

GLENGILLODRAM.



THE CATTLE SHOW.

It is not the great annual gathering of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, nor that of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, that I intend to describe. My task shall be the humbler one of introducing the reader to the yearly doings of a parish Agricultural Society in the far north of Scotland, when its members are met to exhibit their stock. But let it not be supposed that my parish society is an unimportant institution, considered by itself, or in relation to its place in the framework of British "interests." For if we single out the three counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray, in the region of which I have just spoken, we shall find that the great metropolis of England draws from thence a surprisingly large proportion of the finest fat beeves that are week by week sold at Islington. And it is at the parish cattle show that those very beeves, which will by-and-bye come up to London at Christmas in scores and hundreds, with glossy sides shaking with fat, are first drawn out and pitted against each other for the honours of the prize list.

Here, then, on a fine summer day, the young oxen, cows, and heifers are being driven from all quarters of the Glen, in groups of three, four, five, six, and eight, with here and there a refractory animal tugged and pushed along with a rope halter over its head. And the bulls have the distinction of wearing each a ring in

his nose, and of having each a special attendant to himself. They converge towards a large open field of stunted grass, with heather and broom about its margin. In the lower part are sundry wooden and canvas booths, the occupants of which profess to supply "refreshment for man and beast," and about these we find a miscellaneous gathering of horses, sheep-dogs, and vehicles of various descriptions.

The cattle have passed on a little further, and my friend drags me forward to see them; for, he adds, "The judging has begun." We go on toward the upper part of the field, which is a scene of rather uncomfortable liveliness by reason of the number of animals congregated there—about two hundred I am told; and, as every farmer endeavours to keep his own small group separate from all the others, the amount of shouting, bellowing, and spasmodic running hither and thither of men and cattle is immense. They have just driven about a dozen animals into a sort of double pen. These I learn are the "two-year-old heifers," which are about to come under the judges' inspection. The space inside the ring is appropriated to the cattle whose merits are under adjudication, the judges, and a few other official, or privileged persons. Hanging on by, and outside of the fence, are a good many scores of spectators, all deeply interested, evidently, in the awards of the judges. These same judges are three shrewd-looking men, farmers or cattle-dealers, but not men of the parish, lest their decisions should be partial. Along with them are a rustic clerk, to record their "findings," and two or three men with sticks, punching about the cattle for the convenience of the judges. And inside the fence, too, coming and going, are various gentlemen of consideration in the place, one or two of them dressed in the Highland garb. The judges seem to do their work conscientiously. First, they give a brief glance at the lot in general; then they pick out and put to one side a number of the best; next, they com-

pare the "points" of these, turn them round and round for careful scrutiny, and anon draw aside to consult together.

At last the order of prizes is called out, and jotted down by the clerk; the gate is opened, and the two-year-old heifers are driven out, to be succeeded in the pen by the "one-year-old heifers," gathered from different parts of the field with no little noise and scamp-ering. And so it is with the "two-year-old stots," the "one-year-old stots," and various other classes. I have no doubt the judges do their work with thorough knowledge and impartiality, as indeed the dozens of amateur judges around me seem ready to admit, though I am too great a novice to be able to discern with any approach to exactitude the grounds of their various awards. I do not know that in this I am entirely singular either; for here when a new lot is driven into the pen, I overhear one of the kilted gentlemen—the greatest laird in the parish, who smokes a clay cutty, chats familiarly with his tenants, and seems to take a lively interest in all that is going on—directing the very favourable attention of the judges to a showy-looking, speckled cow as an animal of extraordinary merit. These hard-headed gentlemen simply smile an unbelieving smile; and I watch how they will deal with this particular animal, which seems to me also a beast of uncommon merit, judging by her giraffe-like height, and the beautiful speckling all over her body. Alas for amateur opinion, they are not even at the trouble to turn her aside for a moment's inspection; and though the stentorian attendant calls out six or seven prizes to cows, the speckled cow is not admitted to even the lowest place in the list!

