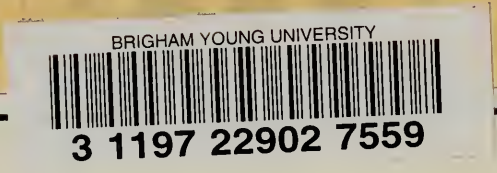

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But even were it otherwise—were novels of every kind, the good as well as the bad, the striking and animated not less than the puerile, indeed liable to the charge of enfeebling or perverting the mind; and were there no qualities in any which might render them instructive as well as amusing—the universal acceptation which they have ever received, and still continue to receive, from all ages and classes of men, would prove an irresistible incentive to their production. The remonstrances of moralists and the reasonings of philosophy have ever been, and will still be found, unavailing against the desire to partake of an enjoyment so attractive. Men will read novels; and therefore the utmost that wisdom and philanthropy can do is to cater prudently for the public appetite, and, as it is hopeless to attempt the exclusion of fictitious writings from the shelves of the library, to see that they are encumbered with the least possible number of such as have no other merit than that of novelty.

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WILD SPORTS

OF

THE WEST.

WITH LEGENDARY TALES

AND

LOCAL SKETCHES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STORIES OF WATERLOO".

"And sure it is yet a most beautifull and sweet countrey as any is under heaven, being stored throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorts of fish most abundantly, sprinkled with many very sweet islands and goodly lakes, like little inland seas, that will even carry shippes upon their waters."—*Spenser's State of Ireland*, 1596.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,
NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET,
AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1833.

PREFACE.

Some explanation may be necessary for obtruding upon the public the private details of a sportsman's life, and particularly when the scene of his exploits is laid within "the four seas of Britain." In the customary course of field adventure, few besides the individual concerned are much interested in the successes and disappointments he experiences: and rural sports are, in all their general incidents, so essentially alike, as to render their minute description, almost invariably, a dull and unprofitable record.

Circumstances, however, may occasionally create an interest which in ordinary cases would be wanting. From local connexions, a field almost untrodden by any but himself was opened to the writer of these Sketches. He was thrown into an unfrequented district, with a primitive people to consort with. With some advantages to profit from the accident, a remote and semi-civilized region was offered to his observation; and although within a limited distance of his majesty's mail-coach, a country was thus disclosed as little known to the multitude as the interior of Australasia; and where, excepting some adventurous grouse-shooter, none have viewed its highlands or mingled with its inhabitants.

That the scenic and personal sketches are faithful the reader is assured; some were written on the spot, and others traced from vivid recollection. Those with whom the author shot these wild moors, or fished the waters, will best estimate the fidelity of the descriptions; and *one* valued friend, though now beneath another sun, will probably recall the days he spent by "fell and flood," and bring to memory those light and joyous nights when he caroused in a mountain bivouac, and rested in a moorland hut.

Of the actors in the following scenes, some are still living, while others are no more. The colonel, that best and honestest of boon companions, sleeps with his fathers; and old John and the Otter-killer have gone the way of all flesh. The priest, "mine honoured friend," I rejoice to say, is still healthy and vigorous; in his wild but happy retirement he holds "the noiseless tenor of his way," exercises hospitality most liberally to the stranger, and throws forty feet of silk and hair better than any artist in the empire. Last of the 'dramatis personæ,' Hennessey is in full force, and '*mutato nomine*,' may still be found in Ballycroy.

With regard to the tales and legends narrated in the succeeding pages, the former were told just as they are introduced. "The Blind Seal" is known to be substantially true: I have heard it from many and never knew its veracity impugned. My lamented friend was himself the principal actor in "the Night Attack;" and he, poor fellow, was exactly the man who in an affray, or a carouse, might be depended on. The heroes of the "Gold Snuff-Box" are alive and merry, and long may they continue so! for "truer friends and better company" never listened to the "chimes at midnight." "Mr. Dawkins" is, I believe, engaged in seeking through Doctors Commons to be relieved "*è vinculo matrimonii*,"—and "Mr. Burke" duly announced among the last arrivals in the Sidney Gazette.

Respecting the legendary stories, I have no pledge to offer for their authenticity,—old Antony believed them to the letter—I have given them nearly in his own words, and I may say with Sir Walter Scott,

> "I cannot tell how the truth may be;
> I say the tale as 'twas said to me."

"The Legend of Knockathample" remains as the Otter-killer related it; but with "Rose Roche" I confess to have taken liberties, in suppressing a portion of her flirtation with the "black-eyed page," which, although, upon the lady's part, I feel convinced was perfectly platonic, yet by uncharitable constructions might be tortured into something like indiscretion.

If I have undervalued those rural recreations in which many a worthy citizen sometimes dissipates, I hope my

contempt for his avocations will be ascribed to the true cause, namely, that local advantages have spoiled my taste and rendered me fastidious. He who can shoot grouse upon the moor will spend little time in killing pigeons from the trap ; the angler who in a morning hooks some half-score salmon, would reckon it but sorry amusement to dabble in a pond. To a Galway rider, the Epping hunt would be a bore, and he would probably treat it with the same contumely that one of this redoubted body did hare-hunting, by riding to the hounds in morocco slippers, and carrying an open umbrella to protect him from the sun.

As I have casually named "an honoured name," I lament that it was not his fortune to have visited those interesting scenes, where I have been so long a useless wanderer. The wild features and wilder associations of that romantic and untouched country, would have offered him a fresh field whereon to exercise his magic pencil—and many a tale and legend still orally handed down, but which in a few years must of necessity be forgotten, would have gained immortality from the touch of "the mighty master." But alas! the creations of his splendid imagination will no more delight an enchanted world. The wand is broken, the spell is over, the lamp of life is nearly exhausted—and even now, Scotland may be mourning for the mightiest of her gifted sons.

As a votive offering, these volumes are inscribed to that matchless genius, by an humble, but enthusiastic admirer of Sir Walter Scott.

Sydenham, 12th September.

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WILD SPORTS

OF

THE WEST.

LETTER I.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

London, July 1st, 1829.

Notwithstanding its dust and desertion, I am still lurking in the metropolis: the heat has become intolerable. Yesterday, I imagined myself in Calcutta; for never but in the land of curries and red pepper did I experience any thing so oppressive.

I breakfasted this morning at the Club-house. My air and attitude, as I caught a glimpse of them in a concave mirror, looked exquisitely disconsolate. Never was mortal more *ennuyé* than I. Town has become a desert—the world has abandoned it by general consent—the streets feel as if they had been recently fanned by a sirocco; and of divers unhappy beings whom I encountered in my walk from Grafton-street to St. James's, none seemed at ease but a bilious gentleman from Bombay, and the French fellow who exhibits in the oven. The thermometer in a shaded corner of the room is stationary at 82. To remain longer here would be suicidal; but, where to go—whither to fly—alas! I know not.

Would that you were near me, then would I be certain of sympathy and counsel. At this moment there is not a more persecuted gentleman in the king's dominions. But I will make a clean breast—and to render

my confessions explanatory, I must favour you with some particulars of my private history.

As autobiographers enjoy a prescriptive privilege of exhibiting their ancestors, I shall take the liberty of introducing my papa. In his twenty-second year Mr. Hector O'Brien was a bold lieutenant of grenadiers in his majesty's 50th foot, then distinguished by the flattering title of "The Dirty Half-Hundred."* My father was a strapping fellow as ever wore a wing, kept a showy horse, and was decidedly the best dancer in the regiment. Being quartered in the vicinity of Bath, he attended the assemblies, and "in double quick" managed to effect a conquest. The lady had a fortune, and my father required one. Unluckily, she had a brother's consent to gain—on being consulted, he was unmoved by importunity, and deaf to "every plea of love." The case was hopeless. Mr. Wamsley disliked Ireland, detested military men, and above all things, abominated "The Dirty Half-Hundred."

To account for the gentleman's antipathy to this celebrated corps, it will be necessary to remark, that the regiment was then afflicted with a mad major. His (the major's) delight lay in drinking port wine and slaying pheasants. Mr. Wamsley, on the contrary, preferred water, and preserved game. The major beat up preserves without remorse, and deforced keepers, who, though good men and true, prudently declined joining issue with mad majors and double-barrelled guns.

Now Mr. Wamsley, resisting an invasion of his rights, applied to the justice for redress, whereas Major O'Farrell considered that a reference to the pistol would be much more gentlemanly—a deadly feud was the consequence, and Mr. Wamsley was closely blockaded within park walls by the military delinquent. Fortunately for all concerned, the regiment got the route; Mr. Wamsley recovered his liberty, and his detestation of the gallant 50th only ended with his life.

But his sister held a very different opinion respecting

* From their black facings, the 50th received this *soubriquet*.

the merits of the brave "Half-Hundred." She was devoted to the lieutenant of grenadiers, and the route hurried matters to a crisis. The result may be anticipated. Despising park walls and surly keepers, Mr. O'Brien overcame every difficulty; and with the assistance of a garden-ladder, the mad major, and his double barrelled-gun, he carried off the lady, and at Gretna they became "one flesh."

Mr. Wamsley was irritated beyond the possibility of being appeased. Ten thousand pounds, which his wife possessed without the control of her brother, enabled my father to leave the army, and settle on his hereditary estate in Roscommon. He hunted, shot, fished, and farmed, and lived just as Irish gentlemen lived thirty years ago.

I was the only issue of the marriage; all communication had ceased between my parents and Mr. Wamsley. Eighteen years passed away, and no appearance of abated displeasure had ever been evinced by this implacable relative. I left a public school for the Dublin University; was destined for the church, and had nearly completed my college course, when an unforeseen event changed my prospects and profession. It was the death of both my parents within the brief space of a month.

My father's affairs were found in great disorder—his estate was heavily embarrassed; and if his debts were paid, it was ascertained that I should be left nearly destitute. The intelligence reached Mr. Wamsley, and to the astonishment of all acquainted with his unrelenting animosity to my deceased parents, a letter was received from him, inviting me to visit him at his magnificent place Lalworth Castle.

The invitation was of course accepted. I arrived, and found him a stern, disagreeable old man. My first appearance was against me.—The resemblance I bore to my father was most striking, and it seemed to recall my uncle's long cherished prejudices. He abruptly asked me on the succeeding morning, "What course of life I had selected?" I replied, "That the army appeared best adapted to my taste and broken fortunes." His only observation was, "Be it so;" and here this laconic conversation ended.

That evening, Mr. Wamsley wrote to his neighbour Lord Ulverston. The peer was his debtor to a large amount, and generally trafficked with him for his borough of ——bury. My uncle's request was promptly attended to. Lord Ulverston stood well at the Horse Guards; and in a few weeks, to my unfeigned satisfaction and surprise, I was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Blues.

But my joy at this event was but of short duration. The miserly disposition of my uncle took alarm at the large outlay attendant on entering an expensive corps. Each hundred was doled out with painful reluctance, and the knowledge that a certain annual allowance would be requisite for my support, made him still more wretched. I joined the regiment; my subsidies—generally drafts for a paltry fifty—were "few and far between." To hold a certain place in society, with an income incompetent to its expenses, is a state of inexpressible misery. Gradually I became embarrassed, and in two years found it necessary to exchange from the Blues to a light cavalry regiment, then stationed in the East Indies. My uncle made no objection; he was tired of what he termed supplying my boundless extravagance—bade me a cold farewell—and his parting words, as I stepped into the carriage, were a request that I would "write but seldom, as postage from the East, his lawyer told him, was enormous."

I obeyed him to the letter, I only wrote once, and that was conveying an entreaty that he would purchase a majority likely to become vacant; I got a coarse refusal, and thus our correspondence terminated. For four years I never heard from him, and I had nearly forgotten that I had left a relation behind me.

I was surprised, however, at this distant period, with a letter worded in his stiff and peculiar style. It briefly stated, that his health was indifferent, and that he would recommend me to return to Europe with as little delay as possible.

This recommendation was any thing but gratifying. I liked India well enough; the climate agreed with me, my health was unimpaired, the mess was good, the regi-

ment gentlemanly, and, better still, I could live most comfortably upon my pay. I felt, however, that my uncle's invitation should not be neglected; applied for leave, succeeded, and made immediate preparations for a return to Europe. My brother officers congratulated me on my good fortune in so speedily revisiting my native country; but to me it was a subject of regret; I was leaving pleasant quarters, cheerful society, and comparative independence, to become a slave to the caprice and ill-humour of a morose and splenetic invalid.

It was late in December when I landed at Portsmouth. The voyage had been remarkably quick. Without delay I started for my uncle's residence, and in the gloom of a wet wintry evening re-entered the gates of Lalworth Park. I looked down the long vista of splendid elms, but in the twilight the house was not visible; not a candle glanced from a window, and no indication of its being inhabited appeared about this melancholy mansion. The post-boy stopped—I alighted, ran up the steps and rang gently—no one answered—I rang again—louder yet—and a step came hastily over the oaken floor. The old porter at last approached, cautiously affixed the chain, opened a few inches of the door, and raised his candle suspiciously to examine the late visiter. Instantly recollecting me, he uttered a suppressive exclamation of astonishment, removed the fastenings, and muttered, "Thank God, it is himself!" and, as he admitted me, whispered that my uncle was not expected to survive till midnight.

In silence I was conducted to a back drawing-room, where, on a large old-fashioned sofa the dying man was laid. The porter advanced before, and in a low voice notified my arrival. The news appeared to gratify the invalid; he turned his dim eyes to the spot where I stood waiting for permission to advance. "Are you there, Frank?" he said, in a feeble voice—"Ha, ha, ha! it was *touch and go* with you!" and he uttered a weak but sarcastic laugh,—"Call Doctor Dodwell and the lawyer—desire them to bring the *other will*—and tell Moore and Hubert to attend to witness it." While he gave these orders I gazed on the wasted features of the dying

miser. There was a strange expression of stern satisfaction visible on his countenance, as his cold glance rested fixedly on me. Immediately the doctor, solicitor, and witnesses entered the room.—"Raise me up," he said to the ancient domestic, his personal attendant. It was done, and he motioned to the solicitor to unfold the parchment—carefully he passed his eye over the surface to assure himself that the document was the one he required, and having ascertained the fact, he pointed to a pen. With difficulty he placed it in his trembling fingers, and with a painful exertion, affixed his signature to the deed; then looking at the witnesses as they annexed their names—"This is my last will and testament," he said with feeble emphasis, "and thus do I revoke all others!" then turning to me, while a ghastly smile overspread his face, "Half an hour later would have served hospitals and alms-houses, Francis!" he leaned himself back and expired without a struggle.

For a few moments we were not aware that he was dead; the strength with which his last remark was uttered, led us at first to believe that he had reclined in consequence of the exertion. In a few minutes the physician took his hand and sought for a pulse, but in vain; he raised the eyelid and applied a candle to the fixed and deadly stare, and then announced that the patient had departed.

A scene, a disgusting scene ensued; the attorney, when certified of his client's death, seized my hand and coarsely congratulated me on my good fortune. The doctor abandoned the corpse to join the solicitor in his compliments; between them the truth transpired. I had, indeed, been luckily expeditious in my journey, and the old man's phrase of *touch and go* was fully explained. The preceding day he had signed a testament conveying his entire property to a variety of charitable institutions; and the will which had been originally made in my favour, and been kept over by this singular relative, would have remained imperfect, had I not so providentially arrived the evening of his death.

We left the room while the body was being laid out preparatory to interment. What a turn one hour had

given to my fortunes! I entered Lalworth Park, at four o'clock, a poor and miserable dependent: at five, I was master of all around me, possessed of twelve thousand pounds a-year, owner of a borough, with fifty thousand in the funds, and twenty at my banker's. Such a mingled yarn is the web of human life.

The obsequies of my uncle were duly performed, and for many days I was engaged in examining papers and taking possession of the plate and valuables of Lalworth Park. The house was sadly out of repair, and the grounds and gardens utterly neglected. The old man had limited the fuel for the mansion to such fallen wood as could be collected throughout the domain; and the few domestics he employed were scarcely sufficient to ventilate, without attempting to keep in order, the numerous and once splendid apartments. For some time I was busily occupied; I hired additional servants, engaged an architect, fiated my agent's accounts, and started then for London so soon as a decent respect towards the deceased would permit my appearing in the metropolis. Of the rest, my dear baronet, you know sufficient particulars; a presentable man, *olim* in the Blues, and recently succeeding to a large and unincumbered property, would soon "find room in any place." I was speedily admitted to those chosen circles which are impassable to those who want birth, impudence, or money. I ran the full round of dissi——but, on this head, *you*, my constant companion, require but little information.

In human life, George, every thing has its limits. I am, probably, too rich to be permanently happy. I tired of Brookes's, and Willis's, and Crockford's; I had little taste for play, and betted moderately, and with even success; if I lost I was not depressed; if I won I was not exhilarated. The season was drawing to its close, and I began to discover that I was not fated to escape from sublunary annoyances. I was bored by the dull dinners of stupid placemen, who calculated on my borough; I was persecuted by ancient gentlewomen who wished to rid themselves of daughters that years ago were *passées;* a young and titled widow almost wooed me to desperation; and the Dowager of —— shocked me by an assurance,

that Lord Leatherby expected, from my marked attention at the horticultural fête, that I would *forthwith* propose for that sandy-haired fright his daughter. God help me! little did I suppose that an act of common humanity, in sheltering her red ringlets with a broken umbrella, would have been so tortured by that leaden-headed lord her sire!

I forgot in its proper place to notify an important occurrence; it was the death of Mr. James Jones. This personage was owner of a property in Surinam, and one of the representatives for the borough of ——bury. A year before his death my late uncle had pocketed three thousand pounds, and returned as inoffensive a gentleman as ever snored upon the benches of St. Stephen's. I took his place, next the oaths, and had sufficient grace to sit quiet and listen to other declaimers, who possessed more talent or more impudence than myself. For some time I was rather undecided in my politics; but the ministerial were the quieter benches,—there I established myself, and for half a session none slept through a debate with a quieter conscience. Curse upon blighted beauty, I was not permitted to remain in happy and unambitious celibacy.

From my first appearance I had been exposed to distant attacks, but as the weather warmed and the town thinned, my persecutors became more daring in their approaches. Did I venture to a Refugee concert, there I was waylaid by the widow. Did I endeavour to steal a ride in Rotten-row, I was directly hunted off by the *dame rouge* and that infernal peer her father; and all that was penniless or *passé* marked me as an object of unrelenting importunity. Eventually, I was fairly driven from every place approachable by woman; and having no other refuge, turned to the turf, and engaged myself deeply in the Derby.

That event is over, and I shall write the man "mine enemy" who ever recalls it to my recollection. But as this is a confession to thee, George, I must make a clean breast; I was as well acquainted with the mysteries of a betting-book as I was with the financial department of Timbuctoo. But "a d——d good-natured friend" came

to my aid, and, with his experience, why should I not get on cleverly? A horse was going for nothing, my friend was on the alert, made the discovery, and I bought him for five hundred. He was a dead bargain, quite a *dark one*, and in proof of the same, the odds against him were thirty-five to one; but as I was informed, *there* lay the beauty of the thing.

As the races drew near, I discovered that my book was what the *legs* call a *queer concern*. I had picked up the halt and blind as first favourites, and betted accordingly. My *dark one* proved a *roarer*, and my faithful friend recommended me to hedge immediately; I did so, as the result will show.

Off went the horses; Phenomenon, my courser in the chance medley, got a splendid start, but from his pace the spectators alleged that he was hamstrung. In three hundred yards he was passed by the slowest of the *bad ones*, and before the leading horses reached the distance, every thing I was interested in was beaten fairly off. All I had left for consolation under this accumulation of disappointment, was the smart hedge that I had so prudently effected before starting.

The settling-day came; I was at Tattersal's, and so were my winners, to a man; I disbursed five thousand to divers legs, with and without titles, and furthermore disposed of the celebrated horse Phenomenon for fifty pounds. But where was the worthy gentleman with whom I hedged half my losses? Till four o'clock I waited in painful expectation; at that hour, he being still invisible, I ventured to hazard an inquiry, and was favoured with the comfortable tidings that my absent friend was a broken wine-merchant, and that he had levanted the evening of the race.

This wind-up of the season, united to sultry weather, and a tender persecution, determined me to fly "east, west, or north, I care not whither." This, however, was more easily decided on than effected. To retreat is the difficulty, as I find myself hemmed in by my enemies on every side. The widow cuts me off from Cheltenham; The Honourable Juliana Thistleton would haunt me in Hastings; the Dowager of —— and her *protegée*

abide in the pleasant town of Brighton; and my Lord Leatherby has taken out a sort of roving commission, to infest every retirement of fashionable repute; and from his cunning inquiries as to the particular point, seaside, or suburban, to which I purpose to remove, I perceive I am as deliberately doomed to matrimony by this relentless nobleman, as ever a country bonnet-maker was devoted to destruction by an immoral captain of horse.

And shall I fall without a struggle to avert my fate? forbid it, honour! Yes, my determination is fixed; I will counteract this conspiracy against my freedom, and call my Connaught cousin "to the rescue." He is a determined duellist, and has been regularly jilted, consequently he abominates the sex, and will protect me from the widow; and I trust that his truculent propensities for the pistol will keep the peer at a distance. Adieu! I'll write anon; thine always.

LETTER II.

Letters—An Escape—Connaught—Topographical and Moral Description—Ballinasloe—A Virtuous and Flourishing Town—A Bible Meeting and Radical Reform.

I APPRISED you, in my last letter, that in this my hour of need, I would seek succour from my Irish kinsman. I wrote to him accordingly, implored him to abandon his mountain den, and join me at Lalworth Park. To my invitation I received a decisive, and I would almost say, an insulting refusal; "He hated puppies, avoided flirts, was neither a fool or a fortune, and therefore had no business with such society as I should expose him to." The man appears to be a misanthrope; I gave him in return a tart rejoinder, and he seems disinclined to remain my debtor. Hear what he says:—

"Francis, I pity thee! Like the Moor, your 'occupation's gone,' and your letter seals your condemnation.

"You talk of exercise; pshaw! what is it? You

knock some party-coloured balls over the smooth surface of a green table; you hazard suffocation for an hour in Rotten-row, and should you survive the dust, endure eternal dread of impalement by a carriage-pole; you shoot a score of rascally pigeons within the enclosures of Battersea, or make a grand excursion to slaughter pheasants in a preserve; last and proudest feat comes the *battu*, when, with noble and honourable confederates, you exterminate a multitude of semi-civilized fowls, manfully overcoming the fatigue of traversing an ornamented park, and crossing a few acres of turnips. And is this ignoble course befitting one of 'lith and limb' like thine? *You*, the best of your day in Trinity;—you, whose prowess is still recorded in the annals of the watch-house, and whose hurling is yet chronicled in the Park;—you, whom no six feet wall could turn, whom no mountain-herd could tire in the dog-days;—you, who could swim with Byron, and walk with Barclay,—What are you become? an elegant and fashionable idler—lolling life away, the morning in a club-house window, the evening in the Park, and the night *gallopading* some scion of nobility, who has discovered that you possess twelve thousand pounds a-year, and that her own funds are insufficient to satisfy the corset-maker in Regent-street.

