

LEGEND OF JOHN MACKAY OF ROSS-SHIRE, CALLED IAN MORE ARRACH, OR BIG JOHN THE RENTER OF THE MILK OF THE COWS.

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My old Highland major told me, what perhaps you know better than I do, I mean, that some half century or more ago, before sheep were quite so much in fashion in the Highlands as I believe they now are, and when cattle were the only great staple of the country, the proprietors of the glens had them always well filled with cows. In those times it was the custom in Ross-shire to allow one calf only to be reared for each two cows of the herd. Each calf with its pair of cows was called a *Cauret*; and these caurets were let to renters, who, as they might find it most advisable, took one or more of them in lease, as it were, according as their circumstances might dictate; and the renter being obliged to rear one calf for the

landlord for each cauret he held, he was allowed the remainder of the milk for his own share of the profit. These milk-renters were called *arrachs*; and John Mackay, the hero of my story, was called Ian More Arrach, from his lofty stature, and from his being one of these milk-renters. According to my informant the major, who personally knew him, Ian well merited the addition of More; for he declared that he was the most powerful man he had ever beheld.

It so happened that Ian went down on one occasion into Strath-Connan, to attend a great market or fair that was held there, probably to dispose of his cheese; and as he was wandering about after his business was over, his eye was caught exactly like those of some of our simple trouts of the lake here, by the red and tinsel, and silk and wool, and feather glories of a recruiting serjeant and his party. He had never seen anything of the kind before, and he stood staring at them in wonderment as they passed. Nor did his solid and substantial form fail to fill the serjeant's eye in its turn; but if I am to give you a simile illustrative of the manner in which it did so, I must say that it was in the same way that the

plump form of a well-fed trout might fill the greedy eye of a gaunt pike. He resolved to have him as a recruit. The party was accordingly halted immediately opposite to the spot where Ian was standing; and after one or two shrill shrieks of the fife, and a long roll of the drum, the martial orator began an oration, which lasted a good half hour, in which he largely expatiated on the glories of a soldier's life, and the riches and honours it was certain one day or other to shower on the heads of all those who embraced it. The greater part of this harangue was lost upon Ian More Arrach, partly because he but very imperfectly understood English, and partly because his senses were too much lost in admiration. But when the grand scarlet-coated gentleman approached him with a smiling air, and gaily slapping him on the back, exclaimed,—

“Come along with us, my brave fellow, and taste the good beef and mustard, and other provender, that King George so liberally provides for us gentlemen of his army, and drink his Majesty's health with us in his own liquor. Come, and see how jollily we soldiers live!”

His wits returned to him at once, and he quick-

ly understood enough of what was said to him, to make him grin from ear to ear, till every tooth in his head was seen to manifest its own particular unmingled satisfaction, and his morning's walk from his distant mountain residence having wonderfully sharpened his appetite, he followed the serjeant into a booth with all manner of alacrity, and quietly took his seat at a table that groaned beneath an enormous round of beef, flanked by other eatables, on which the hungry recruits fell pell-mell, and in demolishing which Ian rendered them his best assistance. The booth or tent was constructed, as such things usually are, of some old blankets stitched together, and hung over a cross-stick, that was tied horizontally to the tops of two poles fixed upright in the ground. It was the ambulatory tavern of one of those travelling ale and spirit sellers who journey from one fair or market to another, for the charitable purpose of vending their victuals and drink to the hungry and thirsty who can afford to pay for them. The space around the interior of the worsted walls of this confined place was occupied with boxes, vessels, and barrels of various kinds; and whilst the landlord, a knock-kneed cheeseparing of a man, who had once been

a tailor, sat at his ease in one corner reckoning his gains, his wife, a fat bustling red-nosed little woman, was continually running to and fro, to serve the table with liquor. Many were the loyal toasts given, and they were readily drunk by Ian, more, perhaps, from relish of the good stuff that washed them down, than from any great perception he had of their intrinsic merit. His head was by no means a weak one. But the serjeant and his assistants were too well acquainted with all the tricks of their trade, not to take such measures as made him unwittingly swallow three or four times as much liquor as they did.

“Now, my gallant Highlander,” exclaimed the serjeant, when he thought him sufficiently wound up for his purpose, “see how nobly his Majesty uses us. Starve who may, we never want for plenty. But this is not all. Hold out your hand, my brave fellow. See, here is a shilling with King George’s glorious countenance upon it. He sends you this in his own name, as a mark of his especial favour and regard for you.”

“Fod, but she wonders tat sae big an’ braw a man as ta King wad be thiukin’ on Ian Arrach at a’, at a’,” said the Highlander, surveying the shil-

ling as it lay in the palm of his hand ; “ but troth, she wonders a hantel mair, tat sin King Shorge was sendin’ ony sing till her ava, she didna send her a guinea fan her hand was in her sporrان at ony rate. But sic as it be, she taks it kind o’ ta man ;” and saying so, he quietly transferred into his own sporrان that which he believed to have come from the King’s.

