CHAPTER XXI.

BURN OF CRAIG—RIVERS BOGIE, DEVERON, AND ISLA—DUFF HOUSE, AND BANFF.

THE Deveron, and its tributaries, rise in Aberdeenshire, among the second-rate hills of the Cairngorm group. The course of the principal stream to Banff, where it throws itself into the German Ocean, is about 50 miles in extreme length. As nothing of any importance has reached me regarding the Deveron, above Huntly, I shall begin with the burn watering and animating Mr Gordon's romantic residence of Craig, which, uniting itself at some distance below the house with the Burn of Clova, forms the river Bogie. The whole of the wooden bridges were swept from Mr Gordon's pleasure-walks. One of these, immediately under the house, rested on a huge mass of the basaltic rock, which I measured, 8 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 4 feet deep—dimensions that would make it weigh something between seven and eight tons. Yet this ponderous and angular body was removed by the flood full 300 yards down the stream! The inclination of the channel of the burn is considerable; but it had not been rolled; for I particularly remarked some delicate plants of maiden-hair fern *(Asplenium Rata muraria)*, still growing unharmed on its upper side, which would have been destroyed by the least friction against the rocky bottom of the burn. Its progress, therefore,

PLATE LVI.

A *The Stone.*
B *The piece chipped out of the rock.*

PL. LVII.

PL. LVIII.

must have been effected by the water gradually sliding it forward. The last exploit performed by this errant mass, was a leap over a cascade, of some 30 feet of fall. In executing this, it did not select the lower part of the ledge, but the higher part of it, that is rarely covered but in great floods; and, as nobody happened to witness its feat, it chipped a large triangular piece out of the sharp edge of the shelf of rock, that, viewed in conjunction with its present resting-place, removes all doubt as to the circumstances attending its descent. (Plate LVI.)

Mr Gordon informs me that the shock of an earthquake was felt in this neighbourhood towards the morning of the 4th. After the ruin we have been contemplating on the banks of the more northern rivers, the injury done by the Bogie, and its tributaries, to the land and crop, is really not worth notice. But no less than seven important bridges were swept away, and one much injured, by these streams. On the Deveron, two bridges were carried off; that near the ruins of Peterkirk was of 56 feet span. Besides these, seven other bridges, in different parts of the district, were much damaged. Mr Murdoch, at Huntly Lodge, informs me, that the whole of these have suffered, not from lateral pressure, but from the water ruining the foundation where there was no rock. To prevent this evil in future, he very properly recommends a substantial pavement to be carried, from a point 10 or 20 feet above the bridge, round the pillars, under the arch, and to a distance of at least 10 feet below it, to be defended by rows of good piles at both extremities.

At Huntly, the flood was 22 feet above ordinary level at the old bridge of Deveron, only 6 feet of the arch being left unoccupied. A mass of the rock, rent

out by the roots of a tree that grew in it, was carried about 60 or 80 yards down, and now lies in the middle of the stream. The park wall, to the west of the old Castle of Huntly, is about 7 feet high, yet the water rose 2 feet over it, and made its way through the park towards the Bogie, isolating the noble ruin. The whole of the fertile haugh above the wall, which is let out in acres to the inhabitants of Huntly, was flooded half-a-mile wide, and from 3 to 9 feet deep. Through all this meadow, hay-cocks might be seen sailing along. Those belonging to Dr M'Coll, with a hay-stack at their head, looked like a fleet of merchantmen under convoy. They weighed from their anchorage at the upper extremity of the park wall, the line of which ran at right angles to that of the flood; and, sailing along its whole length, they wore, and turned in at the park gate, in very regular order, and took up a new position on the bank opposite to the Castle. From its situation between its two rivers, Huntly was almost surrounded by water; but the current was gentle, and tore away little soil, except from a few turnip fields. The Bogie flooded the distillery at Pirie's Mill, and destroyed a great quantity of malt; and some other houses and mills were inundated, but none were carried off. The house of Thomas Leslie, fisherman to the Duke of Gordon, was almost filled by the Deveron. All the family left it on the evening of the 3d, except the man's daughter, who perched herself on the top of a chest of drawers, made by a favourite brother, resolving to save the beloved piece of furniture, or perish with it. Both were fortunately preserved. Six fine heifers belonging to the Marquis of Caermarthen, which were grazing in a little paddock, railed in from the park, and immediately within the park wall, already

mentioned, were nearly drowned. Their lowings, expressively speaking their terror, were extremely affecting. A breach was made near the end of the wall towards Huntly; and some boys, by first wading to the neck, and then swimming, got behind the poor animals, and drove them out. There was a prodigious commotion among the hares, rats, mice, and moles, an immense number of which were drowned. At one place, not less than 50 weasels were dislodged from a deep covered drain. The creatures ran anxiously about, rising occasionally upon their hind legs, and looking as if amazed at what had befallen them.

The House of Avochy, on the right bank, stands about 10 feet above the level of the river, yet the inundation was 3½ feet deep all over the lower storey, and the furniture was floating about. In more confined situations on this property, it rose fully 18 feet, exceeding the great flood of 1768 by from 15 inches to 1½ feet, and that of 1799 by 2 feet or 2½ feet. The garden was flooded 4 feet, and the offices 3 feet deep. The flood was at its height on the morning of the 4th, between seven and eight o'clock.

The Isla, which joins the Deveron from the left bank, destroyed several dwelling houses and other buildings. The mill and brewery at Keith would have been demolished by it, but for the exertions of those on the spot. The destruction of vats, casks, and beer, was great; and the whole winter stock of coals was carried away.

On Lord Fife's property of Rothiemay, on the left bank, a few acres were carried off. Some of the smaller streams hereabouts rose 15 feet, and swept away great numbers of pigs and other animals. On the morning of the 4th, three men who went out to cut grass in the

haughs of Rothiemay, were suddenly surrounded by the water breaking out upon them from several different parts of the river at the same moment. They had a horse and cart with them; and, after driving the animal to the highest accessible ground, and being pursued thither by the inundation, they unyoked him, and got into the cart. The water rose around them, luckily without much current, till it reached their shoulders; and in this condition, they sat until next morning at eight o'clock. A boat was at last carried from a distance of six miles to effect their rescue. When landed, they were so benumed and exhausted, as to be unable either to stand or to speak.

At the Bridge of Marnoch, I learned from some masons, that the Deveron had risen 14 feet above the usual level there.

Sir George Abercromby had 2 acres of soil carried off at Forglen, worth £120; corn crops destroyed and damaged, £80; pasture and hay injured, £34; and growing wood lost, £40: in addition to which it is calculated that £500 will be required to make the whole banks secure. I mention these particulars to shew how much less the scale of ruin on the Deveron was than that of the Spey or Findhorn, where the damage on such an estate as that of Forglen would have been 10 or 15 times as much. Sir George's cattle were surrounded, but they all got safe out. The height of the flood here was 19½ feet above the usual level of the river.

At the Craigs of Alvah, where the Deveron enters the beautiful grounds of Duff House, under the noble Bridge of Alvah, the rocks cross the valley exactly like the dam of a mill-pond, above which the flood formed a lake nearly a mile long, by above a quarter

of a mile wide. This natural compensation-pond was of various depths, from 10 feet on the haughs to 40 feet at the entrance to the Craigs. It was well for Duff House and the good town of Banff, that this immense body of water was so arrested; for, if it could have been otherwise, their disasters would have been greater. The water above the Craigs was smooth and unruffled. On looking towards the bridge from the haughs, with the eye placed on a level with the water, a very small segment of the arch was visible. The fall, therefore, immediately above the bridge, resembling the escape of the water from a sluice, was not less than 15 feet. So great was the rapidity in the narrow pass among the rocks, that some aquatic birds were literally dashed to pieces by it; and its impetuosity at the entrance was sufficiently displayed, by the whole of the trees and bushes being overturned and thrown with their tops downwards. Had the bridge been situated at the upper part of the rocky pass, it must have been inevitably swept away. The crop that lay under so great a depth of water, was of course almost entirely destroyed.

The Bridge of Alva, consisting of one grand and lofty arch, reminds me more of a Roman work than anything of modern times. (Plate LVII.) To have stood in the midst of its beautiful scenery, when the mighty lake above was discharging itself between the Craigs, would have been to enjoy a spectacle of the most sublime description. From the rocky nature of the banks for some miles down, little damage was done to the upper part of the grounds of Duff House. But, in the lower part of the park, and at Banff, the effects of the storm and flood were both severely felt.

Towards the afternoon of the 3d, the water-bleared horizon dimly shewed a number of vessels, struggling

hard to keep off the iron-bound coast on their lee, and apparently in fearful distress. As some of them were evidently fast yielding to the storm, parties of the Whitehills fishermen patrolled the beach all that dark and tempestuous night, to be ready with their help, if aught of help might yet avail. The fears and the pious hopes of these praiseworthy fellows were soon alike realized; for, about one o'clock in the morning, the coal brig Success came ashore among the rocks to the eastward of the Knockhead, and six men and a woman, all in an exhausted state, were safely landed by their intrepid and well-directed exertions. So furious was the surf, that it instantly beat the vessel to pieces, and literally pounded her cargo to a powder that blackened the white waves around. As day broke, two sloops were seen among the breakers, rapidly driven towards the Sands of Boyndie, where the men of the preventive coast-guard had joined the Whitehills fishermen. As they drifted on, the toil-spent crews were seen clinging to the rigging, as if in preparation for the coming shock. One of them, the Katherine, was immediately thrown on her beam-ends on the sand, and the spray that dashed over her left it doubtful whether the men were swept away. But she partly righted, and the crew again became visible. A rope was thrown over her by Captain Manby's apparatus; but the poor people were so worn out and benumbed, that upwards of an hour was lost before they could draw in and adjust the cable and reeve-rope, after which they were all safely landed. The other vessel, called The Active, being new, leaked less, and maintained her upright position, so that the crew remained dry on board of her till the tide fell.