After all the "general classes" have been gone over, there comes a special competition. There are a couple of silver "challenge cups" to be competed for; one for the "best male," the other for the "best female breeding animal on the ground." And here both the

interest and excitement awakened by the day's proceedings culminate. The man who would make the challenge cup his own must take it three years running against all competitors; and the difficult nature of this feat finds illustration in the fact that nobody has ever yet succeeded in accomplishing it. On the present occasion, I can perceive, the competition runs some risk of tending to a war of races. For the male cup a selection of bulls, old and young, pawing the earth and breathing out fierce threats against each other, are brought into the ring; and, after much consultation, a young, but, as one can understand, very handsome short-horned bull is declared entitled to the high award; whereupon sundry of the amateur judges around me mutter very audible doubts about the equity of the decision. The region in which we are is rather famous for the production of that variety of the bovine race known as "black polled," which, when fully "finished," stand at the very top of the London butchers' price-lists under the title of "prime Scots." And the idea that any other than a black-polled animal should carry off one of the chief honours of the day does not command the popular sympathy. However the equilibrium of feeling is pretty well restored when it is announced that the cup for females has been carried off easily from a large lot of competitors of divers breeds by a polled cow of "uncommon sweetness," as my friend assures me.

The "labours of the field" fairly over, and certain adjustments about payment of prize-money made, the next part of the day's proceedings is the dinner, which takes place in the largest of the canvas booths already spoken of, the inn, near by; not affording accommodation for a company of sixty to seventy, such as is now assembled. The kilted laird is chairman; his *vice*, or "croupier," is a very hale-looking man of Herculean build, not under seventy years of age; and who from the designation I hear applied to him on all hands of the "el'er," I understand to be a representative within the parish of the lay element in the Presbyterian kirk.

On the chairman's right sits the parson of the parish ; a comfortable, sedate-looking man, with ruddy cheeks and bald head, who has not deemed it beneath his dignity to enter the lists with his parishioners, and has honourably gained two or three prizes at the show. To the left of the chairman are the judges ; and the rest of the company take their places without any regard to precedence. The toast list, as one discovers by-and-bye, is a paper of portentous length, enumerating well nigh thirty separate "sentiments" from "The Queen" downward ; but luckily the speeches are brief ; for when the gentlemen of the Glengillodram Agricultural Society get on their legs their otherwise copious power of talk seems notably to desert them. The one really set or effective speech is when, in reply to the toast of "The Clergy and the Rev. Dr. Bluebell," the Rev. Dr. Bluebell proceeds to vindicate the propriety of his appearance there and then, amongst his parishioners ; and how it becomes a true pastor to be interested in all that concerns the prosperity of his flock, to illustrate and make clear the truth that they, the natural, and he and his order, the spiritual husbandmen, are united by a common nature, common sympathies, and common wants, and thus are bound to seek each other's welfare in every possible way. The elder, as his present office demands of him to do, cries "Hear, hear," and the company cry "Hear, hear," and applaud the Rev. Dr. Bluebell loudly. When the chairman toasts "The Judges," they applaud again ; when he toasts "The Successful Competitors," they also applaud ; and when he toasts "The unsuccessful Competitors" they applaud, if possible, yet more lustily. And it is observable that at every succeeding pause between the toasts, the general hum of conversation is getting louder, and more and more animated.

Then the silver challenge cups are brought in, and with due ceremony presented by the chairman to the winners, who turn out to be no other than the elder,