"Would that I could reform your taste and habits! could I but induce you to pass one autumn here, your conversion would be a certainty. Come to me, Frank; ay, come to the wilds of Connaught; avoid an atmosphere surcharged with villanous impurities, and brace your relaxed nerves in the waves of the Atlantic; seek life and energy in the mountain-breeze; abandon the gymnasium to scriveners and shopmen; and leave Crockford's to ruined dupes and titled swindlers.

"You have hitherto been a silent member of the Honourable Commons, and St. Stephen's has never heard from you 'the popular harangue, the tart reply.' Hast thou any aspirations after fame, any 'longing after immortality?' Listen; the means are simple: indict the Red-house as a nuisance, and propose a bill, making the being, aiding, or accessary to a *battu* death, without benefit of clergy. Thy name will live when Joe Hume, that ready

reckoner, shall be forgotten—and Dick Martin's senatorial renown will fade before the perennial glory of the present member for ——bury!"

Need I say how opportunely came this invitation? "I embraced his offer," and here I am, fairly over the border, and safely deposited in the kingdom of Connaught, without injury or interruption.

On the subject of my travels I intend to be laconic, inasmuch as, with a temporary intervention of steam, I have resided in the royal mail since I left the lamps of London. I believe I am not exactly cut out for a traveller; I am incurious as to names of guards and coachmen —never inquire after their wives, or take the population of their families. I generally sleep from the start to the close of the stage: I did observe that the colour of corn was nearly alike in both countries, and remarked further, that English drivers seemed partial to ale and overalls, and Irish ones preferred frieze coats and naked whiskey.

And now, George, you shall have the particulars of my escape. Since the times of the Anabasis, or the more recent exploits of Lavalette and Ikey Solomons, never was retreat effected in more masterly style. Candour obliges me to admit that mine was unaccompanied by sound of trumpet or other "pomp and circumstance of war," and rather resembled the hasty retirement of a detected thief from a tabernacle, than a bold operation in noon-day, and in the face of the enemy.

But let that pass: I embarked a miscellaneous cargo of guns, dogs, and fishing-tackle, under the *surveillance* of a trusty servant, on board a Dublin steamer, and the following evening started quietly for "the Head," leaving directions with mine host in Grafton-street, to acquaint Lord Leatherby and all suspicious-looking inquirers, that I had departed for Constantinople, and that any commands for me must be forwarded, under cover, to the Sublime Porte.

I have no talent for statistics, but if my memory serve, the interesting portion of the British empire from which I write is thus laid down by a modern tourist:—"It lieth," says this intelligent traveller, "under a dark gray cloud, which is evermore discharging itself on the earth,

but, like the widow's cruse, is never exhausted. It is bounded on the south and east by Christendom and part of Tipperary, on the north by Donegal, and on the west by the *salt say.* It abounds in bogs, lakes, and other natural curiosities; its soil consists of equal quantities of earth and stone, and its surface is so admirably disencumbered of trees, shrubs, hedges, and ditches, that an intelligent backwoodsman from Louisiana was heard to declare with rapture, that it was the most perfectly cultivated territory in Europe.

"Further," saith the tourist, "its gentry are a polished and religious race, remarkable for their punctuality in pecuniary transactions, and their freedom from a litigious or quarrelsome disposition. The prevailing mode of belief among the upper classes is *anythinganianism*, that of the people pure popery."

This premonitory sketch will save you and me, George, an infinity of trouble. You have here the country graphically placed before you, as well as the distinguishing traits of character, for which the pleasant and virtuous community who abide in this interesting department of the Emerald Isle are so eminently distinguished.

The town of Ballinasloe is seated on a river, the name of which I neglected to inquire. It is much frequented by saints and cattle-dealers, carries on a smart trade in sheep and proselytes—and Bibles and bullocks are "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa." The cabins, moreover, are whitewashed—pigs and popery are prohibited—and travellers wayfaring on the seventh day denounced, and, under perilous amercements, enjoined to take their ease in their respective inns.

While the horses were being brought out, I strolled into the street, and in a show-room of the Farming Society, discovered a collection of biblicals in full activity. From a short gentleman, with soiled linen and an impeded delivery, I learned the gratifying fact, that the spread of the gospel was progressive in California; and, further, that a second-cousin of the King of Siam had been baptised by a Moravian missionary. This latter annunciation elicited a thunder of applause, and a young lady with a lisp pinched my elbow playfully, and requested me

to propose that a piece of plate be transmitted to the convertee. Now, pinching one's elbow on a five minutes' acquaintance is alarming; I accordingly levanted, leaving *Lispy* to propose the plate in person. I observed in my retreat a mob assembled round the chapel, and pushing through a crowd of ragged urchins, established myself in the doorway; within there was a meeting of Radical Reformers; a tall man was pouring forth a philippic from the altar, in which he made an awful example of the king's English, and in his syllabic arrangements differed totally from modern orthoepists. The gist of his oration went to prove, that Catholic Emancipation was a humbug—concession a farce—and luck or grace would never visit this unhappy island, until Mr. Cornelius Cassidy, of Kilcooney-house, was sent to represent us in the imperial Parliament.

The horses are being put to, and I must say farewell; I shall, however, note my adventures, and in due time favour you with another epistle.

Adieu, always yours.

LETTER III.

Journey continued—Inn of G ———.—Tuam—A bad Night—Out of the Frying-pan into the Fire—A Country Ball, and the Finish.

My journey hither has been singularly propitious; I shall only trouble you with the leading incidents.

My carriage broke down close to the Inn of G——, a solitary house, as the song goes, "delightfully placed in a bog." As some delay must necessarily occur before the repairs of the vehicle could be effected, after the example of that accomplished cavalier, Major Dalgetty, I determined to seize on this opportunity to provision the garrison. To this prudent proceeding on my part I found there was an insurmountable obstacle; the landlady assured me that the "*matérial*" was in the house, there was

bacon in the chimney and chickens in the yard, but there was no turf within, till the *boys—the devil bother them for staying*—came home from the blacksmith's funeral. Now, that the hotel of G—— should be deficient in this point was marvellous. The surface of the circumjacent country, in its proportions of tillage ground to turbary, bears an acreable ratio of one to five hundred; and yet, though in the bosom of a bog, there could not be a sufficiency of fire obtained to boil a potato-pot; but human ingenuity is surprising; after a delay of three mortal hours, I reascended my chaise, and without farther accident was deposited in the town of Tuam.

On the merits of the Mitre Inn I shall be silent; it produced in good time a respectable quarter of cold lamb, and a dish of exquisite potatoes. By-the-way, we cannot cook this latter esculent in England. Had my fare been worse, I would have submitted without a murmur, for the waiter assured my servant that I had got the best bedroom in the house. Now, in the course of my narrative, I omitted to mention, that on the preceding night I had scarcely closed an eye. On retiring to my dormitory, I remarked that the grate was heaped with black turf, apparently in the same state in which they had been removed from their parent moor; anxious to court the drowsy god, I extinguished the candle, sprang into bed, and too late discovered that I was overloaded with a mass of ponderous blanketing; a faint spark also twinkled in the bottom of the grate, but, like the cry of wisdom in the streets, it was disregarded. I fell into a temporary doze, and awoke an hour afterward in a burning fever; the grate, in place of cold turf, exhibited a roaring fire. In vain I opened door and window; in vain I tumbled blanket after blanket on the floor; hours elapsed before the fever warmth of the apartment could be abated; at last, exhausted by heat and exertion, I threw myself upon the outside of the bed-coverings, and made myself up for repose. Just then a brace of obstinate curs determined to "bay the moon;"—one established himself beneath my window, and the other took up a position at the opposite side of the street. For three long hours they barked incessantly, relieving themselves by occasionally indulg-

ing in a mournful and nerve-torturing howl. Human forbearance could not support the martyrdom I suffered. Driven to desperation, I collected every missile article in the chamber, and with repeated discharges, routed my persecutors, and once more endeavoured to procure some rest.

I sank into a delicious slumber; suddenly the door was flung open, in rushed the waiter with portentous speed: "The house must be on fire!" I ejaculated, as I somerseted into the centre of the floor. My fears were groundless; Dennis merely awoke me to inquire if I would drive three miles out of town to see two scoundrels fight who had quarrelled the preceding night about a game of cribbage. Judge now, dear George, whether the annunciation of a quiet bed at Tuam was not "a sound ecstatic."

I swallowed a pint of rascally sherry without a murmur, fortified it with a dose of diluted alcohol, yawned my way to my room, found clean linen, no fire, and in five minutes was buried in sleep "fast as a watchman."

Presently arose a hum of many voices—dreams and fantasies disturbed my uneasy slumbers—a noise like distant music at times was faintly audible—at last, a crash of instruments awoke me, and the first quadrille was in full execution within four feet of my distracted head.

Heaven granted me patience; I was on the very brink of a country ball-room, and separated only from "the gay throng" by the intervention of a slip of deal-board; through the chinks you might have passed the poker, or interchanged a parasol.

I raised myself up on my elbow,—what a group was there!—a short man in a claret-coloured coat, was paired with a stout gentlewoman in bright scarlet; she must have been descended from "the giant; I would as soon grapple with her in a waltz as commit myself to the embraces of a boa-constrictor. *Vis-à-vis* was a police-officer, in state uniform, with a pale beauty in cerulean blue; and a personage of immense calf, in black *tights*, confronted a skeleton in nankeen *unmentionables*. The ladies were gloriously adorned with silver riband, gilt wreaths, and every flower that blows, from a pink to a piony; the lords of the creation sported stiffened cravats

and a plurality of waistcoats; and the ballroom emitted "an ancient and fish-like smell," a miasm of musk, assisted by every abomination in perfumery.

I was in an intermediate state between phrensy and fever, and turned over in my mind the expediency of setting fire to the bedcurtains, and sending myself, the quadrille, and the whole company to the skies, by igniting ten pounds of Harvey's *treble strong*, which was stowed away somewhere in my luggage. Did tired nature quiesce for a moment, I was fearfully roused with a tornado of torturous sounds,—"Places, gentlemen!"—"Ladies, chain!"—"Now, don't dance, Patsey, you know you're drunk!"—"Arrah! Charley, are you stupid?"—"*Dos-à-dos*, Miss Rourke!"—"Up with the Lancers!"—"Aisy, Mr. Bodkin, remember, there are ladies here!"—"Waiter, there's porter wanted at the card-table!" Somnus! deity of my adoration, never expose me to such misery as I endured in the archiepiscopal town of Tuam.

Morning came, and the company retired to supper below-stairs. Anticipating the consequences, I fortified my chamber-door with all the moveables I could collect. It was a prudent precaution; for, blessed be God, a row ensued that finished both delft and dancing. I suffered nothing in person, but my less fortunate valet got a black eye from a Connemara gentleman, who, unluckily for poor Travers, mistook him for the master of the ceremonies, with whom he of Connemara was at feud.

For the present, farewell.

LETTER IV.

Loss of a Waiter—Precocious Talent—The Mad Major and the Mendicants of Mullingar—Cursing an Adjutant—Death of Dennis O'Farrell.

It was noon when I arose—the inmates of the Mitre were still in exquisite confusion. Breakfast, after much delay, was provided by the agency of the housemaid,

She apologized for the non-attendance of the waiter, at present a patient in the infirmary; he having, in the course of the entertainment, been ejected from the window by a pleasant gentleman of Loughrea.

Anxious to be off as soon as possible, I ordered the horses to; an unforeseen difficulty, however, occurred in removing my luggage to the carriage—the door was blocked up four deep by a gang of beggars. With relation to the sizes of the respective places, the lazaroni of Naples are far outnumbered by the mendicants of Tuam. A trace broke at starting, and enabled me to form a pretty correct idea of this multitude. I reckoned to fifty-seven, and then became confused. Although beset on every side, I was proof against importunity, and refused parting with a sixpence. Cursing was next tried, and to the curious in that accomplishment, I would suggest a week's residence at the Mitre. One boy, a cripple in a dish, excelled the united talent of the remainder. English and Irish epithets were with him "common as household words." He used both languages with surpassing fluency, and there was an originality of conception in his style of execration, which was what the cockneys call most refreshing.

This precocious prodigy could not be much above fifteen; and, if he lives, will in this peculiar department of national eloquence be without a parallel. I have "erst while" passed through Billingsgate, when the fair inhabitants betrayed symptoms of irritation—I have heard hackney-coachmen cursing at a crowded opera over a fractured pannel or broken pole—I have listened to a score of watermen squabbling for a fare at Westminster Bridge—I have been on board a transport in a gale of wind, with an irreligious commander; but, Tuam for ever! there cursing is perfection.

Mine, George, is but a rambling narrative. My details, however interesting, lay no claim to the *lucidus ordo;* and I reserve full liberty from the start, to bolt into digressions when I please.

Of the many anecdotes that I have heard my father narrate of his friend the mad major, one was particularly characteristic.

When the gallant 50th were removed to Mullingar, it was supposed that this town produced a greater number of beggars than any in the king's dominions—a swarm of paupers rendered the streets almost impassable, and ingress or egress to or from a shop was occasionally impracticable. Now beggars were to the mad major an abomination; and for two day she ensconced himself in his lodgings, rather than encounter the mendicants of Mullingar. Confinement will increase bile, and bile may induce gout; and at last, wearied of captivity, he sallied forth, and to every application for relief he specified an early day, requesting the numerous supplicants to be punctual to the appointed time. His wish was faithfully attended to, and on the expected morning, the street where he resided was literally blocked up. The major, under a volley of blessings, appeared at the hall-door. "Are you all here?" he inquired, in accents of the tenderest compassion. "All, your honour,—all, young and owld!" responded a big beggar-man. "We're all here, colonel, *avorneen!*" exclaimed a red virago, "but my own poor man, *Brieney Bokkogh;** and he, the crater, fell into the fire a Sunday night, and him hearty, and sorrow stir he can make good nor bad."—"Ah, then," said the humane commander, "why should poor Brien be left out? Arrah! run yourself, and bring the cripple to us!" In a twinkling, off went the red virago, and after a short absence, issued from a neighbouring lane, with Brieney on her shoulders. "Are ye all here now?" inquired the tender-hearted chieftain. "Every single sowl of us;" said an old woman in reply. "Ogh! that the light of heaven may shine on his honour's dying hour, but it's he that's tender to the poor." "Amen, sweet Jasus!" responded a hundred voices. "Silence!" said the mad major, as he produced a small book neatly bound in red morocco. "Whist, your sowls!" cried the big beggar-man. "Are ye listening?"—"Sha, sha! yes, yes:" was responded in English and Irish. "Then, by the contents of this blessed book, and it's the Bible; a rap I won't give one of ye, you infernal vagabonds, if I remained a twelve-

* Bryan the Cripple.

month in Mullingar!" A yell of execrations followed; the major bore the cursing like a philosopher, and kept his promise like a monk. To the surprise of all, the beggars left the way when he walked out, and absconded from the shop he entered. They crossed themselves devoutly if they encountered him unexpectedly at a corner, adjuring the Lord to "stand between them, the mad major, and the devil!"

Apropos to cursing;—the late Sir Charles Asgill told a story of this eccentric personage. During the time the 50th remained in Ireland, the colonel was mostly absent from ill-health, and the command of course devolved upon the major. By one of the military abuses at that time too common, a little Scotch doctor, who had somehow been appointed adjutant to a fencible regiment, was transferred from it to the 50th. Incompetent from professional inability, he was farther afflicted by a constitutional nervousness, that made him badly calculated to come in contact with such a personage as the mad major.

Shortly after the little Scotsman joined, the half-yearly inspection took place. Major O'Farrell, in the course of his evolutions, found it requisite to deploy into line, and called to his field-assistant "to take an object." "Have you got one?" cried the commander, in a voice of thunder. "Yes, sir," replied the alarmed adjutant, in a feeble squeak. The word was given, and the right wing kept moving, until the face of the regiment assumed the form of a semicircle. "Hallo!—where or what is your object?" roared the major. "A crow, sir," replied the unhappy Scotsman. "And where is the crow?" roared the commander. "Flown off;" was the melancholy response. "May the devil fly away with you, body and bones! Halt—dress! Stop, Sir Charles; do stop. Just allow me two minutes to curse the rascally adjutant." To so reasonable a request Sir Charles, who was a most obliging officer, readily assented. The general mentioned often, that the damning of a stupid adjutant was no novelty; but that he never saw a man cursed to his perfect satisfation, until he heard the Scotch doctor anathematized in the Phœnix Park.

The death of poor Dennis was in such perfect keeping with his life, that I am tempted to give it to you.

The regiment was in garrison, and at a race-ball a trifling misunderstanding occurred between a young ensign and a country gentleman. It was, however, instantly adjusted. A few days afterward some intemperate expressions which had fallen from the gentleman at the ball were reported to the mad major. These he considered as reflecting upon the character of his corps, and he despatched the senior captain for an explanation. The answer to this demand was unsatisfactory, and the captain was directed to deliver a hostile message. The officers of the "Half-Hundred" were a brave body. They vainly endeavoured to make it a regimental affair, and insisted that the person to resent the insult should be indifferently selected (by lot) from the corps. "Gentlemen, I thank you;" said the mad major, as he struck his broad hand upon the mess-table. "Your motives are personally kind; but I am at the head of this regiment, and I hold myself to be the conservator of its honour."

That evening the major had a violent attack of gout, to which for years he had been a martyr—but he concealed it carefully, and when his friend called him on the morning, he was found dressed and powdered, but unable to move without assistance. Captain M—— pressed upon him the necessity of postponing the meeting, or permitting another officer to be his substitute; but Dennis was immoveable in his resolve; he proceeded to the ground, and supported by a crutch, after a discharge of pistols, received a satisfactory apology. Poor fellow! this was his last feat. Exposure to the cold of a damp spring morning brought on a renewed attack of gout; that night the disorder settled in his stomach, and the morning after he was a corpse.

The body was carried to its last resting-place, accompanied by all the pomp of a military funeral. His own beloved company, the grenadiers, who had often followed their lion-hearted leader into action, now formed his guard of honour to the grave: and when his remains were committed to the earth, there was not a dry eye among the "Dirty Half-Hundred."

Two months afterward, when an Irish soldier was questioned on the merits of his successor—"the man is

well enough," said Pat, with a heavy sigh, "but where will we ever find the equal of the mad major? By Jasus, it was a comfort to be cursed by him!"

LETTER V.

Castlebar—Newport—Departure from Christendom—Progress into Terra Incognita—Roads and Scenery—Mulranny—Passage down the Inlet—Incidents—Lodge in the Wilds of Erris—Description of he Establishment.

Without any adventure worthy of a place in this itinerary, I reached in safety the capital of Mayo. From other provincial cities this town is distinguished in having a new drop and an old jail; a swamp in the centre of the town, surrounded by an iron chain, judiciously placed there I imagine, to prevent cattle and children being lost in the morass which it environs; a court-house, with a piazza and façade of an original order of architecture, only known to Irish professors of the art of building; trade and manufactures are limited to felt hats and poteen-whiskey; and the only machinery I could discover was the drop aforesaid. I was informed that the chapel and petty-sessions are generally crowded, as is the market upon a hanging-day.

I was called next morning at five o'clock by the waiter to proceed by the Sligo mail, although on the preceding night I had taken pains to persuade him that my course lay westward. One hour afterward, the chambermaid roused me to inquire if I had any intention of proceeding to Hollymount by a hackney car. To save these worthy people farther trouble I arose and dressed, and wishing to avoid a vestry to be that day holden in the town, and where, in the course of argument, it was believed that divers lives would be lost, I took an early breakfast and departed.

I stopped at Newport; it was the last cluster of houses arrogating to itself the title of a town, that I should now

meet with—I had reached the *ultima Thule* of civilized Europe. And when I had given directions to the post-master touching the transmission of my letters in my cousin's bag, I looked around me, and took a silent farewell of Christendom.

I found at the public-house that my kinsman had provided for my farther progress into *terra incognita*. A couple of rudely-constructed vehicles were waiting to receive myself and personal property, and a wild bare-legged mountaineer, with a leathern bag strapped across his shoulders, announced himself as guide. "Had he no horse?"—"*Devil a harse!*" but he would warrant he would keep up with me,—and away we went, under a salute of cur dogs, and the furtive glances of sundry ladies with their hair in papers.

Some distance from the town we crossed an ancient bridge of many arches, through which an extensive lake communicates with the sea, and farther on passed the old tower of Carrigahowla. Our route was contiguous to the sea; on the left were the numerous islands of Clew Bay; on the right an extensive chain of savage hills and barren moorland. The road became hardly passable; constructed without the least regard to levelness, *here* it dipped into a ravine, and *there* breasted some sudden hill inaccessible to any carriage but the light machines we travelled with. Its surface was rough, and interrupted by a multitude of loose stones; some of the bridges were partially dilapidated, and others had never been completed. In these the ragged lines of granite which formed the key-stones of the arches stood nakedly up, and presented a barrier that no common carriage could overtop without endangering its springs and harness; and yet this forlorn road is the only communication with a highly improveable country, covering at least fifty square miles, with numerous and profitable islands attached, and an immense line of sea-coast, possessing rich fisheries, and abounding in kelp-weed and manure! And why was this neglect? Were the proprietors of this deserted district so cold to that true spring of human action, self-aggrandizement, as to omit providing an outlet for the sources of their opulence? Were there no public moneys allocated to these

abandoned corners of the earth, and so much lavishly expended on many a useless undertaking elsewhere? Yes; large sums have been presented and *re-presented* by the grand juries for the last twenty years, but they have been regularly pocketed by those to whose good faith they have been intrusted. Would it be believed in England, George, that this atrocious system of peculation has been carried to such an extent, that roads have been passed, *as completed*, when their lines have been but roughly marked out—and bridges been actually paid for, the necessary accounting affidavits having been sworn to in open court, when not a stone was ever laid, and to this day the stream runs without a solitary arch to span its flood from the source to the debouchement? Ay—these delinquencies have been often and notoriously perpetrated, and none have had the courage to drag the criminals to justice.

At the *clachan* of Mulranny, we struck into a pass in the mountains, and turned our backs upon Clew Bay. A branch from the waters of Black Sod runs some ten miles inland, and meets this opening in the hills, affording a communication, by boats, with Erris. There my kinsman's galley was waiting for me, and in it I embarked my person and establishment. Taking advantage of a south-westerly wind, the boatmen hoisted their close-reefed lug, and away we shot rapidly towards the entrance of the inlet. From the highlands which rose on every side, the squalls fell more heavily and frequent than I found agreeable, but in an hour we cleared this confined and dangerous channel, and running between Currane Point and the island of Innis Biggle, entered Black Sod Bay.

The passage down the inlet was marked with several incidents, which were in perfect keeping with the wild and savage scenery around. A seal would suddenly raise his round head above the surface, gaze for a moment at the boat, and when he had apparently satisfied his curiosity, sink quietly from our view. In rounding the numerous headlands through which this inlet irregularly winds, we often started flocks of curlew,* which,

* Appendix, No. I.

rising in alarm at our unexpected appearance, made the rocks ring with their loud and piercing whistle. Skirting the shores of Innis Biggle, we disturbed an osprey, or sea-eagle,* in the act of feeding on a bird. He rose leisurely, and lighting on a rock, waited till we passed, and then returned to his prey. We ran sufficiently close to the shore to observe the size and colour of the bird, and concluded that a grouse had been the eagle's† victim.