The lower part of the town of Banff is bounded on the south by the gardens of Duff House. The wall,

partly built of stone and partly of brick, extends along the whole of Bridge Street, the market-place, and thence eastward, till it joins the bridge. Above the gardens, and in the middle of the expanded part of the valley, stands the Earl of Fife's residence. At a bend of the river, about half-a-mile above the house, there was a strong embankment. Over this the flood poured with tremendous impetuosity on the morning of the 4th, overspreading the extensive park and lawn around Duff House, and, in a few minutes, deluging the gardens below, to the depth, in some places, of 14 feet. The wall was now the only barrier between the immense inundation above it, and the nether quarter of the town below it. For a short time, it most wonderfully resisted the weight of water that pressed upon it. But it soon began to betray symptoms of weakness, in a thousand little jets that played through it in all directions, till the waters, becoming impatient of longer restraint, burst a large breach in it, and rushed onwards into the market-place. Terrific was the scene that now ensued. At that early hour, many of the houses were occupied by unconscious sleepers; and such of these as were in the lower apartments, received the first intimation of the disaster from the water that approached them in their beds. To think of saving furniture where life was so immediately at stake, was impossible. Those in houses of more than one storey fled for safety to the upper rooms, abandoning every description of property below, and there they remained trembling with apprehension lest the foundations of the buildings might be undermined by the furious flood; whilst those in humbler dwellings, being compelled to make their way into the street, many of them almost in a state of nudity, and many of them, with infants in their arms,

were seen struggling for their lives in the midst of the raging waters.

And now the alarm was given, and down ran the population from the upper streets of the town, mingling their shouts and exclamations of astonishment with the cries of those who wrestled with the peril that had so suddenly environed them. Help was speedily lent by such as were best able to give aid; and, after the rescue of all who were in immediate jeopardy, some attempt was made to save a few articles of furniture, shop goods of all kinds, and whatever valuables could be most easily snatched up. As the day advanced, the water still increased, till the strong bulwark forming the eastern boundary of the town, having been partly cut, gave way. The water rushed in with unparalleled force, demolished one house completely, and very much injured several others. By 12 o'clock, the flood had attained its greatest height, being 18 feet 4 inches above the ordinary level of the river at low tide. This was ascertained from an accurate measurement made in the market-place. By this time, the view from the upper part of the town was truly grand, if the destruction of property, and the perilous state of those who still remained in the higher apartments of their houses, could have been forgotten. The streets below appeared like canals. Lord Fife's park and gardens formed one immense lake, studded with islands and clumps of trees; and the beautiful Bridge of Banff, though nearly engulfed, was still withstanding the mighty force of this otherwise overpowering deluge; whilst boats were plying everywhere across the flat, from the Palmer's Cove, near Macduff, almost all the way to the top of Bridge Street.

An alarm was given that a number of cattle were

drowning in a field above Duff House, and that some men, who had gone on horseback to their relief, were now participating in their danger. A boat was hastily dragged to the place, and the men and the animals were seen clustered together on a knoll, in the midst of the flood. The boat was launched and pushed off; and, on reaching the isolated spot, the first creature that sought safety in it was a poor hare, which had survived the fate of hundreds of her tribe. A number of live rats were also collected on the knoll. The people and the cattle were all saved. In the kitchen and eastern wing of Duff House, the water rose to the height of 4 feet. Mounds of clay and sods were raised to keep it out of the western rooms; but the water forced itself up, in powerful springs, through the floors and pavements, and compelled the factor to remove the furniture to the rooms above. A tame eagle, long a favourite, was drowned.

The mail-coach had found it impracticable to proceed south, in the morning, by its usual route, and had gone round by the Bridge of Alva. It was therefore supposed that the mail for Inverness, which reaches Banff in the afternoon, would take the same road. But what was the astonishment of the assembled population, when the coach appeared, within a few minutes of the usual time, at the farther end of the Bridge of Banff. The people who were standing there, urged both the guard and coachman not to attempt to pass where their danger was so certain. On hearing this, the passengers left the coach; but the guard and coachman, scouting the idea of danger in the very streets of Banff, disregarded the advices they received, and drove straight forward along the bridge. As they turned the corner of the butcher market, signals were

made, and loud cries were uttered from the nearest houses, to warn them of the danger of advancing; yet still they kept urging the horses onwards. But no sooner had they reached the place where the wall had burst, than coach and horses were at once borne away together, by the raging current, and the vehicle was dashed violently against the corner of Gillan's Inn. The whole four horses immediately disappeared, but rose and plunged again, and dashed and struggled long and hard for their lives. Loud were the shrieks of those who witnessed this spectacle. A boat came almost instantaneously to the spot; but, as the rowers pushed up to try to disengage the horses, the poor animals, as they alternately reached the surface, made desperate exertions to get into the boat, so that extreme caution was necessary in approaching them. They did succeed in liberating one of them, which immediately swam along the streets, amidst the cheering of the populace; but the other three sank to rise no more. By this time the coach, with the coachman and guard, had been thrown on the pavement, where the depth of water was less; and there the guard was seen clinging to the top, and the coachman hanging by his hands to a lamp-post, with his toes occasionally touching the box. In this perilous state they remained till another boat came and relieved them, when the guard and the mails were landed in safety. Great indignation was displayed against the obstinacy which had produced this accident. But much is to be said in defence of the servants of the royal mail, who are expected to persevere in their endeavours to forward the public post, in defiance of risk, though, in this case, their zeal was unfortunately proved to have been mistaken.

In running off, the flood broke down the walls of the slaughter-houses, and the house of the tacksman of the customs. A good deal of water still remained in the market-place on the 5th, and the cellars were not emptied on the 8th. Trouts, flounders, and eels were taken in them and in kitchens. The loss of property was very great, as may easily be imagined when it is stated that no less than fifty houses, and seven shops, containing perishable merchandise to a great amount, were flooded. Two men narrowly escaped drowning, their boat having been driven into a frightful vortex at the river's mouth.

Mr William Robertson, of Banff, has some memoranda regarding floods in the Deveron in the years 1739, 1768, 1772, and 1779, but none of these appear to have equalled that of last August. The notice regarding that of 1739 is worth recording. "In January this year, and on a public market-day, a great flood took place on the Dovern, when William Haddo, with two men and three women, crossing in a ferry-boat, were forced down the river by the impetuosity of the current, and carried out to sea. The two men and two of the women unfortunately perished; but the other woman, of the name of Shand, was miraculously saved, owing to her having a large sack of wool on her back, which buoyed her up, until a Doune* boat reached her in the bay, and picked her up. Some will have it that she floated about during part of a day, and all the following night; but it rather appears she was rescued from her great peril almost immediately on being seen in the bay."

The rivers Ugie and Ythan, though flooded, were productive of nothing worth notice.

* Now Macduff.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RIVER DON.

THE river Don rises from the hills bordering on the higher mountains of the Cairngorm group. Its windings give it a course of about 62 miles; but the straight line of country it waters is not above two-thirds of that extent. Although much more flooded on the 3d and 4th of August than it ever was known to have been before, yet it was less extravagantly so than any of the other rivers. The rain that fell, though very great, was considered by many as quite inadequate to account for its rapid and uncommon increase. "*It didna come oot o' the cludds*," was an observation frequently made with a grave face, and a significant shake of the head, by those who had seen many floods, but nothing like this.

Mr Watson, landlord of the New Arms Inn, Strathdon, was awakened, between the hours of one and two o'clock in the morning of the 4th of August, by the shock of an earthquake. He could not speak with any degree of accuracy as to its duration or direction, but he says that it set all the glasses and tumblers in a cupboard a-ringing, and threw down the key of a clock that was placed on the top of the clock-case. At the same hour, the school-house of Strathdon was also felt to shake by several persons.

At Milltown of Allargue, the house of a shoemaker was so instantaneously and unexpectedly swept away

by the bursting of a mill-dam, that the poor occupant only escaped by wading and plunging for his life, abandoning his whole stock of leather, lasts, and awls to the raging torrent. Even his very lapstone was not left behind. But sometimes the proverb of "an ill wind" may be applied with equal justice to the water. A strolling brother of the craft, who, but a few days before, had earnestly, but vainly, solicited him for the loan of a few lasts, procured an immediate supply, by searching among the wreck on the banks of the river.

The water so rapidly surrounded the farm-house of Dalachash, on the right bank, opposite to the church of Loinorn, that all possibility of retreat was cut off before the danger could be perceived. The tenant's wife had just had an accouchement, and her husband was in the greatest anxiety regarding her. With the utmost haste he built up the door and windows with turf, and having erected a temporary platform, as near the roof as possible, he lifted his wife and new-born babe, with great tenderness and care, and placed them upon it. There they spent that cheerless and dismal night, amidst the mingled roar of the waters and the tempest, awaiting the result with trembling anxiety. Most providentially, the house resisted the furious stream that beset it on all sides; and neither the woman nor her infant suffered materially from all they had been subjected to.

The house of a widow lady at Glenconry was so distant from the river, and so much elevated above it, that, deeming herself perfectly safe, she only felt for the danger of others. But her dream of security was disturbed by the flood first sweeping away some fine trees that stood between her and the river—then her washing-house, with all its contents of boilers and tubs,

vanished amid the waters—and next, a large peat stack, containing her whole stock of fuel, melted into the stream; the deluge then advanced on the house, with the threat of undermining it, and induced her to remove all her furniture, but, fortunately, it ultimately subsided, without doing farther injury.

Three miles of turnpike road were destroyed near Inverernan; and the Bridge of Naughty was swept away by the tributary stream of that name. The bridge over the Don at Castleton of Corgarff, built in 1749, and that across the same river at Poolduilie, which is as old as 1715, both resisted the violence of the flood; indeed, the number of *auld briggs* which have stood, whilst *new* erections have been swept away, is rather a reproach to the boasted superiority of modern masons. Early in the afternoon of the 3d, and long before the Don had risen to the unwonted height it afterwards attained, Mr Alexander Thomson, assistant schoolmaster of Strathdon, reached its banks about a quarter of a mile below the church, on his return from a visit to his relations at Drumblade. A strange infatuation seems to have attended this man. Within a few yards of the ford, there was a wooden bridge, along which he might have passed with perfect safety, for it remained uninjured throughout the whole flood. But he was observed to push his horse into the water without a moment's pause. Both were engulfed at once. The horse rose to the surface, and struggled to the farther bank; but the rider was gone. Nearly an hour elapsed before the body could be recovered. The moment it was found, it was carried to a poor old woman's humble cottage near the spot, but, strange to say! she stood in her doorway and peremptorily refused to admit it over her threshold. Let not the reader suppose, however,

that her conduct proceeded from any uncharitable feeling. The poor creature was overwhelmed by the superstitious dread, by no means uncommon, that the admission of a drowned person into her house was certain to be followed by some fearful calamity. But those who were vainly anxious to use every means to restore animation, would have taken the frail tenement by assault in their eagerness; she was therefore compelled to come to immediate terms with those who besieged her. A capitulation was the consequence; and she agreed to yield immediate admittance, on condition that the evil effects of her compliance should be guarded against, as far as possible, by the usual charm provided for such occasions. This was judged reasonable by all, and highly necessary by many; and accordingly the corpse was carried with all due ceremony completely around the outside walls of the house, after which it was permitted to enter. But this mysterious conjuration was not enough; and it is somewhat surprising that any one of the years and knowledge of this ancient dame should have allowed it to be so inefficiently performed. The effect was never held to be complete until the magical number of three circles had been performed around the dwelling. A charm never can be available unless its terms are executed to the veriest letter. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the result, in this case, should have been unfortunate, and that the poor woman's frail cottage was utterly destroyed, in the course of the night, by the river. Her own escape was a miracle. But if she has lost her house, she has at least gained a hard-earned experience, enabling her to assure her neighbours, that she never will again admit the body of a drowned person within the walls of the house she occupies.

