scavaig, and landing passengers within a few hundred yards of Loch Coruisk. It is also a favourite resort of yachts of all sorts while cruising about the Hebrides with pleasure parties on board. We got back to the hotel pretty late in the evening, very tired.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DAY AT VATERNISH.

I DARESAY there is no district of equal extent and population in all Skye which is less known than Vaternish. I don't think it is even once mentioned in some of the well-known guide books to the far North. There are no special sights or "lions" in the locality to attract the tourist or the traveller bent on sight-seeing, and besides, it is in a manner isolated from any of the principal highways throughout the island, and approached only by one road, which has to be retraced when leaving it. It is hid by surrounding hills from almost any other part of the island. A very good bird's-eye view of the steep, sloping, circular district is seen on the left, sailing up Dunvegan Loch, or across Loch Bay. However, I had resolved to visit Vaternish, and started one fine morning, riding on one of the Manse horses, a strong, well-built chestnut, named Cobb, which, I was well warned, had rather a dangerous habit of shying or taking tremendous side-long jumps when he either saw, or fancied he saw, some ghost or bogle by the wayside. Instead of going

up the Portree road, I steered my course along a fine carriage drive through the castle grounds; and, after passing the Castle, up along a romantic, bosky glen, where I saw the most luxuriant and beautiful bell heather I had seen for long. The private road leading from the Castle joins the Portree road near the Fairy Bridge that spans the Fairy Glen, which, if all the old stories one hears related could be relied on, has been from time immemorial the favourite haunt of fairies, who used to be seen by the shepherds about the gloaming on the green-clad knolls above the glen, with flowing, golden locks, and arrayed in neat, tidy, green frocks—some chirming and singing merry Gaelic songs, others dancing round the Fairy ring. When any benighted traveller happened to pass, two off the fairies used to accompany him across the bridge and up the steep brae beyond. I was duly warned to be strictly on my guard when crossing the Fairy Bridge,

> Lest some fairies might be seen with flowing yellow hair,
> That oft were seen to jink and skip about in pairs,
> With kilted frocks abune their knees fu' neat and trim,
> Amang the bloomin' heather bells and brackens green;
> And might mak' frisky, jumpin' Cobb, cock his lugs,
> Then jump aff the road, or owre the haunted brig.

Immediately after crossing the Fairy Bridge, the Portree road forks abruptly off to the right, and the Vaternish road to the left, and after proceeding a couple of miles through a bleak, heathery moor, I got a splendid view of nearly the whole of Vaternish, which extends for

some miles athwart the steep ascending hillsides. The road, which is probably five or six hundred feet above sea level, looks almost sheer down on Loch Bay and the beach far below. The little tidy village of Stein, consisting of a row of white, slated houses, is seen along and quite close to the shore. A short way beyond the village, and about midway between the high road and the beach, stands Vaternish House, the residence of the proprietor of the district—Captain M'Donald,—and rather more than a mile further on, the Parish Church and Manse is seen, finely situated close together, standing out prominently among the dark heather and bracken, thatched huts seen in the surrounding district. After a ride of some eight or nine miles, I reached the Parish Manse, where I got my horse stabled and fed. I expected to have been favoured with the minister's company to show me some of the principal "lions" of the district, but he happened to be engaged at the time, so I proceeded alone. In the first place, to visit the ancient church and churchyard of Kilchonan—or Troumpan, its more modern name—rather over two miles beyond the Manse, and beautifully situated on the crest of a high, rounded knoll, commanding a most extensive view of the blue Minch and the Long Island across the wide channel, and the whole surrounding districts of Vaternish and Troumpan; also Ardmore point, a very peculiarly-formed promontory, which, from many parts of the district, appears to be an island. With the

exception of a large number of crofts scattered over the wide, sloping district, which have existed from time immemorial, the proprietor farms his own estate—which is chiefly grazing—and has an extensive stock of first-rate Highland cattle. I tramped a considerable distance off my way to have a near view of a large drove—more than a hundred browsing on a green hill side, and nearly all Highland cows with their calf at foot—finely-formed, plump, shaggy, curly-coated, little fellows, of varied shades of colour, from the light dun to the jet black. Several groups of them were congregated here and there, busy at play, some couples pretending to be fighting with their curly heads down, their two pair of sturdy legs well set for a pushing tussle. I don't remember ever seeing such a large number of cows with their calf at foot on a farm before, and all exceptionally fine-looking animals, and of the purest Highland breed.

For reasons unnecessary to explain here, I wished specially to see the grave of Lady Grange, and fully expected to have had no difficulty to find it out in the lonely, sequestered kirkyard of Troumpan, but after a fruitless search I could find no trace of it—no tombstone or anything of any kind whatever to indicate the spot where the mouldering remains of the unhappy lady lie so far removed from those of her departed kith and kin. On the summit of the circular, sloping, ancient burying-ground, stands the old church, for long a ruin. One of the gables and side walls are still standing. In

one part of the yard stands the burying-place of the laird of the district, a pretty large oblong square, enclosed by a stone wall about two feet high, with substantial dressed copestone, and surmounted by an iron railing. There is no headstone or inscription of any sort whatever to be seen within the enclosure. All the rest of the churchyard is covered with a forest of strong, tall nettles and Scotch thistles, with their prickly, green bonnets, and beautiful magenta "taps" in full bloom, and some of them standing about six feet high. While wending my way through the forest of wild weeds, I observed that a small avenue had been recently cleared, the stumps resembling strong bean stubble. Following the newly-cut path through the wilderness, I saw that a small space had been cleared in which there was a fresh mound of rough earth and stones, without even a single green sod, where the mortal remains of some one had been laid very recently. An additional horror is lent to the disgraceful and unseemly scene when one discovers that the whole burying-ground is a rabbit warren, the ground being honey-combed in all directions amidst the rank weeds and graves. Laird M'Donald's place of burial is securely protected from the inroads of the obnoxious vermin by a wire netting fixed round and round the iron railing. The surrounding fields seemed overrun with rabbits.

Surely there must be some law in our Scotch Statute books, applicable to rural churchyards or burying-places,

to compel either heritors or some local authorities to keep "God's sacred Acre" in decent order; but if not, the sooner some such law is enacted the better, as it is simply a disgrace in our enlightened and reforming age to see the last resting-place of the dead in the far north, and more especially in many parts of Skye, kept in such an unseemly state of utter neglect and ruin.

Being loath to leave the place without ascertaining the spot where Lady Grange was buried, I called on Capt. M'Donald's manager—Mr Hector M'Caskill—who readily accompanied me back to the graveyard, and at once shewed me the sadly neglected grave of Lady Grange. There are two small native stones, placed on end, and fixed in the ground, one at each end of the grave, but completely hid by the surrounding rank weeds. On asking M'Caskill if he was quite sure of it being the grave of Lady Grange, he told me that I need not have the slightest doubt on that score, as the two stones were placed there a good many years ago by himself at the express direction of the present Laird's mother, who knew the spot perfectly, which is situated immediately in front of the entrance door to the old church. The history of the later years of Lady Grange is somewhat remarkable. From many long accounts I have heard in the district, and other parts of Skye, and from natives of St Kilda, who look back on the unfortunate lady's long, forced confinement on St. Kilda, it is the most notable and painful incident connected

with their solitary, ocean-girt island. The lady's maiden name was Rachael Chiesley. About the year 1709, she was married to the Hon. James Erskine of Grange, second son of Charles, tenth Earl of Mar, who in 1707 was raised to the Scottish bench under the title of Lord Grange, and became Lord Justice-Clerk three years afterwards. After being married for about twenty years, and having a family of eight children, they agreed to separate and live apart, and shortly afterwards, on the plea that she was partially insane, and of a very ungovernable violent temper, he resolved, as it would appear, on removing his wife at once from Edinburgh.

There was said, however, to be another special cause. Lord Grange, as brother of the Earl of Mar, who headed the enterprise in 1715, was connected with the Jacobite party, and was said to be privy to some treasonable designs, and that his wife was in possession of some letters written by him in which he had made reflections on Sir Robert Walpole, and which she threatened to take to London and use to his disadvantage. With the aid of a party of Highlanders, she was seized and carried off at midnight, on 22nd January, 1732, to Wester Polmaise, near Stirling, where she was kept till August. She was then transported by successive night stages on horseback to the Highlands, passing through the lands of Lovat and Glengarry. At Lochburn, an arm of the sea on the west coast, she was transferred to a vessel, and taken to the small island of

Heskir, belonging to Sir Alexander M'Donald, and was kept there for about two years; and in June, 1734, she was conveyed to the still more remote and lonely island of St Kilda, the property of M'Leod of Dunvegan Castle, and was confined in that desolate, solitary region for nearly eight years. Writing materials were at first denied her, but in the winter of 1740 a letter from Lady Grange, which was concealed in the heart of a ball of woollen thread, reached her friends by means of the minister of St Kilda and his wife and daughter, who had quarrelled with M'Leod's factor and left the island. Legal steps were at once taken to rescue the lady, but somehow or other they fell through. Soon afterwards Lady Grange was removed to M'Leod's country in Skye, where she survived till May, 1745, when she died at Vaternish, and was secretly interred in the churchyard of Troumpan. It is said that she learned to speak the Gaelic tolerably well during her confinement in St Kilda, and took great pleasure in listening to the native, eerie tales and romances of one of her faithful attendants. She wrote some poetry during her imprisonment on the lonely sea-girt rock, which was published in Edinburgh in 1799 under the title of "Matilda." The general tone of the poems are very warm and passionate—the simple, guileless, young maidens of St Kilda reminding the unhappy exile of the bright and happy scenes of her own childhood. The story of Lady Grange is told at length in Mr Chambers'

"Traditions of Edinburgh."

The most conspicuous object to be seen in the old churchyard is a neat obelisk of rough, unhewn, native stone, which rises up clear and distinct above the surrounding, tall, wild weeds. I had observed this stone even before I had entered the enclosure, and on entering I went straight to it, but could find no mark or lettering of any kind to indicate the purpose of its being put there. There is a small, smooth hole in it, fully a couple of inches deep, and about four feet from the ground, just sufficiently large to admit an ordinary-sized forefinger, but of course I could make nothing of it. Mr M'Caskill explained to me that in olden times, when the church was in possession of the Roman Catholics, members of the flock used to be taken to a particular spot in the yard, then blindfolded, and made to walk to the stone, and put their forefinger into the hole, and those who managed to do so were supposed to be sure of being saved and go to heaven, and those who failed, well———. The churchyard is enclosed by the ruins of a drystone dyke, which to all appearance has not been repaired for centuries.