When we had cleared the highlands, the breeze blew fresh and steadily; the boatmen shook out the reefs which had hitherto confined their canvass; the galley, with increased velocity, rushed through the rippling water, till doubling a neck of land, surmounted by a ruined castle, and running up a sheltered creek, I found myself at the termination of my voyage, and warmly welcomed by my Irish kinsman, from whom, for fifteen years, I had been separated.

* * * * *

I have been here three days, and am as much domesticated in the mansion as my cousin's Newfoundland dog. I know the names and "*sobriquet*" of the establishment; can discriminate between "*Hamish*-a-neilan (James of the Island), and Andy-bawn (Fair Andy); hold converse with the cook, and am hand and glove with the housemaid. Really I am delighted with the place; every thing is wild, new, and out-of-the-way; but I must describe the *locale* of my kinsman's domicile.

At the bottom of a narrow creek, you must imagine "a low snug dwelling, and in good repair." The foam of the Atlantic breaks sometimes against the windows, while a huge cliff, seaward, defends it from the storm, and on the land side, a sudden hill shelters it from the north wind. Here, when the tempest roars abroad

* Eagles are well knowne to breed here, but neither so bigge, nor so many, as books tell. Cambrensis reporteth of his own knowledge and I heare it averred by credible persons, that barnacles, thousands at once, are noted along the shoares to hang by the beakes, about the edges of putrified timber, shippes, oares, anchor-holders, and such like, which in processe taking lively heate of the sunne, become water-foules, and at their time of ripenesse either fall into the sea or fly abroad into the ayre.—*Campion's Historie.*

† Appendix, No. II.

your friend Laura might venture forth and not endanger a *papillotte*. The bent* roof is impervious to the rain: —the rooms are neat, well arranged and comfortable. In the parlour, if the evening be chilly, a turf fire sparkles on the hearth;—and when dried bogdeal is added to the embers, it emits a fragrant and delightful glow, superseding the necessity of candles. The long and measured swell of the Atlantic would almost lull a troubled conscience to repose; and that rural hum, which attends upon the farm-yard, rouses the refreshed sleeper in the morning. In the calm of evening, I hear the shrill cry of the sand-lark;† and in the early dawn the crowing of the cock grouse. I see the salmon flinging themselves over the smooth tide, as they hurry from the sea to reascend their native river; and while I drink claret that never paid the revenue a farthing, or indulge over that proscribed beverage—the produce and the scourge of this wild district—I trace from the window the outline of a range of hills, where the original red deer of Ireland are still existing. None of your park-fed venison, that tame, spiritless, diminutive, which a boy may assassinate with his "birding-piece," but the remnant of that noble stock which hunters of other days, *O'Connor the Cus‡ Dhu*, and *Cormac Bawn Mac Tavish*, once delighted in pursuing.

The offices of this wild dwelling are well adapted to the edifice. In winter, the ponies have their stable; and kine and sheep a comfortable shed. Nor are the dogs forgotten; a warm and sheltered kennel is fitted up with benches, and well provided with straw. Many a sporting-lodge in England, on which thousands have been expended, lacks the comforts of my kinsman's unpretending cottage. Where are the coach-houses? Those indeed would be useless appendages; the nearest road on which a wheel could turn is ten miles distant from the lodge.

* The customary thatch in parts of Enis.
† Appendix, No. III.
‡ Blackfoot.

LETTER VI.

Periodicals—Cockney Sports and Sportsmen—Mountain Angler and his Attendant—Fishing-tackle—Antony the Otter-killer—Visit the River—Flies—Hooking my first Salmon—Return to the Lodge—Sporting Authors—Sir Humphrey Davy—Col. Hawker—Salmonia—Criticisms.

The last post-bag brought a large supply of newspapers and monthly literature. "Gad-o'mercy!" what notions the fishermen of Cockaign must have of the "gentle art!" It is amusing to read the piscatory articles so seriously put forth in the sporting periodicals. No persons on earth suffer more personal inconvenience than the cockney artist, or submit so patiently to pecuniary imposition; and, like virtue, their trouble is its own reward; punt-fishing and perch-fishing, baiting-holes and baiting-hooks, appear to the mountain fisherman so utterly worthless, that I do not wonder at the sovereign contempt with which he regards the unprofitable pursuits of the city angler.*

What a contrast to the cockney bustle of a Londoner does my cousin's simple preparation for a morning's sport exhibit! If the wind and clouds are favourable, the rod, ready jointed and spliced, is lifted from beneath the cottage-eave, where it "lay like a warrior taking his rest," on a continuation of level pegs. The gaff and pan-

* To induce fish to come to any particular spot, boiled wheat, grains of malt, graves (from the tallow-chandler's) cut small, should be thrown in *plentifully* two or three times. A composition of *ground malt*, *blood*, *and clay* is the best for salmon and trout; to which some add ivy-gum.—*Daniel.*

Laughable as this practice may appear to us, in 'olden time,' much more ridiculous expedients than Daniel's were resorted to by the ancient anglers. Some of these vaunted recipes were so absurd, that it is hardly credible that rational persons could be persuaded to employ them. They are set out, however, with great gravity in many antiquated books, and were no doubt commonly used by our forefathers. Some of these prescriptions will be found in Appendix No. IV.

nier are produced by a loose-looking mountaineer, whose light-formed but sinewy limbs are untrammelled by shoe or stocking. Fond of the sport himself, he evinces an ardent interest in your success; on the moor and by the river he is a good-humoured and obliging assistant: traverses the mountains for a day, and lies out on the hill-side through the long autumnal night, to watch the passage of the red deer as they steal down from the mountain top to browse on the lower grounds by moonlight.

How different from this wild and cheerful follower are the sporting attendants of the unhappy cockney; he must consort with "bacon-fed knaves," be the companion of some brawny, jolter-headed, porter-swollen waterman, who in sulky silence paddles his employer into some phlegmatic pool, where the disciple of Walton is secure of the lumbago, but by no means certain of a sprat.

In truth, dear George, I am half ashamed of myself; I came here loaded with rods, flies and baskets, with the "thousand and one" nameless *et cetera* furnished from a city tackle-shop, in their uses and appearance various as the cargo of the ark. When I displayed yesterday this accumulation of "engines and cunning devices," my cousin burst into a roar of laughter, and inquired "if I intended to annihilate the fishery?" Then turning leaf by leaf, three immense fly-books over, he praised the pretty feathers, commended the brightness of the tinsel, and good-naturedly assured me that this rich assemblage did not possess a fly of the value of one farthing. I fear his verdict was a true one; I have tried two days consecutively and never hooked a fish. But no, the water was too low, the wind too high, or something was amiss, for I have the best flies procurable in the best shop in London.

* * * * *

The storm terminated, as summer gales do, in a heavy fall of rain. Although the wears are raised to intercept the passage of the fish from the sea, the late *freshes*, joined to a spring-tide, have enabled both trout and salmon to overleap the barrier and fill the pools above it. Want of success had damped my ardour for piscation; and besides, I had involved myself in a most amusing article in the New Monthly, and felt an unwillingness to lay aside

the book. At this moment of indecision, old Antony the otter-killer, one of that numerous and nondescript personages who *locate* themselves in the houses of the Irish gentry, passed the window with a fine salmon and a brace of trout sixteen inches long. How fresh, how sparkling is the phosphoric shading of the scales, as the old man turns them round for my inspection! What a beautiful fish! it barely measures thirty inches, and is fully ten pounds' weight! That short and deep-shouldered *briddawn** is worth all the lubberly roach, dace, perch, and gudgeon, that the Thames contains from its source to its debouchement.

I looked after the ancient otter-hunter with envy; how lowly would he be estimated in the eyes of a Cheapside fisherman—one who wears a modest-coloured jacket,† lest a showy garment might annoy the plethoric animals he is dabbling for,—whose white basket is constructed of the finest wicker-work, with rods and reels, floats and flies, pastes and patties, lines and liqueurs sufficient to load a donkey,—how contemptuously would he look down upon honest Antony! Figure to yourself a little feeble man, dressed in a jerkin of coarse blue cloth, with an otter (a fancy of my cousin's) blazoned on his arm; in one hand he holds a fish-spear, which assists him when he meets with rugged ground, in the other a very unpretending angle, jointed rudely with a penknife, and secured by waxen threads; a *cast* of flies are wound about his hat, and his remaining stock, not exceeding half a dozen, are contained between the leaves of a tattered song-book: in the same depository he has some silk, died mohair, a hare's ear, and a few feathers from the cock, brown turkey, and mallard; and these simple materials furnish him with most efficient flies, but he requires a bright day to fabricate them, as his sight is indifferent.

* Hibernice, a salmon.

† Our forefathers were wont to pursue even their amusements with great formality; an angler, a century and a half back, must have his fishing-coat, which, if not black, must at least be of a very dark colour, a *black velvet cap*, like those which jockeys now wear, and a rod with a stock like a halbert; thus equipped, he stalked forth, followed by the eyes of a whole neighbourhood."—*Daniel*.

It required much persuasion and a positive assurance of success, before I ventured with my kinsman to the river; ten minutes' easy walking brought us to a noble pool above the wear, where my friend never fails to kill a salmon if the wind be westerly and the water not too low. The water was in beautiful order, and my cousin insisted that under his direction I should once more try my fortune with the fishing-rod. Discarding my gaudy flies with a malediction upon the knave who tied them, he affixed two of his upon the casting-line; nothing could be of a simpler character than those selected from his book. The tail-fly was a plain black and orange mohair body, with a long and pointed turkey-feather wing; the dropper was formed of blue and scarlet wool, ribbed with silver, a pheasant sprilt for legs, and mixed wings of the turkey and mallard.

I made several unsuccessful casts—"A bad look-out, friend Julius; Heaven forfend that the cook has placed any dependance on the angle!" Again I tried the pool, and like all disappointed fishermen began to prognosticate a change of weather. "I had remarked mares' tails in the sky yesterday evening, and there was rain over head, for a hundred." My cousin smiled, when suddenly, my nebulous speculations were inturrupted by a deep sluggish roll at the dropper. "*Monamondiaoul!*"* exclaimed *Mortien Beg*,† as he caught a momentary glance of the broad and fan-like tail. "He is fifteen pound' weight!" Obedient to the directions of my mentor, I left the spot the salmon leaped in, and commenced casting a dozen yards below it. Gradually I came over him again. "A light cast, Frank, and you have him." I tried and succeeded gallantly. I sent the fly across the water with the lightness of the thistle's down—at the same moment the breeze eddied up the stream, and curled the surface deliciously. A long dull ruffle succeeded. Whish, span the wheel; whish-h-h-h-h, whish-h-h, whish,—I have him!

Nothing, my dear George, can be more beautiful than the play of a vigorous salmon. The lubberly struggles of a pond-fish are execrable to him who has felt the ex-

* An Irish imprecation. † Little Martin.

quisite pleasure that attends the conquest of "the monarch of the stream." His bold rushes—his sudden and rapid attempts to liberate himself from the fisher's thrall —the energy with which he throws his silver body three or four feet above the surface of the water, and the unwearied and incessant opposition he makes until his strength is exhausted by the angler's science. All this must be experienced to be adequately conceived. In ten minutes I mastered my beautiful victim; and "Mortien Beg" gaffed and landed a splendid summer fish, which, if the cook's scales be correct, weighed *thirteen pounds and seven ounces.*

Overjoyed with my success, I proceeded up the river. My cousin brought me to several delightful pools; and with his assistance, I raised and hooked several capital fish, but only landed one of them, a nice and active salmon of about eight pounds' weight. From half a dozen white trout fresh from the sea, I received excellent amusement; and at six o'clock returned to dinner, gratified with my sport, pleased with myself, and at peace with all mankind, excepting that confounded cozener, the tackle-merchant in ——— street.

Over our wine, the conversation naturally turned upon the "gentle art." My kinsman is both a practical and a scientific angler. "Holding, with few exceptions, all published sporting productions in disrepute, one that I remarked on your book-stand, Julius, strikes me as being at the same time clever and useful; I mean Sir Humphrey Davy's."

"It is both, Frank: his account of the habits and natural history of the salmon species is just, ingenious, and amusing; and there is a calm and philosophic spirit that pervades the whole, rendering it a work of more than common interest. But practically, it is as useless as all *Guides* and *Manuals* since the days of Walton. Of the uninitiated it will make fishermen, when *Colonel Hawker's* sage directions enable a man to shoot, who has never been five miles from Holborn-bars. I doubt not but Sir Humphrey was an ardent and *scientific* fisherman, but in many practical points I differ with him. He angled well, but he fished like a philosopher. If he haunted this river for a season, unless he altered his sys-

tem materially, he would not kill a dozen salmon. Flies, such as he describes, would never in any seasons or weathers be successful here. He fairly says, 'that different rivers require different flies;' but nothing like those he recommends would answer this one. And although many of the theories and speculative opinions are very ingenious, I question much their validity."

"Admiring Sir Humphrey as I do, I would pardon his philosophy and fine flies; his 'golden pheasants, silken-bodied, orange, red, and pale blue, silver-twisted, and king-fisher mixtures,' even to his 'small bright humming-bird' itself; but with all my Christian charity and personal affection, there is one fatal passage for which, like Lady Macbeth's soiled hand, there is no remedy. Would that I could 'pluck from the memory' that luckless page; but, alas! whenever I see *Salmonia*, it rushes to my recollection. Think, Frank, of a man, who limited a party of sporting tourists to *half a pint of claret!*—and threatened an honest gentleman, who called for another bottle, with 'an overflow of blood'—'a suffusion of the hæmorrhoidal veins'—and worse than all, 'a determined palsy,'* if he persevered. I could have forgiven the philosopher any thing—every thing,—even to the comparison of that rascally fish the perch with the rich and luxurious mullet. But to *fob off* four stout gentlemen with a solitary bottle of the *vin ordinaire*, ycleped claret, that one meets with in a country inn! For God's sake, ring the bell! Here, John, some wine!—nothing but a fresh bottle can allay my indignation, and restore my tranquillity."

"Well, we must admit, that Sir Humphrey would not be exactly the man to fill the chair at an Irish 'sympo-

* Doctors will disagree;—*Vide* Daniel's Account of Joe Mann, Gamekeeper to Lord Torrington. "He was in constant strong morning exercise; he went to bed always betimes, *but never till his skin was filled with ale.* This," he said, "would do no harm to an early riser, and to a man who pursued field-sports. At seventy-eight years of age he began to decline, and then lingered for three years; his gun was ever upon his arm, and he still crept about, not destitute of the hope of fresh diversion." Vol. ii. p. 172.

Inhabitants (especially new come) are subject to distillations, rhumes, and fluxes, for remedy whereof they use an ordinary drink of aqua-vitæ, so qualified in the making, that it dryeth more, and inflameth lesse, than other hote confections."—Campion's Historie, 1571.

sium:' but his bacchanalian antipathies apart, he really is an agreeable and instructive writer."

"Why, ye-es; still there is a dash of milk-and-water throughout *Salmonia*, that nothing but its ingenious account of the affinities and natural history of fishes could compensate. Take for example the introduction of the fishing-party, and remark the colloquy between Halieus and Poietes.

"*Hal.*—'I am delighted to see you, my worthy friends, on the banks of the Colne; and am happy to be able to say, that my excellent host has not only made you free of the river for this day's angling, but insists upon your dining with him,—wishes you to try the evening fishing, and the fishing to-morrow morning—and proposes to you, in short, to give up twenty-four hours to the delights of an angler's May-day.'

"*Poiet.*—'We are deeply indebted to him; and I hardly know how we can accept his offer, without laying ourselves under too great an obligation.'

"*Hal.*—'Fear not—he is as noble-minded a man as ever delighted in good offices; and so benevolent, that I am sure he will be almost as happy in knowing you are amused, as you can be in your sport; and hopes for an additional satisfaction in the pleasure of your conversation.'

"*Poiet.*—'So let it be!'

"*Hal.*—'I will take you to the house, you shall make your bow, and then you will be all free to follow your own fancies. Remember, the dinner-hour is five; the dressing-bell rings at half-past four; be punctual to this engagement, from which you will be free at seven.'

"Now, because a country gentleman takes heart, and invites four philosophers to dinner, Hal. can scarcely find words to communicate the hospitable message, and Poietes opines that the obligation shall be eternal. After the worthy host is lauded for this generous act to the very skies, it appears that he bundles off the company at seven o'clock, and before they had time to look around the table, quoits them out, 'like a shove-groat shillling;' but, hark! the piper is in the hall—*Shin suis, Cormac!** pass the wine—and a fig for philosophy!"

* Play up, Cormac!

LETTER VII.

Symptoms of a coming Storm—A Sportsman's Dinner—Old John—Pattigo—Gale comes on—Shawn a tra Buoy—Seals—The Blind Seal.

The morning had a sullen look; *Slieve More* retained his night-cap; the edge of the horizon, where the ocean met the sky, was tinged with a threatening glare of lurid sunshine; the wind was capricious as a woman's love, now swelling into gusts, now sinking to a calm, as the unsteady breeze shifted round to every point "i' the shipman's card." As evening approached, the clouds collected in denser masses, and the giant outline of Slieve More was lost in a sheet of vapour. The swell from the Atlantic broke louder on the bar, the piercing whistle of the curlew was heard more frequently, and the small hard-weather gull, which seldom leaves the Black Rock but to harbinger a coming tempest, was ominously busy, whirling aloft in rapid circles, or plunging its long and pointed wing into the broken surface of the billow: all portended a storm; the wind freshened momentarily, and at last blew steadily from the south-east.

I was at the door, engaged in speculating upon the signs of the approaching gale, when old John, my kinsman's gray-headed butler, summoned me to dinner. Some say that a bachelor's repast has always a lonely and comfortless appearance: it may be so: I grant that a sprinkling of the sexes adds to the social character of the table, but this apart, with the abatement of that best society, *lovely woman*, who shall dine more luxuriously than I? Two hours' rabbit-shooting in the sand-hills has given me a keen and wholesome appetite. That salmon at noon was disporting in the sea;—this kid was fatted among the heath-flowers of the mountain-glen. *Kitchener and Kelly* could take no exception to the cookery;

and had these worthies still been inhabitants of "this fair round globe," the doctor would have found ample amusement for "every man's master the stomach," and honest *Myke* might have safely ventured to dinner without his "*sauce piquant.*"

In due time the cloth disappeared, a bundle of split bog deal was laid upon the hearth, and speedily lighted into a cheerful blaze. Old John, with the privilege of an ancient retainer, conversed with us as he extracted a fresh cork for the evening's potation. "Awful weather in July, sir. Well, that *Shawn a tra buoy** is a wonderful beast; I knew a change of weather was at hand when he rose beside the shore last night, and showed his gray head and shoulders over the water."

"Is the seal, John, a sure foreteller of an approaching storm?"

"A certain one, sir; I remember him from I was a boy in the old master's kitchen,—the Lord be merciful to his soul! *Shawn a tra buoy's* features are as familiar to me as my own; I would swear to him among a thousand."

"You see him frequently?"

"Oh, yes sir; when the salmon come in, he is every day upon the yellow strand opposite the lodge; there you will see him chase the fish into the shoal water, catch them beside the boats, ay, or if that fails, take them from the nets, and rob the fishermen. Year after year he has returned with the salmon, spending his summer on the 'tra buoy,' and his winter near Carrigh-a-Boddagh."

"How has he escaped so long, John? has he not been often fired at?"

"A thousand times; the best marksmen in the country have tried him without success. People say that, like the *master otter*, he has a charmed life, and latterly nobody meddles with him."

Old John's narrative was interrupted by the entrance of another personage; he was a stout burly-looking man, with indifferent good features, a figure of uncommon strength, and a complexion of the deepest bronze. He is the schipper of my cousin's hooker. After a career of

* Jack of the yellow strand.

perilous adventure in piloting the Flushing smugglers to the coast, he has abandoned his dangerous trade to pass an honester and safer life in future.

"Well, *Pattigo*,* what news?"

"The night looks dirty enough, sir; shall we run the hooker round to Tallaghon, and get the rowing-boats drawn up?" His master assented, and ordered him the customary glass of poteen. *Pattigo* received it graciously in the fingers of his right hand,—for he has lost his thumb by the bursting of a blunderbuss in one of his skirmishes with the revenue,—made his ship-shape bow, clapped his *sow-wester* on, and vanished.

The storm came on apace; large and heavy drops struck heavily against the windows; the blast moaned round the house; I heard the boat's keel grate upon the gravel, as the boatmen launched them up the beach; I saw *Pattigo* slip his moorings, and under the skirt of his mainsail run for a safer anchorage. The rain now fell in torrents, the sea rose, and broke upon the rocks in thunder; mine host directed the storm-shutters to be put up, ordered in candles, with a fresh supply of billets for the fire, and we made final preparations to be comfortable for the night.

Were I required to name the most *recherché* of my kinsman's luxuries, I should specify his unrivalled "cannastre;" an ample quantity of this precious *tobaque* (brought from Holland by a smuggler), with excellent Dutch pipes, was produced by honest John, who rises hourly in my estimation. There was also an *addendum* in the shape of a foreign-looking bottle, which the ancient servitor averred to have been deposited in the cellar since the time of "the master's father." If it were so, the thing is a marvel, for such liquor is rarely vouchsafed to mortals. Alas, George, while my aching head testifies a too devoted attachment to that misshapen flask, the unequalled flavour of the exquisite *schiedam* it contained will ever haunt my memory.

"I remarked," said my kinsman, as he struck the ashes

* Clans, requiring by-names, are usually distinguished by personal peculiarities, as Shawn Rhua (red John), Shawnie Bokkagh (lame Johnny).

from his meerschaum, "that you appeared amused with old John's history of *Shawn a tra buoy*. Although in its wild state the seal is always shy, and sometimes dangerous, yet when taken young it is easily domesticated, and is susceptible of strong attachment to its keepers.* There is a curious story told of one of these animals—I believe the leading incidents of the narrative to be perfectly authentic—and it is a memorable record of enduring attachment in the animal, and exquisite barbarity in the man. The tale runs thus:—

"About forty years ago, a young seal was taken in Clew Bay, and domesticated in the kitchen of a gentleman whose house was situated on the sea-shore. It grew apace, became familiar with the servants, and attached to the house and family; its habits were innocent and gentle, it played with the children, came at its master's call, and, as the old man described him to me, was 'fond as a dog, and playful as a kitten.'

"Daily the seal went out to fish, and after providing for his own wants, frequently brought in a salmon or turbot to his master. His delight in summer was to bask in the sun, and in winter to lie before the fire, or, if permitted, creep into the large oven, which at that time formed the regular appendage of an Irish kitchen.

"For four years the seal had been thus domesticated, when, unfortunately, a disease, called in this country *the crippawn*—a kind of paralytic affection of the limbs which generally ends fatally—attacked some black cattle belonging to the master of the house; some died, others became infected, and the customary cure produced by changing them to drier pasture failed. A wise woman was consulted, and the hag assured the credulous owner

* In January, 1819, in the neighbourhood of Burntisland, a gentleman completely succeeded in taming a seal; its singularities attracted the curiosity of strangers daily. It appeared to possess all the sagacity of the dog, and lived in its master's house and eat from his hand. In his fishing excursions this gentleman generally took it with him, upon which occasion it afforded no small entertainment. When thrown into the water, it would follow for miles the track of the boat, and although thrust back by the oars, it never relinquished its purpose; indeed, it struggled so hard to regain its seat, that one would imagine its fondness for its master had entirely overcome the natural predilection for its native element.

that the mortality among his cows was occasioned by his retaining an unclean beast about his habitation—the harmless and amusing seal. It must be made away with directly, or the crippawn would continue, and her charms be unequal to avert the malady. The superstitious wretch consented to the hag's proposal; the seal was put on board a boat, carried out beyond Clare Island, and there committed to the deep, to manage for himself as he best could. The boat returned, the family retired to rest, and next morning a servant awakened her master to tell him that the seal was quietly sleeping in the oven. The poor animal over night came back to his beloved home, crept through an open window, and took possession of his favourite resting-place.