A party of people were guiding Mr Forbes of Edinglassie to his shooting quarters, after the flood had considerably subsided on the evening of the 4th. They had reached a spot near Forbes Lodge, when one of the guides, in making his way through the inundation, suddenly began to flounder and plunge in a very unaccountable manner. The fellow was known to be a wag, and his companions being accustomed to see him play tricks for their amusement, laughed heartily at his supposed freak, and wondered what it would end in. But Mr Forbes, becoming alarmed at his strange mode of diving, rushed forward to his assistance, and drew him to land. Most fortunate it was that he did so, for the man had slipped into a newly formed hole, of great depth, and would have been drowned, but for Mr Forbes's prompt and humane aid. These dangerous excavations were so frequent, and the panic against fording streams became so general, that a medical practitioner, called on an express occasion which compelled him to cross the river Naughty on horseback, carefully fastened a strong rope round his body, and committed the other end of it to a trusty person posted on the bank he was quitting, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of the bystanders that it had been previously crossed on foot with perfect safety.

Opposite to the manse of Towie, the river completely altered its course, and left the bridge quite dry.

Another life was lost in this neighbourhood, in a yet more foolish manner than that of Mr Thomson. A blacksmith undertook, for a bet, to swim across the flooded river, near the mason-lodge of Glenkindy. If his strength had been like that of Hercules, it would have availed him nothing in such a stream. He was whelmed beneath the raging billows, and sank to rise

no more. If he who tempted him to so wilful a provocation of Providence, has any human feeling in his bosom, I should say with Douglas, that "happy in my mind was he who died."

The flood appeared to me to have been about 12 feet up on Alford Bridge, a handsome structure of 3 arches, where the valley was flooded for some hundred yards wide. The bridge is said to have been considerably shaken, and even rendered insecure.

At the house of Monymusk, where the haughs are flat, and very extensive, the Don rose about 10 feet; and, at Tillyfour, where the banks are contracted, its height was about 14 feet above ordinary level. The meal-mill at Ramstone, the saw-mill at Ordmill, and the malt-mill in the distillery at Monymusk, all sustained injury by the flood. Several bridges were damaged, and some soil carried off, but to an extent not worth naming, after the devastations of the Findhorn and Spey. The loss of crop was everywhere considerable.

At Kemnay, the terrors of the storm were heightened, about six o'clock in the evening of the 3d, by tremendous thunder and lightning. The flood was at its height about seven o'clock in the morning of the 4th, having risen, opposite to the manse, 13 feet above ordinary level, and 15 feet at a point about a mile below, where the ground on both sides is elevated. Several houses were flooded 4 or 5 feet deep; half the mill-house of Kemnay was swept away, and the wooden part of the machinery carried down to Inverurie and Kintore. The millstone was moved several yards, and left on a little island. In the parishes of Oyne, Monymusk, Kemnay, and that part of Inverurie and Kintore lying above the Inverurie Bridge, all the best

land was flooded to the extent of at least 600 acres, averaging 24s an acre of rent. Many acres were covered with sand and gravel; and the crop, being all in a state of immaturity, was very much injured. To give some idea of the loss in the grain crop, one farmer carried to the mill the whole produce of 4 acres of his best land, and brought home 4 bolls of very bad meal.

Mr William Williamson, butcher, of George Street, Aberdeen, was riding between Kemnay and Monymusk, when his horse started at some wreck that was floating on the road, near a bridge, then completely flooded over by the Burn of Ton. The animal leaped over the end of the bridge, and disappeared with his rider in the stream, then raging along 10 feet deep. His companion was Mr George Williamson, grandson and nameson of the great cattle-dealer so called, well known at every market from John o' Groat's to Smithfield, by the name of *Stately*. With a bravery not often paralleled, he leaped to the ground, stripped, and in defiance of the furious flood, plunged in, and dived in several places. He did succeed in getting hold of the horse's rein, and dragged him out; but the rider was irrecoverably lost. This is perhaps the most gallant action I have had to notice; and Mr George Williamson would indeed richly merit some distinguished mark of the approbation of his fellow-men. The body was not found until next morning.

For a day or two before the storm, the haugh land was observed to be so unaccountably loose and wet, that the feet sank into it at every step. The Rev. Dr Mitchell of Kemnay * has lived to see all the floods of the Don since 1768. He says that of August last was at least two feet higher than that of 1768, which

* The learned editor of Dr Campbell's works.

was much greater than any other he ever witnessed.

At Inverurie, the furious rain and wind was attended, in the afternoon of the 3d, by the loudest thunder, and the most vivid lightning, that had ever been seen there. The Don and the Ury join about three quarters of a mile below the town. The church-yard lies by the side of the road leading to Keithhall, close to the singular green knoll called *The Bass*, and the Ury runs on the north side of both. But, on the morning of the 4th, the rivers united close to the town, and inundated some of the houses 4 feet deep. As in the case of that near Grantown, this church-yard was completely covered, the tops of two or three of the tallest tombstones only being visible; and one of these frail memorials of the dead was actually carried off by the force of the stream, and deposited on the haugh grounds below Kintore, a distance of four or five miles down the river! More than once during the day, a boat was seen to sail over the church-yard. The Bass is an artificial mount, being a very regularly shaped truncated cone of about 40 feet in perpendicular height. A smaller mount, of less regular shape, and half the height, rises to the east of it. The Bass is one of those *moot hills*, or places for holding courts, not unfrequently found in Scotland. This is the Bass alluded to in Thomas-a-Rhymer's prophecy:—

> "The Dee and Don shall run in one,
> The Tweed shall run to Tay;
> And the bonny Water of Ury
> Shall bear the Bass away."

As the first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled by the formation of the Aberdeenshire Canal, which is fed from the Don at Inverurie, and discharges itself

into the Dee at Aberdeen, I felt very desirous to know whether the fate of The Bass had been, in any degree, hastened by the operation of the late flood; but I am happy to say it remains untouched. The inundation stood high on it, and even left a wooden bridge upon it; but the water was rendered dead and harmless by the force of the Don damming it back. The destruction of crops on the Don and Ury was very considerable, but the injury done the properties on the banks has been comparatively little. The bridge on the Ury at Williamston was carried off, and those at Pitmachie and Pitcaple were so injured, that the former has been taken down.

The flood of the 1768, which seems to have stood next to that of August last, left a small spot of the haugh ground visible below Inverurie; whereas, on the 4th, a paling 4 feet high, standing on the same piece of ground, was completely hid.

At Fintray, on the Skene estate, the tenant was engaged with three of his servants repairing an embankment when the flood burst out about a mile above them, and surrounded them. Fortunately their alarming situation was observed; horses were sent in for them, and they were removed, with the greatest difficulty and danger, from a high earthen fence, where they had taken refuge.

At Kintore, where the environs are flat, a number of people were taken out of their houses, at the upper windows, by means of boats. At Dyce, the roads were so flooded on both sides of the river, that it was impossible to cross by the bridge; so that the Banff mail was obliged to find its way to Aberdeen by the old road. A good many cattle were swept from the haughs of Bedlestown, and utterly lost.

The flood was at its height at Mr Pirie's paper-mill, at Stoneywood, near Aberdeen, about noon on the 4th, and continued unabated till between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The water made a breach in the bulwarks, between 11 and 12 o'clock, swept them entirely away, and, rushing with resistless fury through the premises, carried off some of the smaller houses, with a considerable quantity of paper and rags, destroyed the water-courses, and made a new channel for the flood-water of the river. At this point, the bed of the river is confined by rocks, the current is consequently very rapid, and the height of the flood was from 12 to 14 feet above ordinary level. The houses of the workmen, near the mills, were under water, and part of their furniture was washed out and carried away. Five men employed in a drying-house, situated between the mill-lead and the Don, were intercepted in their attempt to escape, and obliged to take refuge in the highest part of the haugh, of which about half-an-acre had remained uncovered. Their situation was distressing and hazardous. Captain Manby's apparatus was sent for, and speedily brought to the spot by Lieutenant Sanderson of the Preventive Service, and the men of the Don station under his command. A small line was sent over to the men on the island, who fixed the end of the rope to a pole there; but, in a few minutes, the fury of the flood loosened the pole, and swept it away. In the course of the afternoon, however, the people on shore, by means of the small rope of the apparatus, contrived to send over some refreshments to the poor fellows, which served to enliven their spirits, and enabled them to bear up under their misery. At length, as the river subsided, all fears for their safety ceased; and, about four o'clock on the morning of the 4th,

they were brought out in a state of great exhaustion.

Much damage was also sustained at Mr Davidson's paper-mill. A house occupied by Mr Watson, *junior*, was reduced to a heap of ruins, and Mrs Watson, who remained in it until part of the furniture had floated out, had nearly perished. Another house, immediately adjoining, was also swept away. Considerable damage was done by the water entering the lower storey of the Printfield. At Persely bleachfield, the sluices of the mill-lead gave way on the forenoon of the 4th, and, in a few moments, the field and the workmen were surrounded by water. The mill-lead, which runs 12 feet above the level of the river, was confounded with it in one stream. Boats were procured, and the people were relieved, but many of the dwelling-houses were injured and their furniture destroyed. Some damage was likewise sustained at Gordon's Mills Bleachfield, and at Messrs Smith & Company's Paper-work. The flood also rose to the lower windows of the Grandholm works.