Long ago the old church of Troumpan was the scene of a very tragic and memorable occurrence, which one hears oft retold with deep interest by the old folks in the district. One Sunday, while the M'Leods were engaged at public worship within the sacred edifice, their bitter foes, the Clan M'Donald, had landed at full tide at one

of the rocky creeks at Ardmore, down below the church, stealthily approached and surrounded the church, fastened the doors, and then set fire to it, and all within the walls of the sacred edifice were burned to death, except one woman, who managed to squeeze herself through a small hole or window in the gable, which is still entire. It was so narrow that she left one of her breasts behind her and escaped, and soon roused the country-side with her bitter wailing and the sight of her bloody clothes. All the men and women of the M'Leod's at once rose and hastened to the burning church, and there a fierce and bloody battle began. The men and women of the M'Leod's country fought like heroes. After a prolonged and terrible struggle, the M'Donald's were beaten, and made for their boats, but by this time it was ebb-tide, and they found all their boats high and dry on the rocky beach, and their retreat cut off. The M'Donald's thus brought to bay, turned round upon their assailants and fought like fury till the last man fell, and their blood was seen running down in red streams among the sand into the sea. Mr M'Caskill told me, that when making drains, or plowing the ground on which this terrible hand-to-hand battle was fought, a number of human skulls and other bones are still often turned up.

Both on my way to and from the old kirkyard and Ardmore, I was amazed at seeing immense swarms of starlings along the wayside in some places, large flocks of them holding a joyous, merry concert on some green

knolls, which was literally covered with them—no trees of any kind in the locality on which to hold their meetings. When they rose on the wing, they looked just like a dark, moving, whirling cloud. I never had seen such a large number of starlings anywhere before.

After enjoying a good rest, and the hospitalities of the Manse, Cobb was brought out, looking as brisk and as fresh as a daisy, and we were soon cantering on our way back to Dunvegan. Cobb, upon the whole, behaved fairly well, the chief complaint I had to report against him being his unaccountable perverse fancy to take quite a different road to the one I wished to take; but, by-and-by, finding that his rider for the day was quite bent on having his own way, Cobb quietly gave in, and we both got back to the Manse safe and sound, without any broken bones, pretty late in the evening.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MANSE DOGS.

In a preceding chapter I introduced one of the Manse dogs, a very smart, plucky terrier, named Garry. Although rather distant and shy to me at first, Garry and I gradually became fast friends. As a rule, he came to my bedroom door regularly every morning, prompt at six o'clock, to give me the hint that it was about time to be up and get ready for our usual morning stroll. He usually accompanied me to the river when I went to fish, and seemingly took a keen interest in the sport, watching with unflagging interest my every throw; and, while playing a good-sized lively sea-trout, I had often the greatest difficulty to prevent him plunging into the river to seize the fish. He would often swim across to the opposite side, and eagerly watch operations from the opposite bank. Indeed, he became rather troublesome, continually crossing and re-crossing the river. When I got a fish landed, Garry would make a great fuss, and seemed quite pleased when he saw the trout placed

secure in the basket. Latterly, another terrier, of a different breed, and a close companion of Garry's, named Ropack, accompanied us to the river, and soon became a more eager and excited onlooker than even Garry. I was a good deal amused one day with the two at the river. I was fishing a long, deep, dark pool, at a place where the river runs through a sort of flat haugh-land, and forms a good many links and bends in its course. On the side of the stream where I was fishing, the bank was pretty high and steep; on the other side, a sloping gravel bank. I hooked a very vigorous, good-sized, sea-trout. On being hooked, he continued jump, jumping, three or four feet high, clear out of the water, glittering like a piece of silver in the blaze of the shining sun, making a hard struggle for freedom, then scampered up and down the pool. At last he darted down to the bottom, and my flies got fixed firm and fast on something evidently pretty deep down in the pool, and near the opposite side. I felt quite annoyed at the prospect of losing a fine new cast of flies, which I had just got sent me by a fisher friend in the far south. I did not care a straw for the loss of the fish, as I might be upsides with him some other day. I laid down my rod, and began to put off my fishing boots and stockings. My two excited companions, who had watched the whole affair, I daresay fancied that I was preparing to jump into the big linn to catch the trout, and both were eager to

plunge in along with me, to assist at the capture. As I could not well fish from the opposite side against the strong breeze, I left my boots, &c., took rod in hand, walked some 40 or 50 yards up the side of the stream, letting out my line as I went along—I had a pretty long line on—but it was nearly all off the reel before I reached a place where I could wade knee deep across. My two active assistants were across long before me, and waiting impatiently to see what I was going to be about. On getting safely across, I began to wind up my line, until I reached opposite the spot where it was fixed down below in the water. The river was pretty much swollen, and a dark porter colour. I pulled the line in all directions, but to no purpose, it was quite firm and fast. I then waded cautiously in till the water was nearly up to my middle, and my two assistants swimming out before me, until I was straight above where the flies were fixed. I put down my arm, following the line, but could not reach where it was stuck, and my hand came against what seemed to be a souple yielding stick. After peering steadily down into the pool—the sun was shining brightly—to my surprise I saw the big trout wagging his tail, but evidently pretty much exhausted. By degrees I saw that the flies were entangled about the root of a young tree which had been carried down the river, and had become partially embedded in the sand. I could not nearly reach the trout or the flies with my hand, and I did not care about diving. However, I got hold of a

branch of the root, and after some hard pulling I managed to haul the whole root, trout, cast and all, a good bit out on the gravelly beach, where I first secured the trout, which was well hooked. I had some difficulty preventing my two active assistants—all drookit after a good swim in the linn—from seizing and worrying the trout.

The two used to accompany me regularly every Sunday forenoon to the church, situated about a mile and a-half from the Manse. On seeing me to the church door, the sensible, "auld farrant" Garry, instead of going inside, would wheel round and trot back a bit and jump into the minister's carriage, which usually stood on the green lawn in front of the church. The horse was tethered not far off, and Garry would select the most cosie and softest rug, and, after wheeling round and round for several times, pop down to have a comfortable snooze till the congregation "skaled." As a rule—unless in very good trim for a walk—Garry returned to the Manse in the carriage, sitting quite coolly beside the minister. Ropack usually lay down at my feet in the church during the service, and behaved very well, unless the sermon happened to be extra long, when sometimes she would get up and stretch herself all her length, and give a long yawn, making a slight squeaking noise, but nothing to speak off, then look up into my face, give her tail a bit wiggle-waggle, as much as to say, I wish the minister would stop and let us out.

There was another noted dog at the Manse, a big,

swanky, souple tyke, named Moss, a light yellow colour, with streaks of white athwart his body and one down his long nose, with a pure white tassel dangling at the point of his tail. Besides being a famous sheep dog, he was also a first-rate watch. I never saw him enter the Manse except on Sunday, when he condescended to go in and even pay a short visit to the parlour or dining-room, wagging his gaucy tail gently, and looking up, as much as to say, "Cia mar tha shu an diudh"—he could speak no English. Regularly every night, wet or dry, he took up his stance on the very top of a conical, verdant knowe, close to the Manse, where he lay down curled up, with his nose resting on his bushy tail, and woe betide any wandering straggler who unwarily ventured near the Manse. The only time I ever noticed him leave his usual and regular position, was one night when blowing a severe gale, when he shifted to the lee side of a peat stack on the brow of the knowe. He seemed to have a bitter enmity to tinklers or tramps of all sorts. About the last thing I usually did every night, before going to bed, was to look out from my bedroom window to see the faithful and vigilant sentinel on his watch-tower, guarding the Manse and its slumbering inmates. I witnessed a somewhat comical scene one day, in which Moss played a prominent part. One of the young folks at the Manse, who was fond of playing pranks, got himself rigged out so as to represent a ghost or a brownie, in order to frighten a visitor who

happened to be staying at the Manse for a few days, and was very timid—at any rate pretended to be so—about meeting ghosts, brownies, fairies, or such like uncannie customers. The young wag, knowing that the timid visitor would arrive at a certain hour, got himself rigged out in an indescribable rag-tag dress, and slipped out by the back door, and up the side of a dyke close to the wayside, along which the unwary visitor was approaching, and hid himself in a small gravel pit till the stranger was within a short distance, when the "brownie," who had the appearance of an old, frail grannie bodie, but very small in stature, suddenly appeared, leaning heavily on her staff as she moved slowly along. Moss got his eagle eye on the mysterious-looking brownie, gave a savage howl, and bounded like a wild deer across the lawn, and was just on the point of seizing the "auld wifie," but she had the presence of mind to snatch off her tattered head-dress and speak to Moss, who at once wheeled round, and slunk away with his tail trailing behind him, evidently thoroughly ashamed of his savage conduct to one of his own folks of the Manse. Moss is about the only member of the collie tribe I ever met who fairly baffled me to get on anything like friendly terms with him. I persevered for some time, but all my friendly advances were doggedly repulsed. The saucy, surly fellow, would neither obey nor take the slightest heed to any one except Alastair—the Minister's man—a stout, sonsy, cannie chiel, who performed his varied duties

about the Glebe and Manse in a very methodical, staid, philosophic style.

I will here briefly relate a short story about another dog of quite a different class from any of the Manse dogs, which I had met on the banks of the river Dee, shortly before I left there for Skye. The said dog belonged to a Mr Cruickshanks, a gentleman for long well-known and much respected in the city of Aberdeen and neighbourhood. He lived in a neat villa at Cults, on the banks of the Dee, some three miles from the Granite City. I had occasion one day to call on Mr Cruickshanks, and was much struck with the appearance of his famous dog, Sancho, of whose remarkable feats I had repeatedly heard. Sancho is, I believe, a native of Russia, and altogether a somewhat singular looking dog—dark brown colour, with short, glossy, curly hair; clear green coloured eyes; a finely formed head; his nose not unlike a Polar bear's; legs rather short; with a well formed and powerful frame; and weighed a little over nine stone. He was a splendid swimmer; and a narrative of his many feats and adventures would fill a volume. However, in the meantime, I will simply give a short account of one of his fishing exploits, namely, a hard and prolonged struggle with an eighteen pound salmon. In front of Mr Cruickshank's house, the Dee is spanned by a neat, substantial suspension bridge, for foot passengers only. For some distance, both above and below the bridge, the river runs with a very strong current; but a few

hundred yards lower down a bend occurs in the channel, and forms a large deep pool—one of the finest salmon pools in the river. On the opening day of the salmon fishing, Mr Cruickshanks, accompanied by his favourite dog and constant companion, went down the riverside to see the result of the first "shot" in the famous pool below the bridge. Either eight or nine fish were caught in the first haul, and while the fishermen were taking them out of the net, one of the salmon slipped through their hands and wriggled quickly down the steep, sloping, grassy bank (an artificial embankment) into the river. Sancho, who had been watching the fishermen's operations, instantly plunged into the pool and dived in pursuit of the salmon. By-and-bye he popped up his head close to the opposite bank, but without the salmon. On seeing his master and the fishermen all looking on, he at once dived again. I never saw any dog that could remain so long under water. When he next appeared, he had the salmon firmly in his mouth, holding it across the back close to the tail. . After a prolonged and terrible tussle, sometimes above, and sometimes below the water, he reached the side, but would not let go his hold till he landed his captive on level ground on the top of the embankment. The salmon weighed over eighteen pounds. Sancho was usually kept on the chain, but, when at liberty, he spent most of his time on the banks of the river, and, if he saw branches or pieces of wood floating down the stream, he plunged in and brought

them to the bank. During rainy weather, towards the end of harvest, the Dee occasionally comes down raging in full flood, overflowing its banks, and sweeping hay ricks, cut grain, &c., along with it. Sancho has been known to land as many as 24 sheaves, or two full stooks of corn, in one day, and without the bidding or encouragement of anyone, but simply for exercise and amusement to himself.