“ That shilling is but an arnest of all the golden guineas he will by and bye give you,” said the serjeant ; “ not to mention all those bags of gold, and jewels, and watches which he will give you his gracious leave to take from his enemies, after you shall have cut their throats.”

“ Tut, tut, but she no be fond o’ cuttin’ trots,” replied Ian ; “ she no be good at tat trade at a’ at a’.”

“ Ha ! no fears. but you will learn that trade fast enough,” said the serjeant. “ You mountaineers generally do. You are raw yet ; but wait till you have beheld my glorious example—wait till you have seen me sheer off half a dozen heads or so, as I have often done, of a morning before breakfast, and you will see that there is nothing more simple.”—

“ Och, och !” exclaimed Ian, with a shrug of his shoulders, that spoke volumes.

“ Aye, aye,” continued the serjeant, “ ’tis true, you cannot expect that at the very first offer you are to be able to take off your heads quite so clean at a blow as I can do. Indeed, I am rather considered a rare one at taking off heads. For example—I remember that I once happened to take a French grenadier company in flank, when, with the very first slash of my sword, I cut clean through the necks of the three first file of men, front rank and rear rank, making no less than six heads off at the first sweep. And it was well for the company that they happened only to be formed two deep at the time, for if they had been three deep, no less than nine heads must have gone.”

“ Keep us a’ !” cried some of the wondering recruits.

“ Nay,” continued the serjeant ; “ had it not been for the unlucky accident that by some mistake the fourth front-rank man was a leetle shorter than the other, so that the sword encountered his chin-bone, the fourth file would have been beheaded like the rest.”

“ Och, och !” cried Ian again.

“ But,” continued the serjeant, “ as I said before, though you cannot expect to take up this matter by nattral instinck, as it were, yet I’ll be bail that a big stout souple fellow like you will not see a month’s sarvice before you will shave off a head as easily as I shave this here piece of cheese, and—— confound it, I have cut my thumb half through.”

“ Her nanesell wanna be meddlin’ wi’ ony siccan bluidy wark,” said Ian, shaking his head, and shrugging his shoulders. “ She no be wantan’ to be a boutcher. But, noo,” added he, lifting up a huge can of ale, “ she be biddin’ ye a’ gude evenin’, shentilmans, and gude hells, and King Shorge gude hells, an’ mony sanks to ye a’; and tell King Shorge she sall keep her bit shullin’ on a string tied round her neck for a bonny die.” And, so rising up, Ian put the ale can to his head, and drained it slowly to the bottom.

“ But, my good fellow,” said the serjeant, who had been occupied, whilst Ian’s draught lasted, in tying up his thumb in a handkerchief, and giving private signals to his party, “ you are joking about bidding us good evening—we cannot part with you so soon.”

“ Troth, she maun be goin’ her ways home,” said Ian, “ she has a far gate to traivil.”

“ Stuff!” cried the serjeant; “ surely you cannot have forgotten that you have taken King George’s money, and that you have now the great privilege of holding the honourable and lucrative situation of a gentleman private in his Majesty’s infantry, having been duly and volunteerly enlisted before all these here witnesses.”

“ Ou, na,” said Ian, gravely and seriously; “ she didna’ list—na, na, she didna’ list; troth, na. So, wussin’ ta gude company’s gude hells wanss more, an’ King Shorge’s hells, she maun] just be goin’ for she has a lang gate o’ hill afore her.”

“ Nay, master, we can’t exactly part with you so easily,” said the serjeant, rising up. “ You are my recruit, and you must go nowhere without my leave.”

“ Hoot, toots,” replied Ian, making one step towards the door of the booth; “ an’ she has her nane leave, troth, she’ll no be axan’ ony ither.”

“ I arrest you in the King’s name!” said the serjeant, laying hold of Ian by the breast.

“ Troth, she wudna’ be wussin’ to hort her.”

said Ian, lifting up the serjeant like a child, before he knew where he was; "but sit her doon tere, oot o' ta way, till her name sell redd's hersell of ta lave, and wuns awa'."

Making two strides with his burden towards a large cask of ale that stood on end in one corner of the place, he set the gallant hero down so forcibly on the top of it, that the crazy rotten boards gave way, and he was crammed backwards, in a doubled up position, into the yawning mouth of the profound, whilst surges of beer boiled and frothed up around him. Ian would have charitably relieved the man from so disagreeable a situation, which was by no means that which he had intended him to occupy; but, ere he wist, he was assailed by the whole party like a swarm of bees. The place of strife was sufficiently narrow, a circumstance much in favour of the light troops who now made a simultaneous movement on him, with the intention of prostrating him on the ground, but he stood like a colossus, and nothing could budge him; whilst, at the same time, he never dealt a single blow as if at all in anger, but ever and anon, as his hands became so far liberated as to enable him to seize on one of his assailants, he wrenched him away from his own