The park at Seton House was nearly covered, and the flood rose 4 feet in the ground-floor of the house, that was about 16 feet above the level of the river, and it was 18 feet higher in the gorge below. The gardener here recollects the flood of 1768 perfectly well. It took place in the end of September. He says it was not so high as that of the 4th of August last.* Lady Die Middleton, who then lived in Seaton House, was rescued by means of a ladder applied to a window of the second storey.

* This is doubted by some, from the height of the flood of 1768 being marked by a notch in a stone at the Mill of Dyce, which the last flood did not reach by eight inches. But we must not forget that the very effect of a flood is to enlarge the permanent capacity of the river's bed, so that, if precisely the same volume of water were to return, it would not nearly fill the altered channel. The excavations in the Findhorn and Divie, in certain

The river's channel becomes narrowed by the rocks on both sides, as it approaches the ancient *Brig of Balgownie.* The waters rose opposite to the centre of the arch, somewhat in the form of an arc, the extremities of which touched the foundations of the piers on both sides. From this height they poured down in a cascade of many feet, to the lower side of the bridge, where they produced a frightful whirlpool. "I have seen the waves of the Atlantic rolling down the Pentland Firth," says my informant, Mr George Tulloch,* "and wasting their gigantic strength on the bold and iron-bound coasts of the north; but even there my impression of power was less vivid. The united exertions of the whole human race seemed but a feeble conception compared with it, and I recurred to the sublime language of the Psalmist: 'The floods have lifted up, O Lord! the floods have lifted up their voice! the floods lift up their waves! The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the ocean.'"

The history of this old *Brig of Balgownie,* which stood firm amidst assault so terrible, is extremely interesting. (Plate LVIII.) Henry Cheyne, Bishop of Aberdeen, nephew of the Cumin who was killed by Bruce at Dumfries in 1305, fled to England after that event, and remained there for several years; but being reconciled to the King, he was allowed to return to his

places, were such, that the same body of water would not rise within many feet of the height attained by the flood that occasioned them. If, therefore, we find a modern flood rise above any such old floodmark, we are well entitled to argue that it has been larger; but when the fact is the other way, we cannot, with equal certainty, draw an opposite conclusion. In the present case, the general opinion and facts regarding the Don, are all decidedly with the old Seton gardener.

* Of King's College, Aberdeen.

See of Aberdeen. The Bishop was so gratified by this indulgence, that he proposed to the King to apply the revenues of his bishopric, accumulated during his absence, to the erection of this bridge over the Don; and he accordingly built it in the year 1320. It is therefore above 500 years old, and presents a singular specimen of the Gothic arch. Lord Byron, who long lived near it, thus notices this ancient bridge, in the tenth canto of Don Juan:—

"As 'Auld lang syne' brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills and clear streams,
The Dee, the Don, Balgownie's Brig's black wall,
All my boy-feelings, all my gentler dreams,
Of what I then dream't, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring;—floating past me seems
My childhood, in this childishness of mind:
I care not—'tis a glimpse of 'Auld lang syne.'"

"The *Brig of Don*," adds he in a note, "near the *Auld Toun* of Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black, deep salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday. I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote, the awful proverb, which made me pause to cross it, and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being an only son, at least by the mother's side. The saying, as recollected by me, was this, but I have never heard nor seen it since I was nine years of age:—

"Brig of Balgownie, black's your wa',
Wi' a wife's ae son, and a mear's ae foal,
Doun ye shall fa'!"

It must be particularly gratifying to Mr Gibb, the contractor for the beautiful new bridge over the Don, that, although it was not quite finished at the time of the flood, it sustained no injury.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RIVER DEE TO CRATHIE.

THE Dee takes its rise from the very bosom of the Cairngorm Mountains, and therefore it is not wonderful that it should have been largely affected on the late occasion. Its course to Aberdeen is not less than 90 miles in length, during which it receives a great number of tributaries. The scenery of the upper part of this river is so grand, as strongly to recal to my mind many parts of the Alps. I do not speak of those regions bordering on the glaciers, and eternal snow, which the savage aspect of the lonely Loch Aven so much resembles, though the mountains about the source of this river possess many such specimens. But I allude to the magnitude of the features of Braemar, where the immense extent of its pine forests, and the huge bulk of its timber, give quite a Swiss character to the country. The rapidity and wildness of many of the streams—their craggy channels—the infinite variety displayed in the grouping of their birches, and picturesque firs, often partially interposing their deep green mantles before the white foam of the waterfalls—and the accidental glimpses of the misty mountain-tops caught between them—combine to form an endless variety of pictures, such as are to be met with among the upper Alpine ravines; whilst about Mar Lodge, Invercauld, and Ballater, we have the wide and cultivated valley—the sublime outline of bounding moun-

tains, their bold and rocky fronts starting forward into individually prominent masses, hung with woods—their deep and shadowy recesses, and their levels and slopes, and varied knolls, where even the very buildings are found to complete compositions well calculated to bring back the recollection of many a lovely Swiss valley.

The 2d of August was a remarkably fine day at Braemar. Towards night it began to rain a little; but the barometer never fell below 29½ inches, and nothing appeared to lead to the anticipation of any approaching deluge. Throughout the morning and forenoon of the 3d, there were heavy intermittent showers, with strong gusts of wind from the north-west. During the afternoon the wind and rain gradually increased, and about five o'clock it blew a perfect hurricane, driving clouds of rain before it of that comminuted description that somewhat resembled snow-drift. It was during one of these violent gusts of wind that the first flash of lightning occurred. It was intensely vivid, and was instantaneously followed by a deafening peal of thunder. It was not the common, long, loud, continued, rolling thunder; but it was as if whole batteries of the pieces of Heaven's ordnance had been discharged in rapid succession. The lightning appeared like a broad stream of liquid fire, widely diffused, and fearfully glaring over the hemisphere. About seven o'clock in the evening the thunder ceased, but the wind and rain continued undiminished, and many of the smaller streams, already swollen to an unusual height, had commenced their havoc.

A night of pitchy darkness followed this dismal day, and, between one and two o'clock in the morning, the shock of earthquake experienced in the neighbourhood of Craig, and at the head of the Don, was sensibly and

simultaneously felt here, by different individuals, in different places. William Rattray, boatman at Monaltrie, who was up during the whole night, said, that "he felt the earth hobblin' under him." A lady at Aldourie Cottage was awaked by a singular noise at the time mentioned, which she immediately referred to an earthquake. At Allanquoich the same noise and sensations were noticed; and, at Crathie, three of Dr Robertson's men-servants, who were sleeping in a loft, started from their beds, felt the house shake, and heard a noise as if the slates were falling from the roof. The combined horrors of this dreadful night led many in Braemar to imagine that the end of the world was approaching. One individual, in particular, remained a whole night in a corner of his house, and would not go to bed, in full persuasion that the termination of all things was at hand.

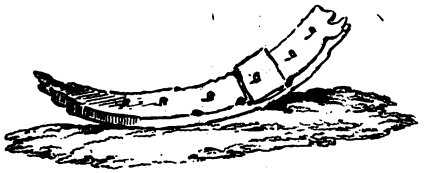
The rain on the northern mountains was infinitely more tremendous than that which fell in the valley; and whilst the tributaries from that quarter were swollen to an unparalleled height, those from the south, in the Braemar district, were not more raised than they are every year by spring and autumn floods. Instances of outbursts of subterranean water were very frequent in the northern mountains. The red granite hill of the *Muckle Glashault*, nine miles to the north-west of Invercauld, is about 3000 feet high, and of steep ascent on all sides, the surface being covered with immense masses of stone and granitic sand. On the north side, and at about a third of the way from the summit, no less than 15 or 16 of these openings have been made, varying in breadth from 30 to 40 yards. Each of these appears to have had an immense column of water issuing from it, which has cut a track for itself to the very base of

the mountain, into the Glashault burn. The ravines are all of them of very peculiar formation. Their margins or sides are completely defined by a fence of stones, raised considerably above the surface, something like that presented by the track of an avalanche. Dr Robertson, of Crathie, concludes, from the appearances, that the water burst from the bowels of the mountain in repeated jets, rather than in one continued stream; and such we know to have been the case at Tomanurd. Some of the stones on the sides are of great size, and must have required a powerful force to have placed them there. None of these appearances existed previous to the 3d and 4th of August, but were noticed immediately afterwards. They are by no means confined to the *Muckle Glashault*, being observed of greater or lesser magnitude by Dr Robertson, in all the hills he had an opportunity of examining. To have stood in the midst of a solitary amphitheatre of these wildernesses, with all the elements warring around, and to have beheld the mountain sides heaving, and these fountains of the great deep broken up," and their streams sent forth as messengers of Almighty displeasure, would have been inconceivably awful.

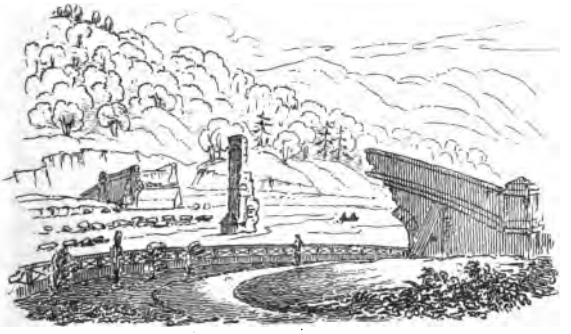
The Dee reached its height at different places in Braemar, between the hours of eight and ten in the morning of the 4th. By correct measurements made by Dr Robertson, at six different points of the river, the average breadth of which was 130 feet, the mean rise of the whole was 15 or 16 feet.

Hugh Macdougall, one of Lord Fife's keepers, has his house situated on an isthmus at the junction of the rivers Gouldie and Dee, in a remote part of the forest, several miles from any human dwelling. Being at Inverey on the 3d, four or five miles from home, he

PLATE LXIII.



PL. LXIV



PL LIX.

became alarmed at the heavy rain, lest it might swell the Gouldie so as to prevent his joining his family. He ran all the way home, therefore, and did get through the river with some difficulty; but he had no sooner reached his house, than the flood came down with a terrific noise; and, in a few moments, he and his family were surrounded by water to a depth that rendered escape, in any direction, quite impossible. The poor people spent the night in a state of the liveliest anxiety and misery, whilst every one who thought of them, as the wind blew and the rain beat, shuddered at what they conceived the certainty of their doom. But, as the day-light came in, the flood most providentially subsided, and they were saved.

At the Linn of Dee (Plate LIX.), the river forces itself through a deep and narrow chasm in the primitive rocks, over which an alpine wooden bridge is thrown, for the passage of carts, at a height of 30 feet above the stream. The flood rose 3 feet above this bridge, and swept it entirely away.