CHAPTER X.

A CHAPTER OF ODDS AND ENDS.

Before bidding good-bye to Dunvegan, I will here relate one or two little incidents, shewing some of the inconveniences I experienced during my stay in that somewhat out-of-the-way district of Skye. Finding my hair was getting rather long and towsey, I made enquiries one day which was the nearest barber or hairdresser. To my surprise and dismay I was informed that there was no professional barber or hairdresser in all Skye, and that, if I was very particular as to a style of crop, I would require to go to Inverness, about 130 miles off. On making a rough calculation as to the approximate cost of a journey to the famed northern capital, I found that I could not well do it at much less than £6 or thereabouts, including a hire to and from Portree, steamer and railway fare, two nights at the very least at a hotel, and the "saxpence" to the professor of razors and scissors for the job. So I resolved to avoid incurring such an enormous expenditure for such a trifling errand. On making further inquiry, I learned that there was a

small farmer named Alistair Caimbhoul—Sandy Campbell —some couple of miles off, who was a by-ordinar' handy "chiel," and occasionally did a little in the haircutting line. Indeed, that the said Alistair would take in hand to do almost anything, and was equally at home nursing a little baby or plunging a barbed harpoon into the side of a big whale. I soon found my way to Alistair's domicile, saw his Highland cattle, a few of his sheep, all very good animals of their kind. And, as is the general rule throughout Skye, his dwelling-house was by far the worst feature about his small holding. Alistair has no shop, so we arranged that he should call the following morning at the Manse; and punctual to the hour appointed he arrived, and was shown up to my rooms. I am not quite sure whether it was the big shears with which he clips his sheep he had with him or not; but, at anyrate, I can solemnly testify that he made sad havoc amongst my scanty locks, which have not yet quite recovered from the barbarous barber's onslaught. I did not require another crop during my stay at Dunvegan. Amongst his many other accomplishments, Alistair can play the bagpipes fairly well, although he candidly admits that he is the worst piper in the family of several brothers. He also occasionally acts as pilot on the wild rocky coast around his native sea-girt island, and would be ready to engage at a moment's notice to navigate the Great Eastern round the "Mull," Ardnamurchan Point, shave Dunvegan Head, and up the intricate channel of

Dunvegan Loch, with its many seen and unseen rocky islets. A prominent characteristic in Alistair's composition, which puzzled and surprised me a good deal, was his mortal terror of riding or driving, more especially if the horse happened to be at all disposed to indulge in any playful pranks or capers. A smart, good-looking young man from the Scotch capital—a promising son of the Manse, who, I have no doubt, has many glowing youthful dreams of being some day Lord Chancellor of England—was on a visit spending some holidays at the Manse. He and I arranged to have a day's angling on the Glendale river, and engaged Alistair to go with us in the capacity of gillie, than whom, a more intelligent, handy, pleasant assistant, could not be found in all Skye. The young limb of the law, who can handle the whip and reins admirably, acted as our Jehu. Both going and returning Alistair was evidently kept in constant terror, lest our somewhat reckless driver would land us in some catastrophe. The more Alistair would plead with Mr Henry, "for God's sake to be more careful, and not drive at such a tremendous pace in case something might happen," the faster he drove. On our return journey in the evening, while coming down a very steep brae above Colbost, where the road is carried along the brink of a deep ravine, with a mountain stream tumbling over a series of small cascades along its rocky channel, we approached a certain spot where some time previously, owing to some of the harness giving way

coming down the brae, a vehicle with horse and occupant had toppled over, and rolled down until it landed in the rocky bed of the stream far below. Although the turnout was smashed to shivers, and the horse damaged, I believe there were no lives lost in connection with the catastrophe. On nearing the ominous spot, Alistair leapt at one bound from the waggonette, landing among the heather on the roadside, the perspiration trickling down his face. A few days afterwards, Alistair happened to be at the Manse one evening, when one of the inmates took suddenly unwell, and he, being the most active person about the place, was asked to ride post haste for a doctor, who resided a few miles off. In a jiffey, Cobb was saddled and ready to start. Alistair at once jumped into the saddle, and set off at a smart canter, but after proceeding a few hundred yards, Cobb all at once came to a sudden halt, and stood stock still, his forefeet firmly set, and leaning slightly backwards as if about to sit down on his tail, his ears on full cock, and staring at some mysterious object before him, making a peculiar snorting noise, which very likely meant, "Gude preserve us a', Sandy, what's *yon?*" Sandy was not disposed to argue the point as to the nature of the bogle referred to by Cobb, and at once jumped off his back, pitching the reins over his neck, telling him he might go to the diobhoul if he liked and inspect his bogle at his leisure, and set off on his own well-formed pins for the doctor. Alistair is generally reckoned a

famous angler, good fly-dresser, a crack shot, &c.; although, from what I have witnessed personally of his performances, I have very grave doubts whether he is entitled to the credit of being by any means a crack shot.

I was kindly invited one day to accompany a party going on a fishing and sea bird shooting expedition, away out towards Dunvegan Head. My little friend Garry—who is very fond of sport—seeing the gun being taken to the boat, was the first to jump in. It was a beautiful, bright, sunny day, with a good smart breeze. We had a first-rate, long, broad-beamed boat, and we were soon scudding down the Loch before the breeze, at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour. Alistair and another old fisherman had charge of managing the boat. At length a solitary solan goose, white as new-driven snow, was seen in the distance, fishing in the air. I watched the beautiful white bird's mode of fishing in the air with keen interest. He soared slowly along high up, with his piercing eye peering down into the briny deep. On seeing a fish, he balanced himself steadily on the wing for a minute or so in the same spot, then suddenly darting straight down like a shot, made a big splash, and disappeared below the water, but soon bobbing up again, spread out his wings, and gave himself a bit smart shake. It was quite evident that he had secured his prey, and he seemed not the least concerned at the approach of the boat with its full set sail. Had we been rowing, in all probability we would not have got near him. It is a

well-known fact that seafowl of all kinds are much less frightened at a boat going under sail than a rowing boat. One of our party being very anxious to secure a solan goose for some special purpose, and Alistair being considered the surest shot of the party, he got the gun, a first-rate fowling-piece—breach-loader. The man at the helm handled the boat to a nicety, and every one on board felt quite confident of Alistair's unerring aim. When the boat, which was being steered in a half circle, was within a short distance of him, the goose rose slowly, and Alistair let bang right and left at him, but to all appearance not a single feather of the goose was the least ruffled, and he soared slowly and majestically away with a merry cackling laugh—orook, orook, orae, orae. "Sandy, my man, try and catch me if you can." All on board, including Sandy I have no doubt, were greatly disappointed at the unexpected result. One of our party, an elderly gentleman, told Sandy that he ought to be quite ashamed of himself, wasting so much powder and shot to so little purpose, after getting such a rare chance. Alistair made some plausible excuse, laying the blame on the shot, which he said was only No. 6, which is usually used for grouse, woodcocks, snipes, and such like tender easily shot birds, but that it would require a sharp-pointed leaden bullet to pierce the strong thick coat of feathers on these wild geese. After some further bantering, Sandy's dander was getting up, and he half pitched the breech-loader at his tormentor, telling him to try his hand at the goose himsel'.

While steering in the direction of the goose, which was destinctly seen bobbing up and down amidst the waves a good way off, we came on a pair of large-sized, dark-feathered birds, with long necks, belonging to the cormorant tribe, which we had not observed till comparatively close upon them. The elderly gentleman who had the gun shifted his position to the bow of the boat, and was hid from the rest on board by the full-spread sail. The man at the helm steered the boat so as to give the amateur sportsman a fair chance when the birds got up. They were some few yards apart, and they rose on the wing at the same moment, but they were no sooner up than they both dropt one by one with a heavy splash into the sea. Whither it was simply by mere accident, or that the gentleman had been a crack shot in his younger days, I would not venture to give an opinion, but I have rarely witnessed a neater done thing in the way of shooting large seafowl.

Shortly after mid-day we landed on one of the islands at the entrance to Loch Bay, to take lunch. After spending some time exploring the island, and admiring a number of Highland cattle browsing on it, we embarked, and, when about half-a-mile from the shore, we heard a dog barking and yowling on the island close to where we had landed, and only then discovered that Garry had been left behind. He had last been seen hunting after some rabbits among the brackens. Getting his eye on the boat, the plucky little fellow at once jumped off a rocky cliff into the sea, and struck out towards us.

The boat was at once turned round and steered to meet him, and he was soon seized by the cuff of the neck and hauled on board, none the worse of his long swim. The breeze having calmed down, we commenced to fish, and in a comparatively short time we had secured as many as we cared to take. We had over four dozen, all good-sized fish, several 6 to 8 lbs. weight. Of late, the usual mode of sea-fishing about Dunvegan is by trolling. There are generally three lines out from each boat, with india-rubber bait about 5 or 6 inches long, representing a small sand eel. Three different colours are used—black, brown, and white. I observed that as a rule the black was the favourite, but a good deal depends on the weather, colour of the sky, &c. I had never seen that style of bait used before. It is very handy, as it lasts for almost any length of time, barring accidents, catching the bottom, &c. The hook is fixed to the one end of several yards of fine copper wire, and is enclosed in the tube, except the barbed point, which is about the middle of the small tube. There is a small swivel in the wire close to the bait, and as the boat is rowed a ta certain rate of speed the bait spins rapidly round in the water, and looks very like one of the small sand eels. Alistair had a steel clip or gaff for hauling the big fellows into the boat, after a smart struggle for liberty down below the water. After spending a very enjoyable, and to me a very interesting day, we got back to the Manse pretty late in the evening, without any mishap.

There is great inconvenience experienced occasionally in procuring provisions, &c., at Dunvegan, if any hitch happens to occur with the weekly steamers from Glasgow. About the time I arrived at Dunvegan, my esteemed friend, the minister, one day wrote two letters, one to a brother clergyman asking him to come and preach on a certain Sunday in the Parish Church; the other letter was to a butcher in Portree—a very keen Free Churchman—with an order for a leg of mutton. The leg of mutton was to be forwarded to the Manse as early as possible. The two letters were inadvertently put into the wrong envelopes. The reader will readily fancy the Highland flesher's amazement on reading the minister's letter, at being asked to occupy the pulpit of one of the "doomed" auld Established Kirks. It was several days before matters were put in order, but in the interim there was a cattle market held at Portree, and the big, stalwart, hungry cattle-dealers, drovers, show folks, &c., had gobbled up every scrap of mutton, and, I believe, almost everything else eatable, in the thriving capital of Skye. So the order for the leg of mutton had to be sent on to Inverness, and it was well nigh a fortnight before it reached its destination. However, it is only during the winter and spring months that there is any scarcity of mutton about Dunvegan. Before I left the Manse there was usually a good fat three or four-year-old wedder killed every week, and sometimes oftener, according to the number of visitors from the

south, all of whom appeared to relish the sweet Skye mutton very much. Nearly all the loaf bread used about Dunvegan is baked in Glasgow. There is no baker within 24 miles, and no carrier or regular conveyance for goods of that description.