person, and tossed him from him, either forth of the tent door, or as far at least as its bounds would allow, some falling among the hampers and boxes—some falling like a shower upon the poor owners of the booth,—and some falling upon the unfortunate serjeant. The red-nosed priestess of this fragile temple of Bacchus, shrieked in sweet harmony with the groans of the knock-kneed and broken down tailor, and in the midst of the melee, one unhappy recruit, who was winging his way through the air from the powerful projectile force of Ian More, came like a chain-shot against the upright poles of the tent—the equilibrium of its whole system was destroyed—down came the cross beam—the covering blankets collapsed and sank,—and, in a moment, nothing appeared to the eyes of those without but a mighty heap, that heaved and groaned underneath like some volcanic mountain in labour previous to an eruption. And an eruption to be sure there was—for, to the great astonishment of the whole market people, Ian More Arrach's head suddenly appeared through a rent that took place in the rotten blanket, with his face in a red hot state of perspiration, and his mouth gasping for breath. After panting like a

porpus for a few seconds, he made a violent effort, reared himself upon his legs, and thrusting his feet out at the aperture, which had served as a door to the tent, he fled away with all the effect of a felucca under a press of sail, buffeting his way through the multitude of people and cattle, as a vessel would toss aside the opposing billows; and then shooting like a meteor up the side of the mountain that flanked the strath, he left his flowing drapery behind him in fragments and shreds adhering to every bush he passed by, bounded like a stag over its sky line, and disappeared from the astonished eyes of the beholders.

It were vain to attempt to describe the re-organization of the discomfited troops, who, when their strange covering was thus miraculously removed, arose singly from the ground utterly confounded, and began to move about limping and cursing amidst the bitter wailings of the unhappy people, whose frail dwelling had so marvellously fled from them. The attention of the party was first called to their gallant commander, who, with some difficulty, was extracted from the mouth of the beer barrel, dripping like a toast from a tankard. His rage may be conceived better than told.

His honour had been tarnished, and his interest put in jeopardy. He, whose stirring tales of desperate deeds of arms and fearful carnage, had so often extended the jaws of the Highland rustics whom he had kidnapped, and raised their very bonnets on the points of their bristling hair with wonder,—who could devour fire as it issued from the mouth of a cannon,—and who could contend single-handed against a dozen of foes, to be so unceremoniously crammed, by the arm of one man, into a beer barrel, in the presence of those very recruits, and to be afterwards basely extracted from it before the eyes of the many who had listened to his boastful harangues. And then, moreover, to be choused out of the anticipated fruits of his wily hospitality, as well as of a silver shilling, by the flight of the broad-shouldered Celt, whom he thought he had secured, and of whom he expected to have made so handsome a profit. All this was not to be borne,—and, accordingly, wide as was Ross-shire, he determined most indefatigably to search every inch of it until he should again lay hands on him. From the enquiries made on the spot, it was considered as certain that Ian More had gone directly home to his lonely bothy, in a

high and solitary valley, some dozen of miles or so from the place where they then were ; and as one of the recruits knew the mountain tracks well enough to act as guide, he collected the whole of his forces, amounting to nearly double the number of those who had been engaged in the battle of the booth, and after having refreshed and fortified them and himself with all manner of available stimuli, he put himself at their head, and set forward on his expedition at such an hour of the night as might enable them to reach the dwelling of Ian More Arrach, before he was likely to leave it in the morning in pursuit of his daily occupation. .

Ian More was but little acquainted with the tricks of this world ; and no wonder, for the habitation in which he lived, and from which he rarely migrated, was situated in one of those desert glens which are to be found far up in the mountains, where they nurse and perhaps give birth to the minuter branches of those streams, which, running together in numbers, and accumulating as they roll onwards through wider and larger valleys, go on expanding with the opening country, until they unite to water the extended and fertile plains in some broad and important river. The ascent

to the little territory of which Ian More was the solitary sovereign, was by a steep and narrow ravine among rocks, down which the burn raged against the opposing angles, like a wayward child that frets and fumes against every little obstacle that occurs to the indulgence of its wishes. Higher up its course was cheerful and placid, like the countenance of the same child perhaps, when in the best humour and in the full enjoyment for the time being of all its desires, laughing as it went its way among water-lillies, ranunculuses, and yellow marygolds, meandering quietly through a deep and well swarded soil, that arose from either side of it in a gently curving slope to the base of two precipitous walls of rock, within the shelter of which the caurets of Ian More had ample pasture for a stretch of about a quarter of a mile upwards to the spot where the cliffs, rising in altitude, and apparently unscalable, shut in the glen in a natural amphitheatre. There the burn issued from a small circular lochan; and it was on the farther margin of this piece of water, and immediately at the foot of the crags behind it, that the small sod hovel of Ian More Arrach was placed, so insignificant a speck amid the vastness of the surrounding features of

nature, as to be hardly distinguished from the rock itself, especially when approached, as it now was, in the grey light of the morning, until the serjeant and his party had come very near to it.