and a remarkably jolly-looking farmer from the upper part of the Glen, with a big red nose, and clad in a suit of "hodden grey." The chairman is now evidently getting tired of speech-making; and he begs to inform the company that when the Rev. Dr. Bluebell has given a toast he will call on the croupier for a song. The parson rises, and after a somewhat prosy and meaningless exordium, as it seems to me, proceeds to propose as his toast "The Strangers Present." And, adds the Rev. Doctor, to my unspeakable amazement and horror, "let me join with the toast the name of a gentleman, with whom I have not the pleasure of personal acquaintance—a representative of the small ware and pearl button department of trade, I understand—Mr. Simon Jellycod, your health, sir." All eyes are directed towards me, some dozens of broad good-natured countenances grin at me, as many shaggy heads nod over me; and it is a positive relief when one burly fellow, rather more than half seas over, fraternally seizes my hand with a hiccuped "Gi'e's your neive, min," as they madly "hip-hip-hurrah," all round. How I manage to get to my feet, and actually to speak for full five minutes, as my guide, philosopher, and friend afterwards assures me, I do, remains to me still a complete mystery.

My speech, like all things human, takes end at last and somehow; and then comes the elder's song; which, as it has in it a touch of the spirit of the old Scottish lyric, and to me at least is quite new, I here reproduce:

BONNY BALCAIRN.

There lives an auld man at the back o' yon knowes,
 His legs are nae better nor auld owsen bows,
 It would set him far better to be herdin' his yowes,
 Than takin' the tackie o' bonny Balcairn.

Whilk o' ye lasses will gang to Balcairn,
 Oh whilk o' ye lasses will gang to Balcairn,
 Oh whilk o' ye lasses will gang to Balcairn,
 To be the good wife o' bonny Balcairn.

I'm nae for the lass that has naething ava,
Nor yet for the lassie that speaks for it a',
Nor yet for the lassie that girns an' flytes,
An' blames her goodman fan it's a' her ain wytes.
Whilk o' ye lasses, &c.

I'm nae for the lass wi' the bonny black locks,
Nor yet for the lass wi' the braw ribbon knots,
But I'm for the lass wi' the bonny bank notes,
They will help wi' the tackie o' bonny Balcairn.
Whilk o' ye lasses, &c.

"Oh mither I'm gaen to Laurence fair."
"Daft laddie fat are ye gaen to dee there?"
"I'm gaen to buy some harrows an' plows,
To streak a bit pleuchie on Balcairn's knowes."
Whilk o' ye lasses, &c.

"O mither I'm gaen to Laurence fair."
"Daft lassie fat are ye gaen to dee there?"
"I'm gaen to buy some ribbons and lawn,
To wear on my head fan I get the goodman.
For I am the lassie that's gaen to Balcairn,
I am the lassie that's gaen to Balcairn,
Although the auld man be a silly concern,
It's a canty bit tackie the tack o' Balcairn."

"Your health an' song, el'er"—"your health an' song," alternate with shouts of applause when the song terminates. Then the Rev. Dr. Bluebell and a few of the straiter sort in the company leave; then we have one or two more attempts at toast-giving and song-singing. But the company are getting gradually more uproarious and less manageable, till at last the chairman sternly calls for "order," to allow of his finishing the toast list, which is done by drinking to "A Good Harvest."

The company have now dispersed, as I innocently suppose, and my friend and I are setting out for his home, when the elder seizes him by the arm, and says, "Hoot, ye're nae gaen awa wi' the gentleman till he see the cups kirsent't." It is in vain to urge that I have seen, perhaps quite enough of the convivialities of the place for the time. We are pulled away toward the