My first Sunday at Dunvegan I attended the Parish Church. I started early, and after a pleasant walk of over a mile I reached the Church in good time. A number of the congregation who attended the Gaelic service were assembled on the lawn in front of the Church, and formed into small groups here and there, sitting on the green sward engaged in a subdued chat, all speaking Gaelic. Several elderly women, plainly dressed, wore a tidy frilled "mutch"; the men, as a rule, arrayed in a suit of rough tweed, of either Skye or St. Kilda manufacture; and almost all wearing a Glengarry bonnet, with long flowing ribbons fluttering in the fresh morning breeze. I never saw the Lord of the Manor (M'Leod of M'Leod), either at kirk or market, wear any other dress than a smart Glengarry bonnet, with a tartan plaid about him, and few men of his years looks so fresh and active. It was a little after the usual hour for commencing the day's service before the beadle made his appearance to open the church door, and while making his way through the assembled flock, his gleg eye soon missed Iain, the precentor. After a brief consultation with the minister, the church officer was requested to run up to the top of a big knowe above the

Church to see if the precentor—who resided some 7 or 8 miles off in the Glendale district—was in sight. On the beadle's return he reported no appearance of the missing official. It was then at once arranged that the parish minister was to officiate in place of the precentor, who did the duties both in the Gaelic and English very creditably. There were several good singers beside him, and after the tune was once fairly started, all was plain sailing, and the regular precentor did not seem to be seriously missed. The Rev. Mr Bell, who is a very fluent Gaelic preacher, delivered two excellent discourses. The congregation is not so large as the Free, but all the wealthier and better class folk in the district, including the people from the Castle, attend the Parish Church.

The gentry, or upper ten of the congregation, consisting of a few Lairds, a Dr. and his family, some big farmers, and a few retired elderly folks, did not put in an appearance until the close of the Gaelic service. On leaving the Church at close of the day's service, all the poorer members of the Highland flock were seen wending their way in different directions homewards; while the gentry, including the minister, and all his elders, their wives, and families, congregated in front of the Church. The ladies, some of them not quite so blooming and fair as they were sixty or seventy years ago, did a large amount of hugging and kissing, which I fancied to be a complete burlesque on the kissing custom, and done more for a little vain show than for any real love they entertained

for one another. The kissing ceremony over, they were engaged for a considerable time evidently discussing all the clashmaclaver, twaddle, and gossip of the week. The following Sunday, Professor Christie of Aberdeen conducted the English service in the Church. I could hardly recognise the eloquent Professor, holding forth in a Highland pulpit in his travelling suit, to be the same divine whom I had seen a few weeks previously in the pulpit of a Parish Church on the banks of the Dee, arrayed in his flowing silk robes and white bands, which were completely hid by his by-ordinary long flowing beard. I happened to be sitting immediately behind him during the Gaelic service, and observed him very attentively following all the reading, &c., evidently anxious to master the Gaelic.

My esteemed friend, the minister, who has been well-nigh half-a-century a respected clergyman in the far north, but most of the time in Skye, occasionally made a bit slip in the pulpit. He is a very staunch, uncompromising old Tory, and a great admirer of the late Lord Beaconsfield, but probably no incident in that distinguished politician's political career pleased the minister more, than his masterly stroke of statemanship in securing the Island of Cyprus, as an additional gem to be added to Queen Victoria's already sparkling ancient crown. The minister had preached several eloquent discourses about Cyprus, and the small in stature, but eloquent and undaunted, Apostle Paul, and his herculean friend Barnabas,

who was a native and a landlord in Cyprus. One Sunday, at the close of the service, he astonished his congregation by making the following intimation from the pulpit:—"My dear friends, I purpose, God willing, to preach next Sunday at *Cyprus*, so there will be no service in this Church next Sabbath." It was at Edinbain, one of the preaching stations connected with this parish, where he intended to preach.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SKYE COTTARS AND CROFTERS.

A STRANGER visiting Skye, during the summer season, might readily fancy that all the population throughout the country districts were occupied exclusively making peats and tending cattle. Peat moss is very abundant in almost every inhabited neuk and corner of the island, and, as a rule, very convenient and easily got at. There is hardly anything except peats used for fuel on the island. I did not see a coal fire all the time I was there, and as for wood, it's a very scarce commodity in Skye. As a general rule, the peats are all carried home in creels by women of varied ages—from the smart, blooming young maiden in her teens, to the aged, hard-featured granny, who may be seen in all directions with their creels on their backs, and a white napkin wrapped round their head. None of the men are ever seen carrying peats, and I was repeatedly told that a Skye man would think himself quite degraded if seen with a peat creel on his back. The most important and constant part of their daily work is tending cattle. As a general rule,

every crofter keeps a cow, or two or three as the case may be, and I believe that almost every calf that sees daylight is reared with every care and attention. A large number of cattle are exported annually from the island. Cattle is about the only stock that crofters have to dispose of, from their small holdings, to pay rents, &c., so there is great attention and care bestowed on the rearing of them. Small cattle dealers are often met travelling through the country, picking up any odd beast that crofters may have for sale. It is very common to see horses and cattle tethered on some odd neuks between the plots of corn, green crops, &c. I was amused occasionally to see even some hens tethered, just a small string tied to one of their feet, the other end to some twig.

As I have already stated in some of my previous rambles, one of the greatest drawbacks and discomforts of the Skye cottars and crofters are their wretched dwellings, which are the worst constructed and most uncomfortable I have ever seen in any part of Scotland. So far as I could ascertain, many of them, indeed the large majority, are by no means rack-rented. Many with whom I often conversed, told me that they kept two or three cows, several young beasts, and a number of sheep; and for their house and croft land, with hill-grazing for their sheep and cattle, they paid from £3 to £4 of yearly rent, which, I presume, any intelligent person, having any practical knowledge of the

value of land, will consider exceedingly moderate. In many parts of Scotland, even the summer grazing of a cow costs about as much, if not more. Were the proprietors to act upon the strictly commercial principle of letting their land to the highest bidder, I have no doubt, from the keen competition for every croft that becomes vacant, that in many cases they might probably double their rents; but croft rents are, as a rule, never raised, and evictions in Skye are only things of the distant past. I have no doubt that the report of the Royal Commission now appointed by the Crown will, for one thing, conclusively shew, that the Skye crofters have about the cheapest rented holdings of a similar character to be found in any other part of Scotland, notwithstanding all the sentimental nonsense that has been written recently on the subject, by parties who were evidently ignorant of the real nature of the disputes between the proprietors and their tenants. These disputes, I believe, have been chiefly due to the pernicious communistic doctrine instilled into the minds of the hitherto well-behaved and law-abiding folks of Skye by foreign agents. I had occasion to meet several of these paid agitators repeatedly during my sojourn in Skye—one of them, a big Irishman, who spent several months constantly amongst the simple crofters in various districts, teaching them how to treat their lairds. His shallow, stereotyped mode of addressing them, seemed to be by putting a question, namely, "Who does the land belong

to?" which he always answered in his own plausible, but erroneous way, by stating that the land belonged to the people, and that the crofters had as good a right to their holdings as their tyrannical landlord. That their early forefathers had rights in their crofts, as well as the lairds who are now infeft in the property of them, is very probable, but that was so very long ago, that even to give the slightest countenance to the cry to "restore" the land, would be subversive of all established law, let the means by which the chiefs or superiors acquired the property of their holdings have been ever so unfair or unjust. The crofters are several hundred years too late in asserting their claim. The wise spirit of our law is quite against raking up old claims of alleged wrongs, which have been allowed to slumber even for a single generation, let alone several centuries. That the legislature will soon pass some measure, giving the crofters some amelioration of their present unsatisfactory condition, is almost certain, and no one will grudge them this; but that the ancient order of things, for which they have been taught by paid agitators to clamour, will ever be resorted to as a system of landholding, is as improbable as it would be inexpedient. The Irishman was occasionally accompanied by a fluent Gaelic-speaking, kilted Highlander, who, had he attended more to his own affairs, and less to other people's, might have had a more prosperous and lasting literary career, and been more useful to his Gaelic-reading countrymen. I happened to

be staying at the same hotel with an Aberdeenshire gentleman, Mr B———, a very intelligent, clear-headed, practical old farmer—quite a different stamp of a man from the Irishman—who was sent by some Farmers' Association in Aberdeenshire to collect all the information he could regarding the Skye crofter's agitation, and he fulfilled his mission in a practical and judicious way. In the first place, he called personally upon a number of the crofters in different districts, and heard their own story. He then called on several factors, clergymen of the different denominations, and having obtained all the information he desired, left the island, with his preconceived ideas as to the real condition of the crofters greatly modified.

The Skye crofters have a large host of sympathising friends, but for all that, they must be sharply and sternly taught, that they cannot be allowed, with impunity, to disregard their country's laws, by using violence or taking forcible possession of their neighbour's property. Many intelligent people, even in Skye, were strongly of opinion, in which I fully joined, that it would have been much better for all concerned had the authorities acted with more decision and firmness with the few Meala-veg crofters, who had taken forcible possession of a neighbouring farm, at a much earlier stage of the agitation. The ill-advised crofters were, in their rustic simplicity, led to believe that the iron grasp of the law was powerless to reach them in their secluded native glen. For many

months the only official representative of law and order to be seen in the district was a solitary policeman, who was refused even the shelter of a roof in all the glen, and had to be accommodated in the proprietor's mansion. Another respected official (Mr M'Tavish) from Glasgow, who was engaged to deliver some mandates from our highest Scottish law courts, was subjected to personal violence, while his legal documents were treated with the utmost contempt.

The most important and difficult problem to solve, however, is how to improve the present unsatisfactory condition of the crofters. The Glendale district, which of late has been more prominently before the public, consists of ten separate hamlets or townships, and contains close on 2,000 inhabitants, including a pretty large number of strong, active, able-bodied men, who spend a very considerable portion of their time in comparative idleness; indeed, for several months of the year, with absolutely nothing whatever to do. At present there does not appear to be the slightest probability that any regular employment can be found on the island for the present population. Some theorists recommend the improvement of land as a means of procuring employment for the Highland people; but rocks, heather, and moss, can never make crop-bearing land—so any land improvement scheme, at least in many parts of Skye, even with the most lavish expenditure of money, is simply out of the question.

Land improvement experiments on an expensive scale have been repeatedly tried in several of the Western Isles, but have always proved a complete failure. The great and laudable efforts of the late Sir J. Mathieson of Lewis, have pretty clearly shown how hopeless is the attempt to make good land out of bleak moor and moss, and more especially in such an ungenial and moist climate. A good many years ago, a wealthy gentleman (Mr Rainy) purchased the island of Raasay, then containing about 1,000 inhabitants. Besides some sixty families of cottars, there were rather more than one hundred crofters paying an average rent of about £4 10s. The proprietor was anxious to improve the property. He and his family resided on the island, interested themselves in the welfare of the people, and employed them in making drains, trenching, &c., until, at the end of four years, it was found that the expenditure had exceeded the clear rental by about £1,700, while the condition of the people was not apparently a whit better than at the beginning. Indeed, although some of these poor crofters were to sit rent-free, their condition would not be very materially improved—their small holdings, to which they cling with such tenacity, are by far too much subdivided to afford employment or sustain a family with any degree of comfort. One of their chief drawbacks is the want of regular employment.