"Next morning another cow was reported to be unwell. The cause must now be finally removed; a Galway fishing-boat was leaving Westport on her return home, and the master undertook to carry off the seal, and not put him overboard until he had gone leagues beyond Innis Boffin. It was done—a day and night passed; the second evening closed—the servant was raking the fire for the night—something scratched gently at the door—it was of course the house-dog—she opened it, and in came the seal! Wearied with his long and unusual voyage, he testified by a peculiar cry, expressive of pleasure, his delight to find himself at home, then stretching himself before the glowing embers of the hearth, he fell into a deep sleep.

"The master of the house was immediately apprized of this unexpected and unwelcome visit. In the exigency, the beldame was awakened and consulted; she averred that it was always unlucky to kill a seal, but suggested that the animal should be deprived of sight, and a third time carried out to sea. To this hellish proposition the besotted wretch who owned the house consented, and the affectionate and confiding creature was cruelly robbed of sight, on that hearth for which he had resigned his native element! Next morning, writhing in agony, the mutilated seal was embarked, taken outside Clare Island, and for the last time committed to the waves.

"A week passed over, and things became worse

instead of better; the cattle of the truculent wretch died fast, and the infernal hag gave him the pleasurable tidings that her arts were useless, and that the destructive visitation upon his cattle exceeded her skill and cure.

"On the eighth night after the seal had been devoted to the Atlantic, it blew tremendously. In the pauses of the storm a wailing noise at times was faintly heard at the door; the servants, who slept in the kitchen, concluded that the *Banshee** came to forewarn them of an approaching death, and buried their heads in the bed-coverings. When morning broke the door was opened—the seal was there lying dead upon the threshold!"

"Stop, Julius!" I exclaimed, "give me a moment's time to curse all concerned in this barbarism."

"Be patient, Frank," said my cousin, "the *finale* will probably save you that trouble. The skeleton of the once plump animal—for, poor beast, it perished from hunger, being incapacitated from blindness to procure its customary food—was buried in a sand-hill, and from that moment misfortunes followed the abettors and perpetrators of this inhuman deed. The detestable hag, who had denounced the inoffensive seal, was, within a twelvemonth, hanged for murdering the illegitimate offspring of her own daughter. Every thing about this devoted house melted away—sheep rotted, cattle died, 'and blighted was the corn.' Of several children none reached maturity, and the savage proprietor survived every thing he loved or cared for. He died *blind* and miserable.

"There is not a stone of that accursed building standing upon another. The property has passed to a family of a different name, and the series of incessant calamity which pursued all concerned in this cruel deed is as romantic as true."

It was midnight—I laid down my pipe, took a candle from the sideboard, wished my cousin "a good night," and went to bed, full of pity for the gentle and affectionate seal.

* Appendix, No. III.*

LETTER VIII.

A wet Day — Fly-tying — Peasantry Disquisitions — The Tinker— Lessons in the "Gentle Art"—An unexpected Ally.

The night throughout continued wild and blustrous; the squalls, which shook the casements, became less frequent and violent towards morning; the wind settled in the south, and dying gradually away, was succeeded by a heavy and constant fall of rain. To stir out of doors was impossible; the Lodge is unprovided with a billiard-table, and it requires ingenuity to contrive some occupation for the long duration of a summer's day.

The breakfast was prolonged as much as possible; it ended, however, and my kinsman left me to give some necessary directions to his household. I seated myself in the window; the view seaward was interrupted by the thickness of the weather, the rain dropped from the thatch incessantly, the monotonous splash of the falling water, the sombre influence of a dull and torpid atmosphere, gradually produced a drowsiness, and I fell fast asleep over a dull collection of sporting anecdotes. My cousin's return roused me; he placed a spider-table beside the window, and having unlocked a box filled with angling materials, "in great and marvellous disorder," proceeded to extract from a mass of unmentionable things, the requisites for dressing a cast or two of flies. As my own voluminous book had been sadly discomposed in the numerous interchanges I made, when vainly striving to seduce a salmon to try my "tinsel and fine feathers," I proceeded to arrange my splendid collection, while my kinsman was busied with his own simple stock. The disappointment I had endured in finding my flies so unprofitable, had made me hold the entire outfit of the London artist in disrepute; and I would have given my most elaborate and expensive fishing-rod for the hazel angle of the ancient otter-killer.

"Frank," said my cousin, "you must not undervalue what really is unexceptionable; I mean the mechanical part of your collection. Those rods are beautiful, and your reels, lines, gut, and hooks cannot be surpassed; your flies may be excellent in an English river, so put them carefully aside, as I will supply you with some better adapted to our mountain-streams. But what a size that book is!—In fishing, as in literature, the schoolmen's adage holds,—*Mega biblion, mega kakon.* Why nothing but a soldier's pack would carry it! we will soon, however, render you independent of this mighty magazine, by teaching you to fabricate your own flies."

"I fear I am too old to learn; the art of tying must, I presume, be acquired early in life, and brought to perfection by after-experience."

"This does not always follow; I did, when a boy, tie flies passably; but having left off fishing when I removed from my native river, I forgot the art, and depended on others for my supply. The person who furnished my casting-lines fell sick, and it unluckily happened that his illness occurred in the best period of the season; the river was filled with fish, and constant service soon wore out my scanty store. Necessity is the mother,—you know the proverb,—I was sadly reduced; ground blunted hooks and patched ravelling bodies; at last, my stock was reduced to half-a-dozen, and that half-dozen to perfect skeletons. What was to be done? Man is an imitative animal,—I endeavoured to fabricate; produced something between a bird and a bee; tried again, succeeded better; and before my artist had recovered, by the shade of Walton! I could turn out a reputable fly."

"I believe I must make an attempt."

"You shall succeed; and as a preliminary, I will put you under the tutelage of my worthy neighbour, the priest; observe his style of casting, and mark the facility with which he sends five-and-thirty feet of hair and gut across the broadest pool. I fish tolerably, but have repeatedly laid aside my rod to admire the beautiful casting of this perfect master of the angle."

"He ties a very handsome fly, no doubt."

"I won't say that,—he ties a very *killing* one, I ex-

pect him presently; and as the day is wet, I'll leave the materials ready, and to-morrow, if the rain ceases soon, we shall prove the value of his flies."

"As we are on the subject of tying, I must observe, that the advantage one derives from being able to construct his own flies is wonderful; in fact, without attaining this accomplishment in the 'gentle art,' no one can fish comfortably or successfully. No stock, however extensive, will afford a supply adapted for every change of weather and water, and a man may lose a day overlooking an interminable variety of kinds and colours, in a vain search after one killing fly. Not so the *artist:* the favourite insect being once ascertained, he speedily produces an imitation and fills his basket, while his less fortunate neighbour is idly turning the pages of his overstocked fishing-book.

"I had two sporting friends, who were excellent instances of this. Colonel S—— was an ardent, and, I may add, a very tolerable angler. No one went to more trouble and expense in procuring the most approved flies; he never tied, or attempted to tie one, and he assured me he had many hundred dozens in his possession. To find a new fly was with him sometimes the labour of a day; and when about to try another water, he would spend hours toiling through his immense variety, before he could succeed in discovering the necessary colour and description. I have seen him, with Job-like patience, labouring through endless papers and parcels in search of a paltry insect that I could fabricate in five minutes.

"His companion, Captain B——, ran into an opposite extreme. He rarely had a second casting-line, and seldom a second set of flies. Did the day change, or the river fall or lower, he sat down on the bank, ripped wings and dubbings from his hooks, and prepared a new outfit in a twinkling. I never met an angler who was so certain of filling a basket as my friend B——. His system, however, I would totally disapprove of. Without burthening oneself with enough to furnish out a tackle-shop, a small and effective collection is desirable, and it is absurd to lose a fortunate half-hour tying on the river bank what could be more conveniently fabricated during the tedium

of a wet day within doors. An accident may rob the most discreet angler of his flies, and surely it is necessary to have a fresh relay to put up. But though I take a sufficiency along with me, I never leave home without being provided with the materials for constructing new ones. An hour may bring ephemeræ on the waters, which you must imitate, or you will cast in vain; before evening they will have vanished, and given place to some new variety of the insect world. Thus far, at least, the tyer possesses an advantage over him who cannot produce a fly, that no collection which human ingenuity can form will compensate.

"The best practical lesson I ever got originated in the following accidental occurrence. Some years ago I received private information that a travelling tinker, who occasionally visited these mountains to make and repair the tin stills used by the peasantry in illicit distillation, was in the constant habit of destroying fish, and he was represented as being a most successful poacher. I was returning down the river after an unfavourable day, a wearied and a disappointed fisherman, and observed, at a short distance, a man chased across the bogs by several others, and eventually overtaken and secured. It was the unfortunate tinker, surprised by the keepers in the very act of landing a splendid salmon; two, recently killed, were discovered in his wallet, and yet that blessed day I could not hook a fish! He was forthwith brought in durance before *my honour*, to undergo the pains and penalties of his crime. He was a strange, raw-boned, wild-looking animal, and I half suspect Sir Walter Scott had seen him before he sketched Watt Tinlin in the Lay. He was a convicted felon—he had no plea to offer, for he was taken in the very fact. But he made two propositions wherewithal to obtain his liberty—'He would never sin again—or he would fight any two of the captors.' My heart yearned towards him—he was after all a brother—and, admitting that rod and coat were not worth threepence, still he was an adept in the 'gentle art,' although the most ragged disciple that ever Izaak boasted. I forgave him, dismissed the captors, and ordered him to the lodge for refreshment. 'My honour had no sport,'

and he looked carelessly at my flies. 'Would I condescend to try one of his?' He put a strange-looking combination of wool and feathers on the casting-line. There was a fine pool near us—I tried it, and the second cast I was fast in a twelve pound salmon! My ragged friend remained with me some days; and in his sober intervals, 'few and far between,' gave me lessons in the art that have been more serviceable than any I had hitherto acquired.

"Two years after, I was obliged to attend the winter fair of Ball, to purchase cattle. It was twilight when I left it, and had proceeded only a few miles towards a gentleman's house, where I was to dine and sleep, when my horse cast a shoe, and forced me to leave him at a smith's shop, which was fortunately at hand. The evening was chilly, and I determined to proceed on foot, directing my servant to follow. I passed a lonely *potcen-house*—several ruffian-looking fellows were on the road beside it. They were half drunk and insolent; I was rash—words borrowed blows. I soon discovered that I should have the worst of the battle, and that I was tolerably certain of a sound drubbing. Suddenly, an unexpected ally came to my assistance; he *dropped* the most formidable of the assailants as if he had been struck down by a sledge hammer. A few blows settled the contest. I turned round to recognise and thank my deliverer. 'Pon my sowl, you're mighty handy, Master Julius: it's a murder that ye don't practise oftener!' The speaker was my gifted friend—the tinker."

LETTER IX.

Sporting Topography of Mayo—Hunting Country—Fox Covers—Lakes, Rivers, and Fish—A Domiciliary Visit—Revenue Foray—Capture of drunken Distillers—Alarm—Midnight Meditations—Angling Excursion—Goolamore—Salmon-fishing—English and Irish Hooks—Limerick preferable to all others.

To look, my dear George, at the map of Mayo, one would imagine that Nature had designed that country for a sportsman. The westerly part is wild and mountainous; alpine ridges of highlands interpose between the ocean and the interior, and from the bases of these hills a boundless tract of heath and moorland extends in every direction. To the east, the face of the country undergoes a striking change—large and extensive plains cover the surface, and as the lands are generally occupied as pasturage, and consequently not subdivided into the numerous enclosures which are requisite in tillage farming, this part of Mayo is justly in high estimation as a hunting country, and for centuries has been a favourite fixture of the neighbouring fox-hunters. *The Plains*, as this sporting district is usually denominated, afford constant opportunities for the horse to show his powers, and the rider his nerve. The parks are of immense size; the fences stiff and safe; the surface agreeably undulated, and from the firmness of the sward, affording superior galloping ground. One may occasionally ride over miles without being necessitated to take a leap; but when one does meet fences they are generally *raspers;* and if the scent lies well, and the dogs can *go*, nothing but a tip-top horse, and a man "who takes every thing as God sends it," will hold a fair place upon *the plains.*

The covers in the vicinity of the plains are numerous and well supplied with foxes. Of these animals there is no scarcity anywhere in Mayo; but in the mountain districts there is, unfortunately, a superabundance. The herdsman and grouse-shooter complain sadly of their

devastations; and notwithstanding numbers are annually dug out for hunting, or destroyed by the peasantry, there seems to be an anti-Malthusian property in the animal, which enables its mischievous stock, maugre traps and persecution, to increase and multiply.

While the country is peculiarly adapted for field-sports, the extensive lakes* and numerous rivers offer every inducement to the angler; the streams are plentifully stocked with trout; the rivers which communicate with the sea have a good supply of salmon. Curious varieties† of the finny tribe are to be found in the mountain loughs; and in those noble and expansive sheets of water, Lough Con, Lough Mask, and Lough Corrib, the largest and finest specimens of fish are easily obtained.

Anxious to introduce me to his clan, and to gratify my growing propensities for the gentle art, my kinsman has proposed a piscatory expedition. To him the thing will be a common recurrence of rural amusements; to me, a neophyte, all will be fresh, strange, and interesting. I shall journalize our proceedings, and favour you with the details.

* * * *

We have just had a domiciliary visit from the revenue police. Under cover of the night, they made a descent upon our valleys from their station, some fifteen miles off. Excepting causing dire alarm—a general abduction of stills, worms, and all the apparatus of the craft—the concealment of malt, and the burying of kegs, the consequences of the foray have not been important. One fatal casualty occurred—a distillery had finished its brewing (*i. e.* distilled the quantity brewed), and principals and accessaries were indulging a little after their exertions. Unluckily, the revenue stumbled upon the convivial meeting, and although the *stuff* was gone, the still, apparatus, and unextinguished fire were proofs positive that the king—God bless him!—had been wofully defrauded. Such of the party as could strike a walk, escaped without difficulty; but two unhappy gentlemen, who were blind drunk, and fast asleep in all security before

* Appendix, No. V. † For example, the gillaroo and par.

the smouldering embers of the still-fire, were captured, and conveyed to my loving cousin, to undergo the pains and penalties of their crime. He, as a matter of course, committed them to jail; and the next going judge, as another matter of course, will discharge them. Meanwhile, they are taken from their families, and supported at the expense of the county; their utility is lost when it is most requisite, and they are, during the term of incarceration, a useless burden upon the community. I cannot see the moral and legal expediency of all this; but the men who framed the revenue laws were probably more clear-sighted than I am.

When I first observed a score of banditti in blue jackets and white cross-belts arranged before the Lodge, I felt particularly nervous: old John, my refuge in perplexity, was immediately consulted. "John!" said I, in a masonic whisper, "are we safe?"—"Safe! from what, sir?"—"The gauger."—"Lord, sir, he dines with us!"—"But—but is there any *stuff* about the house?"—"Any! God alone can tell how much there is above and under."*—"If anybody told the gauger, John?"—"They would only tell him what he knows already. The gauger—Lord bless you, sir! he never comes or goes without leaving a keg or two behind him: if the master and he did not pull together, what the devil business would he have here? Don't mind, sir, we know what we are about;—*Tiggum tigue Thigien!*"†

* * * *

Midnight.—I hope the weather has settled; the moon looks well, and, as John avers, the sun set favourably:‡ there is, however, one solitary scintillating star,—one! there are two. Confound the *poteen!* it is the queerest, pleasantest, out-o'-the-way drink imaginable!—and the

* *Poteen* is commonly buried in the earth in small-sized vessels; this is done for the double purpose of improving the whiskey and concealing it from the revenue. If detected in a dwelling-house, the owner incurs a penalty of one hundred pounds; notwithstanding which, there are few gentlemen in this part of Connaught who are not plentifully supplied with this proscribed spirit.

† An Irish proverb, literally meaning, "Tim understands Teddy."

‡ Appendix, No. VI.

gauger told such odd stories and sang such extraordinary songs—the sooner I am in bed the better. What a field the Temperance Society would have here for their exertions!—Well, if I arise without a headache, I'll immortalize the man who first invented distillation.

* * * *

We start under favourable auspices; a sweet, steady westerly wind is blowing, clouds and sunshine alternately prevail, the river should be in good order, and we anticipate that this will be a killing day.

We have determined to fish the sister stream; the waters of Goolamore unite in the same estuary with those of our own river, and yet the fish vary with regard to season as much as if they inhabited waters a thousand miles apart. In Goolamore, throughout the whole year, white* salmon are found in high condition; in Aughniss, from October till April, the fish are red, spent, and worthless. In size, in character, the streams are much alike; they unite in their debouchement in the sea; and flow, but a few miles asunder, through a flat and moory country. That the fish of these sister streams should differ so much is surprising, and can only be attributed to one circumstance: Aughniss is a union of mountain-streams, Goolamore flows from an extensive lake, and affords an outlet to the waters of Carramore. Judging from the constant supply of white fish which Goolamore yields all through the year, one would conclude that the lake offers better food and winterage to the salmon than the shallower and colder waters of Aughniss.

Our expectations were fully realized; we found the pools in excellent order. Independently of a west wind, being a favourite point for the angler—in these rivers, it blows against the current of the stream, and consequently increases the ruffle on the surface of the water, which, in salmon-fishing, is so favourable. My cousin, who is per-

* By the simple appellation of white and red fish, the peasantry distinguish salmon when in and out of season; indeed, the colour is such a perfect indicative of health and disease, that any person who has frequented a salmon river will, on seeing a fish rise, be enabled to tell with accuracy the state of his condition.

fectly acquainted with the local haunts of the salmon, placed me where I seldom failed to rise or hook a fish. What splendid angling this wild country offers! It spoils one in after-life, however. The man who has held a salmon on his line disrelishes the inferior amusement of the craft. The fox-hunter will seldom condescend to ride to beagles; the deer-stalker will not waste time and powder in a rabbit-warren, and the disciple of Izaak, who has once indulged in the exquisite delight of salmon-fishing, will feel little satisfaction in the commoner pursuits and lesser pleasures of the gentle art.

We landed five salmon, besides taking a pannier full of sea-trouts. Had I been an adept, or better appointed than I was, we might have killed double the number of salmon. My flies were unluckily tied on London hooks, and from their defective quality and formation, several fish escaped me. Repeated failures caused me to examine the hooks, and I ascertained that they were both ill-shapen and badly tempered. My cousin had warned me against the consequences of using them, but I believed that he was prejudiced, and concluded that this department of my London outfit must be unobjectionable. The event, however, proved that I was deceived. My kinsman rarely lost a salmon, and mine broke from me continually. I find, by sad experience, that in hook-making the Irish are far before us; our workmen either do not understand the method of forming and tempering hooks, or they do not take sufficient pains in their manufactory. It is strange, when so much of the angler's pleasure and success depends upon the quality of his hooks, that more attention is not bestowed upon their fabrication. The art of forming,* and the process of tempering them, appears simple enough; and that little difficulty is required to attain it, is evident from the fact that many fishermen make their own hooks.† For my own part, however, I consider hook-making to be an unnecessary accomplishment for the angler, as the best

* Appendix, No. VII.

† "I have even made a hook, which, though a little inferior in form, in other respects, I think, I could boast as equal to the Limerick ones."—*Salmonia*.

hooks in the world can be procured without trouble, and at a trifling expense, from O'Shaughnessy of Limerick.*

* "I never use any hooks for salmon-fishing except those which I am sure have been made by O'Shaughnessy of Limerick; for even those made in Dublin, though they seldom break, yet they now and then bend; and the English hooks, made of cast-steel, in imitation of Irish ones, are the worst of all."—*Salmonia.*

LETTER X.

Salmon — Fishing described — Draughting — Fishing precarious — Change of Season and Condition—Poaching—Private Distillation —Size and Weight of Salmon—Sir H. Davy—Migration of Salmon—Natural History—Anecdotes and Experiments—Lerneæ Salmoneæ.

To those unacquainted with the method of taking salmon, a brief detail may not be uninteresting ; premising that in other fisheries different means are employed, yet the simplest and general method is that used at Aughniss.

About March fly-fishing commences, and a strong and active spring fish will then frequently be killed, if the river is sufficiently supplied with water, and the wind brisk and *westerly*. As the season advances, the fishing materially improves ; and from the month of April, salmon in the highest condition, with red and white trout, will rise here freely at the fly.

In June, however, the regular fishing with nets commences. The wear is raised to stop the passage of the fish, and the river water vented through a small aperture provided with a trap, or, as it is technically called, a *box*. By these traps and artificial canals, in other fisheries, the salmon are principally taken ; but here, except some straggling fish, the box produces little.

The fishing is confined to the estuary, where the river meets the sea. Here, according to naturalists, the salmon undergo a probationary course before they exchange the salt for the fresh water, as a sudden change from either would be fatal to the fish, and a temporary sojourn in water of an intermediate quality (brackish) is supposed to be requisite before they can leave either the ocean or the river.

The draughting is carried on at the last quarter of the ebb, and during the first of flood ; five or six boats, with as many men in each, are necessary. When the salmon are seen, the nearest boat starts off, leaving a man on

shore, with a rope attached to one extremity of the net, which is rapidly thrown over, as the boat makes an extensive circle round the place where the fish are supposed to lie. Returning to the shore, the curve of the net is gradually decreased. Stones are flung in at each extremity to prevent the salmon from escaping; the net reaches the bank, the semicircle is complete, and all within effectually secured. The fish are then carefully landed, and at a single draught five hundred salmon have been taken. This is, however, an event of rare occurrence, and unless the net were powerfully strong, and the fishers skilful, a fracture, and consequently a general escape, would be inevitable.

The fishing here is exceedingly precarious. If the season be favourable, from the 1st of July to the 12th of August, the daily average would be probably five hundred salmon, exclusive of an immense quantity of white trouts. But success depends entirely upon the weather. Should the season prove rainy or tempestuous, the salmon directly leave the estuary, and remain at sea until the water clears and the storm abates;—and the time allowed by law often expires before a moiety of the fish can be secured.

It is extraordinary how much the flavour and quality of the salmon depends on circumstances apparently of trifling moment. A single day in the river will injure, and a flood spoil their condition; and a difference between a fish taken in the nets, and one killed with a rod, will be easily perceptible.

Although in this water angling may be considered as ending in September, yet, through the succeeding months till spring, the fish rise freely at a fly. But the sport is very indifferent, compared with summer angling; the salmon has lost his energy, he struggles *laboriously* to get away; but his play is different from the gallant resistance he would have offered had you hooked him in July. I have landed and turned out again as many as nine salmon in one day, and their united exertions did not afford me half the amusement I have received from the conquest of one sprightly summer fish. Salmon appear to lose beauty and energy together. They are now

reddish, dull, dark-spotted, perch-coloured fish, and seem a different species from the sparkling, silvery creature we saw them when they first left the sea. As an esculent they are utterly worthless—soft, flabby, and flavourless if brought to table ; and instead of the delicate pink hue they exhibited when in condition, they present a sickly, unhealthy, white appearance, that betrays how complete the change is that they have recently undergone.