inn, and on our way thither the elder seems to be mustering his friends to take part in the ceremony that is about to follow, whatever it may be. Of that we are not left long in doubt. On entering mine host's largest parlour, which is evidently set out for the occasion, there stand the two veritable challenge cups—silver cups of ample size, though not of the highest finish—at the top of the table, and beside them a goodly array of bottles corked and sealed. Gradually a company of about half the number of that which has just broken up has assembled. That the proceedings are to be more of the free-and-easy order than those that have gone before is testified by the fact that the greater part of those who come in enter the room smoking their pipes; and in this particular the chairman, who is none other than the worthy laird who had officiated in that capacity just before, is no exception. When he has got us all seated, and the elder installed in his former office, Boniface is ordered to draw the corks of the eight bottles of—it is no slander to say it—very ordinary port that grace the top of the table. The liquor, it is understood, has been, or will be, paid for by the winners of the cups; and it has got to be drunk out of the challenge cups, handed round the table among the company. Here there is no toasting, and no particular order to be observed in anything; only the cups have to be filled and emptied; so much does the rite of christening render imperative. And in due course they are emptied, amid infinite noise of speeches and songs, tobacco smoke, and incoherent talk about cattle and cattle breeding, and many things relating thereto, to me unintelligible. The indifferent port seems to tell more rapidly on the bulk of the company than the whisky-punch imbibed at our previous sitting had done. No doubt the two hours we have spent over the national compound have done their part in helping to mellow all our hearts; but I rather think the general sentiment of the company is expressed by the red-nosed cup-man,

when, as the result of an abortive effort to stand in equilibrio, he declares that, "that sour dirt o' wine 's nae like gweed honest fusky; it'll turn a man's heid afore he's half gate on." How many are tipsy at the close of the christening, which takes place about half-past ten o'clock, I will not venture to guess. The chairman, who has proved himself, as he is on all hands declared to be, a jolly good fellow, certainly is not. Neither is the strong-headed old elder, for, as we are breaking up, with considerably more noise than haste, he tucks his challenge cup under his arm, and marches sturdily out. The ostler has his pony at the door, the elder mounts with a ponderous swing, shouts "Good-night, boys!" and in three minutes thereafter we can hear only the receding footfalls of his nag, half a mile off, as he clatters on his homeward way in the grey gloamin' light.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLOUGHING MATCH.

THERE are only two public events in the course of the year that stir the community of the glen in its length and breadth. One is the Cattle Show, the other is the Ploughing Match. Glengillodram is famous for cattle, and is equally famous for peerless ploughmen.

The ploughing match occurs in the late autumn, when ways are dank, and daylight is brief. As the homely placard on the kirkyard gate informs us, "the ploughs must be on the ground by eight A.M.," at which hour, the December dawn in our northern latitude has done little more than make the landscape dimly visible. "The ground" one finds to be a large field of even grass-land marked off into narrow sections by a number of small wooden pins, with a straight furrow drawn along at either end, leaving a narrow margin outside.

Forty ploughs are to compete ; and here, to be sure, they are—forty pairs of plump, spirited, farm horses, groomed in the highest style of art, some with gaudy ribbons worked into their tails and manes, and all with plough harness polished as if the most expert of shoe-blacks had done his best upon it.

Once, on a spring day journey by the London and North-Western Railway, I set myself to reckon up from the carriage window the diversities that might occur, as we passed on, in the style of team used to do the ploughing going on at that busy season. In the course of the journey from London to Warrington, the varieties that presented themselves were amusing.

Here, were two horses abreast in the traces, with one leader in front ; there, were two leaders in front, and one behind, and then three abreast. Next, three in single file, four in single file, and at last five in single file. Generally, too, it was the wooden plough ; and invariably there was one man to manage the plough, and another, or a lad, to drive the team. With the Scottish ploughman it is altogether different. The plough is uniformly drawn by a single pair of horses walking abreast, and the ploughman both guides his plough and drives his team without any assistant. And it must needs be said that his ploughing wears a far more workmanlike look than the zigzag uneven furrows cut by his English brother of the old school : who yet adheres to the numerous team and the antiquated wooden plough.

But the Glengillo dram field is now in motion. The forty ploughs have all started, or are starting. They plough in sections, or ridges, of about a furlong in length. At the outset, every ploughman has to cut his "feirin" furrow in the line of the small wooden pins. With what a serious air each competitor bends himself to his task, and how quietly and steadily the well-in-hand teams pull forward ! The ploughman has no guide but his eye, closely fixed on the line of pins before him ; yet, when the other end of the field has been reached by the man we watch, we see that he has drawn a furrow which, if not in the mathematical sense a straight line, is yet so remarkably straight that the eye can detect neither bend nor wrinkle in its whole length. And to be successful in the competition, he must cut every one of the thirty or forty furrows he has to plough equally straight. Nor is that the only requisite. Equality in depth of furrow is one condition of success ; equality in width, is another ; and not less indispensable are evenness in "packing" the furrows against each other, and neatness in turning out the last narrow strip when the ridge has been pared down,

furrow by furrow, till only a mere thread of green runs from end to end of the field.