The leader of the enterprise felt that no time was to be lost in a survey, lest, whilst they were hesitating, Ian might perceive them, and again make his escape. A simultaneous rush, therefore, was made for the door; but albeit that Ian generally left it unfastened, he had somehow or other been led to secure it on this occasion, by lifting a stone of no ordinary size, which usually served him as a seat, and placing it as a barricade against it on the inside. Their first attempt to force it being thus rendered altogether unavailing,—

“ John Mackay, otherwise Ian More Arrach, open to us in the name of King George,” cried the serjeant, standing at the full length of his pike from the door, and poking against it with the point of the weapon.

“ Fat wud King Shorge hae wi’ Ian More,” demanded the Highlander.

“ Come, open the door and surrender peaceably,” cried the serjeant, “ you are the King’s lawful recruit. You have been guilty of mutiny and

desartion; but if you will surrender at discretion, and come quietly along with us, it is not unlikely that, in consideration of your being as yet untaught, and still half a savage, you may not be exactly shot this bout; though it is but little marcy you deserve, considering how confoundedly my back aches with the rough treatment I had from you. Keep close to the door, my lads," continued he, sinking his voice, "and be ready to spring on him the moment he comes out."

Whilst the serjeant yet spoke, the whole hovel began to heave like some vast animal agonized with internal throes. The men of the party stood aghast for one moment, and in the next the back wall of the sod edifice was hurled outwards, and the roof, losing its support, fell inwards, raising a cloud of dust so dense as utterly to conceal for a time the individual who was the cause and instrument of its destruction.

"Ha! look sharp, my lads!" cried the serjeant, "be on your mettle!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when the herculean form of Ian More arose before his eyes, from amidst the debris and dust, as did the

figure of the Genii from the jar, before those of the fisherman in the eastern fable.

“ There he is, by Jupiter !” cried the serjeant, involuntarily retreating a step or two. “ On him ! —on him, and seize him, my brave boys !”

The nature of the spot seemed to forbid all hope of escape. The party blocked up the space in front of the bothy, and the narrow stripe of ground that stretched along between the lake on the one hand, and the cliffs on the other, grew more and more confined as it ran backwards, until it disappeared altogether at a point about an hundred yards distant, where the crags rose sheer up out of the water. In this direction Ian More moved slowly off, after throwing on the throng of his assailants a grim smile, which, however, had more of pity than of anger in it. Before he had taken a dozen steps, the most forward of the party were at his skirts. He turned smartly round, and suddenly catching up the first man in his arms, he sent him spinning through the air into the lake, as if he had been a puppy dog. The next in succession was seized with astonishment, but before he could shake himself free of it, he was seized by something more formidable, I mean by the iron hands of Ian More,

who flung him also far amid the waters after his fellow. A whole knot of those who followed then sprang upon him at once, but he patted them off, one after another, as if they had been so many flies, and that he had been afraid to hurt them; but, as it was impossible for him to accommodate his hits with mathematical precision to the gentleness of his intentions, some of the individuals who received them bore the marks of them for many a day afterwards. The ardour of the attack became infinitely cooled down. But still there were certain fiery spirits who coveted glory. These, as they came boldly up, successively shared the fate of those who had gone before them. Some were stretched out, as chance threw them, to measure their dimensions on the terra firma, whilst others were hurled hissing hot into the lake, where they were left at leisure to form some estimate of their own specific gravity in a depth of water which was just shallow enough to save them from drowning. Meanwhile, the object of their attack continued to stalk slowly onwards at intervals, smiling on them from time to time, as he turned to survey the shattered remains of the attacking army, that now followed him at a respectful distance, and halted

every time he faced them. The serjeant, like an able general, kept poking them on in the rear with his pike, and upbraiding them for their cowardice. Meanwhile Ian gradually gained ground on them, and having produced an interval of some twenty or thirty yards between himself and them, just as they thought that he had arrived at a point where further retreat was impossible, he suddenly disappeared into a crack in the face of the cliff, hitherto unobserved, and on reaching the place, they found that the fearless mountaineer had made his slippery way up the chimney-like cleft, amidst the white foam of a descending rill, that was one of the main feeders of the Lochan, into which it poured.

“The feller has vanished into the clouds,” said the serjeant, shuddering with horror as he looked up the perilous rocky funnel, and, at the same time, secretly congratulating himself that Ian had not stood to bay. “He has vanished into the clouds, just out of our very hands, as I may say. Who was to think of there being any such ape’s ladder as this here?”