The uppermost cultivated farm on the Dee is Dellavorar, the place formerly alluded to as having had its name from Lord Dundee encamping here.* The river surrounded the house on the night of the 3d, with so much rapidity, that the husband, the wife, and seven or eight children, had hardly time to escape by wading; and they were compelled to trudge through the pelting and pitiless storm, by a circuitous route of several miles to, Inverey. The whole of their crop was destroyed, as well as 11 acres of arable land, and the farm is now valued at one-third of its former rent.

A little to the westward of Inverey, on the right bank, the river cut its way through the road, and came

* See p. 187.

sweeping down on the little hamlet, insulating six families, whose houses were built nearer to the Dee, and rather detached from the rest. So suddenly, and to so great a height did it rise, that it was quite impossible for the poor people either to escape towards the hill, or to receive the least aid from their neighbours. The flood continued to inundate house after house, until all the families they contained were driven for shelter to one, and the only remaining, hearth. Whilst condoling with each other, and expressing their gratitude that even this had been left to them, the water burst suddenly through the gable upon them, and drowned out their fire. All was instantly terror, and confusion, and shrieking, and lamentation, and they were compelled to flee from this their last hope, to a flat piece of ground of considerable size, now an island, and little elevated above the surrounding waters. There these unfortunate people, men, women, and children, to the number of 22, remained among the young fir trees, helpless infants and all, drenched by the rain, and shivering in the tempest. They repeatedly succeeded in lighting a fire, but, as they told me themselves, it was as often immediately extinguished by the torrents of water that poured from the heavens; and they were without a morsel of food. In the midst of that dark and stormy night, even the sense of these afflictions was absorbed in the growing dread they felt as the roar of the flood came louder upon them, that it was gaining an increase that must soon spread it over the ground they stood on, and sweep them to destruction. In this state of misery, they were kept till 10 or 11 o'clock next day, when the water so far subsided as to admit of their relief.

The glen and river Lui meet the Dee on the left.

The Bridge of Lui was founded on the solid micaceo-schistose rock, the foundations being several feet high above the surface of the river in its ordinary state. But the flood actually cut out a cavern in the rock, under the north-east abutment, large enough for a man to shelter himself in. It must be observed, that the laminated structure of this rock is peculiarly adapted for being torn up by the force of a stream rushing against its seams.

In our way to the park of Mar Lodge, we saw three *capercailzies*—a young cock and hen, kept in one place and an old cock, who resides in a separate apartment. The hen has laid eggs, but has uniformly destroyed them. Whether this was in obedience to an instinct, leading her to prevent the generation of progeny to live in captivity, may be matter of curious inquiry. What a desirable restoration it would be to the pine-covered districts of Scotland, if this noble bird could be introduced! Donald Mackenzie, one of Lord Fife's gamekeepers, who has the charge of them, has had the advantage of paying two visits at Court, and can boast of a reception from Majesty, which many a greater man might envy. He was twice sent by Lord Fife with presents of live roe-deer to the King, who was so much pleased with him, that he gave him more than one audience, manifested towards him repeated proofs of his favour, kept him a considerable time at Windsor, made people attend him to shew him whatever might be supposed interesting, and had it communicated to him that he might stay about Windsor as long as he pleased. "Why did you not remain altogether, Donald," demanded I. "Hout, what was I to do stayin' there?" replied he; "I had naething to do, an' I tired." But though Donald had no fancy for becoming a courtier,

he was not a little proud of a handsome coronation medal, presented to him by His Majesty's express order, which he brought out and shewed us with a considerable sparkle in his eye.

The destruction at Mar Lodge is very lamentable. The river broke over the embankment of Poldearg, at a bend of the stream, at the upper part of the lawn, and the whole breadth of the valley was soon afterwards laid under water. A current, 5½ feet deep, set, with great force, directly against the house, garden, and adjacent buildings, which lie along the base of the northern hill, with the lawn stretching 1000 yards broad in front of them towards the ordinary channel of the river. The garden was completely destroyed—the beautiful iron railing that fenced it, modelled from that at the Tuilleries, though inserted in hewn granite, was broken over, and prostrated from one end to the other—the approach was cut into great gulfs—the house was surrounded—the ground-floor filled with water—and the stream that rushed past it was so violent, that it cut away the gravel, and exposed an old causeway, 3 feet below the surface, of the existence of which no one was aware, which saved the house, by preventing the complete excavation of the ground it stands on. As it was, the corner of the dining-room was taken entirely away, and the room was filled 3 or 4 feet deep with mud. The bow-window of the drawing-room was also undermined, and would have fallen, had it not been promptly supported with a dry-stone wall. The foundation of a large store-house, at the back of the garden, was dug under, and a part of the building broken down. (Plate LX.) The dog-kennel was entirely swept away; and an outhouse attached to it. containing some excellent apartments, was com-

PLATE LX.

PL. LXI.

PL. LXII.

J. Bartholomew, Edin.

pletely ruined. (Plate LXI.) The lawn was very much sanded and destroyed, and the handsome wooden bridge of approach across the Dee was carried off completely. Notwithstanding the breadth of the valley hereabouts, the flood was running over the greater part of the grounds at a depth of 8 or 10 feet, the plantations were much injured, the roads and walks utterly ruined. In short, a scene of wreck more melancholy than that which the once beautiful spot of Mar Lodge now presents, is hardly to be conceived, and it was impossible to behold it without the most painful feelings.

The river Cuach,* or Quoich, which falls in from the left bank, committed great havoc. A little way up its rocky and picturesque bed, a handsome bridge, of one wide arch, spanned a most romantic water-fall. The scene here was curious and magnificent. As the water ran completely over the parapet, the arch was quite hidden from above; but when viewed from below, it appeared empty on the under side, and exhibited a dark cavernous appearance. The noise was tremendous, and the shaking of the rocks was so terrific, that Mr Cumming of Allanquoich, factor on Lord Fife's estate here, who has long lived close to the place, and has been all his life familiar with such scenes, felt as if he was hardly safe, though standing at a considerable distance. At length the bridge could no longer resist the force of the water, and not only its strong masonry, but immense masses of the micaceous rock were rent

* *Cuach* is a drinking-cup, and the river is so called from the circular holes worn in the micaceous rock near where the bridge stood. Tradition says that the Earl of Mar, and his followers, used to rest here, as they returned from the chase, and to drink, mixing their liquors with the pellucid water, for which this river is remarkable. One of these holes is still called *The Earl of Mar's Punch-bowl.*

away, and no part of the fabric was left but a small fragment of the western land breast. (Plate LXII.)

Issuing from its gorge, the Cuach swept away three acres of a well-grown young larch wood, surrounded a group of cottages, and manœuvred with the main body of its stream, now in front, and now in rear of them, so as to keep the unfortunate inmates in a state of distraction. The result was, that, by the providential mercy of God, the mere spot of earth on which the foundations of the houses stand, was left in the midst of a deep excavation, extending for many hundred yards around them, and the river now runs on the side of them opposite to that where it had its course before the flood. From the point where the houses are situated, the Cuach used to run across a very wide and extensive haugh, for perhaps one-third of a mile, to join, nearly at a right angle, the Dee, that has its course close to the base of the southern hills. The haugh formed Mr Cumming's farm, and he had just finished a most expensive deer-fence round it, without which agricultural labour is rendered utterly useless in Braemar, owing to the numerous herds of red-deer by which it is tenanted. The flood having brought down an immense slice of a high hill of gravel and stones, not far from the cottages, filled up the channel below, broke out to the left, and rushed across the eastern division of the farm in a diagonal line, spreading one wide flood of devastation over 150 acres. It then filled up the mouth of this new or second channel, as it had done the first, and, bursting away to the right, it cut a third, still deeper, along the line of Mr Cumming's wall of enclosure, and then spread itself abroad over the upper part of the western end of the farm, and converted 60 acres of valuable meadow into a permanent

lake. Tired with running in this direction, it filled up the new-made channel under the wall, and heaped stones and gravel so high on it as to leave only its cope visible, and completed its operations by opening a fourth bed in a diagonal line between the first and the third, in which I saw it running. All these cruel gambols were performed by this wicked stream in the course of a few hours, leaving two-thirds of the once beautiful and valuable surface of the farm lying in scarified river beds, or covered to a great depth with sand and gravel, and the rest of it in a large lake, where wild fowl may breed. The smell of decomposing matter that came from this scene of desolation, was sickening and offensive, and reminded me of what I had experienced after the debacle at Martigny.

An old fragment of a mill was disinterred and brought down by the Cuach, and lodged on Mr Cumming's farm. (Plate LXIII.) It was ultimately proved to have belonged to a saw-mill that existed in Glenquoich, in Mr Cumming's father's youth, though for some time it excited yet greater interest, as it was believed to be part of a corn-mill anciently erected in a small plain in the glen. As persons conversant in mechanics were not plenty in the Highlands in the days when this corn-mill was constructed, the laird brought a miller from the low country to manage it. In this neighbourhood there lived at that time a certain Donald Mackenzie, a far-removed branch of the family of Dalmore, a place that once stood where the Lodge does now. This hero, being remarkable for his haughty and imperious manner, was known by the appellation of *Donald Unasach*, or Donald the Proud. Being a native of Glenquoich, he knew as little of the English language as the miller did of the Gaelic. He was an outlaw,

addicted to freebooting, and of so fierce and unruly a temper, that the whole country stood in awe of him. One circumstance regarding him struck every one with superstitious awe, and created much conjecture and speculation among those around him. He was never known to be without abundance of meal, and yet he was never known to carry any corn to the mill.

But the sagacious miller of Glenquoich soon discovered that, in order to bilk him of his proper mill-dues, the caitiff was in the habit of bringing his grain to the mill in the night, and grinding it, and carrying it off before morning. To charge him directly with his fraud, was too dangerous an attempt. But the miller ventured to ask him now and then quietly how he did for meal, as he never brought any corn to the mill? To which the freebooter never returned any other answer than "*Is laider laimh Dhe!*"—"Strong is the hand of God!"