As the ploughing goes on, the spectators accumulate. They are not allowed to wander over the field, but they traverse its margin, and closely inspect the progress of the work. Here are the crack ploughmen of the parish; men who knock under to nobody: save in this way, that this year you may beat me, but next year I shall hope to beat you; here are less experienced aspirants, who look forward to a good time coming, when they also shall wear the blue ribbon of their order; here, too, are men of humbler ambition, who yet hope to win a place of some sort among the dozen of prizemen; and a sprinkling as well of rollicking blades who have never been troubled about the high honours of the day, and some of whom are swinging on with the determination to let it be seen that they can plough, if not as well, at least as quickly, as any of their contemporaries.

We find attention strongly centred upon two competitors, whom we quickly come to know as Sandy Macnab and Rory Meerison (if the reader be skilled in comparative philology he will be able to translate the last of the two names into Roderick Morison). They are the champion ploughmen of the parish. After a hard struggle, Rory gained his position as champion, and for several years wore his laurels almost undisturbed, but of late the honours of this veteran have been repeatedly put in jeopardy by his younger rival. And now, as the grizzled, weather-beaten man of fifty steps warily on, with firm hold of his plough-handles, while the pair of sleek handsome bays in front are obedient to his softest whisper, we hear the exclamation: "Eh, man, but he's makin' bonny wark!" But so, too, is Sandy Macnab. And by-and-bye the remark becomes frequent that if Sandy "dinna spoil himsel' wi' his mids, he is maist sure to get it." The "mids," or finishing furrow, is critical. Rory evidently sees it, gets nervous toward the close of his task, and—poor

man!—to his chagrin comes in as second prizeman ; for the judges who are let loose on the land as soon as the ploughs are off, point at certain small patches of green surface which he has not turned perfectly down, and award the first prize to Sandy Macnab. “ Ah, but Rory was a gran’ ploughman, though his han’s grown’ nae sae steady noo,” says my sympathising neighbour to his friend ; and his friend re-echoes the statement with a long narration of Rory’s bygone exploits.

The ploughing match proper is now finished, and the subordinate competition—for which only part of the teams present enter—to decide who has the “ best-groomed horses and the best-kept harness,” comes next. This competition awakens but a limited amount of interest, compared with the other, inasmuch as it is felt that success in it depends only in part on the ploughman’s skill and attention, and in part on the quality of the horses and harness due to the taste or means of the ploughman’s master. And so, while the teams depart by this and the other route homeward, the newly-ploughed field continues to be the subject of minute critical inspection. The gathering of onlookers appears to be mainly from the class of ploughmen, or “ day labourers,” rather than the class of farmers, though there are a few of the latter, just as one or two farmers’ sons have entered the lists as competing ploughmen. Generally the spectators are of the order who have had, or expect yet to have, personal experience in walking at the plough-tail. They are of all ages, too ; from mere lads to old men bent double by hard toil with spade and pickaxe ; and all keenly discuss the doings of the ploughmen with the confidence of those who know what they are talking about. I note particularly one firmly-knit young fellow, with keen grey eyes, rather sprucely dressed in a tweed suit, with shiny leather leggings. He is evidently not a ploughman, and yet he is volubly, and even somewhat dictatorially, pronouncing upon the ploughing to a group of

rustics, some of whom endeavour to combat certain of his opinions with not much apparent success. Who can he be? And the query is promptly met. "Oh, it's Tammy Grant," "But who is Tammy Grant?" "Weel," quoth my intelligent and never-failing friend, through whose agency I am here, "he is jist the son o' a labourin' man o' the glen. He was a ploughman here himsel' three year ago, an' for his years, a lad o' extraordinar' promise. But he was aye fond o' buiks, an' drew aside wi' nane mair than the dominie. So ye wudna' hin'er Tammy to gi'et up the plough stilts, an' aifter a brush up at the parish skweel, gae aff to the college to study for the ministry." And I found it even so. Tammy Grant, who was entered of his second year as a student at Aberdeen University, was home for the Christmas vacation, and spending a day with evident zest among his old associates at their wonted employment.