The party returned, sullen and discomfited, to the strath, and their leader now gave up all hopes of capturing Ian More Arrach, either by strata-

gem or force. But his thirst for the large sum which he expected to realize by producing such a man at head-quarters, rendered him quite restless and unremitting in his inquiries, the result of which was, that he found out that Lord Seaforth, then, I believe, Lord Lieutenant of the county, might do something towards apprehending the runaway ; he accordingly waited on his Lordship to request his interference for procuring the seizure of John Mackay, surnamed Ian More Arrach, a deserter from his Majesty's service. Lord Seaforth enquired into the case, and believing that the man had been fairly enlisted, he procured his immediate appearance at Brahan Castle, by going the right way to work with him. There, it so happened, that Lord Rae was at that time a visitor, and Lord Seaforth called in his aid to work upon Ian More, who bowed to the ground in submission to the wishes of his chief.

“ This is an unlucky business, Ian More,” said Lord Rae, “ it seems that you have deserted from the King's service, after having accepted his money, and that moreover, you have twice deforced the officer and party. Your case, I fear, is a bad one. Depend upon it, they will have you, if it should

cost them the sending of a whole regiment after you ; and then, if you give them so much trouble, no one can say what may be the consequence. Take my advice, and give yourself up quietly. I shall write to your commanding officer in such terms as will save you from any very bad consequences ; and with the recommendations which you shall have, there is no saying but you may be an officer ere long. All the Mackays are brave fellows ; and if all I have heard be true, it appears that you are no disgrace to the name."

Ian was too proud of the interest taken in him by his noble chief, to dispute his advice or wishes for one moment. He would have sacrificed his life for him. And accordingly, abandoning his mountain-glen and his caurets, he surrendered himself to the serjeant, who implicitly obeyed the instructions he received from Lord Rae to treat him kindly, particularly as they were backed up with a handsome *douceur* ; and Ian was soon afterwards embarked to join his regiment, then quartered in Guernsey.

The regiment that Ian More was attached to was almost entirely a new levy, and the recruits were speedily put on garrison duty, frivolous per-

haps in itself, but probably given to them more as a lesson, in order that they might become familiar with it, than from any absolute necessity for it. It so happened, that the first guard that Ian mounted, he was planted as a night sentinel on the Queen's Battery. The instructions given to his particular post were to take especial care that no injury should happen to a certain six-pounder, which there rested on its carriage; and when the corporal of the guard marched Ian up as a relief, he laughed heartily to hear the earnest assurances which he gave, in answer to the instructions he received from the man he was relieving, "Tat not a bonn o' ta body o' ta wee gunnie sould be hurt, at a', at a', while he had ta care o' her."

And Ian kept his word; for he watched over the beautiful little piece of ordnance with the greatest solicitude. It so happened, however, that whilst he was walking his lonely round, a heavy shower of rain began to fall, and a bitter freezing blast soon converted every particle of it into a separate cake of ice, which cut against his nose and eyes, and nearly scarified his face, so that much as he had been accustomed to the snarling climate of the higher regions of the interior of Scotland, he felt as

if he would lose his eye-sight from the inclemency of the weather ; and then he began to reason that if he should lose his eye-sight, how could he take care of the gun ? His anxiety for the safety of his charge, united to a certain desire for his own comfort, induced him gravely to consider what was best to be done. He surveyed the gun, and as he did so, he began to think that it was extremely absurd that he should be standing by its side for two long hours, whilst he might so easily provide for its security in some place of shelter ; and accordingly he quietly removed it from its carriage, and poisoning it very adroitly on his shoulder, he carried it deliberately away.

Strong as Ian was, the position and the weight of the six-pounder, considerably more than half a ton, compelled him to walk with a stiff mien and a solemn, measured, and heavy tread. He had to pass by two or three sentinels. These were all raw unformed recruits like himself, and full of Highland superstitions. Each of them challenged him in succession as his footstep approached ; but Ian was too much intent on keeping his burden properly balanced to be able to reply. He moved on steadily and silently therefore, with his eye-balls

protruded and fixed, from the exertion he was making, and with his whole countenance wearing a strange and portentous expression of anxiety, which was heightened by a certain pale blue light that fell upon it from one part of the stormy sky. Instead of attempting to oppose or to arrest such a phantom, which came upon them in the midst of the tempest, like some unearthly being which had been busied in the very creation of it, each sentry fled before it, and the whole rampart was speedily cleared.

It was not many minutes after this that the visiting serjeant went his rounds. To his great surprise, he was not challenged by the sentry upon Ian More's post; and to his still greater astonishment, he was permitted to advance with impunity till he discovered that Ian More was not there. But what was yet most wonderful of all, the gun of which he was the especial guardian was gone.

"Lord ha' mercy on us!" exclaimed the corporal, "I see'd the man planted here myself alongside the piece of ordinance; what can have become of them both?"

"'Tis mortal strange," said the serjeant. "Do you stand fast here, corporal, till we go down the rampart a bit, to see if we can see any thing."

“Nay, with your leave, serjeant,” said the corporal, “I see no use in leaving me here to face the devil. Had we not better go and report this strange matter to the officer of the guard?”