Provoked at last, the miller determined to take his own way of curing the evil; and, having some previous inkling of the next nocturnal visit of his unwelcome customer, he took care, before leaving the mill in the evening, to remove the bush, or that piece of wood which is driven into the eye of the nether millstone, for the purpose of keeping the spindle steady in passing through the upper stone. He also stopped up the spout, through which the meal discharged itself; and, as the mill was one of those old-fashioned machines, where the water-wheel moved horizontally, and directly under the stones, it follows, that, by this arrangement of things, the corn would fall into the stream. Having made these preparations, the miller locked his house door, and went to bed. About midnight, Donald arrived with his people, and some sacks of dry corn;

and finding everything, as he thought, in good order in the mill, he filled the hopper, and let on the water. The machinery revolved with more than ordinary rapidity—the grain sank fast in the hopper, but not a particle of it came out at the place where he was wont to receive it into his bag as meal. Donald the Proud, and his *gillies*, were all aghast. Frantic with rage, he and they ran up and down; and, in their hurry to do everything, they succeeded in doing nothing. At length Donald perceived, what even the obscurity of the night could not hide, a long white line of fair provender, flowing down the middle of the stream, that left not a doubt as to where his corn was discharging itself. But he could neither guess how this strange phenomenon was produced, nor how the evil was to be cured. After much perplexity, he thought of turning off the water. But here the wily miller had also been prepared for him, having so contrived matters, that the pole or handle connecting the sluice with the inside of the mill, had fallen off as soon as the water was let on the wheel. Baffled at all points, Donald was compelled at last to run to the miller's house. Finding the door locked, he knocked and bawled loudly at the window; and, on the miller demanding to know who was there, he did his best to explain, in broken English, the whole circumstances of the case. The miller heard him to an end; and, turning himself in his bed, he coolly replied, "Strong is the hand o' God!" Donald Unasach gnashed his teeth, tried the door again, returned to the window, and, humbled by circumstances, repeated his explanation and entreaties for help. "*Te meal town te purn to te tiel! Hoigh! Hoigh!*" "I thought ye had been ower weel practeesed in the business to let ony sic mischanter come ower ye, Maister

Anesack," replied the imperturbable lowlander; but "strong is the hand o' God!" The mountaineer now lost all patience. Drawing his dirk, and driving it through the window, he began to strike it so violently against the stones on the outside of the wall, that he illuminated the house with a shower of fire, and shewed the terrified inmates the ferocious countenance of him who wielded the weapon. "*Te meal to te mill, te mutter to te miller,*" sputtered out Donald in the midst of his wrath, meaning to imply, that, if the miller would only come and help him, he should have all his dues in future. Partly moved by this promise, but still more by his well-grounded fears, the miller arose at last, put the mill to rights, and ground the rest of the corn; and tradition tells us that, after this, the mill-dues were regularly paid, and the greatest harmony subsisted between Donald Unasach and the miller of Glenquoich.

The damage done by the flood to Lord Fife's estate in Braemar, is estimated at £10,000.

The river *Cluanadh* or *Cluny*, which runs in a deep and craggy bed through the village of Castleton, and enters the Dee from the right, was not swollen to any extraordinary degree. The remains of King Malcolm Canmore's hunting castle may still be traced on the rocky knoll near the south-east corner of the Bridge of Castleton; and the old name of *Ceann-an-drochait*, which once designated the parish of Braemar, was given to it from the bridge, probably of wood, which Malcolm threw across here to facilitate his hunting operations.

The most extensive mischief done by the flood on the estate of Invercauld, was by the Burn of Chandlick, which cut away 6000 square yards from a gravel hill, and deposited the *debris* on the haugh land of the farm of Milton, utterly destroying about 30 arable

acres. The stream came directly through the farm-house, but fortunately the farmer and his family had gone, some time before, to another farm. In its progress through the park of Invercauld, the Dee was about 400 yards wide, and 14½ feet above the usual level. But its greatest havoc was committed where it leaves the park, immediately above the fine old bridge. The lodge is one of those numerous cottages scattered about the grounds, all so exquisitely well conceived, both as to plan and position, as to exhibit a perfect as well as an exhaustless good taste. It stands some 30 or 40 yards from the north end of the bridge, and considerably elevated above the river. Its inmates, Kenneth Lamond, his wife, and daughter, were awakened at midnight by the noise proceeding from the stools and chairs knocking about; and, on jumping out of bed, they found themselves knee-deep in water. Undressed as they were, the whole party made for the door; but the moment they opened it they were nearly thrown down by the fury of the torrent that burst in on them. In the midst of all these horrors, old Kenneth reasoned and calculated with perfect presence of mind. To attempt to make a direct course to dry land, would probably be certain destruction; but, bethinking him of a line of paling that ran along an elevated ridge, he proceeded with his companions, linked hand in hand, till he reached it; and, by means of the direction it afforded him, they all gained the houses of Kiloch in safety. The river rose 17½ feet here. It was fearfully grand. A fine nursery above the bridge, and a beautiful flower-garden below it, gave to this spot all the charms of a little paradise amidst the tall beetling cliffs and solemn woods that surround it. These were utterly ruined,

together with the smallest of the three arches of the bridge. According to the most accurate observations, the recent flood hereabouts seems to have exceeded that of 1768 by fully two feet; in addition to which difference we must not overlook the probable increase of capacity in the river's bed.*

The Swiss character of the scenery about and below Invercauld, is much heightened by the larches, which are scattered wildly over the crags among the natural pines and birches. When these begin to shed their seed around, this valuable tree will soon become as much a native here as the Scotch firs, which have maintained their gloomy but sublime dominion for so many centuries.

* Old Spalding tells us that, "on the 2d of February, 1642, at midnight, there arose an extraordinary high wind in Aberdeen, with fire-flaught and rain. The rivers Dee and Ythan, through high flood, overflowed their wonted limits, both in this month and January. Dee surpassed in speat the Key-head, and Ythan grew so great that it drowned out the fires in some men's houses in Ellen and Newburgh, far beyond the wonted course, many thinking this to be prodigious tokens. Besides, in Marr, about that part called Banka Fair, the country people heard nightly tucking of drums, beginning about the sky going to, and continuing till eight hours at even. The noise was fearful; for they could hear marches perfectly tucked, as if there had been an army in order. This was not well thought of by honest, peaceable men, as it over well proved by the overthrow of the house of Drum."—(P. 268.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RIVER DEE, FROM CRATHIE TO WOODEND COTTAGE.

DR ROBERTSON'S cottage of Crathie stands in a romantic nook, where the brawling little burn of that name hurries into the Dee, from the left bank. During the flood, it ran quite over the parapets of the bridge, which resisted all its force. It rose 2 feet on the walls of the house, and 8 feet above its usual level. From an eminence above the house, the valley can be seen for six miles up, where occasional glimpses of the windings of the river are caught through openings in the thick natural woods; and the mountains, on both sides, are seen standing out in high and bold relief. On the morning of the 4th, one wide sea of water, filling the valley from side to side, came rolling on. Houses appeared as if floating on its surface, and groups of birches and alders were tossing about their branches, and labouring to withstand its furious impetuosity; and, when the flood had passed away, fearful destruction everywhere appeared: "the land-marks of our forefathers" were gone; and even the angler will now look in vain for the pools and streams of other days.

The damage done at Abergeldie, on the right bank of the river, is estimated at £1000. The house itself, which is near the Dee, and not much elevated above its stream, must have been in some degree of jeopardy.

At the base of Craighuis, some 4 or 5 acres were swept away from the haughs, and the whole crops were destroyed; and, lower down, the stream of the Girnock, coming in from the right, committed much devastation, and formed two large islands by the new channels it produced.

The river Gairden, which joins the Dee from the left bank, did great damage both to the land and crops along its course. Lord Aboyne's loss here is estimated at £1000. At the bridge where I crossed it, the stream rose from 20 to 25 feet in the narrow rocky bed, and flooded the first storey of the mill.

A little way below the point where the Gairden falls in, the Dee strikes directly against the rocky base of Craigdarroch, and sweeps off suddenly to the right. Here it cut off a considerable promontory, covered with trees, and laid bare two parallel logs of oak, about 15 feet apart, strongly connected by cross bars of the same wood, with two upright posts at the end next the land. Only 10 feet of the logs are visible, the rest being still buried by a sand bank. There is a tradition that a wooden bridge was erected here, in ancient times, by Gordon, the laird of the Knock, and the baron of the Castle of Glengairden, to facilitate their communication with each other; but that, when it was nearly finished, a flood swept it away; and many suppose that what has thus recently been brought to light formed a part of its foundations; though some think it may be the buried wreck of a bridge brought down the river, and deposited there by some former deluge.

After leaving Craigdarroch, the Dee takes a southerly direction for a mile or more, and then bending gently round towards the east for perhaps a mile more, it gradually assumes a northerly direction, which

it holds for about a mile and a half farther, thus encircling three sides of a great plain, the fourth or north side of which may be said to be bounded by Craigdarroch. The village of Ballater, formed of regular streets, crossing each other at right angles, covers a considerable extent of ground immediately below the bend of the river, and above 12 feet above the ordinary level of the stream. The beautiful stone bridge, designed by Mr Telford, consisting of five arches, with an aggregate water-way of 200 feet, was thrown across from the centre of the great square to the opposite bank, in 1819, at an expense of £5000.

The rain and hurricane, on the 3d of August, at Ballater, was attended, in the evening, by the brightest lightning, and the loudest thunder, ever seen or heard there; and the same shock of earthquake which was experienced elsewhere, was sensibly felt by different individuals in the village and its neighbourhood. The Dee rose gradually till about 11 o'clock at night, when the same partial subsidence took place which was observed in all the other rivers; and the inhabitants, thinking that all cause for apprehension was now over, retired to rest in full confidence. Ballater is always crowded, during the summer months, with invalids and other visitors, brought together by the fame of the chalybeate wells of Pananich, which spring from the side of the wooded hill on the right bank of the river; or attracted by the salubrity of the air, and the grandeur of the surrounding scenery. This was the height of the season, and not a house in the village was without some inmate of more than ordinary consequence. Among these was a lady, who was suddenly disturbed, about half-an-hour after midnight, by voices talking loud and earnestly under her window; and the omin-

ous words, "flood"—"deluge"—"drooned"—and "hae mercy on us a'!" having reached her ears, she thought it was time to inquire what had occasioned them. Opening her window, therefore, she asked what was the matter. "The Dee's oot ower bank and brae!" cried half-a-dozen voices at once, "an' some o' the hooses are surrounded wi' the water; an' they've been carryin' oot the fouk, sae ye had better get up a'the-gither o' ye, for she's comin' roarin' doon just like an ocean, an' we'll be a' drooned!" Extravagant as all this clamour appeared, there was some foundation for their fears; for an individual in one of the houses the water had made its way into, particularly marked the progress of its rise, during a whole hour, in the staircase, which was at the astonishingly rapid rate of one foot in every ten minutes!