And yet at this period they suffer most from night-fishers. This species of poaching* is as difficult to detect as it is ruinous in its consequences. It is believed that the destruction of a few breeding fish may cost the proprietor one thousand; such being the astonishing fecundity of the pregnant salmon !

Night-fishing is carried on when the river is low, and the night moonless. The poacher, with a gaff and torch, selects some gravelly ford—for there, by a law of nature, the salmon resort, to form beds in the stream wherein to deposite their ova; and they continue working on the sand until they are discovered by the torch-light,† and gaffed by the plunderer. Hundreds of the breeding fish are annually thus destroyed; and although the greater fisheries may be tolerably protected, it is impossible to secure the mountain-streams from depredation. If detected, the legal penalty upon poaching is trifling ; and, as appeals on very frivolous grounds are allowed from the summary convictions of magistrates, it too frequently happens that delinquents evade the punitory consequences attendant on discovery.

* "When I made the tour of that hospitable kingdom in 1754, it (the Coleraine fishery) was rented by a neighbouring gentleman for 620*l.* a year, who assurred me that the tenant, his predecessor, gave for it 1600*l.* per annum—and that he was a greater gainer by the bargain, on account of the number of poachers, who destroy the fish during the fence month."—*Pennant.*

† "There are a good many pike in the river near Trolhättan. In the course of two successive days, I once took with my rod sixty-three of those fish; they were, however, small, their aggregate weight being little more than one hundred pounds. The largest fish weighed eight pounds. Great quantities of pike and other fish, salmon among the rest, are speared in the vicinity of Trolhättan by torch-light, many of the people thereabouts being adepts at that amusement."—*Lloyd.*

Here, too, the evils of private distillation may be traced. Much of the depredations committed upon the salmon are effected by persons concerned in this demoralizing trade. They are up all night attending to the still. The watch kept against the revenue police enables them to ascertain when the bargers are away, and the river consequently unguarded. A light is snatched from the still-fire, the hidden fish-spear speedily produced, and in a very short space of time an infinite deal of mischief is perpetrated.

I should be inclined to question the accuracy of weight which Sir Humphrey gives his salmon. Fish of the sizes he describes are rarely met with here, and out of one thousand taken in the nets, there will not be ten fish of twenty-five pounds weight.

The average size is from seven to fifteen pounds. Within thirty years but one monster has been taken; he weighed fifty-six pounds. Four years ago one of forty pounds was caught; but of the thousands which I have seen taken, I would say, that I never saw a fish weighing more than thirty pounds, and not many dozen reaching to twenty-five pounds.

The priest, my neighbour, who lives on the banks of Goolamore, told me he once killed a salmon of twenty-seven pounds' weight, and that the feat gave him an infinity of trouble, and occupied three mortal hours. The priest fishes with tackle of amazing strength, and is one of the best practical anglers I have ever met with. Sir Humphrey Davy mentions salmon of twenty-five and thirty pounds as being commonly taken with a fly. The largest I ever killed was eighteen pounds four ounces, and it gave me abundant exercise for an hour.

Either Sir Humphrey overrates the weight of Scottish salmon, or in the rivers he frequented they must be immensely superior to these found in the Irish waters. In the Shannon, I believe, the largest fish are found, and I am inclined to think, that even there the capture of salmon, with a fishing-rod, of this unusual magnitude, is an event of very rare occurrence.

Pennant states, "that the largest salmon ever known weighed seventy-four pounds. In September, 1795, one,

measuring upwards of four feet from nose to tail, and three in circumference, weighing within a few ounces of seventy pounds, was sold at Billingsgate, and was the largest ever brought there. The Severn salmon are much inferior as to their bulk, for one taken near Shrewsbury, in 1757, weighing only thirty-seven pounds, is recorded in the British Chronologist as exceeding in length any ever known to be taken in that river, and being the heaviest, except one ever remembered in that town. They have in many parts been caught by angling, with an artificial fly and other baits, upwards of forty pounds, weight."

Passing Grove's shop in Bond-street about a month ago, I remarked an immense fish extended in the window; I stopped to inquire what its weight might be, and was informed it weighed forty-five pounds. It had been a little too long on its passage from Scotland, and I should be inclined to say, that at best it was a coarse-flavoured fish, but in its present state a most indifferent one.

The migratory habits of the salmon, and the instinct with which it periodically revisits its native river, are curious circumstances in the natural history of this fish. As the swallow returns annually to its nest, as certainly the salmon repairs to the same spot in which to deposite its ova. Many interesting experiments have established the fact. M. de le Lande fastened a copper ring round a salmon's tail, and found that for three successive seasons it returned to the same place. Dr. Bloch states, that gold and silver rings have been attached by Eastern princes to salmon, to prove that a communication existed between the Persian Gulf and the Caspian and Northern seas, and that the experiment succeeded. Shaw, in his Zoology, mentions that a salmon of seven pounds and three-quarters was marked with scissors on the back, fin, and tail, and turned out on the 7th of February, and that it was retaken in March of the succeeding year, and found to have increased to the amazing size of seventeen pounds and a half. This statement, by-the-by, is at variance with the theory of Dr. Bloch, who estimates the weight of a five or six year old salmon at but ten or twelve pounds.

That the salmon should lose condition rapidly, on quitting the sea for the fresh water, may be inferred from a fact agreed upon by naturalists, that during the period of spawning the fish neglects feeding. In this peculiar habit the salmon is not, however, singular; animals of the Phocæ tribe, in breeding-time, exercise a similar abstinence. On opening a salmon, at any season, no food will be discovered, and the contents of the stomach will be confined to a small quantity of yellowish fluid and tape-worms, which are generated there. Sir Humphrey Davy believes that occasionally food may be found. I have seen thousands opened preparatory to being salted, and I never observed any thing but this fluid and tape-worms. Another circumstance may be stated as a curious proof of health, as well as of the period of time the salmon has been resident in a river. When the fish leaves the sea, and of course is in its best condition, insects (the Lerneæ Salmoneæ of Linnæus) will be perceived firmly adhering to the skin. Immediately on entering the fresh water these insects begin to detach themselves from the salmon, and after a short time they gradually drop off and disappear.

LETTER XI.

Mullet—Preparations for Mullet-fishing—Seals—Anecdotes—The Red Dwarf—His Mode of killing Seals—Catching a Tartar—Pitching Mullet Nets—Excursion on the Island—Awild Guide—Coursing—Comparison between English and Irish Grayhounds—Take of Mullet—Return—Anecdotes of Mullet-fiishing—The Homicide.

Early this morning we received intelligence that a school* of mullet† had been seen on the preceding evening, working in a sandy bay some six miles distant from the lodge. We determined to devote the day to fishing. The household were soon upon the alert, and a galley and rowboat were laden with nets, poles, and spars; half a dozen rifles and muskets put on board, and with a stout and numerous crew, we started for the scene of action.

It was a bright and cheerful day; the sun sparkled on the blue water, which, unruffled by a breeze, rose and fell in the long and gentle undulations which roll in from the westward when the Atlantic is at rest. While pulling to the cove, we amused ourselves in shooting puffins as they passed us, or trying our rifles at a distant seal, while my kinsman's anecdotes whiled away the tedium of the voyage.

"Seals are very numerous on the coast, and at this season a number may be seen any warm day you make an excursion up the sound of Achil. We shoot them occasionally; the skin makes a waterproof covering, and the fat affords an excellent oil for many domestic purposes. It is difficult, however to secure the animal, for numbers are shot and few gotten. The head is the only place to strike them, for even when mortally wounded in the body they generally manage to escape. This fact we have ascertained, from finding them dead on shore many days after they had received the bullet. I shot one last autumn at the mouth of the river, and a fortnight afterward he was taken up in the neighbourhood of Dhuhill. There could be no doubt as to the identity of the creature, for

* Shoal. † Appendix, No. VIII.

on opening him to extract the oil, a rifle-ball such as I use, of the unusually small size of fifty-four to the pound, was lodged in his lungs. Unless when killed outright, they sink instantly; and I have seen the sea died with blood to an extent that proved how severely the seal had been wounded, but never could trace him farther.

"Formerly, when seal oil and skins were valuable, some persons on the coast made the pursuit of the animal a profession. There is one of these persons living near the sound, a miserable, dwarfish, red-bearded wretch, whom you would consider hardly equal to grapple with a salmon, and yet he secures more seals than any hunter in the district. His method of effecting it is singular; he uses neither gun nor spear, but kills the animal with a short bludgeon loaded at the end with lead.

"Adjacent to the seal-killer's residence there is a large rock, uncovered at half-tide, and this appears to be the most favourite haunt for the animal to bask upon. The rock is easily approached from the mainland, and on a sunny day, when the wind favours the attempt, the hunter, undressed and armed with his bludgeon, silently winds among the stones, and steals upon his sleeping prey. Wary as the creature generally is, the *Red Dwarf* seldom fails in surprising him, and with astonishing expertness generally despatches him with a single blow.

"The number he kills annually proves his extraordinary success. If the first blow fails, an event that seldom happens, the dwarf is in considerable danger. When attacked, and especially at such a distance from the water as renders his escape doubtful, the seal will turn with amazing ferocity on the assailant. If it be an old one, in case his first essay is unsuccessful, the dwarf declines the combat and flies from his irritated enemy; but the cubs are taken without much difficulty.

"Last summer I was witness to a curious scene; running through the Sound of Achil in my hooker, at a short distance from me, I observed several men, who appeared to be practising a quadrille over the thwarts and gunnels of a row-boat: they never rested for a moment but continued jumping from stem to stern, and springing from bench to bench. Struck by the oddity of their

proceedings, I eased away the sheets and ran down upon them; I was a welcome ally, as the result proved. It turned out that having espied a seal and her cub sleeping on the sand, they had procured an old musket and rowed over to attack them: they were partially successful, and seized the cub before it could regain its native element, although the dam rendered all assistance possible to relieve the young one. Having placed their prize in the boat, they were returning, followed by the old one, who kept rising beside them, attracted by the cries of the cub; after many bootless attempts, their gun at last exploded, the ball entered the seal's head, and for a moment she appeared dying. The captors, seizing her by the tail and fins, with a united exertion dragged her into the boat—but this exploit had nearly ended in a tragedy. Stunned only by the wound, the animal instantly recovered, and irritated by pain, and maddened by the cries of her cub, attacked her captors fiercely; every exertion they could make was necessary to save them from her tusks, and their oars were too long and clumsy to enable them to strike her with effect. I came most opportunely to the rescue, and by driving a carbine-bullet through the seal's brain, brought the battle to a close. Never was the old saw of 'catching a Tartar' more thoroughly exemplified; and though we laughed at their terror-stricken countenances, the deep incisions made in the oars and gunnels by the tusks of the enraged animal, showed that *gallopading* with an angry seal is any thing but pleasure."

Although the mullet are generally first seen here in the month of June, from the wetness of this summer the shoals are later in their appearance than usual. Mullet are taken in draught-nets like salmon, but on this coast a different mode of fishing is pursued. The shoals in hot weather run in with the tide, and after remaining on the shores and estuaries during flood, they return with the ebbing water. The following method we employed in our fishing to-day; being provided with a sufficient quantity of herring nets and a number of spars and poles, we selected at low water a sandy creek for our operations, and commenced erecting a line of poles across the entrance of the cove. The nets were then extended along

these uprights, and also secured firmly to the bottom of the spars; the lower part of the net is kept upon the bottom by a row of stones, and the remainder laid flat upon the sands. With the flowing tide the fish pass over the prostrate net, and run along the estuary; at high water the buoy ropes are raised and secured to the upright poles; with the assistance of a boat the whole is effected in a few minutes, and a network barrier effectually cuts off the retreat of all within. When the ebb of tide commences, the mullet begin to retire, and when they discover that their egress is obstructed, their attempts to effect a passage are both constant and curious—now running down the nets, trying for a broken mesh by which to force an aperture—now with a bold spring endeavouring to clear the buoy ropes, and, even after repeated failures, leaping at it again and again. The last effort is directed to the bottom, but there the heavy stones resist every attempt to dislodge them, and deserted by the treacherous water, the mullet are left upon the bare sands.

As hours must elapse from the time the nets are laid down until the fish can be secured, I left my kinsman, who officiated as chief engineer. Having brought two brace of grayhounds with us, I set out to course, under the guidance of a man who joined my cousin on the island.

There was a striking air about the stranger, joined to his wild and haggard look, that at once riveted my attention; his clothes were much better than those of any of the peasantry I had yet seen; and in address and manner he was far superior to the rest of my cousin's retainers; he was not above five-and-twenty, his figure tall, gaunt, sinewy, and almost fleshless,—but his square shoulders and well-knit joints proved him to be a powerful and active man. I shall never forget the singular expression of his countenance, it was settled sorrow bordering on despair; the hollow cheek, the sunken, rayless eye, the wandering and suspicious glance around him, all showed a mind fevered with apprehension and harrowed by remorse. He shunned observation, and if my eye met his by accident, he instantly looked another way. He was armed with a new carbine; and his whole bearing and

appearance were so singular and alarming, that more than once I wished my kinsman had allotted me some other guide.

My companion was shrewd and intelligent—appeared fond of field-sports, and perfectly conversant with the arcana of shooting and coursing. He enumerated with the science of a connoisseur, the points, and praised the beauty of a brace of English dogs I had brought with me; but told me "*the master's* (my kinsman's usual title) would outrun them *here*." I differed with him in opinion. Mine were of distinguished breeding,* the produce of a Swaffham sire, and compared with my cousin's, appeared descended from a giant-stock. His certainly were beautiful diminutives; but, as I conceived, very unequal to compete with animals of such superior strength and size as mine—but the result proved how correctly my wild companion judged.

Our first start was on hard, firm ground—and here my dogs outstripped my kinsman's, although they displayed uncommon fleetness. Being hard pressed, puss crossed a morass, and ran into an unsound bog. Then were my guide's predictions verified. From their own weight, my dogs sank and floundered in the swamp; while my cousin's topped the surface with apparent ease, and turned and killed the hare, while their larger companions were struggling through the mire.

On the second start puss left the moor, and took to the sea-shore, always the favourite run of island hares. Rushing headlong through rocks, and running over pointed pebbles, the English dogs were speedily disabled. But my cousin's, accustomed to the beach, ran with caution till they cleared the rocks, then taking advantage of the open strand, killed without a scratch, while my unpractised dogs were rendered unserviceable for a fortnight.

Generally speaking, the large and high-bred English greyhound is not adapted for Irish coursing. *There* he will encounter a soft and difficult surface, instead of the fine firm downs he has been accustomed to in his native country. And any plains on which he could exert his

* Appendix, No. IX.

powers, and prove his superiority, are, with few exceptions, in the possession of some pack, and of course preserved as hunting grounds, and greyhounds rigidly prohibited.

On returning to the estuary where I had left the fishing-party, I found the tide had fallen, and in a little time we were enabled to secure the spoil. We had enclosed upwards of a hundred mullets, weighing from four to ten pounds each. While embarking our nets and poles, I observed several boats filled with men row towards us from a distance; and, after a short reconnoissance, return to the place from whence they came. The evening breeze blew fresh, and in our favour; the boatmen hoisted a large square sail; my kinsman took the tiller, and with wind and tide along with us, in an hour we crossed the bay, and reached our destination, accompanied by the tall melancholy-looking man who had been my companion in the island.

We dined sumptuously. The flavour of a mullet, fresh from the water, neither injured by land-carriage* nor spoiled by exposure to the sun, is exquisite. I mentioned, casually, the noble addition which this delicious fish must give to my cousin's *cuisine*. "And they are so abundant, that I presume you seldom want them?" "The contrary is the case," he replied; "a remnant of barbarous usage prevents this wild population from benefiting by the ample supply which Providence sends to these shores. Did you remark several boats approach and reconnoitre us?"

"Yes, and what of it?"

"Nothing more, than that they came with the laudable design of relieving us of the produce of our fishery. The natives believe that there is a prescriptive right to rob mullet-nets; and in consequence, none will be at the

* The general length of the common mullet (*mugil*) is from twelve to eighteen inches. When used immediately after being taken, the fish is excellent; carriage, even for a short distance, injures it. Dr. Blotch recommends *oil and lemon-juice* to be used with it at table. Vinegar, with parsley and melted-butter is better—"probatum est."

This fish is sometimes preserved by salting; and from its spawn an inferior kind of caviar, called *Botargo*, is prepared, by using the common process of curing and drying.

trouble of laying them down, if they have not a sufficient party to protect the fish when taken. You remarked the formidable preparations made this morning; they were requisite, I assure you, or we should have returned home as lightly laden as we left it. Those people are not upon my territory, and I am on bad terms with their landlord. They would spoil me of fish without ceremony, and think themselves too indulgent in permitting me and my dependants to return with undamaged heads. Last year, they robbed and beat my boatmen cruelly; on the next occasion of a mullet *chasse*, I went in person. They soon discovered us, and with three boats full of men came to despoil us. I warned them off; but they were resolutely bent on mischief. Finding them determined, I let the leading boat approach within sixty yards, and having them well under my fire, threw in two barrels loaded with BB shot. The effect was decisive, and out of a dozen marauders who formed the crew, not one escaped without receiving a fair proportion of the charge. They put about instantly, and for a fortnight afterward, a country quack had full employment in extracting my double B. I sent a *message* to their master, for which he *benched* me; and it cost me a cool hundred before I got clear of the honourable justices. 'A plague upon all cowards!' as honest Jack says."

"But, Julius, who was that wild and melancholy man, to whose guidance you intrusted me in the island?"

"Oh, Hennessy, my foster-brother! Poor fellow, he has been rather unlucky!"

"Unlucky?"

"Why, yes—he hit a fellow a little too hard, and finished him. He is keeping close until the assizes are over, and then he will have time to settle with the friends. It would not signify a farthing if he had not been in two or three scrapes before."

"Has he been always riotous?"

"Oh, no, quite the contrary. When sober, he is the civilest creature on earth. No, poor fellow! they were only two homicides,* and an abduction."

* Appendix, No. X.

"And do you countenance and shelter such a character?"

"What! abandon my poor foster-brother for an accident or two?—Pshaw! Frank, you jest. I'll tell you the particulars another time."

It was late, and we separated.

LETTER XII.

Angling—Fish found in Mayo—Peasantry—Their Mode of Fishing The Pooka—Description and Use—Pike and Trout—Their Size Perch—Their Fecundity—Trout destroyed—Greater Lakes described—Subterraneous Communication between them—Lesser Lakes—Their Fish—Lake of Derreens—Its Trout extinct—Lake of Castlebar.

In a country whose surface is covered with numerous and extensive sheets of water like Mayo, it may be concluded that the angler will find ample occupation. Independently of salmon and trout-fishing, to those who will employ themselves in killing pike and perch, the lakes and rivers here offer superior amusement. In the greater waters, Lough Mask, Lough Carra, and Lough Conn, the coarser species of fish are taken in immense numbers, and in the lesser lakes many interesting varieties of the trout tribe will be found, from the little speckled samlet,* to the large and curious gillaroo.†

* The natural history of the samlet, or par, is very doubtful. Some assert it to be a mule produced by the salmon and trout, and as a corroboration of this theory, it is stated that the rivers where the par is found are always resorted to by salmon. Others conjecture it to be a hybrid of the sea and river trout; and Sir Humphrey Davy mentions, that fishing in October, in a small stream communicating with the Moy, near Ballina, he caught a number of sea-trout, who all proved males, and accordingly infers that "these fish, in which the spermatic system was fully developed, could only have impregnated the ova of the common river-trout."

The par differs from the small mountain-trout in colour, and in having additional spines in the pectoral fin. It has also certain olive-bluish marks upon the side, similar to impressions made by the pressure of a man's fingers.

Great numbers of samlet are found in the upper streams of the Ballycroy river. They will rise voraciously at a fly, provided it be gay and small enough. I remember my friend Sir Charles Cuyler and I amused ourselves on a blank shooting day, when there was neither a sufficiency of wind nor water to warrant salmon-fishing, in angling for this hybridous diminutive. We nearly filled our basket; we reckoned them, and they amounted to above two hundred.

† Pennant says:—"In all these lakes the gillaroo is found. It

It is true, that the scientific angler generally confines himself to the use of the fly; for salmon and trout, he will forego the commoner department of bait and float-fishing. Hence angling for pike and perch is usually an amusement of the peasantry; and to those contiguous to the banks of the large lakes it yields occupation for idle hours, which might be less innocently dissipated, and occasionally supplies their families with a welcome addition to their unvarying food, the potato.

Besides the established system of bait-fishing, other and more successful methods are resorted to by the lake-fishers. By mesh-nets immense numbers of pike are annually taken; and with night-lines, and a very simple contrivance, called the *pooka*,* these fish, with the largest trout and perch, are constantly killed.

This latter implement is formed of a piece of flat board, having a little mast and sail erected on it. Its use is to carry out the extremity of a long line, of considerable stoutness, to which, at regulated distances, an infinity of droppers or links are suspended, each armed with a hook and bait. Corks are affixed to the principal line or *back*, to keep it buoyant on the surface; and from a weather-shore, if there be a tolerable breeze, any quantity of hooks and baits can be floated easily across the water. The corks indicate to the fisherman when a fish is on the dropper, and in a small punt, or curragh, he at-

varies in weight from twelve to eighteen pounds, but sometimes reaches thirty;" and Daniel states these fish to be "esteemed for their fine flavour, which is supposed to exceed that of any other trout. Their make is similar to the common, except being thicker in proportion to their length, and of a redder hue both before and after being dressed. The gillaroo is remarkable for having a gizzard resembling that of a large fowl or turkey." He also says:—"It is usual to dress the gizzards only, which are considered as very favourite morsels."

* "Among other methods for taking the finny tribe common in this part of Scandinavia, the *Längref* was very generally adopted. This consisted of a line, running occasionally several miles in length, to which, at certain intervals, many hundreds of hooks were attached; and this, as it extended through such an immense expanse of water, was, as may readily be imagined, very destructive. I have known instances when the *Längref* has been provided with one thousand or twelve hundred hooks, and to have been eight or ten miles in length." —*Lloyd's Northern Sports.*

tends to remove the spoil and renew the baits when necessary. Two hundred hooks may be used on the same line, and the pooka at times affords much amusement, and often a well-filled pannier.