“Nonsense,—obey my orders; and if you do see the devil, be sure you make him give you the countersign,” said the serjeant, who had had all such fears rubbed off by a long life of hard service.

On walked the serjeant along the rampart. The other sentries were gone also. One man only he at last found, and him he dragged forth from under a gun-carriage.

“Why have you deserted your post, you trembling wretch?” demanded the serjeant.

“Did you not see it, then?” said the man, with a terrified look.

“See what?” asked the serjeant.

“The devil, in the shape of Ian More Arrach, with his face like a flaming furnace, shouldering a four-and-twenty pounder,” replied the man; “och, it was a terrible sight.”

“By jingo, my boy, your back will be made a worse spectacle of before long, if I don’t mistake,” said the serjeant.

By this time a buzz of voices was heard. The

guard had been alarmed by the fugitive sentries, whose fright had carried them with ghastly looks to the guard-room. The guard had alarmed the garrison, and the whole place was thrown into confusion. Soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and officers, were seen running and heard vociferating in all directions, lanterns and flambeaux were everywhere flitting about like fire-flies, and soldiers' wives and children were heard screaming and crying. The cause of the tumult was reported in a thousand different ways. Some of the least rational of the women and juveniles even believed and asserted that an enemy had landed on the island; whilst those who really were aware that the true cause of the uproar was Ian More's mysterious disappearance, were employed in searching everywhere for him and the six-pounder; but he was nowhere to be found, and wonder and astonishment multiplied at every step.

At length the tumult rose to such a height, that the commanding-officer was roused, and hurrying on his clothes, he came running to the Queen's Battery to know what all the hubbub was about. The place was filled with a crowd of all ranks, each individual of which was ready to hazard his

own conjecture in explanation of this most unaccountable event. All gave way at the colonel's approach. After hearing what had happened, he enquired into the circumstances so far as they were known; he listened calmly and attentively to the various accounts of those who had been making ineffectual search, and having heard all of them patiently to an end—

“ This is very strange,” said he; “ but well as you have searched, it appears to me that none of you seem to have ever thought of looking for him in his barrack-room. Let us go there.”

Off went the colonel; accordingly, to the barrack-room, followed by as many curious officers and soldiers as could well crowd after him; and there, to be sure, snug in bed, and sound asleep, lay Ian More Arrach, with the piece of artillery in his arms, and his cheek close to the muzzle of it, which was sticking out from under the blanket that covered both of them. The spectacle was too ridiculous, even for the colonel's gravity. He and all around him gave way to uncontrollable bursts of laughter, that speedily awaked Ian from the deep sleep in which he was plunged. He stared around him with astonishment.

“What made you leave your post, you rascal?” demanded the serjeant of the guard, so much provoked as to forget himself before his commanding-officer.

“Nay, nay,” said the colonel, who already knew something of Ian, from the letter which he had received from his chief, “you cannot say that he has left his post; for you see he has taken his post along with him.”

“Is na ta wee bit gunnie as weil aside her nanesell here,” said Ian, with an innocent smile. “Is she na mockell better here aside her nanesell, nor wi’ her nanesell stannin cauld an weet aside her yonder on ta Pattry?”

“Well, well;” said the colonel, after a hearty laugh. “But how did you manage to bring the gun here?” “Ou troth her nanesell carried her,” replied Ian.

“Come, then,” said the colonel, “if you will instantly carry it back again to the place whence you took it, nothing more shall be said about it.”

“Toots! but she’ll soon do tat,” said Ian, starting out of bed, and immediately raising the gun to his shoulder; he set out with it, followed by the colonel and every one within reach; and, to the

great astonishment of all of them, he marched slowly and steadily towards the battery with it, and replaced it on its carriage, amidst the loud cheers of all who beheld him.

As Ian was naturally a quiet, sober, peaceable, and well-behaved man, a thorough knowledge of his duty soon converted him into a most invaluable soldier ; and nature having made him a perfect model, both as to mould and symmetry of form, the colonel, who took a peculiar fancy to him, soon saw that he was altogether too tall and fine looking a man to be kept in the ranks. Accordingly he had him struck off from the ordinary routine of domestic duty, and drilled as a fogleman, in which distinguished situation Ian continued to figure until his services were terminated by an unlucky accident.

It happened one evening that the colonel of an English regiment dined at the mess of the Highland corps. In the course of conversation this gentleman offered a bet that he had a man who would beat any individual who could be picked from among the Highlanders. One of the Highland officers immediately took him up and engaged to produce a man to meet the English cham-

pion next morning. By break of day, therefore, he sent for Ian More Arrach, and told him what had occurred, and then added—" You are to be my man, Ian ; and I think it will be no hard thing for you who shouldered the six pounder to pound this boasting pock-pudding."