The lady lost no time in dressing; but, as the house she occupied had several others between it and the river, and was moreover on rather higher ground, she did not as yet think it necessary to leave it. But, about half-past three o'clock, the flood increased, and swept before it the two northern arches of the bridge at one and the same instant; and, in the course of two hours afterwards, the three others were borne away in succession. Those who saw the first arches go, assured me that the noise was tremendous, and that the "splash" of the water was so great that it was driven over the tops of the adjoining houses. Certain it is that the current was so arrested, for a moment, by the ruins, as to produce a recoil, that burst open the doors, and smashed many of the windows of the offices belonging to the inn. This dreadful reflux of water alarmed the lady I have mentioned, and she and her party deemed it prudent to move; and, in doing so, they had to wade

more than an hundred yards through the town before they could get to a dry house. But they were fortunate in so escaping, for danger now swept into the village from a quarter where it was least expected. At a point about half-a-mile to the north-west, the river burst over its banks; and, following the track of an old water-course, a stream of about four feet deep came rushing down through the streets. Now was the bustle, the hubbub, the screaming, and the plunging of delicate and nervous women, all wading for their lives, something too serious for matter of merriment. And yet there were scenes that were irresistibly comic. On most of these strangers the catastrophe came so suddenly, that they were only roused from their sleep to flee from the deluge in drapery that, to say nothing more of it, was at least too scanty for encountering the raging elements in this most tempestuous night. Every horse in the village, and every vehicle that could be made useful, was pressed into active service, to convey the invalids, and the more helpless, to some place of safety. One of the lumbering Aberdeen and Ballater coaches was ferreted out, and horses being yoked to it, the interior was filled, and the outside covered with so great a number of passengers as set the laws at defiance. Nor was there any great ceremony used in the manner of bestowing this overload of human beings. Ladies and gentlemen, young and old, fat and lean, strangers to each other, were all huddled in together, all anxious to escape, but each wishing that the rest had been away, or at least that an introduction had taken place under other circumstances. Many a fair creature had her slumbers rudely broken; and a blanket being thrown around her, she was scarcely conscious of what passed, till she found herself hoisted in the arms

of some hero, who, rejoicing at the accident, and proud of the precious burden, was seen gallantly plunging along, middle-deep, with an air that might have done honour to a quadrille. It is impossible to say how many of the tedious out-works of courtship were swept away by the flood at Ballater.

Still the waters went on increasing; and so rapidly did they gain on the village, that the house to which the lady and her party had fled for refuge, was so inundated in half-an-hour after they reached it, that they were again compelled to move. Still was the crowd of provincial fashionables to be seen floundering on. In the midst of a terrified group of grown daughters, who were hanging around her, one lady clung to her worthy husband and their dear papa, till the good man, who was rather corpulent, had been nearly pressed down into the water, by the weight of their united embraces. "Call you this a watering-place?" exclaimed he, as he shook himself good naturedly free of them on reaching a dry spot, and began to get a little freer breathing; "if you catch me coming a-watering again this gate, I'll alloo ye to mak' a waterkelpie o' me."

It would be in vain to attempt an enumeration of all the disasters that occurred. Two calves were drowned in Mr Smith's barn, and one of them was found within the hopper of the corn-fanners, 5 feet 6 inches from the ground; and certainly it is not easy to imagine a more singular place for an animal to have met with a watery grave. One of Mr Smith's pigs was afterwards found alive on an island, two miles below Ballater, grunting in his liberty. A great quantity of grain and meal was carried off. The lower storey of the inn near the end of the bridge was flooded to the depth of 5 feet 3 inches; the furniture carried away from the kitchen;

two hogsheads of porter from the cellar, one never again heard off; and the other found uninjured on the island with Mr Smith's pig; and one anker of whisky was laid hold of by a stout young fellow, as it was in the act of making its exit at the door.

Mrs Mitchell, her child, and servant, were sleeping in the kitchen, which is sunk several feet below the level of the street. They were awakened about one o'clock, by the noise of the door bursting open, and the dreadful sound of the water rushing into the place. Snatching up her infant, Mrs Mitchell jumped out of bed, followed by the maid, and found the water already more than knee-deep. Undressed as they were, they struggled to the stair leading upwards to the first floor. Having gained it, the servant attempted to return for their clothes, but it was already impossible; and, in half-an-hour, the kitchen was filled to the ceiling. Had the warning they received been but ten minutes later, they must have been drowned in that apartment, the very name of which is designative of dryness, warmth, security, and substantial comfort.

Few of the houses of the village suffered much; but, as many of them were filled from 4 to 6 feet deep of water, a great deal of furniture was destroyed. The most deplorable loss was that of the magnificent bridge. (Plate LXIV.) The appearance of the ruins, when I saw them, as viewed from the window of the inn, with a ruined flower-garden in the fore-ground, was truly lamentable; nothing remaining but the two land-breasts of the north and south arches, and a tall spectre-like fragment of a central pier, rearing itself from the midst of the triumphant stream, as if quivering from dread of its utter annihilation. The whole crops of the fertile plain below the village were of course completely destroyed.

The view of Ballater, from the lower extremity of the plain, is something quite exquisite. I do not speak of the village itself, which, at that distance, presents little more than the indication of a town, with a steeple rising from it; but I allude to the grand features of nature by which it is surrounded. The very smallness of the town, indeed, adds to the altitude of the mountains; for, when seen from the point I mean, it might be a city for aught the traveller knows to the contrary. It stands, half hidden among trees, in the rich and diversified vale. On the north rises the mountainous rock of Craigdarroch, luxuriantly wooded with birch, and divided off from the bounding mountains of that side of the valley by the wild, and anciently impregnable, Pass of Ballater. Beyond the river, amidst an infinite variety of slopes and woods, is seen the tall old hunting-tower of Knock; and, behind it, distance rises over distance, till the prospect is terminated by the long and shivered front, and (when I saw it on the 15th of October last) the snow-covered ridge of Lochnagar, the nurse of the sublime genius of Byron, who, in his beautiful little poem, so entitled, still

"Sighs for the Valley of dark Loch-na-gar."

On my way down the left bank of the river, I stopped for a few minutes at the door of a neat little inn, called Cambusmay, kept by a respectable couple, Mr James Ogg and his wife. The spot is beautiful. The house is situated in the pass forming the eastern entrance to that enchanting and heart-expanding scenery of which the upper part of the Dee exhibits one uninterrupted series. Here the woods present a delightful intermixture of birches and oaks, and the ground is diversified

with knolls and little plains, and bounded by friable granite mountains, the decomposing rocks of which assume the most picturesque shapes imaginable. The bank of the river here is 8 or 10 feet high, and Mr Ogg's house stands on a small level haugh, having little more than the breadth of the road between it and the stream. Mr Ogg told me that the river burst suddenly in on the upper end of the haugh, at one o'clock on the morning of the 4th, surrounded the house, and rose five feet up in it. Mr and Mrs Ogg were roused from their slumbers by the rushing noise of the waters, as they entered, and had not time to remove anything to the upper storey. "Troth, Sir," said Mr Ogg, "we ware glad eneugh to escape awa' as fast as we could, widin' up to oor middles, to the hill yonder, whar we got shelter in a neebour's hoose." When they returned next day, after the water had subsided, they found the house half filled with mud and sand. "Aye, Sir," said Mrs Ogg, "and we lost three ankers o' whisky an' ane o' rum, an' a deal o' oor furniture." "Aye," said Mr Ogg, "an' our corn an' our carts an' a'—£60 wadna' cover our loss!" "An' what think ye, Sir?" said Mrs Ogg, "the very first thing I fand whan we cam' back was a bit trootie in the plate-rack." "That was something, Mrs Ogg," said I; "did you fry it?" "Eh, na!" said Mr Ogg, "the poor beastie was na dead; it was soomin' about amang the dishes; she could na ha'e fund in her heart to ha'e harmed it, whan it had come, as it were, to our very hearthstane for shelter, sae I took it an' pat it into the reever again, an' it soomed awa." Mr Ogg told me that, at the haugh, a farm a little way lower down, a fine island of three acres was swept entirely away.

After quitting the Pass of Cambusmay, I crossed a

wide and dreary heath-covered plain, which was not so once, nor is it now without interest. It was here that Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell, William Douglas of Liddesdale, and the Earl of March, with 800 of the lads of Lothian and the Merse, attacked David de Hastings, Earl of Athole, where he and the Cumins lay under cover of the Forest of Culblane, routed his troops, slew him and Walter Cumin, and took and beheaded Walter Cumin's brother Thomas—

> "Thare, by an ake, deyed Erle Dawy
> And syndry of his company."

Wyntown gives a very accurate description of the ground. But the "akes" have all fled, like "*Erle Dawy's* troops, and have ensconced themselves within the Pass of Cambusmay, leaving no object to break the monotony of the heath, but the huge grey cairn marking the spot where "*Erle Dawy*" fell.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RIVER DEE, FROM WOODEND COTTAGE TO ABERDEEN.

MAJOR LEITH HAY'S residence of Woodend Cottage stands on a haugh of four acres, on the left bank of the Dee, elevated about 16 feet above the ordinary level of its stream, that runs about 30 yards in front of the house. The haugh is backed to the north by a long and rapid rise; is terminated to the west by wood and a garden, part of which is on a level with the cottage, and part on a slope also rising to the north, and is bounded on the east by a semi-circle of rocks and single trees, beyond which is the Wood of Trustach. The Dee runs from west to east, forming the southern boundary of the grounds at all points. The rain and tempest at Woodend were quite tremendous, and were accompanied by thunder and lightning. The water rushed in streams down the opposite bank, where none had ever been visible before; and the ground giving way in several places, an enclosure of trees, with all its paling, was completely swept away by the precipitate fall of earth and rock from the height above, and a cataract of 50 feet high was formed. By six o'clock in the morning of the 4th, the river surmounted the lowest part of the ground near the garden, and soon afterwards ran in a strong current to the north of the haugh, through a hollow at the back of the house. At seven o'clock nothing remained un-

covered but the ground the house stood on. The stable, coach-house, washing-house, and larder, were flooded to the depth of several feet; and the boat belonging to the proprietor having been carried away, all egress from the cottage was rendered impracticable. Meanwhile the river went on to increase; and, in an hour afterwards, it rushed into the house in every direction. A very formidable current swept round the south-west angle of the house, and threatened to undermine it; and it was discovered, on investigation, that it had laid it bare nearly to the depth of 3 feet. At this time, the lower panes of a French window in the dining-room gave way, by which a great addition of water was admitted into the house, and the windows to the east were opened to allow it to escape. The family took shelter in the upper storey, and now the strength of the masonry, the shelter afforded by the trees, already matted with wreck, so as to form a kind of bulwark, and the hope that so unnatural an inundation could not long endure, were the only circumstances which could inspire confidence in a situation so distressing, from which escape had become impracticable.