Another well-known wealthy gentleman—a very shrewd, clear-headed, self-made Scotchman, who has been now

for a good many years a useful and respected member of the House of Commons—some twenty odd years ago purchased a valuable estate in one of the Western Isles, on which he found a considerable number of crofters, who, besides being utterly unable to pay their croft rent, lived in abject poverty, poorly fed and clothed, and living in wretched hovels. Instead of attempting to improve their condition, where they and their forefathers had lived in comparative poverty for I don't know how long, their new laird offered to pay their passage money to America out of his own pocket, and also volunteered to lend them money to buy land in Canada, where there are broad acres of rich virgin soil by the million, ready for the spade and plough, and capable of yielding abundant returns. His liberal offer was quietly and gladly accepted. They got across the Atlantic in safety, settled in a certain district in Canada, and have prospered far beyond their brightest anticipations ever since.

Their liberal-handed Scotch landlord paid them a visit in the far west not very many years ago, spent some months in the district, and was much pleased and gratified to witness the prosperity of his old tenants in their adopted home.

If some of the successful sons of Skye, who went abroad in early life, and realised handsome fortunes, would interest themselves in the welfare and prosperity of their native isle, by creating work of some kind, to give

employment to the people, it would be a blessing. About 30 years ago, at the time of the destitution, a woollen manufactory was commenced at Portree, which has prospered ever since, and gives employment to a considerable number of people. The only other manufactory on the island is the Tallisker distillery, which produces close on 50,000 gallons of spirits every year.

In the course of all my rambles, in nearly every district and corner of Skye, I don't remember ever seeing a tipsy person, and very rarely ever heard anything like swearing or coarse language—forming a pleasing contrast to the shocking scenes, and the outrageous and blasphemous swearing, often heard in some of the streets of our large cities, which makes one actually shudder. A well-known clergyman, who has spent over forty years in different parts of Skye, has repeatedly told me, that, during all those years of his ministry on the Island, he has never seen a female tipsy, or even ever heard of one being addicted to tippling. Such a testimony to the good conduct and behaviour of the women of Skye needs no comment of mine.

CHAPTER XII.

A TRIP TO THE QUIRAING.

I LEFT Dunvegan on a Saturday, to join some friends from the south, who were to arrive at Portree by that day's steamer from Oban. We had arranged to stay at the Portree Hotel, which we found very comfortable. There are four good hotels in the town, and during my sojourn in Skye I had occasion to stay for some time at each of them. The Royal and the Portree are the two largest, but I found every comfort and attention I could desire at all of them. Portree, or King's Port, derives its name from King James the V., the Royal fleet having anchored in the harbour for some time during his expedition to the Western Islands in the year 1540. The principal part of the town is finely situated on an elevated table-land, overlooking Portree Loch, and straight opposite the entrance to the harbour, commanding a wide and magnificent look-out in every direction. The Loch, which opens to the sea opposite the Island of Raasay, is close on three miles long, and forms a splendid land-locked, natural harbour, one of the finest in

the three Kingdoms, guarded at the narrow entrance by what appears a double gateway of bold, lofty, pillared cliffs, which on the north side forms the commencement of a long range of grand and picturesque rock scenery, including the lofty Storr Rock and the famous Quiraing. There are some elegant modern residences, a Court-house, three banks, and four churches in the town, which has a population of about 900. The following day (Sunday) we went in the forenoon to the U.P. Church—Rev. Mr M'Intyre—a very neat, tidy building, apparently not long erected. It was fairly well filled, and we listened to a good practical discourse, and the singing was exceptionally good. In the afternoon we attended the Parish Church—Rev. Mr Darroch, minister—who preached an excellent sermon. The church was pretty well filled. In the pew immediately before us sat Lord Dunmore and another gentleman, dressed in full Highland costume. We were somewhat surprised to see the same precentor officiating that we had heard in the U.P. Church in the forenoon. (Service in the U.P. Church forenoon and evening.) It is rather unusual to see the same precentor officiating in two different churches, and more especially a U.P. and an Established. On making some enquiries, we learned that the excellent precentor is one of the principal and most respected men in Portree—a banker, factor, millowner, &c. The following morning (Monday) we started immediately after breakfast for the Quiraing. It

was a beautiful, bright, bracing morning. We got a very creditable turn-out, including a most intelligent and respectable-looking driver, a pair of good horses and waggonette. Our party consisted of half-a-dozen, two married couples—one of the couples enjoying their honeymoon—another gentleman and myself. Some four miles from Portree the Uig road forks off from the Dunvegan road to the right, at the head of Loch Snizort, and winds along, overlooking the Loch all the way, passing the Parish Church and Manse of Snizort. About four miles from Uig we crossed the Glenhinnisdale river, spanned by a plain stone bridge. Occasionally the mountain streams in this district come down in remarkably sudden spates. On the Thursday of the previous week (6th July), a very sad and fatal accident occurred just a few hundred yards above this bridge. A young man, named Donald M'Intyre, who, I believe, was the only surviving son of a respected widowed mother, and who had been engaged for some time in mission work at Uig, had gone—accompanied by a friend, a young gentleman named Campbell—to have a day's fishing on the Glenhinnisdale river. While fishing about two hundred yards above the bridge, they were suddenly overtaken by an avalanche of water in its downward career, and were swept away by the raging, irresistible torrent. At a sharp bend of the river, Campbell, without any effort on his part, was dashed out of the channel on to the bank, where he lay for a

considerable time stunned and unconscious. M'Intyre was carried rapidly down the stream, going over several waterfalls. His body was found about a mile below the bridge, a few days afterwards. His remains were quietly interred at Uig. While this was occurring in the Trotternish district, it was a fine bright sunny day at Dunvegan and the west side of the island.

After a very pleasant drive of about 15 miles, we arrived at the Uig Hotel—Mr Urquhart, proprietor—where we had lunch, and a fresh team of horses for the rest of the journey. On leaving the hotel the road winds down a long steep brae, and is thence carried across a deep ravine, through which a considerable mountain stream comes tumbling down over a series of waterfalls. At the mouth of the deep indented gully stood for long the last resting-place of the hamlet's dead, but during a most memorable spate or flood which occurred on the 14th October, 1876, nearly the whole of the ancient churchyard was swept clean away and carried out to sea. Only one small corner, with a very few graves, was left. For several weeks afterwards, the beach along either side of the bay was thickly strewn with coffins and human bones, &c. The summer residence of Major Fraser—proprietor of the district—which stood on a fine level lawn lower down, close to the beach, was also suddenly swept away. His manager or grieve, Mr D. Ferguson, was the only person in the house at the time. Some four or five weeks afterwards,

his body was cast ashore 5 or 6 miles along the coast. A large number of bridges were carried away, rivers broke through their old channels, and a vast amount of damage was done to roads, &c. No such destructive spate has ever been witnessed by any of the oldest inhabitants now living in the locality.

After a drive of other 7 or 8 miles, we reached the point where the footpath for the Quiraing strikes off the carriage road, and there we found a regiment of guides in waiting, and a more rustic, arab-looking squad we had rarely ever seen anywhere before, of various ages and sizes, from the barefooted, bonnetless, kilted laddie, to the weather-beaten, wrinkled, hard-featured old man of three score or more, none of whom could speak a syllable of English. The only words they seemed to have mastered so far, was "Twa shillans, twa shillans." The oldest man, when he observed one of our party making a halt to gaze around on one of the most striking scenes of the kind to be seen in the three kingdoms, had always the same stereotyped phrase, "Fery pretty whatever." We had been repeatedly advised not to engage them, as they were usually considered regular pests, so we refused to engage any of them. However, the whole squad joined our party, probably guessing that before we proceeded very far their services and assistance might be gladly accepted, which turned out to be quite correct. From the point where the path for the Quiraing strikes

off, the carriage road winds zig-zag down a steep descent, through a narrow gully between two lofty cliffs, and continues on to Steinscholl and round the North point of Trotternish to Kilmuir. After proceeding a short way along the footpath, the prospect is all at once completely changed. Instead of the dark, bleak, heathery moor, through which we had passed, a wide and magnificent panorama of sea and land opens out before us. We now get a front view of the long range of stupendous rocky cliffs, extending from the Quiraing on the North to the Storr Rock on the South—the one rising to the height of about 1800, the other to 2,350 feet above sea level, and to all appearance these rocky precipices must have formed at one period the sea coast, but now a considerable stretch of land intervenes. As we proceeded, the rough and rather indistinct path goes along the face of a very steep declivity, with overhanging precipices on our left, and at some parts we had to pick our way over a *debris* of stones which had toppled down from the lofty cliffs above. We won't soon forget the singularly unique picture presented by our party, numbering in all rather more than a score, as we marched cautiously and slowly in single file, the guides pretty well mixed amongst us, a few of the kilted laddies taking the lead. I don't think there were two the same size, or dressed alike. One of the ladies was rather slim and active, the other pretty stout, but a capital pedestrian. We had not proceeded far when one of the gentlemen, the biggest and

strongest looking of our party, began to show signs of "losing his head." He got giddy and nervous, and evidently quite unable either to proceed or retrace his steps to the end of the foot-path to the carriage. So we had to assist him the best way we could down to the foot of the steep stony slope, where the ground is comparatively level, leaving him in charge of three of the Hielan' guides, including the oldest of the lot, until we got back. A big, tall, strappin' lady, who, along with her husband, had followed us all the way from Portree in a seperate turnout, stuck next, but fortunately she had not to be carried down to level ground; she simply sat down quietly amongst the big stones until her husband's return from the top. About a mile and a-half more or less from the start, we reached the most critical and dangerous part of the climb, where the path takes an abrupt bend to the left, and goes up through a very steep, slippery, narrow pass or gateway to the famous "Quiraing Table." On either side a perpendicular face of rugged precipices of huge columns of basalt and massive fragments of fluted rock rise sheer up in lofty inaccessible peaks, guarded at the entrance by a colossal, hoary sentinel, in the shape of an isolated spiral column of finely-tapered bare rock, 130 feet high, called the "Needle." On gaining the summit of the narrow gap, we landed on a beautiful green, grassy knoll. The singular and remarkable picture presented to our gaze is not very easily described. It consists of a spacious circular open-

ing, with an elevated verdant platform in the centre, several hundred yards in circumference (about 300 by 200 feet), covered with a close spongy sward, and surrounded on every side by lofty pinnacled cliffs. After crossing a deep moat or gully, we soon gained the top of the "Table," from which, through a series of openings or gaps in the encircling towering bare peaks, a wide and interesting view is obtained of the outline of a long stretch of the Ross and Sutherland mountains, away towards Cape Wrath, The Lewis, Harris, &c., across the Minch, and looking almost sheer down on the bare rock-bound little islands of Rona, Raasay, &c. The Quiraing being the farthest north height in Skye, it commands a very wide and extensive look-out. The secluded, out-of-the-way little hamlet of Steinschol, is seen close to the sea-beach, a couple of miles or so immediately below. There is a fine spring well gushing out from the face of the rock, a few steps from the edge of the "Table," a draught of which we relished exceedingly after our long toilsome climb.