" Troth na," said Ian, shaking his head, " ta pock-pudden no done her nae ill,—fat for wad she be fighten her? Troth her honor may e'en fight ta man hersell, for her nanesell wull no be doin' nae siccan a thing."

" Tut ! nonsense, man," said the officer, " you must fight him, aye and lick him too ; and you shall not only carry off the honor, but you shall have a handsome purse of money for doing so."

" Na, na," said Ian, " ta man no dune her nae ill ava, an she'll no be fighten for ony bodey's siller but King Shorge's."

" Surely you're not afraid of him," said the officer, trying to rouse his pride.

" Hout na !" replied Ian More, with a calm good humoured smile ; " she no be feart for ne man livin'."

" So you wont fight," said the officer.

“ Troth na,” said Ian, “ she canna be fighten wissout nae raison.”

“ Surely your own honor—the honor of the regiment—the honor of Scotland—the purse of gold—and my wishes thus earnestly expressed, ought to be reasons enough with you. But since you refuse, I must go to Alister Mackay; he will have no such scruples, I’ll warrant me.”

This last observation was a master-stroke of policy on the part of the officer. Alister Mackay was a stout athletic young man; but he was by no means a match for the English prize-fighter. Nor did the officer mean that he should be opposed to him; for he only named him, knowing that he was a cousin of Ian More’s, and one for whom he had the affection of a brother; and he was quite sure that his apprehension for Alister’s safety would be too great to allow him to be absent from the field, if it did not induce him to take his place in the combat. And it turned out as he had anticipated. Ian came, eagerly pressing forward into the throng; and no sooner did he appear, than the officer pointed him out to the Englishman, as the man that was to be pitted against him; and as the Highlanders naturally took it for granted, that the big

fugleman was to be their man, they quickly made a ring for him amidst loud cheering.

“Come away Goliath! come on!” cried the Englishman, tossing his hat into the air, and his coat to one side. Ian minded him not. But the growing and intolerable insolence of the bully did the rest; for, presuming on Ian’s apparent backwardness, he strode up to him with his arms a kimbo, and spit in his face.

“Fat is she do tat for?” asked Ian simply of those around him.

“He has done it to make people believe that you are a coward, and afraid to fight him,”—said the Highland officer, who backed him.

“Tell her no to do tat again,” said Ian seriously.

“There!” said the boxer; repeating the insult.

Without showing the smallest loss of temper, Ian made an effort to lay hold of his opponent, but the Englishman squared at him, and hit him several smart blows in succession, not one of which the unpractised Highlander had the least idea of guarding.

“Ha!” exclaimed the Highland officer, “I fear you will be beaten, Ian.”

“ Foo ! ” cried Ian coolly, “ she be strikin’ her to be sure, but she be na hurtin’ her. But an she disna gie ower an her nanesell gets one stroak at her, she’ll swarrants she’ll no seek nae mair.”

The Englishman gave him two or three more hard hits that went against his breast, as if they had gone against an oaken door ; but at last Ian raised his arm, and swept it round horizontally with a force that broke through all his antagonist’s guards ; and the blow striking his left cheek, as if it had come from a sledge hammer, it actually drove the bones of the jaw on that side quite through the opposite skin, and, at the same time, smashed the whole skull to fragments. The man fell, like a log, dead on the spot ; and horror and astonishment seized the spectators.

“ Och hone ! och hone ! ” cried Ian More, running to lift him from the ground, in an agony of distress, “ She’s dootin’ she kilt ta poor man.”

Ian was thrown into a fit of the deepest despair and sorrow by this sad catastrophe, sufficiently proving to every one around him, that his heart was made of the most generous stuff ; and, indeed, the effect of the horrible spectacle they had witnessed, was such as to throw a gloom on all who

were present, and especially on those who were more immediately concerned with the wager. The case was decidedly considered as one of justifiable homicide. It was hushed up by general consent, and a pass was granted to Ian to return to Scotland.

As he was slowly journeying homeward, Ian happened to spend a night at Stonehaven, and, as he was inquiring of his landlord as to the way he was to take in the morning, the man told him that he might save some distance by taking a short cut through the park of Ury, the residence of Mr. Barclay of Ury, who, as you probably know, was even more remarkable for feats of bodily strength than his son, Captain Barclay, the celebrated pedestrian.

“Ye may try the fut-road through the park,” said Ian’s host; “but oddsake, man, tak’ care an’ no meet the laird, for he’s an awfu’ chiel, though he be a Quaker, and gif ye do meet him I rauken that ye’ll just hae to come yere ways back again.”

“Fat for she do tat?” demanded Ian.

“Ou, he’s a terrible man the laird,” continued the landlord. “What think ye?—there was ae night that a poor tinker body had putten his bit

pauney into ane of the laird's inclosures, that it might get a sly rug o' the grass. Aweel, the laird comes oot in the mornin', an' the moment he spied the beast, he ga'ed tilt like anither Samson, and he lifted it up in his airms and flang it clean oot ower the dyke. As sure as ought, gif he meets you, an' he disna throw you ower the dyke, he'll gar ye gang ilka fit o' the road back again."