It is not to be supposed that the ploughing match can pass by, without affording some opportunity for social enjoyment. The dinner on this occasion is a mere private affair. The farmer who has got his field ploughed, will, it is understood, bear the cost of dinner for the judges and such of his neighbours as he chooses to invite: as well as the cost of a light luncheon, consisting of "breid an' cheese, an' a dram," to the ploughmen; but the crowning entertainment is the Ploughman's Ball in the evening.

For the ball, tickets are not required, nor are special invitations necessary. Indeed, the stranger, of decent social standing, who should pass the night in the Glen and not attend the ball, would be reckoned no better than an unfriendly churl. And thus, when the business of my lawful calling has led me there, why should not I, too, partake of the pleasures going! For years on years, I understand, the ball has taken place at the elder's farm, and for the good reason that the elder has a large granary, extremely well adapted for the purpose,

which he cheerfully clears out and garnishes for the occasion, while he makes it an invariable rule—unless the laird happen to be there—to open the dance in person, with the most mature matron present.

Nine o'clock has come, and a dozen candles in tin sconces light up the spacious granary, around the side-walls of which are ranged "the youth and beauty of the district," as the local newspapers will inform their readers in due season. Among some scores of sturdy lads, I recognise sundry of the competing ploughmen, not omitting the veteran Rory Meerison, who appears to have plucked up his spirits wonderfully. (I understand Rory claims reflected credit as the prime instructor of the man who has this day beaten him.) And he has been at double pains, despite the result of the contest, in combing out his grey whiskers and setting his very high, and very stiff, shirt collar. But, indeed, the gentlemen are all in their "Sunday best," and each has his buxom partner by his side, set off in the nearest practicable approach to her ideal of ball-room style. A sprinkling of the men wear the kilt and plaid, and we number among these the hero of the day, Sandy Macnab, and Tammy Grant, the embryo parson, who affords us indisputable evidence that he is a sound disciple of the school of muscular Christians. A very few of the women affect the tartan too; but the greater part seem to have studied less the material of their dresses than how to achieve a sufficiently violent contrast in colours.

At the end of the granary, on a raised seat, are a couple of fiddlers, and near by them a solemn-looking kilted piper. Screech-screech-screech! The fiddles are in tune, and the floor is filled with waiting dancers. The gentlemen range themselves by their partners, on tiptoe, to begin; when the leading fiddler pushes his fourth finger far up his first string, and brings down his bow with a long-drawn squeak. This is "kissing time;" and, after an attempt more or less successful on the part of each male dancer to kiss his partner's cheek,

at it they go! The fiddlers dash into a stirring "Strathspey," and the dancers dance with a will. Reels, "foursome reels," and "eightsome reels," are the staple dances. To face your partner, and dance your "steps" at will, keeping time to the music, and describing the figure 8 on the floor when a change of position is required, is all the skill needed to make a passable appearance, although the more elaborate style of not a few on the floor would seem to speak of the assiduous professional services of the rustic dancing master. And now, the musicians change their strain, and give us "quick time"; the dancers become doubly energetic, and the scene becomes doubly animated; the gentlemen taking the change of time as the signal to snap their thumbs rapidly above their heads, and utter a wild "hooch!" Five minutes have passed in this exercise, and the fiddlers pause: some of the gentlemen lead their partners back to their seats, but the greater part of them, and some of the ladies, have a second set-to after exactly the same fashion. And thus the dance goes on. While some are speedily danced out of breath, the energy and vivacity of the younger ploughmen seem only to increase as they urge on the hard-worked fiddlers, and caper through the "eightsome" figure with louder "hooch-hoochs!" than before.