At the start, the two married gentlemen seemed very attentive and concerned about the safety of their wives, but by degrees their attentions became gradually less marked, and evidently getting more concerned about their own personal safety. By and by, as we approached the most ticklish bit of the ascent, the two "better halves" were left entirely to the care of two Highland guides each, both going up and coming down. On

gaining the top of the narrow pass, I overheard the stout lady solemnly declare that she would never come down again in this world. However, when it came to the scratch, she changed her mind, as the prospect of remaining there alone, amidst the solitude of the Quiraing, was not by any means inviting—the solitary spectator of the queer and "awfu'" ongoings of the fairies and brownies who, if all stories could be relied on, congregate in large numbers on the Quiraing Table, especially about the gloaming. So the lady screwed up her courage, and trusted herself to her more agile and sure-footed guides. On her way down she occasionally appeared in rather ludicrous attitudes. However, nobody except her guides were taking the least notice of her, everyone looking carefully after "number one." I must confess that I felt more concerned at the coming down than the going up. The look-out from the top of the gloomy pass, through which we had ascended, except to those possessed of a cool and steady nerve, was not by any means pleasant. However, we all managed to retrace our steps without any serious misadventure, and found our friend sitting on a heathery knowe, anxiously awaiting our return. He told us that he had discharged his three guides after he had found his way to the carriage, as he was quite unable to exchange a word with them the whole time he had them with him.

During the visit of the ex-Empress of the French and her son, the late Prince Imperial, to Skye, in 1872, they

both accomplished the climb to the Quiraing, without, I have been told, much difficulty or apparent fatigue. We got back to the Uig Hotel in capital trim for dinner, and found an excellent spread prepared for us, and laid with as much taste as we could expect to see in the very best hotels in Scotland. Two of the landlord's daughters, both very smart, modest-looking young damsels, served us. Although the house is not very large, everything about the place appeared very clean and tidy. It stands on a fine site, overlooking the deep-indented, beautiful Bay of Uig, and surrounded by a plantation of young trees and luxuriant shrubs, chiefly large-sized fuschias, in full bloom. We got back to Portree at 11 P.M.

CHAPTER XIII.

A VISIT TO FLORA M'DONALD'S GRAVE.

About eight miles or so from Portree, the ruins of the once well-known old mansion house of Kingsburgh are passed on the left, which in its day has sheltered under its hospitable roof several individuals whose name will for long live in Scottish history. The district of Trotternish has been familiar to the public as the scene of some of Prince Charlie's adventures in the course of his wanderings after the battle of Culloden. Immediately after the disastrous battle, the Prince escaped to the Long Island—a portion of the Western Hebrides—where he remained for some time concealed; but intelligence having been obtained where he was, a band of soldiers landed on the island in search of him, and it became absolutely necessary for him to leave the island without delay. Flora M'Donald, with the spirit of a true heroine, volunteered to accompany him in a small open boat across to Skye. The Prince got himself dressed in women's clothes, and passed off as Flora's maid, under the name of "Betty Burk," an Irish girl. Although

the coast they were about to leave was strictly guarded by war ships, they managed to escape unobserved, and after a perilous voyage across the wide Minch, tossed about in their tiny little bark amidst the turbulent billows rolling in from the broad Atlantic, they landed in safety opposite Monkstade, the house of Sir Alexander M'Donald, close to Duntulm Castle. Sir Alexander was then at Fort Augustus with the Duke of Cumberland, but his lady was at home. After landing, "Betty Burk" hid herself among the rocks on the beach, until her trusty guide and protectress would call at the house to ascertain if there was any danger to be apprehended. Flora waited on Lady Margaret, and told her confidentially of the enterprise she was engaged in. Her ladyship showed a perfect presence of mind and readiness of invention, and at once settled that the Prince should be conducted to old M'Leod of Raasay, who was himself then under hiding with a few friends. The plan was disclosed to M'Donald of Kingsburgh, who happened to be in the house at the time, and he was immediately sent to inform the Prince of the arrangements, and at the same time carry some refreshments to him. Flora dined with Lady M'Donald, at whose table there sat an officer of the English army, stationed there with a party of soldiers to watch for Prince Charlie, in case he should make his escape to Skye. Flora afterwards laughed in good humour with that gentleman for having deceived him so well. After dinner,

Flora (on horseback), her supposed maid, Kingsburgh, and a servant carrying some luggage, all on foot, set off for Kingsburgh House. When crossing a small burn, the Prince, forgetting his assumed sex, held up his petitcoats far too high. Kingsburgh mentioned this to him, and cautioned him to be more careful, or it might lead to a discovery. The Prince promised to be more guarded in future. He was as good as his word, for when crossing the next brook he did not hold up his clothes at all, but allowed them to float on the water. It is said that he was very awkward in his female dress. He was so tall, and took such long strides, that some women whom they met reported that they had passed a very big woman, who looked like a man in women's clothes. At Kingsburgh the Prince met with a very warm and cordial reception, and after supper indulged in a cheerful glass with his worthy host. As he had not his clothes off for a long time, the comfort of a good bed was highly relished by him, and he slept soundly till one o'clock next day. On the same afternoon, still in the same dress, and escorted by Flora and a man-servant, they proceeded to Portree. His shoes being quite worn out, Kingsburgh provided him with a new pair, and taking up the old ones said, "I will faithfully keep them until you are securely settled in St. James's." Mrs M'Donald, after her guest had left the house, took the sheets in which he had lain, folded them carefully up, and charged her daughter that they should be kept unwashed, and that when she died her

body should be wrapt in them as a winding sheet. Her wish was religiously observed. It has been said that part of the sheets were given to Flora M'Donald, and after accompanying her in all her wanderings, served as her shroud when she was buried.

Upon the road to Portree the Prince changed his dress, and put on men's clothes again—a tartan coat and vest, with kilt, sporan-molloch, and short hose, a plaid, a wig, and broad-brimmed bonnet. Several staunch friends were making arrangements at Portree to get the Prince taken across to the Island of Raasay. There was great difficulty encountered to get him conveyed over. They could not trust a Portree crew, and all the Raasay boats had been either destroyed or carried off by the military, except one belonging to Captain Malcolm M'Leod, which he had concealed somewhere. A Dr. M'Leod, who was then recovering from a severe wound he had received at the battle of Culloden, with the assistance of some women, brought a small boat from a fresh water lake, situated a considerable distance north from Portree. After extraordinary exertions, they managed to carry the boat across a long stretch of mossy, boggy moor, thence down some precipitous steeps to the sea beach. While anxiously waiting in the small inn at Portree, the Prince received a private message that a boat had been got ready for him.

After biding farewell to his faithful guide and protectress, Flora M'Donald—whom he never saw again—he slipt quietly out of the house, and was led by a

circuitous quiet path down to the beach, some distance north of Portree. On reaching the beach, the Prince was introduced to the intrepid, dauntless Malcolm M'Leod, who, from that hour, was the constant and close companion of the fugitive Prince through nearly all the rest of his perilous wanderings and hairbreadth escapes amidst the mountain solitudes, shaded glens, and damp eerie caves in the Highlands of Scotland.

About midnight, when all around was shrouded in sombre darkness, the boat containing the Prince, Malcolm M'Leod, with other two friends, and two strong hardy boatmen, John M'Kenzie and Donald M'Friar, who were both solemnly sworn to secrecy, left the shores of Skye for Raasay, and landed on that island the following morning about daybreak. They found great difficulty in procuring a place of shelter, as nearly all the houses on the island had been burnt down by the English soldiers. They repaired to a small hut which some shepherds had recently built, and having prepared it as well as they could, and made a bed of heather for the Prince, they then kindled a fire, and partook of some provisions which had been sent with him from Kingsburgh. Young M'Leod of Raasay, being the only one of the company that durst appear with safety, went in quest of something fresh for them to eat. But although he was in the midst of his own cattle, sheep, and goats, he could not well venture to take any of them for fear of discovery. However, he managed to seize a young kid, and brought

it to the hut in the pock of his plaid, and it was killed and dressed, providing them with a good meal, which they all highly relished. The distressed wanderer, whose health was now a good deal broken down by hunger, fatigue, and watching, slept a long time. While they remained in the hut, the two boatmen were stationed as sentinels on different hill tops. One day there was a man seen at a distance approaching, who had been observed for several days previously wandering about, pretending to be selling some odds and ends, but was strongly suspected to be a spy in disguise. One of the sentinels came running to the hut, and told that the suspected packman was approaching, upon which the three gentlemen, Malcolm, young Raasay, and Dr M'Leod, at once held a council of war upon the spy, and were unanimously of opinion that he should instantly be put to death. The Prince, assuming a grave countenance, said, "God forbid, gentlemen, that we should take away a man's life who may be innocent, while we can preserve our own." The gentlemen, however, stood firm and decided to their resolution. John M'Kenzie, one of the sentinels, who was standing at the door of the hut, overheard the debate, and said with emphasis, in Gaelic, "Weel, weel, he must be shot, you are the king, but we are the parliament, and we will do what we like." The Prince, observing the gentlemen smile, asked what the man had said, and being told in English, he remarked that he was a clever fellow, and laughed heartily.

Fortunately the suspected packman, not observing that there were people in the hut, walked on past it, little dreaming of the narrow escape he had made with his life, for had he come to the hut, they were quite resolved to despatch him at once. M'Kenzie was often afterwards called the member of parliament. A few days after parting with the Prince, Malcolm was seized by a band of soldiers, put on board a ship, and carried prisoner to London, where some time afterwards he was brought to trial. To his astonishment only one witness could be found to appear against him, although he had been so openly engaged in the rebellion, and for want of sufficient evidence he was set at liberty. Flora M'Donald being then also in London, under the protection of Lady Primrose, that lady provided a post chaise to convey Flora back to Scotland, and desired her to choose any friends she pleased to accompany her. She choose Malcolm; so said he in a triumphant air, "I was taken to London to be hanged, and returned in a post chaise with Flora M'Donald."

It is said that M'Donald of Kingsburgh was arrested in the following manner:—A few days after the Prince was there, Captain Ferguson, of a Government war-ship, cast anchor in a bay close to Kingsburgh House, and having gone ashore, met Kingsburgh's dairymaid tending some cattle. He entered into conversation with the maid, and suspecting that she might have some news for him, induced her to go to see the vessel. When on

board he treated her kindly, and gave her some little presents, then asked her about various circumstances relative to country news. She, not knowing who her entertainer was, told with an air of pride that she had seen Prince Charlie; that he was a night at her master's house; that her mistress and other ladies who were there at the time got beautiful locks of his hair; and his appearance pleased her very much. This was all Ferguson wanted, and by means of this imprudent disclosure on the part of the unsuspecting maid, the first certain proof was obtained of the manner in which Kingsburgh had acted, as well as the certainty that the fugitive Prince had landed in Skye from Uist.