"Tuts! she'll try," replied Ian.

Soon after sunrise, Ian took the forbidden path, and he had persued it without molestation for a considerable way, when he heard some one hallooing after him, and turning his head to look back, he beheld a gentleman whom he at once guessed to be the laird, hurrying up to him.

"Soldier!" cried Mr. Barclay, "I allow no one to go this way, so thou must turn thee back."

"She be sorry tat she has anghered her honor," said Ian bowing submissively, "but troth it be ower far a gate to gang back noo."

"Far gate or short gate, friend, back thou must go," said Mr. Barclay.

"Hoot na! she canna gang back," said Ian.

"But thou must go back, friend," said the laird.

"Troth, she wanna gang back," replied Ian.

“But thou must go back I tell thee,” said the laird, “and if thou wilt not go back peaceably, I’ll turn thee back whether with thy will or not.”

“Hoot, toot, she no be fit to turn her back,” said Ian with one of his broad good-humoured grins.

“I’ll try,” said the laird, laying his hands on Ian’s shoulders to carry his threat into immediate execution.

“An she be for tat,” said Ian, “let her lay doon her wallet, an’ she’ll see whuther she can gar her turn or no.”

“By all means, good friend,” said the laird, who enjoyed a thing of the kind beyond all measure. “Off with thy wallet, then. Far be it from me to take any unseemly advantage of thee.”

The wallet being quietly deposited on the ground, to it they went; but ere they had well buckled together, Ian put down the laird beside the wallet with the same ease that he had put down the wallet itself.

“Ha!” cried the laird, as much overcome with surprise at a defeat, which he had never before experienced, as he had been by the strength that had produced it. “Thou didst take me too much

o' the sudden, friend,—but give me fair play. Let me up and I will essay to wrestle with thee again."

"Weel, weel," said Ian coolly, "she may tak' her ain laizier to rise, for her nanesell has plenty o' sun afore her or night."

"Come on then," said Mr. Barclay, grappling again with his antagonist and putting forth all his strength, which Ian allowed him full time to exert against him, whilst in defiance of it all he stood firm and unshaken as a rock.

"Noo!—doon she goes again!" said Ian, deliberately prostrating the laird a second time, "an' gif tat be na enough, she'll put her toon ta tird time, sae tat she'll no need nae mair puttens toon."

"No, no," said the laird panting, and, notwithstanding his defeat, much delighted not only with the exercise he had had, but that he had at last discovered so potent an antagonist. "No, no, friend!—enough for this bout. I own that thou art the better man. This is the first time that my back was ever laid on the grass. Come away with me, good fellow, thou shalt go home with me."

Ian's journey was not of so pressing a nature as to compel him to refuse the laird's hospitable offer,

and he spent no less than fourteen days living on the fat of the land at Ury, and Mr. Barclay afterwards sent a man and horses with him to forward him a few stages on his way.

On his return to Strath-Connan, Ian was welcomed by many an old friend ; and he speedily felt himself again rooted in his native soil. He soon re-edified his bothy ; but he did so after that much improved and much more comfortable style of architecture, which his large experience of civilized life had now taught him to consider as essential. He again took readily to his caurets, and to the simple occupations attendant on the care and management of them, which he forthwith increased to a considerable extent by increasing their numbers ; and every day he grew wealthier and wealthier by means of them. The taste which he had ever had of society, led him more frequently to visit the gayer and livelier scenes of the more thickly inhabited straths ; and it was seldom that a market, a marriage, or a merry-making of any kind occurred, where Ian's sinewy limb and well turned ankles were not seen executing the Highland fling to a degree of perfection rarely to be matched. These innocent practices he continued

long after he was a husband and a father,—yea, until he was far advanced in life.

If Ian had a spark of pride at all, it was in the circumstance that the calves of his legs were so well rounded, that, however much his limbs might be exercised, they always kept up his hose without the aid of a garter, an appendage to his dress which he always scorned to wear. One night a large party of friends were assembled in his house to witness the baptism of a recently born grandson. After the ceremony and the feast were both over, the young people got up to dance, and, old as he was, Ian More Arrach was among the foremost of them. To it he went, and danced the Highland fling with his usual spirit and alacrity, snapping his fingers and shouting with the best of them. But alas! when the dance was over, he suddenly discovered that his hose had fallen three inches from their original position, betraying the sad fact, that his limbs had lost somewhat of their original muscle. This was to him a sad sinking in the barometer of human life. He surveyed his limbs for some time in silence with a melancholy expression; and then, with something like a feeling of bitterness, which

no one had ever seen take possession of him before, he exclaimed,—

“Tamm her nanesell’s teeth!—She may weel gie ower ta fling, noo tat her teeth wanna haud up her hose!”