By twelve o'clock all moderate dancers own to some fatigue, and the excellent elder who moves about, now here, now there, as a highly efficient master of the ceremonies, enters his emphatic protest against the efforts of a few of the more boisterous lads to pull reluctant or tired-out people on to the floor.

"Come, blaw up, Alister," cries the elder, "an' lat's hae the reel o' Thuilachan. Tammy, get them to the floor."

Forthwith Tammy Grant, dressed, as has been said, in kilt and plaid of the tartan of his clan, picks out three other young fellows wearing "the garb of old Gaul," and one of whom is Sandy Macnab. Alister the

piper, who for the last hour or two has been looking the indignation he feels at the delay that has occurred in calling the national instrument into use, blows up his "chanter" with an air of grave superiority; his "drone" grunts, and grunts again, and at the first wild note that rends the air, the four dancers bow to the ladies of the company, and are off, with the picturesque "Highland fling," into the reel of Thuilachan, which they keep up for the next eight or ten minutes with amazing vigour and skill, while the granary rings from floor to roof with the "skirl" of Alister's bagpipes. The dance ends amid loud acclamations, and there is a general desire to have it repeated. Human limbs and human lungs have a limit to their power, however, and cannot keep it up at this rate. Yet as the four best dancers have just left the floor, there is some difficulty in getting others to succeed them; and after a brief pause they dance the reel again in a more moderate style by way of encore. Then, to gratify the company (and not less to gratify the piper, who is jealous of his reputation as a skilled musician), Tammy Grant consents to dance the Ghillie Callum, over a pair of crossed walking sticks, in place of the traditional crossed swords.

While Ghillie Callum is going on, the elder has disappeared. His duties are multifarious. The time for refreshments has now come; and none but the elder can rightly concoct the toddy. The elder believes in wooden implements for the purpose. Ah! if you but saw the neat little ladles, fashioned of wild cherry tree, with ebon handles, which the worthy man has for private use when his friends are met round his hospitable board! The present is a public, and, so to speak, wholesale, occasion. Therefore there must be a large vessel for mixing, and the elder insists on the use of the wooden bushel measure. Into the bushel he shovels a heap of sugar; and then a "grey beard" jar of the "real Glengillodram mountain dew" is emptied in. Then, water, at boiling point, from the huge copper

over the glowing peat fire on the kitchen hearth. And the elder bends him over the steaming bushel, stirs the toddy with a zeal and knowledge all his own, and has it fully tested and proved by the aid of two or three trusted cronies: a second grey beard being hard at hand to supply what may be lacking to give it the desiderated "grip."

Tin pitchers, delft mugs, and crystal jugs, are indifferently called into use for conveying the elder's mixture to the ball-room, where a band of "active stewards" are speedily at work, handing about supplies of crisp oat cakes and cheese, along with the toddy, which is freely served out to all. Yet let it not be supposed that we drink of it to drunkenness. In the keen air of this upland region, toddy is justly reckoned a kindly liquor, which by itself never wilfully breaks a man's character for sobriety; and we drink of it freely on that clear understanding.

The hour of refreshment past, dancing is resumed with renewed vigour. By-and-bye some of the more staid heads in the company find opportunities for slipping home to bed; but the flower of the youth and beauty, who deem the Ploughing Match Ball an entertainment peculiarly their own, keep the fiddlers going till three or four o'clock in the morning, when the ball breaks up, and the gentlemen gallantly see their lady partners home. And if the intensity of their enjoyment be not sufficiently marked by the lateness of the hour to which it is protracted, it ought to be by the fact that almost every one of those who have danced on until then will have to commence another day of hard manual labour, within a couple of hours after leaving the ball-room.