Many were the trials and severe hardships which fell to the lot of the gallant Flora subsequent to this adventure. She was soon seized, and brought prisoner to London, where she was, with Kingsburgh and many others, confined in the Tower. All admired the dauntless and heroic part which she had acted, and her case excited so much interest that she was visited by the great and noble of the land. Among the rest she had the honour of a visit from Prince Frederick of Wales, great-grandfather of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. This generous Prince was so much struck with the simplicity and dignity of the fair prisoner that he interested himself to procure her freedom. She found refuge in the house of Lady Primrose of Dunnipace, where she was visited and loaded with honours by distinguished personages of all ranks and

shades of politics. It is said that when Flora was liberated she used all her influence to procure the liberation of Kingsburgh, as also of Callum MhicIain—Malcolm M'Leod.

In 1750, Flora M'Donald was married to Allan M'Donald (young Kingsburgh), who, at his father's death in 1782, succeeded him in the farm—Flora then becoming Mistress of Kingsburgh House. Dr. Samuel Johnson and his friend Boswell were entertained at Kingsburgh during their tour to the Western Hebrides in 1773. They arrived at Kingsburgh from Portree on the 12th September of that year, and curious enough, Dr. Johnson, the staunch old Tory, slept in the same bed, under Flora M'Donald's roof-tree, that Prince Charles occupied 28 years before. The family shortly afterwards (I believe the year following Dr. Johnson's visit) emigrated to North Carolina, and young Kingsburgh joined the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment, or 84th, embodied in 1775. This corps was defeated by the Provincial forces in February, 1776, and among those committed to Halifax Jail was Kingsburgh. He afterwards served with his regiment in Canada, holding the rank of Captain.

At the close of the war he returned to Scotland on half-pay. The vessel in which Flora and her husband sailed was attacked by a French privateer, and while the spirited heroine stood on deck, encouraging and animating the sailors, she was thrown down, and had one

of her arms broken. The wanderers, however, by and by found their way back to Skye, and never left it again.

Flora died on the 4th of March, 1790, at the age of 68, and was buried in the old kirkyard of Kilmuir, in the private burying ground of the Kingsburgh family. Her husband died on the 20th September, 1795. They had seven children, five sons and two daughters. The sons all became officers in the army, and the two daughters officers' wives. The last surviving member of the family, Mrs Major M'Leod, died at Stein, Vatternish, Skye, in 1834, leaving one daughter, Miss Mary M'Leod, who died at Stein about twenty years ago.

About two miles or so beyond the Uig Hotel, the Kilmuir road forks off the Quiraing road to the left, and after crossing the spur of a mountain ridge sloping down from the Quiraing heights, and tapering to a point which forms the north side of the entrance to Uig Bay, we suddenly got a fine bird's eye view of the Kilmuir district, which is completely hid from almost any other part of the Island, and in many respects resembles the district of Vatternish, forming the western outstretching promontory or wing of the "Winged Island." Monkstade House, the Parish Church and Manse, Flora M'Donald's Momument, and the ruined walls of Duntulm Castle, are the most prominent objects in the surrounding landscape. Kilmuir at one time was called the granary of Skye, but it is not so now, as there is only a comparatively small portion of land under cultivation, although it is quite

evident that at one period a pretty large area of land was under crop. The district is comparatively flat, and like the most of Skye presents a bare, bald, treeless aspect. A few trees or plantations here and there would vastly improve the general appearance of the Island.

The reason why proprietors don't plant more wood is a matter of much surprise to many intelligent strangers who visit Skye. It is quite evident from the healthy, thriving appearance of several small plantations that have been planted recently, that, as a general rule, timber would grow perfectly well. I have repeatedly heard the sea blamed for preventing the growth of timber, but I believe the simple explanation is that it has not been much tried. For instance, at Gairloch, in the county of Ross, just a few miles across from Skye, and equally as far north, there is some of the finest old trees and timber —chiefly larch and Scotch firs—that can be seen in almost any part of Scotland, and extending down to the seashore.

After a drive of 7 or 8 miles from Uig, we reached the ancient kirkyard of Kilmuir, which stands pretty high up on a hillside, and is enclosed by a tumble-down drystone dyke. It is kept in very bad order, completely over-run with long nettles and other wild rank weeds. It is with great difficulty one can make way wading through them. One of our party made a narrow escape of breaking his neck, by tumbling into a deep, treacherous sheugh or big hole, covered all over with rank weeds.

With the exception of some private enclosed burying-grounds, where some tombstones are seen, in the common ground outside there is hardly a single gravestone or green mound to be seen in all the churchyard. The spot where the mouldering remains of Flora M'Donald lie—almost the only historical name that Skye can boast of—remained for over fourscore years undistinguished in any way, and utterly neglected. This long neglect, however, has now been so far atoned for by the erection, in 1872, of a beautiful monument of very light coloured granite, in the form of an Iona Cross, 28 feet 6 inches in height—I believe the tallest Iona Cross of the kind to be seen in the three kingdoms. It was designed by Mr Alexander Ross, architect, and executed by Mr D. Forsythe, Inverness. There is no inscription or lettering of any kind on the upright stone, but on the large, bevelled white granite block, laid flat on the top of the grave, there is written, in large plain letters, "Flora M'Donald, born at Milton, South Uist, in 1722; died at Kingsburgh, Skye, 4th March, 1790." Shortly after its erection, during a fierce hurricane, the monument was blown down, and to some extent damaged. It is now supported by a strong iron rod placed in a slanting position, and firmly secured at either end by iron bolts and screws. From the elevated situation of the churchyard, the monument forms a prominent object in the surrounding district. A short way beyond the Kilmuir Churchyard, situated on a rocky promontory, partly encircled by sea,

stands the ruined walls of Duntulm Castle—for long the principal stronghold of the Clan M'Donald, descendants of the Lords of the Isles—not far from Ru Ard-de-cheolan, or point of Aird, the farthest north point of Skye. We got back to Portree pretty late in the evening.

PORTRAIT OF FLORA M'DONALD.

At a meeting of the Town Council of Glasgow, held on the 13th April, 1883, the Lord Provost read a letter he had received from Flora M. Wylde, Cheltenham, stating that she had in her possession a portrait of her grandmother, Flora M'Donald, which had been for many years in the family of the writer, and which she wished to present to the Corporation Gallery of Paintings. The picture, the letter stated, was a good likeness, and was painted in 1750 (the year of Flora M'Donald's marriage) by Robertson. The only object of the writer in parting with such a valuable original was a desire that the likeness of such a well-known historical character should be in a good public gallery of her own country. The Lord Provost added that he thought the Town Clerk might be instructed to have the picture brought to Glasgow, that it might be inspected by the committee, with the view to its acceptance, if it were found worthy of a place in the gallery. This suggestion was agreed to.

The said portrait of the brave and heroic Flora may now be seen in the Glasgow Corporation Picture

Gallery, Sauchiehall Street. It has been highly favoured with a very good position on the wall of the Gallery. It is placed at the one end of a long row of large-sized portraits of Kings and Queens. At the other end of the row, in a position corresponding exactly with Flora's portrait, is one—about the same size—of Her Majesty the Queen, painted by Sir David Wilkie in 1841. The figure of the fair Flora is arrayed in a dress of the old Somerlid or original M'Donald tartan, with a white rosette in her hair, and white breast-knot. On the one side of the figure a small boat is seen, its white sail appearing like a distant speck on the dark canvas. On the other side of the picture is the following inscription in Latin, written in a peculiar, unique style of letters, and almost the same shade of colour as the dark shaded back-ground of the painting, and cannot be easily read without the aid of a magnifying glass :—

Finnuella, alias Flora Macdonald, Filia Ranaldi Macdonald, de Milton in Soust Uist, celeberrima illa Heroina Scoticana, nunquam sine laude noninanda, fidelissima illa Carloli conservatrix, patienter latentis per varios casus, per inaudita pericula, per mare, per terras, telague, per hostianutam fan tiler quam cause tudentis tunc temporis investiter muliebri sub nomine hiberniensi Betty Burk personati. Jani., 28, noctu 1746. (A.D.O.M.P.F.S.S.) "Scapham enixius conscendebat clarior etenebris." W. Robertson, ad vivum pinxit, 1750.

TRANSLATION.

Finnuella, otherwise Flora Macdonald, the daughter of Ranald Macdonald of Milton, in South Uist, the famous Scottish Heroine, deserving of eternal renown, as the most faithful companion and zealous preserver of Charles; bringing him through numerous troubles and unheard of dangers by sea and land, braving the darts of his enemies till such time as his cause was safe, when, dressed as a woman passing off under the Irish name of Betty Burk, he was most carefully embarked in a small vessel on the night of the 28th June, 1746, A.D. "A bright light in the midst of darkness." Painted from life, in 1750, by W. Robertson.

NOTE TO PAGE 140.—The punch bowl, which was accidentally broken while old Kingsburgh and the Prince were enjoying a reeking glass of toddy the night Charles was at Kingsburgh House, is now in the possession of a well-known Glasgow gentleman (Thomas Williamson, Esq., Woodlands Terrace, Glasgow). Mr Williamson's wife, Anne M'Donald, who died about two years ago, was a direct descendant of the M'Donalds of Kingsburgh, and inherited a number of valued relics belonging to Flora M'Donald and her family, including the broken punch bowl, and some beautiful miniature portraits of Flora, and several members of her family, &c. I have heard several versions as to the way the said bowl was broken, but as I am not quite sure which of these versions is the correct one, I will not here relate any of them; but there can be no doubt as to the bowl having been broken. The Prince, accompanied by Kingsburgh and Flora M'Donald, arrived at Kingsburgh House on the 29th of June, 1746, about 11 o'clock at night. Mrs M'Donald—or as she was usually called, Lady Kingsburgh—lost no time in preparing a good supper, at which the Prince, still wearing the female disguise, placed Flora on his right, and his hostess on his left. After supper the two ladies retired to have some private conversation by themselves, leaving old Kingsburgh and Charles over a bowl of hot punch. It was after the ladies had retired that the punch bowl was broken. The pieces were, however, afterwards carefully collected, and sent to London, where they were put together again, and very neatly drilled and clasped, and it is now carefully preserved in a beautiful glass case, as a much-prized relic of Prince Charlie and Flora M'Donald.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM PORTREE TO GAIRLOCH AND AUCHNASHEEN.

We spent the best part of next day (Wednesday) visiting all the places of interest about Portree and its vicinity. In course of the day we went in a rowing boat to see Prince Charlie's Cave, situated close to the sea shore, about 4 miles from the pier, or some two miles north from the entrance to the harbour. This Cave forms the scene of Thomas Duncan's celebrated picture, in which the Prince is represented asleep in the inner cavern, with the dauntless Flora M'Donald standing over the entrance.

From about the centre of the town a peculiarly-formed promontory juts out into the bay or loch. Its crest is adorned with some fine green firs, and surmounted by an octagonal tower, from which in a clear day a fine view of the surrounding district is obtained. There is a number of nice walks along the sides of the elevated rounded hill, affording a delightful bird's-eye view of the whole town and harbour, &c., far down below.