There are no waters in Great Britain, with the exception of the river Shannon,* where larger pikes† are caught than those taken in Loughs Mask and Corrib. It would appear that in these lakes the fish are commensurate to the waters they inhabit. It is no unusual event for pikes of thirty pounds' weight to be sent to their landlords by the tenants; and fish of even fifty pounds have not unfrequently been caught with nets and night-lines.‡ The trouts in those loughs are also immensely large. From five to fifteen pounds is no unusual size, and some have been found that reached the enormous weight of thirty. The perch tribe appear the smallest in the scale of relative proportion. These seldom exceed a herring size, but they too have exceptions, and perch of three or four pounds' weight have been sometimes seen. Within fifty years this latter fish has increased prodigiously, and in the lakes and rivers where they abound, trouts have been found to diminish in an equal ratio. If any doubt remained touching the fecundity of the perch, some of the Mayo waters would prove it satisfactorily. Half a century since, I have been assured that pike and perch were almost unknown in the rivers of Belcarra and Minola, and the chain of lakes with which they communicate, and that these waters were then second to none for trout-fishing. Within ten years, my cousin tells me that he often angled in them, and that he frequently killed from three to six dozen of beautiful middle-sized red trouts. Now, fly-fishing is

* "I never remember hearing, in an authentic shape, of a pike exceeding from thirty-five to forty pounds in weight. This a little surprised me, as I should have thought, from the great extent of many of the waters, those fish might have been much heavier."—*Lloyd's Northern Sports.*

† Appendix, No. XI.

‡ "Trimmers, or night-lines (sten-krok), were also in very general use; these, however, were always stationary; and the bait (a natural one) was affixed to the hook, by a rather curious contrivance, in such a manner, that whether alive or dead, it always remained in a swimming position."—*Lloyd's Northern Sports.*

seldom practised there. The trout is nearly extinct, and quantities of pike and perch infest every pool and stream. The simplest methods of taking fish will be here found successful, and the lakes of Westmeath will soon be rivalled by the loughs of Mayo.*

Of the greater western lakes, Conn and Carra belong to Mayo; Corrib to Galway; and Mask lies between both counties. The most northerly, Lough Conn, is about nine miles long by two or three in breadth. Part of its shores are beautifully wooded; and where the lower and upper lakes unite, the channel is crossed by a bridge of one arch, called the Pontoon; there the scenery is indeed magnificent.

Lough Carra is smaller than Conn: as a sheet of water nothing can be more beautiful—every thing that the painter delights to fancy may here be realized. Islands and peninsulas, with rich over-hanging woods, a boundless range of mountain masses in the distance, ruins in excellent keeping—all form a splendid study for the artist's pencil.

Mask communicates with Carra, and their united waters discharge themselves into Lough Corrib by a very curious subterraneous channel at Cong.† Lough Corrib is largest of all; it stretches twenty miles to its southern extremity at Galway, when, through a bold rocky river, it discharges its waters into the Atlantic. Its breadth is very variable, ranging from two to twelve miles. Besides its singular connexion with the Mayo lakes by the underground channel at Cong, Lough Corrib produces a rare species of muscle,‡ in which pearls are fre-

* Mr. Young mentions that, at Packenham, Lord Longford informed him respecting the quantities of fish in the lakes in his neighbourhood, that the perch were so numerous, that a child with a packthread and a crooked pin would catch enough in an hour for the daily use of a whole family, and that his lordship had seen five hundred children fishing at the same time; that, besides perch, the lakes produced pike five feet long, and trout of ten pounds' each.

† "At Cong, about five miles from Ballinrobe, is a subterranean cave, to which there is a descent of sixty-three steps, called the Pigeon-hole; at the bottom runs a clear stream, in which the trout are seen sporting in the water; these fish are never known to take a bait, but are caught with landing-nets."—*Daniel.*

‡ Appendix, No. XII.

quently discovered. Many of them are said to afford beautiful specimens of this valuable gem.

The smaller lakes, which are so profusely scattered over the surface of this county, vary in the species of fish which they respectively produce, as much as they do in their own natural size and character. Some of them afford trouts, others pike only, and many are stocked with both. That this union cannot long subsist, I should be inclined to infer from one remarkable circumstance, and it is a convincing proof of the rapid destruction which the introduction of pike into a trout-lake will occasion. Within a short distance of Castlebar there is a small bog-lake, called Derreens; ten years ago it was celebrated for its numerous and well-sized trouts. Accidentally pike effected a passage into the lough from the Minola River, and now the trouts are extinct, or, at least, none of them are caught or seen. Previous to the intrusion of the pikes, half a dozen trouts would be killed in an evening in Derreens, whose collective weight often amounted to twenty pounds.

Indeed, few of the Mayo waters are secure from the encroachments of the pike. The lakes of Castlebar, I believe, still retain their ancient character;* but I understand that pikes have been latterly taken in the Turlough River, and of course they will soon appear in a lake which directly communicates with this stream.†

* "In the lake of Castlebar, near that town, is the charr and the gillaroo trout, and it is remarked that there are no pike in this and some of the adjacent lakes."—*Daniel.*

† Appendix, No. XIII.

LETTER XIII.

Nineteenth of August—Preparations for the Mountains—Order of March—A Cook broiled to Death—Interruption of a Funeral—Drowned Shepherd—Grouse-shooting—Evening Compotation—Morning—Locale of a Shooter's Cabin—Life in the Mountains—The Red Deer—Return to the Hut—Luxury of a cold Bath.

The nineteenth of August, that busy day of preparation with Irish sportsmen, came at last. An unusual commotion was evident among my kinsman's household, and there was a wondrous packing up of camp-beds, culinary utensils, baskets and bottles, arms and ammunition—in short, of every necessary article for the support and destruction of life. At dawn of day, four horses set off heavily laden; shortly after, a second division of dogs and guns moved under a careful escort. The 'otter-hunter' hobbled off while I was dressing, and the piper, the lightest laden of all concerned, closed the rear. After breakfast, two ponies were brought to the door, and with a mounted attendant to carry our cloaks, my cousin and I pursued the same route that the baggage had already taken.

Talk not of India! Its boasted gang of servants is far surpassed by the eternal troop of followers appertaining to an Irish establishment. Old John tells me, that sixteen *regulars* sit down to dinner in the servants'-hall, and that, at least, an equal number of *supernumeraries* are daily provided for besides. When I hinted to my cousin the expense that must attend the supporting of this idle and useless multitude, his reply was so *Irish*. "Pshaw! hang it!—*sure they have no wages, and what the devil signifies all they eat?* My father, before the landing of the *Paul Jones*, fed two hundred men for a fortnight, and used to declare, that never were there such plentiful times. It killed the cook, however; poor woman! she was literally broiled into a pleurisy—such a wake as she had! I remember it as if it occurred but yesterday. She was

carried to the old grave-yard of *Bunmore* the very evening the *Paul Jones* landed her cargo; and although five hundred men left the house with the corpse, the cook remained over ground till the following morning, for want of sufficient persons to fill the grave. The fact was, that just as the funeral reached the churchyard, the lugger was suddenly discovered rounding the Black Rock. Instantly the mourners absconded—the bearers threw down the body—the priest, who was deeply concerned in the cargo, was the first to fly, and the defunct cook was left in peaceable possession of Bunmore."

To arrive at our mountain-quarters, we were obliged to cross the river repeatedly; when swollen with rain, the stream is impassable, and the communication between the hill country and the lowlands interrupted until the flood abates. At one of the fords, my kinsman pointed out a little *cairn*, or heap of stones, erected on the summit of a hillock, which overhung the passage we were crossing. It is placed there to commemorate the drowning of a shepherd—and as an incident of humble life, it struck me as being particularly affecting.

"In 1822, when the western part of Ireland was afflicted with a grievous famine, and when England stepped forward nobly, and poured forth her thousands to save those who were perishing for want, a depôt of provisions was established on the sea-coast for the relief of the suffering inhabitants of this remote district.

"A solitary family, who had been driven from their lowland home by the severity of a relentless *middle-man*, had settled themselves in this wild valley, and erected the clay walls of that ruined hut before you. The man was shepherd to a farmer who kept cattle on these mountains. Here, in this savage retreat, he lived removed from the world, for the nearest cabin to this spot is more than four miles distant.

"It may be supposed that the general distress afflicted this isolated family. The welcome news of the arrival of succours at Ballycroy at length reached them, and the herdsman set out to procure some of the *committee-meal* to relieve the hunger of his half-starved family.

"On arriving at the depôt, the stock of meal was nearly

expended; however, he obtained a temporary supply, and was comforted with the assurance that a large quantity was hourly expected.

"Anxious to bring the means of sustenance to his suffering little ones, the herdsman crossed the mountains with his precious burden, and reached that hillock where the stones are loosely piled.

"But during his absence at Ballycroy, the rain had fallen heavily in the hills; the river was no longer fordable—a furious torrent of discoloured water rushed from the heights, and choked up the narrow channel. *There* stood the returning parent, within twenty paces of his wretched but dearly-loved hovel. The children, with a cry of delight, rushed from the hut to the opposite bank to welcome him; but terrified at the fearful appearance of the flood, his wife entreated him not to attempt its passage for the present.

"But would he, a powerful and experienced swimmer, be deterred? The eager and hungry looks of his expecting family maddened the unhappy father. He threw aside his clothes, bound them with the meal upon his back—crossed himself devoutly, and "in the name of God," committed himself to the swollen river.

"For a moment he breasted the torrent gallantly—two strokes more would bring him to the bank—when the treacherous load turned, caught him round the neck, swept him down the stream, sank, and drowned him. He struggled hard for life. His wife and children followed the unhappy man as he was borne away—and their agonizing shrieks told him, poor wretch, that assistance from them was hopeless. At last, the body disappeared, and was taken up the following morning four miles from the fatal place. One curious circumstance attended this calamity; to philosophers I leave its elucidation, while I pledge myself for its accuracy in point of fact. A herd of cattle galloped madly down the river side at the time their unfortunate keeper was perishing—their bellowings were heard for miles, and they were discovered next morning, grouped around the body of the dead shepherd, in the corner of a sandy cove where the abated flood had left it."

Every one shoots grouse*—the operation is so commonplace that none but a cockney would find novelty in its detail. Our morning's sport was excellent. The dogs were in good working condition, and under perfect command; at noon the breeze died away, the weather became oppressively hot, and the biting of gnats and horse-flies intolerable. Not being exterminators, we ceased shooting at three o'clock, and returned to our cabin with *two-and-twenty* brace of birds.

The particulars of the evening's compotation I shall be excused in passing over. I must acknowledge that the portion of wine allotted to sportsmen by the *Author of Salmonia* was awfully exceeded. We anointed our faces with cold cream, which speedily removed the pain and inflammation consequent on the stinging we had endured from the insects, and after "blowing a comfortable cloud," went to bed and slept—but a man must exercise and carouse with a grouse-shooter, to conceive the deep and delicious repose which attends the sportsman's pillow.

* * * *

* Red game, goorcock, or moorcock. The length of this bird is fifteen inches, the weight about nineteen ounces. The bill is black, the eyes hazel; the nostrils shaded with small red and black feathers; at the base of the lower bill there is a white spot on each side: the throat is red; each eye is arched with a large naked spot, of a bright scarlet colour; the whole of the upper part of the body is beautifully mottled with deep red and black, which gives it the appearance of tortoise-shell; the breast and belly are of a purplish hue, crossed with small dusky lines; the tail consists of sixteen feathers, of equal lengths, the four middlemost barred with red, the others black; the quills are dusky; the legs are clothed with soft white feathers down to the claws, which are strong, and of a light colour. The female is somewhat less; the naked skin above each eye is not so conspicuous, and the colours of her plumage are much lighter in general than those of the male.

"This bird is found in great plenty in the wild, heathy, and mountainous tracts in the northern counties of England: it is likewise common in Wales, and in the Highlands of Scotland. Mr. Pennant supposes it to be peculiar to Britain; those found in the mountainous parts of France, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere, as mentioned by M. Buffon, are probably varieties of this kind, and no doubt would breed with it. It is to be wished that attempts were more frequently made to introduce a greater variety of these useful birds into this country."—*Bewick.*

This morning we were early astir. There was a mutual admission of slight headache, but coffee and fresh air will soon remove it. Having finished breakfast, and, in spite of Sir Humphrey's denunciations, fortified ourselves against damp feet with a glass of *Mareschino*, we left the cabin for the moors.

Never was there a wilder spot than the dell in which we have taken up our shooting quarters. It is a herdsman's hovel, to which my kinsman has added an apartment for his accommodation in the grousing season. This is our banquet-room and dormitory; a press in the corner contains our various drinkables, and upon a host of pegs, stuck into the interstices of the masonry, hang guns, and belts, and all the unmentionable apparatus of a sportsman. The cabin itself is appropriated to culinary purposes, and to the accommodation of our dogs and personal attendants. The quadrupeds are quartered in the farther extremity of the house, and after their fatigue luxuriate gloriously upon a fresh bed of sun-dried fern.

In a *calliogh** beside the fire, the keeper and old John, who officiates as cook, are deposited at night, while the otter-hunter and piper canton themselves in the opposite den; a detachment of *boys*, or irregulars, who have followed the *master* to the mountains, *bivouac* somewhere in the vicinity of the cabin. In a sod-walled sheeling, erected against a huge rock, the herdsman and his family have taken up their temporary residence, while we occupy the hut; but its limited dimensions would be quite unequal to shelter a moiety of our extensive train. While a mountain sheep hangs from "the couples"† of

* "Callioghs" are recesses built in the side-walls of an Irish cabin, convenient to the hearth, and sufficiently large to contain a bed. Some of them are quite open to the fire; while others are partially screened from view by a rude matting of bent or straw.

If you enter a peasant's hovel on a wet day, and inquire for the owner of the house, a strapping *boy* will generally roll out of one of these dark cribs, yawn, stretch his arms, scratch his head, and bid "your honour" welcome, and then inform you that he "was just *strichin'* on the bed."

† The couples are the principal timbers that support the roof; they are placed at stated distances, and an Irishman describes the size of a house by telling you it has so many "couples."

the cabin, and the whiskey-keg continues unexhausted, those worthies matter little in what cranny they ensconce themselves at night. To a late hour the piper is in requisition, and these careless devils dance, and laugh, and sing, until my cousin's mandate scatters them like ghosts at cock-crow; off they scamper, and where they bestow themselves till morning none but themselves can tell. Although the quantity of whiskey consumed here, in the short space of three days, appears almost incredible; yet upon these seasoned vessels its effects are so very transitory, as almost to authenticate the boasted virtues of the mountain-dew—"that there is not an aching head in a hogshead-full!"

* * * * * *

While traversing a low range of moors, an incident occurred which at this season was unaccountable. A red-and-white setter pointed at the top of a little glen. The heathy banks on both sides of a mountain rivulet undulated gently from the stream, and caused a dipping of the surface; the ground seemed a favourable haunt for grouse, and our dogs were beating it with care. Observing the setter drop, his companions backed, and remained steady, when suddenly Hero rose from his couchant attitude, and next moment a wild deer* of enormous size and splendid beauty crossed before the dog and sprang the birds he had been pointing. The apparition of the animal, so little expected, and so singularly and closley introduced to our view, occasioned a sensation I had never hitherto experienced. I rushed up the bank; unembarrassed by our presence, the noble deer swept past us in a light and graceful canter, at the short distance of some seventy or eighty yards. I might have fired at and annoyed him—but on a creature so powerful, small shot could have produced little effect, and none but a cockney, under such circumstances, would waste a charge. To teaze, without a chance of bringing down the gallant beast, would have been a species of useless mischief, meriting a full month upon the tread-mill. I gazed after him as he gradually increased his distance; his antlers were

* Appendix, No. XIV.

expanded as fully as my arms would extend; his height was magnificent, and compared with fallow-deer, he seemed a giant to a dwarf. The sun beamed upon his deep bay side, as he continued describing a circular course over the flat surface of the moor, till reaching a rocky opening leading to the upper hills, he plunged into the ravine, and we lost sight of him.

What could have driven the red deer so low upon the heath was marvellous. Excepting when disturbed by a solitary hunter, or a herdsman in pursuit of errant cattle, or driven from the summit of the hills by snow and storm, those deer are rarely seen below the Alpine heights they inhabit. But the leisure pace of the beautiful animal we saw to-day, proved that he had not been alarmed in his lair, and led one almost to fancy, that in freakish mood, he had abandoned his mountain home to take a passing glance at the men and things beneath him.

At five o'clock we left the moors and returned to our cabin. The day throughout had been propitious; the breeze tempered the heat which yesterday oppressed us, and our walk this morning had been only pleasant exercise. We were neither exhausted by an ardent sky, nor annoyed by the dazzling glare of constant sunshine. The gnats, which lately had been intolerable, had vanished, and we were thus enabled to perform our ablutions in the clear and sparkling river; a feat last night impracticable, from the number and virulence of the insects. He who has bathed his limbs in the cool and crystal waters of a mountain-stream after a busy day upon the heath, can only estimate its luxury. Fifteen brace of grouse, three hares, and a half-score of gray plovers,* were the produce of our *chasse*.

* "This (the plover) genus is distinguished by a large full eye; the bill is straight, short, and rather swollen towards the tip; the head is large; the legs are naked above the knee, and most of the species are without the hind toe.

"Although the plover has generally been classed with those birds whose business is wholly among waters, we cannot help considering the greater part of them as partaking entirely of the nature of land birds. Many of them breed upon our loftiest mountains, and though they are frequently seen upon the sea-coasts, feeding with birds of the water kind, yet it must be observed, that they are no more water

birds than many of our small birds, which repair thither for the same purpose. The long-legged plover, and the sanderling, are waders, and belong more immediately to the water birds, to which we refer them. The great plover and the lapwing we consider as entirely connected with birds of the plover kind: the former has usually been classed with the bustard, the latter with the sandpiper, but they differ very materially from both, and seem to agree in more essential points with this kind; we have, therefore, given them a place with the rest of the plovers; they may be considered as connecting the two great divisions of land and water birds, to both of which they are in some degree allied."—*Bewick.*

LETTER XIV.

Ball opens—Moonlight—Mountain Scenery—Old Antony—Adventure with the Fairies—Ball continues—The Otter-hunter's History—Ball concludes—The Patre-o-pee.

The moon rose in great splendour over the bold chain of mountains which belts the valley where we are cantoned. The piper is merrily at work, for some of the peasant girls have come to visit us, attracted by the joyful news that a *pieberagh** was included in our suite. The fondness of these mountain maidens for dancing is incredible; at times of festival, on the occasion of a wedding, or *dragging home*,† or whenever a travelling musician passes through these wilds, they assemble from prodigious distances, and dance for days and nights together.

My kinsman and I having duly executed a jig with a brace of Nora Crinas, left the hut, and strolled a short way up the river. The quiet of "lonely night" contrasted strikingly with the scene of turbulent and vivacious mirth we had but just quitted. A jutting bank suddenly shut the cabin from our view, and its lights and music ceased to be seen or heard. A deep unbroken silence reigned around. The moon's disc appeared of unusual size, as she rose in cloudless majesty over the mountain masses, which earlier in the evening had concealed her; not a cloud was in the sky, and the unequal outline of the hills displayed a fine picture of light and shadow. The stream was rippling at our feet, while, "tipped with silver," we traced its wanderings for miles, as the sparkling current was lost or seen among the moor-land.

* Hibernice—A piper.

† "Dragging home," is the bringing the bride for the first time to her husband's house. An immense mob of relatives and *clevines*, of "both the houses," are collected on the occasion, and as an awful quantity of whiskey must of necessity be distributed to the company, this "high solemnity" seldom concludes without subjecting the host's person and property to demolition.

Just then a human figure turned the rock abruptly, and the old otter-killer stood beside us. The rushing of the stream prevented us from noticing his approach. He had been examining his traps, and, as the way was rugged, he was delayed till now. The old man's appearance in this place, and at that hour, was picturesque. His dark dress, his long white hair falling down his shoulders, the seal-skin wallet, the fish-spear, and the rough terrier, his companion, all were in perfect keeping.

"Well, Antony, what sport?"

"Little to speak of, Master Julius; I suspect the trap wants oiling, for there was an otter's spraints* every place about it. I went to the lake yonder, and while the breeze kept up, the fish took well. I killed a dozen red trout."

"Did you meet any of the '*gentlefolk*,'† friend Antony? This is *just* the night that one would expect to find them *quadrilling* upon some green and mossy hillock."

The old man smiled and turned to me,—"Well, well, the master won't believe in them, but if he had seen them as I did—"

"And did you *really* see them?"

"God knows I tell you truth, sir." Then, resting himself on a rock, he thus continued:—

"It will be eleven years next month, I was hunting otters at Lough na Mucka;—the master knows the place; many a good grouse he shot beside it. I then had the two best *tarriers* beneath *the canopy;* this poor *crater* is their son," and he patted the dog's head affectionately. "Well, I had killed two well-sized cubs, when Badger, who had been working in the weeds, put out the largest bitch I ever saw: I fired at her, but she was too far from me, and away she went across the lough, and Badger and Venom after her. She rose at last, Badger gripped her, and down went dog and otter. They remained so long under water that I was greatly afraid the dog was drowned, but, after a while up came Badger. Though I was right glad to see my dog, I did not like to lose the

* Marks or traces left by the animal.
† Fairies.

beast, and I knew from the way that Badger's jaws were torn, that there had been a wicked struggle at the bottom.

Well, I encouraged the dog, and when he had got his breath again, he dived down nothing daunted, for he was the best *tarrier* ever poor man was master of. Long as he had been before at the bottom, he was twice longer now. The surface bubbled, the mud rose, and the water became black as ink; 'Ogh! murder,' said I, 'Badger, have I lost ye?' and I set-to clapping my hands for trouble, and Venom set up the howl, as if her heart was broke. When, blessed be the Maker of all! up comes Badger, with the otter gripped by the neck. The bitch swam over to help him, and I waded to the middle and speared and landed the beast. Well, when I examined her, she had her mouth full of *ould* roots and moss, for she had fastened on a stump at the bottom, and the poor dog was sorely put to to make her break her hold. I mind it well; I sold the skin in Galway, and got a gold guinea for it."

"Was that the night you met the fairies?"

"Stay, Master Julius; I'm coming to that. Well, three otters were a heavy load, and I had four long miles to travel before I could reach Morteein Crassagh's.* The master knows the house well. The night was getting dark, and it's the worst ground in Connaught. Well, I was within a mile of Morteein's when it became as black as pitch, and I had the shaking bog to cross, that you can hardly pass in daytime, where, if a man missed his way, he would be swallowed up in a moment. The rain began; the poor dogs were famished with cold and hunger.—God! I was sure I must stay there, starving, till the morning; when on a sudden, little lights danced before me, and showed me the hard tammocks as plain as if the sun was up. I was in a cruel fright; the dogs whimpered, and would not stir from my foot. I was afraid to stay where I was, as I knew the *gentlepeople* were about me, and I was unwilling to attempt the quagh,† for fear the light would leave me, and then I

* Martin with the rough face.
† A morass.

would get neither back nor forward. Well, the wind began to rise ; the rain grew worse ; I got desperate and resolved to speak to the fairies civilly. ' Gentlemen and ladies,' says I, making a bow to the place where the lights were dancing, ' maybe ye would be so obliging as to light me across the bog?' In a minute there was a blaze from end of the quagh to the other ; and an hundred lights were flashing over the bogs. I took heart and ventured, and wherever I put my foot, the place was as bright as day, and I crossed the swamp as safely as if I had been walking on a gravelled road. Every inch the light came with me, till I reached the *boreein** leading to Morteein Crassagh's. Then turning about, I made the fairies a low bow, ' Gentlemen and ladies,' says I, ' I'm humbly thankful for your civility, and I wish ye now a merry night of it.' God preserve us ! the words were hardly out, when there was a roar of laughter above, below, and around me. The lights vanished, and it became at once so dark, that I could scarcely make out my way. When I got fairly inside Morteein's kitchen, I fainted dead, and when I came to, I told them what had happened. Many a time fairy candles are seen at Lough na Mucka, but sorrow mortal was ever lighted across the quagh by the *gentle-people* but myself, and that the country knows. Well—the master is laughing at me ; but I'll hobble to the cabin, or they'll think that the *good-people* have carried me off at last, as they did Shamus Bollogh,† from Ballycroy."‡

Presently we returned to the hut ; the whiskey began to operate on the *corps-de-ballet* in the kitchen ; the pipes played louder, and the girls danced with additional *esprit*. To think of bed with such a company beside us, would be idle ; my cousin accordingly recharged his meerschaum, and between many a puff, gave me the following memoir of the otter-hunter.