By 11 o'clock, the flood had reached its height, and there was little perceptible alteration in it for an hour. At this time, the depth of the water was above 18 inches in the front rooms and passages of the house; 3 feet in the servants' hall; 5 feet in the larder; and 5½ feet in the washing-house. The extreme height above ordinary level of the river was 17½ or 18 feet, and 20 feet above the lowest summer level. In the memory of man, the Dee was never before known to cover the ground the cottage stands on, nearly an acre having remained dry on former occasions; the flood of August 4th having exceeded all those preceding it, by

at least two feet perpendicular. "It appears to me," says Major Leith Hay, in a letter I received from him, "that the inhabitants of this country were never before acquainted with the irresistible power of water, particularly in mountain streams. My impression is that the power of the ocean is nothing to it." *

Mr Douglas, sheriff of Kincardineshire, was awaked at his cottage of Maryfield, on the right bank of the Dee, at three o'clock in the morning of the 4th, by the dreadful noise of the river, and found that it had risen about 25 feet above the ordinary level. The cottage, which stands 28 feet above the stream, seemed to be in imminent danger of inundation. Curiosity having tempted him to go to look at the cascade at the Bridge of Feugh, he found the turnpike road impracticable, and was compelled to ascend the high grounds, and take a circuitous route to an elevated spot, from which he could view the scene below. The stream was dashing entirely over the parapets of the bridge, which soon gave way with a terrible crash, leaving the centre arch totally bare. An adventurous baker from the village of Banchory walked along one of the parapets, through the spray, immediately before they gave way. A huge fragment of rock, many tons in weight, was disengaged from its solid bed by the force of the current, and carried down several yards, to a position where it still remains conspicuously poised. The interest of the scene was augmented by the appearance of a number of people, most of them driven from the neighbouring

* This remark of Major Leith Hay's is perfectly in accordance with my own observations. I have already endeavoured to draw the distinction between the two forces, by comparing the agitated ocean to a heap of gunpowder set fire to on an open plain, whilst the intense velocity and power of a flooded river, is like a portion of such a heap discharged from the confined breech of a gun.

cottages by the intrusion of the stream; and the whole effect was highly grand and picturesque. The arches of the Bridge of Banchory over the Dee were nearly full, and a small island, a little way below, which was pastured by sheep, being wholly submerged, the wretched animals were seen floating helplessly down the river. One ewe reached Maryfield Cottage in safety, and, when driven homewards by the turnpike road, after the island had again become visible, the poor creature plunged into the water, and swam to the spot where she had been so lately severed from her lamb, which, alas! all her piteous bleatings could not recal.

Mr Moir, of Park, on the left bank of the Dee, was attracted to the window by the noise of the flood, about three o'clock in the morning of the 4th, when the surrounding country presented the extraordinary appearance of one immense sheet of water. The tops of the embankments were alone visible in the adjacent grounds, and on these a few sheep and two ponies had taken refuge. But even there the water was fast rising, and at about 4 o'clock they were swept away; nine of the sheep and one pony were drowned; and the rest, being carried by the current towards a steep bank, were saved with great difficulty. The greatest height attained by the river, opposite to Park, was 13 feet above its usual level; but this was at a point where the breadth of the inundation was not less than half-a-mile. Mr Moir had 300 lineal yards of embankment, and two acres of land swept away. He estimates his damage of all kinds at about £1000; and, as he says that he is induced to believe himself the greatest sufferer on Deeside,* we have some criterion for judging how much

* Deeside is the name applied to the country extending from about the Pass of Cambusmay to the sea.

greater the destruction of the Findhorn and Spey was than that of this river.

A good deal of damage was done on the Duke of Gordon's property of Durris, on the right bank; but the greatest injury was sustained on the farm of Nether Balfour, where about 140 acres were inundated four or five feet deep, by the bursting of an embankment. As this ground formed a kind of bay, a great deal of wreck was drifted into it by the north wind; and, amongst other things, some very large trees. The crops suffered severely, and much soil was carried away from the turnip fields. About 4000 stones of hay were floated off; and, though much was saved by the bold exertions of the farm-servants, who waded in, and threw ropes around the ricks, yet it was utterly spoiled. The tenant's loss here was £400.

A farmer, residing about a mile and a half from the Church of Mary-Culter, said that there would be a great deluge of rain, for that he had not, for twenty years, heard the church bell so distinctly as he had done on Sunday, the 2d. This proved a greatly increased density in the atmosphere, which is the very reverse of what we should have looked for, previous to a great discharge of rain. But a variety of observations have long ago proved, that the formation of rain sometimes takes place at a great height above the surface of the earth, and quite independently of the state of the lower strata of the atmosphere. But to explain why this increased density should have become a sure prognostic of rain with this farmer, we must take into account the effects produced by certain winds, which we know often raise the barometer, though followed by rainy weather, as was indeed very much the case on the late occasion. But the rain at Mary-Culter was, in fact, by no means

so great as to lead any one to anticipate a flood of any great magnitude. The height of the flood in this neighbourhood was from 13 to 16 feet above the ordinary level. The crop was much damaged; and the fishing station of Inch-Culter, one of the best in the river, was so completely ruined, that, it is believed, not a salmon was taken there for the whole season afterwards. Mr Boswell of Kingcausie remarked that the weight and rapidity of the stream was so great that trees and boats passed downwards with the velocity of the "*chute of Alpnach.*"

Colonel Duff of Fetteresso's farm of Milltimber, on the left bank, had 60 acres flooded, with much destruction of crop and deposition of sand and gravel. Mr Thorburn's farm of Mains of Murtle, and Deebank, belonging to Mr Andrew, suffered much, especially the latter, where a stream burst through a bulwark, and cut up a haugh. The river also broke a strong embankment, and covered 60 acres of the Haugh of Pitfoddels, belonging to Mr Menzies, doing not less than £500 damage. Many other farms have suffered; but these may serve as a sufficient sample of the extent of the destruction wrought on the banks of this part of the river.

About five o'clock, on the morning of the 4th, the inhabitants of the quay at Aberdeen were roused from their slumbers by the noise of the flood, sweeping along under their windows; and, on looking out, they were astonished at the magnificence of the scene that presented itself. The Dee rushed from the narrow pass opposite the rocky eminence called the Craiglug, as if from a gigantic mill-dam, the sluice of which had been newly opened. From thence the waters spread themselves from side to side, filling the whole space of nearly

a mile in breadth. At this hour the tide was subsiding, and it continued to do so until ten o'clock, the harbour exhibiting the anomalous appearance of a receding tide, and a rising flood. At ten o'clock it was dead low water; but the stream opposite to the town was then fully 18 inches above the average elevation of spring-tides. At low water at the bar, the current ran at the rate of 9½ knots an hour, as ascertained by actual experiment. So powerful was the stream, that the Duke of Wellington steam-vessel, in attempting to struggle against it, ran aground. The channel of the harbour was completely scoured of its mud. Thirty feet of the quay at the lower bason was undermined, and a portion of the *Raik-dike* was carried away.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A FEW OF THE MORE PROMINENT RAVAGES OF THE RIVERS NORTH AND SOUTH ESK, TARFF, LUTHER, AND BERVIE.

THE rain began to fall at Montrose about 11 o'clock on Sunday evening, the 2d of August; and the inhabitants declare that the deluge was beyond all former precedent. The North Esk was in high flood, and the consequences to all the lower grounds were most disastrous. The Tarff carried away its bridge, and inundated the Rev. Peter Jolly's house at Lochlie, to the depth of 3 feet. All the neighbouring bridges were injured. The new wooden bridge at Dalhesney was entirely swept away; and the fine suspension bridge recently erected at Slateford, was also utterly demolished, as well as a small bridge in Glen Esk. The strong northerly wind came in squalls, and blew down many noble trees. At Gannachy Bridge, the flood rose to within a foot of the key-stone. At the junction of the North, West, and Cruik waters, the scene was extremely grand. The large haugh above the Bridge of Marykirk was completely flooded, and the sheep that fed on it were extricated with the greatest difficulty.

The North Esk overspread the large bleachfield at Craigie Mills, which was covered with cloths and yarn, belonging to Messrs Maberly & Company, rose to the the height of 3 feet in the mill—and, if it had not been

for a rampart raised by the people at the gainshot, by risking their lives, the whole works might have been swept away. Mr Carnegy of Craigo, the proprietor, measured the height of the water at the gainshot of the mills, and found it 7 feet 2 inches above the ordinary level. It rose to its greatest height about five o'clock on the morning of the 4th, and was not observed to subside till eight o'clock. A small unfinished brick building, at the Logie Mills, was the only one that suffered. The loss of Messrs Maberly & Company, in bleaching materials and yarn swept off, was considerable; and that of Messrs Aberdeen, Gordon, & Company, at the Logie Mill, was still greater. The spinning-mill of Kinnaber, possessed by Messrs Duke & Alexander, was deluged to the top of the lower flat of the mill. Mr Mitchell of Nether Careston had 50 or 60 sheep carried away. Much agricultural produce was lost; but no land of any consequence was removed by the North Esk, and the damage it created altogether was so trifling, in comparison with that I have detailed, as produced by any of the other rivers, that I notice it chiefly for the purpose of marking the difference.

This observation also applies to the South Esk, and the rest of the streams mentioned in the title to this article. The suburb called the Nether Tenements in Brechin was flooded, and the inhabitants were confined to the upper part of their houses during the greater part of the day. The South Esk also swept away a great quantity of yarn from the Inch Bleachfield; and sheep, hay, labouring utensils, wood, and other articles, were seen floating down. The Luther and the Bervie overflowed their banks; and the latter carried off the lesser bridge of Mondines, on the road between Laurencekirk and Stonehaven; but this is all I have to record regarding these streams.