On the previous evening we met quite unexpectedly a well-known engineer from Glasgow, who had come north for a few days to superintend a number of his workmen who were putting up a new engine of some 30 H. P. at the Portree Woollen Mills, to assist the Turbin water-wheel when required. He kindly invited us to visit the Mills. We told him that we intended to be in the town most of the following day, and would be glad to look in at the works to see him. On our way to the Mills, situated about a mile west from the town, we were astonished to observe the Portree river, which we had crossed a few hours previously in its ordinary state, now raging and foaming from bank to brae. It was a warm sunny day at Portree, but a deluge of rain or water-spout had fallen a few miles farther west, which caused the sudden and unexpected spate. We were much pleased and interested with all we saw at the Woollen Mills. The proprietor buys "tarry-oo," and sells the cloths finished—chiefly "gude rouch teuch" tweeds —for which, I believe, there is great demand. Besides many other interesting things, we were shown a fine showy tartan plaid that was being finished with extra care to be presented by a Skye lady to Professor Blackie, the indefatigable champion of the ancient Gaelic language and Highlanders.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon we joined the steamer Lochiel bound for Gairloch, in Ross-shire, and bade farewell to Skye, carrying with us vivid and lasting

memories of our many and varied rambles, the grand and the sublime, the picturesque and wild scenery, and the hospitable Highland people of Skye.

Skye, or Eilean-Sgiathach as it is called in Gaelic—the native language of the people—signifies the Winged Island, because the two northern promontories, Vaternish stretching north-west, and Trotternish north-east, resembles two long outstretched wings. It forms no inconsiderable portion of Inverness-shire, and is the largest and most important of the Hebridean or Western Islands, and comprises an area of about 350,000 acres, with a population of rather more than 17,000. Though its extreme length is upwards of fifty miles, with a breadth varying from ten to twenty-five, it is so much indented by numerous winding arms of the sea, that it is said there is no spot on the Island at a greater distance from the sea than three and a-half miles. Probably no part of the known world is more profusely watered from above and below than the Hebrides. Where the sea does not indent and nearly bisect the islands in almost every conceivable direction, they abound in streams, small rivulets, and fresh water lakes. It is generally said that, on an average, rain falls three days in every four throughout the year.

The prevailing character or general appearance of the Island is that of an extensive mountainous moorland, with large tracts covered with moss, coarse grass, rocks, heath and heather, and presenting a naked, barren, treeless, haggard aspect. It contains, however, many tracts of

excellent hill grazing, some green-clad hills, and in several districts a considerable extent of good arable land—more especially in the district of Kilmuir, which forms part of Trotternish. The mountains stand more in groups than ranges. A large portion of the surface of the Island consists of three distinctly separated groups or assemblages of lofty mountains, each group differing widely in formation and general outline. Few countries present such grand and wild mountain and rock scenery, no less striking and uncommon than diversified, and unique in their character and general outline, sometimes rugged and precipitous, and again rising by gentle slopes into regular terraces, diversified by projecting raggled crags, deep houghs and hollows, and lofty pinnacles of dark scaured bare rock.

Skye is invested with associations of undying interest in connection with Flora M'Donald, the historical heroine of Skye, and the wanderings and many hairbreadth escapes of the unfortunate Prince Charlie, who was often concealed for weeks together in damp, gloomy, eerie caves amidst the mountain solitudes of the Western Highlands, his daily wants sometimes supplied by poor, but trusty Highland peasants, who, notwithstanding the large and tempting bribe or reward of £30,000 offered for his capture, scorned the idea of betraying to his eager pursuers the hiding-place of the fugitive Prince, which redounds to the lasting honour and glory of the true and noble-minded Highlanders.

After getting fairly out through the narrow entrance to Portree Loch, the steamer's course was steered about due north. Steamers for Strome Ferry, Glasgow, &c., after leaving the harbour, turn straight south. The Sound of Raasay is probably about five miles broad, with Raasay on our right, and the Trotternish district of Skye on our left. As the steamer proceeds, one gets a splendid front view of the magnificent range of rock scenery which stretches along the east side of Trotternish from Portree to the Point of Aird, a distance of over 20 miles. About the centre of the range rises the Storr Rock, a lofty mountain over 2000 feet high; while the "Old Man of Storr," a spiral bare pinnacle, 160 feet from the ground, forms a conspicuous object, which serves as a well known land mark to sailors. Lower down there are several other detached and sharply peaked masses of rock of great height—one of them is said to have a striking likeness to Sir Walter Scott's Monument in Edinburgh, and, singularly enough, there is a projecting piece of the same rock, which, when seen from a certain standpoint, resembles the bust of the great novelist. A short way farther north is Craig-na-Feile, or the Kilt Rock, so called from the perpendicular pillared rock being chequered by horizontal strata, resembling a colossal kilted Highlander.

When approaching the rock-bound island of Rona, we were somewhat puzzled by observing the steamer's course being steered to all appearance straight on to the

bare, rocky beach, but on rounding a jutting point the steamer was swung sharply round, and we entered the narrow creek or channel which separates the islands of Raasay and Rona, and nearly ran down a sailing yacht belonging to a Glasgow ex-Bailie. The yacht was becalmed in the narrow strait, and was being towed by two sailors. Although three of our party had known the Bailie quite well for many years, and got a good look at him on board his yacht, yet none of them could possibly remember who he was. He looked so very different in his yachting uniform of dark blue, a short jacket elaborately adorned with yellow braid and buttons, &c., and a smart cap, and altogether so unlike his usual fashionable rig-out when seen walking along the streets of Glasgow. However, two of our party met the Bailie next morning along the beach at Gairloch, and matters were soon cleared up. I believe that, as a general rule, the steamers all sail round the north end of the island, both going and returning to and from Gairloch to Portree.

At one time the sole occupants of the island of Rona were a fisherman, his wife and three sons. The father and the three sons while returning one dark, stormy night from the Minch, were wrecked on one of the sunken rocks north of the island. The poor woman, thus suddenly bereaved of her husband and three sons, kept a candle burning in her window every dark night for long afterwards, until at length a substantial lighthouse was erected on the extreme north point of the island, principally it is

said by her exertions, and she was rewarded by being appointed lighthouse keeper. Fairly clear of the bare, rocky island of Rona, we entered the Minch, and looking back we gazed for some time with keen delight on a grand panorama of the lofty peaked summits of Skye, gorgeously gilded in the refulgent golden gleam of the setting sun. We arrived at Gairloch-head at 7.30, and found carriages in waiting at the peir to convey passengers to the Gairloch Hotel, about half a-mile distant, a large modern building and superbly furnished. We left next morning at 10 A.M. by coach for Loch Maree and Anchnasheen, passing Flowerdale House, the residence of Sir Kenneth M'Kenzie, Bart., proprietor of Gairloch, &c., situated in a cosie, wooded dell, sheltered on three sides by a romantic range of craggy heights. After proceeding a few miles, partly through a forest of splendid timber, the road ascends a long, steep brae, for several miles. When the summit is gained, we get probably one of the best views to be had of the famed Loch Maree, or St. Mary's Loch, with its seven-and-twenty islands. The level of the lake is attained by a long and steep declivity. Passing on by the side of the Loch, the Victoria Falls are passed pretty close to the road on the right. As we emerge from a wood the Loch Maree Hotel is reached, which stands on the banks of the lake, some nine miles from Gairloch. The Queen stayed for about a week at this hotel in the autumn of 1877. On a huge detached block of pale red granite, which

stands straight across the road from the hotel, Sir Kenneth M'Kenzie of Gairloch has got an inscription put on the stone in Gaelic, as a memento of Her Majesty's visit to Loch Maree. The inscription reads as follows :—

Air an dara latha, deug deth
mhios meadhonach an fhoghair,
1877,
thanaig
Ban righ Bhictoria,
a dh-fhaicum Loch Marinthe,
agus nan criochan mun ouairt,
dh-fhair i sea oidche san tigh-osder so thall
agus na caomhdalachd, dheonaich i
cum biodh a chlach so na cuinihneachan
air an tlachd a fhuair i
na teachd don chearn so de Ros.

The following is a translation of the Gaelic inscription—"On the 12th day of the middle month of autumn, 1877, Queen Victoria came to visit Loch Maree and the country around it. She remained six nights in the hotel opposite, and in her kindness agreed that this stone should be a memento of the pleasure she so experienced in coming to this part of Ross-shire.

We intended to have remained at the Loch Maree Hotel until the following day, but the weather looked very unpromising, so we resolved to proceed on our journey. We were disappointed at missing our proposed visit to the famous Isle Maree, the largest of the numerous islands on the Loch, and associated with many thrilling and romantic stories of long by-gone days. It

contains the ruins of an ancient monastery or religious edifice, which, having been dedicated to the Virgin Mary, may very probably have given its name to the Loch. Outside the old ruins there is a very ancient burying place. In another corner of the island there is a small well whose waters, with the additional operation of being dragged through the Loch to an adjoining island, was celebrated far and wide in the days of yore as an unfailing cure for insanity.

"Calm on the breast of Isle Maree
A little well resposes;
A shadow woven of the oak,
And willow o'er it closes.

And whoso bathes therein his brow,
With care or madness burning,
Feels once again his healthful thought
And sense of peace returning.

Life's changes vex; its discords stun;
Its glaring sunshine blindeth;
And blest is he who on his way
That fount of healing findeth!"

Long ago, a Danish Prince appointed Isle Maree as the meeting place with his betrothed bride, the daughter of an Irish king. Having learned that the ship was approaching Poolewe, the Prince sent a messenger thither to ascertain if the lady had come. Those on board were preparing to hoist a white flag—the agreed upon signal to announce her arrival—when she, wishing to test his affection, ordered a black flag to be unfurled

instead, upon seeing which the Prince, whose mind was overcome with anxiety, sank down quivering and died. The painfully sad news being communicated to the lady, she dropped down on the deck in a paroxysm of grief and despair, and breathed her last. Two flat native stones lying side by side, within the ruined walls of the ancient sacred edifice, is said to mark the graves of the two unfortunate lovers.

"Far let me wander down thy craggy shore,
With rocks and trees bestrewn, dark Loch Maree;
Till that green isle I view, whence, gazing o'er
Thy placid flood, long looked the prince to see,
If yet the expected signal told that she,
His own loved princess, his betrothed bride,
Drew near, his own for evermore to be;
Then, when the black flag he afar descried,
In heedless sport displayed, sank shuddering down
and died."

After a short stay at the hotel, changing horses, &c., we continued our journey, but had not proceeded very far when, as if by a stroke of the magician's wand, the grand and picturesque surrounding scenery of scaured, sterile, lofty Bens, enclosing the beautiful rippled lake with its cluster of bosky green islands, was slowly, but steadily, and at length completely screened from our admiring gaze by a curtain of thick, grey mist, and heavy drenching rain, rendering the rest of our journey by coach dull and uninteresting in the extreme. After a long and dreary drive for many miles up a toilsome steep ascent, we reached Auchnasheen Hotel in plenty of

time to have dinner, before the arrival of the train from Strome Ferry. Dinner over, we found our way to the railway station, and were soon comfortably seated in a carriage, and careering down the long incline, towards the capital of Ross-shire, on our way to the more genial and sunny south and home.