" The old man is a character. In his earlier days he was a travelling pedlar, a dealer in furs and Conne-

* A horse path leading into bogs.
† James the Stutterer.
‡ Appendix, No. XV.

mara stockings. He had always an unconquerable fancy for angling and otter-killing; and with a pack upon his shoulders, and a fish-spear in his hand, he traversed the kingdom in the double pursuit of pleasure and profit.

"When he disposed of his merchandise, he returned home laden with the skins he had collected in his wanderings. He has frequently brought thirty furs together to Limerick for sale, and as they were then a valuable commodity, he acquired in a few years considerable property.

"In one of his excursions, however, Antony managed to pick up a wife. She was young and handsome, and, tiring of his unsettled life, persuaded the unhappy otter-killer to forego his favorite calling, and turn his fish-spear into a spigot. In short, he took a house in town, became a publican, got extensive business, gave credit, and soon was drunken and embarrassed; his wife flirted, his property melted away, and his frail rib at last levanted with an English showman. Antony was astounded, but he bore misfortune like a philosopher, renouncing whiskey, except in limited quantities, he resumed the otter-trap, which had been rusting in a garret, and one fine moonlight night, turned the key in the door, abandoned goods and chattels to the landlord, and disappeared, 'leaving his curse with Limerick.'

"No Bedouin returned from captivity to his parent's tent—no Swiss revisited his native valley with more delight, than the cornuted otter-killer when he hurried back to his beloved mountains. From that moment he foreswore the town; and excepting on his annual visit to the furrier, Antony has avoided the busier haunts of manknid. Having added bleeding to the number of his acquirements, he practised pharmacy in this wilderness, and for forty years led a careless migratory life, tolerated in the hall, and welcomed in the cabin, until increasing years and bodily infirmity confined him to his wild birthplace, where the otter can be trapped without fatigue, and the salmon will yet reward the old man's skill. The lodge is now Antony's head-quarters, and the remnant of his wandering life will probably be spent with me.

"But it is not as a hunter and leech that the ancient

otter-killer is only valuable. In his wanderings, he picked up tales and traditions among the wild people he consorted with; his memory is most tenacious, and he narrates strange legends, which in wildness and imagination rival the romances of the East. In winter, when the snow falls, and the fury of the storm is unloosed, Antony is settled in his rude but comfortable chair, formed of twisted bent. The women of my household listen to his love-stories with affected indifference, but there is always some apology for remaining near the otter-killer. At times, when the old man is summoned after dinner to receive his customary glass, I, if I be '*i' the humour*,' listen to his wild legends; and here, in this mountain-hut, seated in this room, 'mine own great chamber,' while I luxuriate over a bright bog-deal fire, an exquisite cigar, and an admixture of pure hollands with the crystal waters that fall from the rock behind us, I listen in voluptuous tranquillity to Antony's monotonous romances, as he recites to his attentive auditory in the kitchen his narratives of former times.

"If the otter-hunter's tales be true, the primitive gentlewoman of the Emerald Isle were no vestals, and the Judge of the Consistorial Court, had such then existed, would have had scarcely time to bless himself."

It was twelve o'clock, and no abatement of revelry was manifest among the dancers in the kitchen. The piper's music appeared inexhaustible, and, maugre fatigue and whiskey, the company were as fresh and effective as when the ball commenced. "I must route them," said my cousin; "the devils would dance till doomsday." He opened the door, but stopped, and beckoned me to approach. I looked out; the boys and girls had left the floor, the men settling themselves on *the colliaghs*, empty casks, and turf *cleaves*,* and the ladies being comfortably accommodated upon their partner's knees. One gentleman alone was standing. Presently two sticks were laid crosswise on the ground. The pipes struck up an unusual sort of a jig, and the feat commenced. "This," said my kinsman, "is called the '*pater-o-pee*,' and none but an accomplished dancer would attempt it."

* Anglice—Baskets.

To describe this dance would be impossible. It consisted of an eternal hopping into the small compartments formed by the crossing of the cudgels on the floor, without touching the sticks.

Now, holding reasonable doubts whether, upon Mr. Cooney presenting himself to Monsieur Laporte, this gentleman would favour him with an engagement, I'll bet the manager, notwithstanding *an hundred*, that in the strength of the King's Theatre, he has no *artiste* who will *touch* Tim Cooney at the *pater-o-pee*.

LETTER XV.

Moon looks suspicious—Heavy Fall of Rain—River flooded—Sporting Writers—Criticism on Hawker—Originality of the Colonel—His Outfit of a Wild-fowl Shooter—Samuel Singer and his gun.

When we took a last look from the window of our hut, before we retired to our respective mattrasses, there was a broad belt observable around the moon's disc, which is the well-known token of an approaching change of weather; and early this morning, the constant splashing from the roof told us that the rain was falling heavily. The river rose, and the flood thundered past the cabin, momentarily increasing by the frequent torrents from the high grounds. The gentle and sparkling stream, on whose moonlit banks I had been musing at midnight, had disappeared, and a fierce and turbulent body of discoloured water rushed through its swollen channel, bearing along huge portions of the banks which had yielded to its fury.

"We are fairly caught, Frank," said my kinsman;—"hemmed in by the stream, if life depended on it, we could not now communicate with the Lodge. Fortunately, the cabin roof is impervious to the water; and, thanks to the foresight of old John, I see the backgammon box has not been forgotten. Come, shall we have a hit; tie a fly; cut card-waddings; play écarté; or listen to one of Antony's amatory narratives, showing how a baron's lady left her liege lord for a black-eyed page, and how a holy monk proved in the end to be no better than he ought to be: and we have books too: shall we speculate and star-gaze with Sir Humphrey, or paddle in a punt with Hawker, after 'blue-billed curres,' 'dunbirds and divers,' 'Tommy Loos and Isle of Wight parsons.'"*

* Hawker, p. 177.

"Any thing for me but Colonel Thornton, for I am heart-sick of 'Mrs. T——' and 'red-legged partridges.'"

"I confess I would rather wade through the mud with honest Philip after all, than accompany the colonel in his researches for French estates, which he never had an intention to purchase. I own that Hawker is in many things exquisitely absurd, but he is amusing also, although in his adaptation of matter his work does not precisely exhibit the happiest specimen of good arrangement. See, for example, page 136;—here he recommends you to dine at one o'clock, 'not to snore away the evening in concert with your dog,' and admits that, 'if a man likes grog, he may finish the evening with a bucket-full;' assures you that soap and water is 'the sovereignest thing on earth' for soiled hands; and that kid gloves are sold by Mr. Painter, No. 27 Fleet-street; concluding with the following valuable recipe:—

"'If a person is extremely nervous from hearing the report of his gun, or from the noise of the rising game, let him prime his ears with cotton, and his inside with tincture of bark and sal volatile.'

"This fortification of the ears is, no doubt, an excellent precaution for a cockney, and certainly less hazardous than the aerial mode propounded by the colonel for killing rabbits.* To perch in a tree, I think, would be a sufficient punishment; and what assistance a dog would render in the branches is inconceivable."

"What say you to the association in one sentence of 'game, flies, rats, red-herrings, and corrosive sublimate?'† The information further, that mercury will kill bugs—and a nota bene, warning the king's subjects against poison; concluding with a valuable recipe for a *sauce piquant*, that would "tickle the gustatory nerves where fifty failed."‡

* "To shoot rabbits in the evening, *sit in a tree*, and by your being above them they are not likely to smell you, and will therefore play about close under the tree. Let your dead ones lie till you have done shooting, instead of spoiling your own sport by getting down for them. *For this work you must take no dog.*"—*Hawker.*

† Hawker, p. 240.

‡ Recipe for sauce to wild-fowl:—Port wine or claret one glass; sauce *à la Russe* (the older the better) one table-spoonful; ketchup

"The colonel, indeed, may fairly claim the palm for being as diffusive as successful. He opens up the mysteries of gun-making in one page, and in another gives you instructions for correcting sour beer—proves that publicans dilute spirits—damp sheets produce rheumatisms—and draughts of air bring on the tooth-ache. Gives you a recipe for making cold punch, 'which was given him some years ago in Glasgow,' where said cold punch was universally drank; and furnishes such information upon 'game-laws,' 'tartar emetic,' 'fleecy hosiery,' and 'tincture of bark,' as must astound the reader, and cause him to marvel at the astonishing capacity of the commander's cranium."

"All these are excellent in their way. The colonel, however, owns that he has borrowed much from others; but, for originality, take him upon dress, and listen to his equipment of a wild-fowl shooter.

"*Imprimis*—the nether extremities are to be thus garnished—'one *extra* pair of coarse yarn stockings; one ditto of the thickest *wads;* one ditto of under-stockings of the *warmest quality;* a pair of *water-proof boots*, and a ditto *Flushing trowsers.*'—The worthy colonel proceeds.

"'It is needless to say that (except the feet, which we have already defended) *every part of the body* should be clothed with *flannel.*

"'With regard to the further covering for the body, could we ensure not getting wet—*leather* would perhaps be *warmest;* but at all events, the waistcoat, both *before and behind*, should be made of *shag*, or *Bath coating*, which certainly, taking all weather, answers best, and is the most comfortable. *Under* the waistcoat should be worn a *Flushing frock*, and *over it* a *sort of jacket*, of either drab cloth or swan-skin. *The cap* may be made of the same (or any thing that has the same appearance), and, if cold, worn over a *Welsh wig*. Mr. Lloyd, 13 Old Bond-street, has invented an excellent, though

one ditto; lemon-juice one ditto; lemon-peel one slice; eschalot (large) one sliced; Cayenne pepper (the darkest, not that like brick-dust) four grains; mace one or two blades. To be scalded, strained, and added to the mere gravy which comes from the bird in roasting.

simple *defender for the chest* (which he calls an "Anglesey"), and a *large shawl* handkerchief may be worn over the collar. A pair of worsted *wristbands* (sold by the name of "muffatees") should be worn with *cloth gloves*, and over all, a large and long pair of *double swan-skin cuffs*.'

"But what signify all these flannels and flushings—shag and swan-skin—wads, water-boots, and Welsh wigs, to that immortal garment invented by one Larry Rogers, who calls it his '*sou' wester*,' 'and gets it all for nine shillings,' of which *loquitur* the colonel—

"Now to the point!—Make, with an article called Russia-duck (which, as well as swan-skin, should be previously wetted and dried, to prevent shrinking), a loose over-all frock-coat, and a hood, or cap, with a flap behind, similar to *a coal-heaver's hat*, and dress them as follows:—

"'Take three quarts of linseed oil, and boil them till reduced to two quarts and a half, the doing of which will require about three hours, and when the oil is sufficiently boiled, it will burn a feather. (The addition of some India-rubber was suggested to me, but of this I did not make a trial.) When the oil is quite cold, take a clean paint-brush, and work it well into the outside of the whole apparel, *and it will soon find its way to the inside*.'

"There is here a judicious and cautionary nota bene, requesting the operator *neither to burn himself nor the house*—with an admission that the savour of the garment is abominable. The colonel concludes, that with '*a very large old umbrella, fitted up with brown holland*—a bagful of straw, or something of this kind—*a pair of goggles*—and a sufficient supply of *Messrs. Fribourg's mixture*, the sportsman has all the necessary *covering* that can be required for *real* wild-fowl shooting!'

"Nothing, indeed, can exceed the author's ingenuity, from the construction of a *hare pocket*, to making *an old gun shoot straight*, and firing *two pounds of shot to the best advantage*. Not that I would, ambition being the operator in the latter exploit, and would rather leave the affair to 'one Samuel Singer, of Pool, who shoots with a gun, weight 141 lbs.!' Still the colonel is a merry

soul; and provided with his 'pocket-nightingale,' I wish we had him here. He should compound cold punch *ad libitum*, and receive the *ceade fealteagh* of our highland hut."

"Yes; Frank, I'll bet my new Purdey to a Queen Anne,* that he would have never used his friends as Sir Humphrey treated the unhappy philosophers whom he seduced into Scotland, and shabbed off with half a pint of claret in a rascally sheebein-house. No; Hawker is a worthy fellow; one who, as our lamented countryman Lord L—— told Abernethy, 'puts his trust in Providence, and takes a big drink.' By-the-way, I have often wondered that any honest gentleman having a Christian propensity for the bottle, would venture within arm's-length of that unjoyous and dispiriting doctor——And here comes dinner.

* "Queen Anne's muskets" are in great repute among the Irish peasantry, who assert that the barrels of these antiquated implements are excellent. The following curious notice of these guns is extracted from "An Appeal to the Public," by the unfortunate George Robert Fitzgerald.

"Informant was with his said master, and in the carriage with him, when the said George Robert Fitzgerald came up alone and unarmed, and peaceably and politely addressed his father, the said George Fitzgerald, who went home with his said son to Rockfield-lodge, and had he wished not to go with his said son, he might have refused going, he having in his carriage, in which informant was, *three bell-muzzled blunderbusses, loaded with swan-drops, and a small ditto, and also three Queen Anne's muskets with bayonets, loaded as aforesaid, and three fuzees, one of which was loaded, together with a small sword. Four powder-horns, all filled with gunpowder, one of which contained three pounds of gunpowder, besides several large bags of musket-balls, swan-drops and slugs*—and had the said George Fitzgerald, this informant's master, been disposed to make any opposition in going home with his said son to Rockfield-lodge, informant would have made use of said arms and ammunition in his said master's defence." Now we opine, that Colonel Hawker and his "new-double-swivel gun," with Sam Singer at his back, would scarcely hazard an engagement with this formidable vehicle.

LETTER XVI.

Flood subsides—Post-bag arrives—My Cousin's Henchmen—Their Description—Messenger belated in the Mountains—The Fairy Glen—Herd of Red-deer—Their Destruction by Poachers—Gradual Decrease—Difficulties in continuing them—Anecdotes—Rearing the Fawns—Sterility when domesticated—Red-deer in Parks—The tame Hind—The Tyrawly Stag—Skill requisite in shooting Deer—Curious Anecdote.

How rapidly the waters of a mountain river swell and subside! Last night the steep bank before the cabin door was scarcely visible above the swollen and discoloured stream. The flood is gone; the river has recovered its silvery hue, and no traces of yesterday's violence appear, save the huge masses of turf left by the receding waters on the shore, which, from their size, prove how fierce the torrent was when at its height.

We have been expecting a messenger with the post-bag. Three days have elapsed since its last arrival. There will be an accumulation of newspapers. What a treasure they would have been yesterday! Ha! there is a bustle in the outer cabin; no doubt an arrival. It is the messenger.

I never saw finer samples of the mountain peasantry than this man and his brother exhibit. They are scarcely to be known asunder; young, particularly handsome, five feet eleven inches, light, active, clean-limbed, perfect specimens of strength and symmetry combined; good-humoured, indefatigable, and obliging, submissive to *the master's* nod, and yet the boldest and *handiest* boys in Ballycroy. I sometimes look after my kinsman as he strides over the moors with his handsome *henchmen* at his back. He walks as if the province was his own; bold, and careless, and confident—no wonder—those wild fellows are his *fosterers*, and they would shed the last drop of their blood for "the master," if he required it.

This fidelity and devotion on the one side is requited by kindness and protection on the other. These men

have lived about the Lodge from boyhood; they come and depart as they please. At spring and harvest-times they repair to the village where their parents reside, to assist the old couple and *the girls*, in getting the potatoes in and out of ground—they tend the cattle in the mountains when requisite, and pass the remainder of the year following *the master* to the moors, or to the river, catching fish, netting rabbits, or killing wild-fowl in the winter; and dancing, drinking, and fighting on holidays and festivals, as becomes good men and loyal subjects.

When they marry—for Malthus and restrictions upon population are no more recognised in Erris than the pope is by a modern Methodist—they will obtain a patch of mountain from their patron, erect a cabin, construct a still, and setting political dogmas at defiance, then and there produce most excellent whiskey, and add to "the seven millions" considerably.

The messenger presented himself with the post-bag, being anxious to render a personal account of the causes of his delay. His night's adventure is quite characteristic of the wild life and bold and reckless spirit of these mountain peasants.

The route to the next post-town lies through the ridge of hills which I have already described as bounding the valley where we are quartered. The usual way to reach it is by an old and rugged horse-path, which, although seldom frequented now, was fifty years since the only means of communication which Erris had with the southern baronies. This easier, but more circuitous route was abandoned by the young peasant, who hoped, by directly crossing the heights, to arrive at the cabin before the night shut in. He took this perilous direction accordingly; the rain was still falling fast, and when he topped the ridge of the hills, the valley beneath was covered by a dense mist; presently the mountain streams rose, and the light failed; to advance or retreat was impossible,—and the isolated peasant had no choice left but to seek a shelter in the rocks, and remain there until morning dawned. He easily discovered a fissure in the steep bank above the river, crept in—"*blessed himself*"—and lay down to sleep upon his cold and rugged bed.

What situation could be more desolate and heart-sinking than this? Imprisoned among savage mountains, perched in a wild rock far above the rest of mankind, separated from human help by an impassable torrent, cold, hungry, and exhausted—yet all these dejecting circumstances were unheeded by the hardy mountaineer. He had but one source of terror—the otter-hunter had often described this glen as a favourite haunt of fairies—and "what would become of him if the *gentle people* caught him there?"

The midnight hour passed, however, without any supernatural visitation; no fairy revelry disturbed the peasant's slumbers; the rain ceased; the flood was falling; the chough* and raven were preparing to take wing; and while the first faint light was breaking through the mountain mists, Cormac, anxious to quit his cheerless *bivouac*, crawled out from his cold retreat.

Suddenly, from above, an indistinct noise alarmed him. Feet clattered down the rocky path; a rush, a snorting, announced their near approach, and a herd of deer appeared within half a stone's cast. They traversed the narrow track in single files, and were moving rapidly down the mountain side to browze in the glen beneath.

When the leading stag discovered the startled peasant, he halted, tossed his antlers wildly, and gave a loud and peculiar neigh. The pause, though momentary, permitted the rear to come up: the herd were clustered in a

* Cornish chough, or red-legged crow. (*Corvus Gracilis*, Linn.—*Le Coracias*, Buff.) This bird is about the size of the jackdaw. The bill is long, curved, sharp at the tip, and of a bright red colour; the iris of the eye is composed of two circles, the outer one red, the inner one blue; the eyelids are red; the plumage is altogether of a purplish-violet black; the legs are as red as the bill; the claws are large, hooked, and black.

Buffon describes the bird "as of an elegant figure, lively, restless, and turbulent, but it may be tamed to a certain degree." It builds on high cliffs, by the sea-side, and chiefly frequents the coasts of Devonshire and Cornwall, and likewise many parts of Wales: a few are found on the Dover cliffs, and some in Scotland. The female lays four or five white eggs, spotted with yellow. It is a voracious, bold, and greedy bird, and feeds on insects and berries; it is said to be particularly fond of the juniper-berry. Its manners are like those of a jackdaw. It is attracted by glittering objects. Buffon says that it has been known to pull from the fire lighted pieces of wood, to the no small danger of the house.—*Bewick*.

group; the panic lasted but an instant; they turned round, and with amazing speed, rushed up the hill, regained the heights, and were lost in the thick mist. Cormac could not reckon them accurately, but imagined their number to be about sixteen.

It is seldom, now, that the red-deer are seen in herds. Within late years they have diminished sadly, and unless vigorous means are promptly adopted to prevent their destruction by poachers, like their ancient enemy, the rough Irish grayhound, they *too* will become extinct. My cousin, when a boy, has often met forty deer herded together; but, from their decreased numbers, one rarely sees now more than a few brace. Since the French descent upon this coast in ninety-eight, their destruction has been rapid: unfortunately, many of the firearms then distributed among the peasantry remain in their possession, and in the winter months, when the severity of the season forces the deer to leave the hills and seek food and shelter in the valleys, idle ruffians, too well acquainted with the passes of the mountains, take that opportunity to surprise and slaughter them.

There are many circumstances connected with this scarce and beautiful species, that should render their preservation a matter of national interest. They are the last relic of other times. The once-famed stock which tenanted the Irish forests have disappeared. The wolf, the moors-deer, the grayhound,* exist no longer; and this noble creature is the sole remnant of her aboriginal animals, when Ireland was in her wild and independent condition.

Individual exertions to continue the red-deer are found to be of little use. They seldom breed when deprived of liberty and restricted to the enclosures of a park. If they do, the offspring degenerates, and the produce is very inferior in size to what it would have been had the animal remained in its state of natural freedom. Even when taken young in the mountains, to rear the fawns is a difficult and uncertain task. My cousin has for many seasons made the attempt, and generally failed three

* Appendix, No. XVI.

times for once that he succeeded. Last year one young deer that he procured throve well and grew apace until he was sufficiently stout to go out and graze with the cows. Unfortunately, a visiter brought a savage-tempered grayhound to the Lodge, the dog attacked the fawn, and it died of the worrying it received, before the grayhound could be taken off.

It is almost impossible to procure the fawns from the mountains in an uninjured state. They generally receive a blow of a stick or stone from the captor, or undergo such rough usage in conveying them to the low lands, that death commonly ensues. A fine well-grown male was brought to the Lodge last week. For a day or two nothing could be more promising than its appearance. It began, however, on the fourth morning to pine away, and soon after died. We opened it to ascertain, if possible, the cause of its death, and discovered a gangrened wound on the side, evidently produced by a blow. The peasant who brought him declared that he was sound and uninjured; and to account for his caption swore lustily that he *caught the fawn asleep*, but it appeared that the rogue had knocked the poor animal over with a stone, and thus produced the inward bruise, which terminated fatally.

It is strange that a creature of such strength and endurance when arrived at maturity, should be so very difficult to bring up. Means were resorted to by my kinsman to have the cow's assimilated to the wild deer's milk, by changing the fawn's nurse to a heathier and poorer pasturage; a lichen, indigenous to the mountains on which the deer principally feeds, was also procured, and intermixed with the cow's hay, and yet this attention and trouble were attended with but indifferent success.

When once, however, the period of infancy is passed, the wild deer is hardy, vigorous, and easily provided for. At different times, many have been located in the neighbouring parks, and lived there to a great age. In the domain of a nobleman in Roscommon, there are several brace; and in the park of Clogher, a stag and hind are confined at present—they are all vigorous and healthy, but have never continued their species.

Many curious anecdotes are recorded of the red-deer. Some years since, a hind was domesticated by a neighbouring baronet; it was a fine and playful animal, and gave many proofs of extraordinary sagacity. Like many fairer favourites, she was a very troublesome one, and from her cunning and activity a sad torment to the gardener. No fences would exclude her from the shrubberies, and if the garden-gates were for a moment insecure, the hind was sure to discover the neglect, and avail herself of an opportunity to taste the choicest vegetables. This beautiful but mischievous pet met with some accidental injury, and died, to the great regret of her proprietor.

Many years ago, a stag was in the possession of a gentleman of Tyrawly. He grew to be a powerful and splendid beast, but his propensities and dispositions were very different to those of the playful and innocent hind.

The stag was bold and violent, detested strangers and women, and from his enormous size and strength, was frequently a very dangerous playfellow. He had a particular fancy for horses—resided mostly in the stable, and when the carriage was ordered to the door, if permitted, he would accompany it. A curious anecdote is told of him. He had no objection whatever to allow a gentleman to enter the coach; but to the fair sex he had an unconquerable aversion, and with his consent, no lady should be inside passenger. The servants were obliged to drive him away before their mistress could venture to appear; and at last he became so troublesome and unsafe, as to render his banishment to an adjoining deer park the necessary punishment of his indocility. He did not survive this disgrace long; he pined away rapidly, avoided the fallow-deer, and died, as my informant declared, of a broken-heart.

In killing deer, it is necessary to select the head, or aim directly behind the shoulder. A body-wound may eventually destroy the animal, but the chances are that he will carry off the ball. Many, when severely struck, escape the shooter, and there have been stags killed in these mountains, who bore the marks of severe wounds, from the effects of which they have entirely recovered. The following singular and authenticated instance of a bullet

lodging in what is usually considered a mortal place, and failing to occasion death, is extracted from a scientific periodical.*

"A buck, that was remarkably fat and healthy in condition, in August, 1816, was killed in Bradbury Park, and on opening him, it was discovered, that at some distant time he had been shot in the heart, a ball being found in a cyst in the substance of that viscus, about two inches from the apex. The surface of the cyst had a whitish appearance; the ball weighs two hundred and ninety grains, and was quite flat. Mr. Richardson, the park-keeper, who opened the animal, is of opinion the ball had struck some hard substance before entering the body of the deer. That the animal should subsist long after receiving this ball, is endeavoured to be accounted for from the instance of a soldier who survived forty-nine hours after receiving a bayonet wound in the heart; however, the recovery from a gun-shot wound in an animal inferior to man can in no respect materially alter the importance of the fact, and of the great extent to which this vital organ may sustain an injury from external violence."

* The Edinburgh Medical Journal.

CHAPTER XVII.

An Alarm—Deceptive Appearance of the Weather—A blank Fishing-day—Recovery of the Setter--Hydrophobia—Melancholy Anecdote—Loss of a Kennel—Strange Apathy of Irish Servants—Extraordinary Preservation.

A CIRCUMSTANCE to-day has given us considerable uneasiness; one of our best setters, who had been observed to look rather dull yesterday, has refused his food, and continues listless of what is passing around him. He was a sprightly, active-minded dog, and this torpidness is alarming. We promptly separated him from his companions, and chained him in an adjoining cabin, under the especial observation of old Antony. The otter-killer is preparing to use his leechcraft, and I trust with good effect. Canine madness is a frightful visitation, and no caution can be too strict to guard against its melancholy consequences.

Who shall say that success in angling can be calculated upon with any thing like certainty? If a man were gifted with the properties of a walking barometer, the weather of this most capricious corner of the earth would set his prognostics at defiance. Never did a morning look more favourable; it was just such a one as an angler would swear by; a gray, dark, sober, settled sky, without any vexatious glare of threatening sunshine to interrupt his sport. The otter-killer was not so sanguine of this happy promise of good weather as we were. He observed certain little clouds, to which he gave some Irish name. "The wind, too, had shifted a point southerly since daybreak, and the pinkeens* were jumping, as they always jump when they expect more water." We laughed at him; but Antony was right.

We tried some beautiful pools; the fish were rising fast—they sprang over the surface of the water fre-

* The usual name among the peasantry for samlets and trout fry.

quently, and no worse omen can threaten the fisherman with disappointment. If they did condescend to notice our flies, they rose as if they wished merely to reconnoitre them, or struck at them scornfully with their tails.

Still hoping that a change in the temper of the fish—for a lady is not more fanciful—might yet crown our efforts with success, we proceeded down the river and pushed on for Pullgarrow. To angle here with the water clean and full, and the wind brisk and westward, would almost repay a pilgrimage. For its extent, there is not a better salmon haunt in Christendom. The fish were rising in dozens, and where the river rushes into the neck of the pool, the constant breaking of the surface, by the rolling or springing of the salmon, was incredible. The number of fish collected in this pool must have been immense, for in every part of it they were rising simultaneously. *But not one of them would touch the fly.* I hooked a salmon accidentally in the side, and after a short and violent struggle the hook broke and I lost him. The mode of fishing attributed by Sir Humphrey Davy to the Galway fishermen* must be as unprofitable as *unartistlike.* If ever it could avail, we should have succeeded to-day in Pullgarrow.

Meanwhile the breeze gradually died away, or came in gusts from the south; the sky in the same quarter grew thick and misty; large drops fell, and in a short time the rain came down in torrents. The reason why the salmon had declined our flies was now disclosed: although we had not foreseen the coming change, the fish had evidently expected it. Wearied and drenched, we returned to our shooting-quarters. But we speedily forgot our fatigue

* "In the river at Galway, in Ireland, I have seen above the bridge some hundreds of salmon lying in rapid streams, and from five to ten fishermen tempting them with every variety of fly, but in vain. After a fish has been thrown over a few times, and risen once or twice and refused the fly, he rarely ever took any notice of it again in that place."*a*

* * * * * * *

"When the water is low and clear in this river, the Galway fishermen resort to the practice of fishing with a naked hook, endeavouring to entangle it in the body of the fish; a most unartistlike practice."—*Salmonia.*

a Appendix, No. XVII.

and disappointment. Antony's report of the health of his canine patient was satisfactory. The animal's stomach had been disordered, and the otter-hunter's remedies were promptly administered and successful. My cousin has a dread of madness breaking out in his kennel; and from his melancholy experience of the fearful consequences of neglect, I do not marvel that on the first symptom of loss of appetite or abated spirits, he forthwith causes the suspected dog to be removed, and places him under a strict *surveillance.*

Our conversation after dinner naturally turned upon the indisposition of the setter.—"You may think, my dear Frank," said my cousin, "that I carry my apprehensions of the slightest illness in my dogs to a ridiculous and unnecessary length; but when I tell you that I have witnessed the fatal course of hydrophobia in the human as well as the brute victim, you may then conceive the horror I feel when any thing recalls to my memory this desperate and hopeless malady.

"During my first season at the Dublin University, I was invited to pass a short vacation with a relative of my mother. He lived in the south of Ireland, in an ancient family mansion-house, situated in the mountains, and at a considerable distance from the mail-coach road.

"This gentleman was many years older than I. He had an only sister, a girl of sixteen, beautiful and accomplished; at the period of my visit she was still at school, but was to finally leave it, as my host informed me, at Midsummer.

"Never was there a more perfect specimen of primitive Milesian life, than that which the domicile of my worthy relative exhibited. The house was enormously large—half ruinous—and all, within and without, wild, rackety, and irregular. There was a troop of idle and slatternly servants of both sexes, distracting every department of the establishment; and a pack of useless dogs infesting the premises, and crossing you at every turn. Between the biped and quadruped nuisances an eternal war was carried on, and not an hour of the day elapsed, but a canine outcry announced that some of

those unhappy curs were being ejected by the butler, or pelted by the cook.

"So commonplace was this everlasting uproar, that after a few days I almost ceased to notice it. I was dressing for dinner, when the noise of dogs quarrelling in the yard brought me to the window; a terrier was being worried by a rough savage-looking fox-hound, whom I had before this noticed and avoided. At the moment, my host was crossing from the stable; he struck the hound with his whip, but regardless of the blow, he still continued his attack upon the smaller dog. The old butler, in coming from the garden, observed the dogs fighting, and stopped to assist in separating them. Just then, the brute quitted the terrier, seized the master by the leg, and cut the servant in the hand. A groom rushed out on hearing the uproar, struck the prongs of a pitchfork through the dog's body, and killed him on the spot. This scene occurred in less time than I have taken in relating it.

"I hastened from my dressing-room; my host had bared his leg, and was washing the wound, which was a jagged tear from the hound's tooth. Part of the skin was loose, and a sudden thought appeared to strike him—he desired an iron to be heated, took a sharp penknife from his pocket, coolly and effectually removed the ragged flesh, and, regardless of the agony it occasioned, with amazing determination cauterized the wound severely.*

"The old butler, however, contented himself with binding up his bleeding hand. He endeavoured to dissuade his master from undergoing what he considered to be unnecessary pain. '*The dog was dead, sure, and that was quite sufficient to prevent any danger arising from the bite;*' and satisfied with this precaution, he remained indifferent to future consequences, and in perfect confidence that no ulterior injury could occur from the wound.

"Three months passed away—my friend's sister was returning from school; and as the mountain road was in bad repair, and a bridge had been swept away by the floods, saddle-horses were sent to meet the carriage,

* Appendix, No. XVIII.

The old butler, who had some private affairs to transact in the neighbouring town, volunteered to be the escort of his young mistress, and obtained permission.

"That there was something unusual in the look and manner of her attendant, was quickly remarked by the lady. His address was wild and hurried, and some extraordinary feelings appeared to agitate him. To an inquiry if he was unwell, he returned a vague unmeaning answer; he trembled violently when assisting her on horseback, and it was evident that some strange and fearful sensations disturbed him.

"They rode some miles rapidly, until they reached the rivulet where the bridge had been carried off by the flood. To cross the stream was no way difficult, as the water barely covered the horse's fetlock. The lady had ridden through the water, when a thrilling cry of indescribable agony from her attendant arrested her. Her servant was on the opposite side endeavouring to rein in his unwilling horse, and in his face there was a horrible and convulsive look that terrified his alarmed mistress. To her anxious questions, he only replied by groans, which too truly betrayed his sufferings; at last, he pointed to the stream before him, and exclaimed, '*I cannot, dare not cross it! Oh God! I am lost! the dog—the dog!*'

"What situation could be more frightful than that in which the lady found herself? In the centre of a desolate and unpeopled moor, far from assistance, and left alone with a person afflicted with decided madness. She might, it is true, have abandoned him, for the terrors of the poor wretch would have prevented him from crossing the rivulet; but with extraordinary courage she returned, seized the bridle fearlessly, and notwithstanding the outcries of the unhappy man, forced his horse through the water, and never left his side, until she fortunately overtook some tenants of her brother returning from a neighbouring fair.

"I arrived on a visit the third evening after this occurrence, and the recollection of that poor old man's sufferings has ever since haunted my memory. All that medical skill and affectionate attention on his master's part could do to assuage his pain, and mitigate the agonies he

occasionally underwent, was done. At length the moment that was devoutly prayed for came. He died on the sixth morning.

"From this horrible fate nothing but his own determination preserved my relative: and by the timely use of a painful remedy, *excision and cautery of the wound*, he escaped this dreadful disease.

"I have related the calamity of another--but I, too, have been a sufferer; although, thank God! not in person.

"A setter of uncommon beauty was presented to me, by a gentleman, under peculiar circumstances. He had been the favourite companion of his deceased wife, and during her long and hopeless illness had seldom left her chamber. He begged me to allow him a place in the Lodge, and not subject him to the restraint of the kennel. His wishes were obeyed, and Carlo was duly installed into all the rights and privileges of a carpet-dog.

"I left home on a shooting visit, and luckily brought a brace of my best setters with me. A week after my departure an express reached me to say that Carlo was 'very odd, would not eat,* and bit and worried every dog he met with.' I took alarm instantly, and returned home without delay. Carlo was confined in a separate out-house, but not until he had worried and torn every dog in my possession!

"I went to reconnoitre him through an iron-staunchioned window; he was in the last and most frightful stage of confirmed hydrophobia. I sent for a rifle and terminated the animal's life.

"I was at first afraid to inquire into the extent of my calamity. I mustered courage to enter the kennel, and personally investigated the state of my dogs. Every one of them, ten in number had been bitten, and several of them were fearfully mutilated by the rabid animal I had despatched. Even the terriers had not escaped, and they, poor animals! were necessarily included in the general order for execution, that I issued to the keeper. That noble house-dog, who has been the subject of your admiration, was fortunately preserved by having been sent for by a gentleman who resided in the next county.

* Appendix, No. XIX

"A most extraordinary insensibility to danger was evinced by the female members of my household. Unluckily, Antony was absent in the mountains setting a broken bone; the keeper had accompanied me; every one acquainted with the habits and management of dogs was from home; and the kennel was intrusted to the kitchen-boy. On this occasion the disease appears to have come on gradually, and for days the setter betrayed the customary signs of incipient madness. Had he been tied up even when the malady was fully established, no mischief might have resulted. But until his violence became frightful, he was actually permitted to run about the house, and got access to the kennel while the boy was carrying food to his charge.

"The escape of the servants was miraculous. The day only before my arrival, the dog, in a paroxysm of suffering, had thrown himself across the fire-place. 'Come away from that, Biddy,' said the old cook, with perfect *nonchalance*, to her attendant: '*Don't you see the dog is mad?*' and continued some culinary operation, in which, at a distant corner of the kitchen, she was engaged. The boy's preservation was unaccountable. The poor lad made many unavailing efforts to part the dogs when fighting in the kennel, and prevent the setters from being bitten. In this perilous attempt his clothes were literally torn to ribands, but fortunately for himself there was not a scratch visible on his skin."

LETTER XVIII.

Preparations for visiting Achil—Embarkation and Passage to Dugurth—Fishing—Sea-fowl Shooting—Meeting the Lugger—Picturesque Appearance of the Vessel—Our Landing—Coast-guard Watch-house—Slieve More—Grouse Scarce—Rabbit-shooting—Interior of the Watch-house—Culinary Proceedings—The Dutchman—Morning, and a Head-ache—A Sea-bath—The Eagle's Eyrie—Curious Anecdote of these Birds—Grouse-shooting—Demolition of a Pack—Rock-fishing—Dangerous Employment—Fatal Accident—John Dory—A temperate Evening.

For three days it has continued raining and blowing violently. We fortunately abandoned the mountain-hut, on noticing the unpromising aspect of the weather, before the flood rose to a height that would have insulated us in the hills. We have determined on an excursion into Achil, and wait impatiently until the wind and clouds give some indications of amendment. The moon enters her second quarter to-night, and we trust her ladyship's influence may mitigate the unusual severity of the weather.

This morning my servant's report was favourable; the sky looked settled, the wind blew from the north-west, and old Antony was satisfied with the prognostics. My cousin was already a-foot, and his voice at my window loudly summoned me to "turn-out." I opened the curtains—the sun was shining, as if he intended to keep a fair face throughout the day, and there was a cheerful bustle in front of the Lodge which gave "note of preparation." The mainsail of the hooker was already *chalk up*, and shivering in the morning breeze; and the boatmen, sitting on the grass before the window, were preparing lines, and baiting spillets. The piper looked on, stretching one arm lazily out, while with the other he hitched up the waistband of his *unmentionables;* and frequent visits of the dog-boy to the kennel, showed that both bipeds and quadrupeds would be shortly in requisition. Hammocks, hampers, and gun-cases were subse-

quently embarked, and about eight o'clock we had finished our *dejeuné*, and committed our persons and fortunes to the waves.

Never was there a lovelier day or wilder scenery; after we had cleared the river, and opened the bay, a view of surpassing grandeur was presented. We were surrounded on every side by an amphitheatre of bold and endless hills, except where the opening to the Atlantic showed us the dark waters of a boundless ocean. The surface was clear and undisturbed. The light breeze rippled the long and measured undulations from the sea, and bore us gently towards the island. The bay was filled with mackerel, and consequently it was crowded with sea-fowl. In clamorous groups the gulls were darting on the fish below, and an endless variety of puffins and cormorants were incessant in pursuit of the smaller fry, which had attracted the shoals of mackerel from the deep. The wind was too scanty, and the kooker's sailing not sufficiently fast to allow us to kill fish in any quantity. We occasionally, however, caught a mackerel, and shot, among a number of water-fowls, a beautiful specimen of the sea-hawk, which I shall endeavour to preserve.*

We were gradually nearing Dugurth, which is the only spot on which, for many miles, a boat, even in moderate weather, can safely effect a landing, when a galley stood out of Elly Bay and bore down upon us. Our courses nearly crossed: they were running off the wind, we as close-hauled as possible. Nothing could be more picturesque than the light and elegant appearance of this "fairy frigate." At a little distance, she seemed a cloud of canvass flitting across the sea; for the long low hull was not visible until her close approach revealed it. Her large lugs and top-sails were of the whitest duck, and as all her sails *drew*, light as the breeze was, she passed us with the velocity of a race-horse. The airy motion of this "light shallop" as she glided through the water, might, to the fancy of a poet, present a similitude of that imaginary bark, in which the spirits of departed mariners

* Appendix, No. XX.

are seen flitting over the dark billows beneath which their bodies rest.

Having weathered the Ridge Point, we made a signal for a rowing-boat, and one immediately came off. Our boatmen, having ascertained by their landmarks that they were upon clean ground, prepared to shoot their spillets. We left them, taking with us our dogs and attendants, and landed on a small sandy beach.

Having established our head-quarters in the watch-house of the coast-guard, and procured an adjoining cabin for the suite, we set out to look for grouse, taking a westerly direction along the base of Slieve More. Deceived by the false report of the villagers, we found the beat we had chosen neither a pleasant or productive one. The heath was short and withered; the side of the mountain unsheltered, and exposed to the severe and almost eternal west wind; and, with the exception of a very few banks beside the water-courses, and one or two natural ravines, there was not a spot in which a grouse could shelter. In these hollows we generally found a *stager*,* and in one rugged dell shot three old cocks. Contrary to their general caution they stood the dogs well—and from the short cover and stunted heath, had the weather been wet and the birds consequently wary, it would have been almost impossible to have approached them.† The peasants, while looking after cattle, and cutting peats upon the hill, had frequently disturbed those solitary birds, and concluded from meeting them that there must be some packs convenient.

Too late we found out our error—it was four o'clock, and we determined to abandon the heath for the day; and having from a high ground examined the interior of the island, we arranged to morrow's beat accordingly.

Quitting the hill, we walked for a mile along the beach, to some bent banks, where we were told that rabbits were abundant. In an hour we shot eight pair, and two couple of whimbrels,‡ and perceiving that the

* An old cock grouse which has not paired.

† Appendix, No. XXI.

‡ Scalopax Phæopus of Linnæus.—*Vide* Appendix, XXII.

hooker had anchored off the landing-place, we gave up shooting and returned to the watch-house.

In our absence the servants had been active; they slung our hammocks and made the necessary preparations for cooking dinner. The chief officer of the coast-guard kindly gave us his own apartment. His little cabin was crowded with every necessary requisite for one so far removed from the civilized portion of mankind, and it was amusing to remark the ingenuity with which the occupier had arranged his numerous goods and chattels; nothing could exceed the cleanliness of his cottage, and it formed a striking contrast to the filth and misery of the surrounding hovels.

The boatmen were just landing in their punt, and we descended to the beach to ascertain what addition to our *cuisine* the spillets had afforded. They produced a pair of fine soles, and a score of large plaice. These, with the mackerel taken in the morning, supplied the fish department admirably. Our purveyor had purchased a *Keim sheep*;† and at six o'clock we went to dinner. Nothing could be more delicious than our fare—fish transferred from the sea to the kettle, and diminutive mutton, whose only fault was excessive fatness. We had a grouse, too, one of our stagers, but it was coarse and flavourless; and if toughness be a test of years, I should set him down as coeval with St. Patrick.

The host joined us after dinner, and presented a bottle of genuine Inniskea. If such be the customary produce of their stills, those gifted islanders are worthy of being canonized. Although our host's flask was a true Hollander, having an amplitude of bottom that would have put two degenerate wine-bottles to the blush, I regret to say, such unyielding thirst beset us, that before any of the company sought a hammock, the honest Dutchman was left without a drop!

We were astir betimes next morning. It was an excellent shooting-day; a brisk breeze had sprung up with the first of flood, and the fog rising gradually up the mountain-side cleared the summit of Slieve More, leav-

† Keim is a mountain district of Achil, celebrated for the flavour and fatness of its sheep.

ing its rugged pinnacle—a disordered mass of shivered granite—sparkling in the sunshine. Our dogs were in beautiful condition; and we were gratified to hear from a water-guard patrol, that but an hour before, he had sprung a strong pack of birds on our purposed beat.

But, alas! the departed Dutchman had left us certain twinges in the head to make us recollect him, and we felt a nervous sensibility* that was any thing but favourable to good shooting. An immersion in the sea was recommended as a certain remedy, and our host conducted us to a rock, from which we could plunge into water four fathoms deep, and yet clear enough to enable us to observe the shells and pebbles at the bottom. We enjoyed a delightful ablution, returned *new men* to the watch-house, and, like giants refreshed, prepared for a good day's fag.

So salutary proved our bath, that we breakfasted as if we had never drained a Dutchman in our lives. The dogs were duly coupled, and sundry disengaged gentlemen of the village, whom we found lounging at the door, were being invested with shot and game-bags, when, roused by an exclamation of the keeper, we witnessed a curious scene.

In a huge and inaccessible crag on the east of Slieve More, and immediately above the coast-guard station, the eagles† had formed an eyrie,—a fissure in the cliffs, beyond the possibility of being disturbed by the approach

* "I will venture to say, there is no sportsman living who has not been known to miss the fairest shots, and there are very few, but now and then in a season, would shoot badly for a whole day. It stands to reason, when the most skilful may become, for a time, unnerved for shooting by ill-health, oppression of mind, one night's debauch, or any thing that will operate on the temper or nerves."—*Hawker.*

† "The sea-eagle (*Falco Ossifragus*, Linn.—*L'Orfraie*, Buff.) This bird is nearly as large as the golden eagle, measuring in length three feet and a half, but its expanded wings do not reach above seven feet. Its bill is large, much hooked, and of a bluish colour; irides, in some, light-hazel, in others yellow: a sort of strong bristly feathers hang down from under its bill, next to its throat, whence it has been termed the bearded-eagle; the top of the head and back part of the neck are dark brown, inclining to black; the feathers on the back are variegated, of a lighter brown, with dark edges; the scapulars are pale brown, the edges nearly white; the breast and belly whitish, with singular spots of brown; the tail feathers are dark brown, the

of man, afforded these birds for many years a secure retreat. Here annually, they produced their offspring, to the sad annoyance of the islanders, and particularly the villagers of Dugurth. This morning they had descended from their rocky habitation, accompanied by two eaglets, evidently to teach their young to stoop and lift their prey.* The old birds tore up turfs from the mountain-side, rose high in the air, and dropped them. The eaglets in turn stooped and took them up again. This was frequently repeated, and the course of instruction having lasted half an hour, the eagles mounted to their eyrie, and leaving their progeny safely in the nest, sailed off upon the rising breeze to provide for the evening meal. We viewed the proceedings of this predatory family through the telescopes of the coast-guard, who gave us many curious anecdotes of those daring and destructive birds.

We took an opposite course to the barren beat we had yesterday pursued. The bogs were intersected by several mountain-streams, whose dry and heathy banks offered excellent feeding and shelter for grouse. Our success, however, was very indifferent to what we had anticipated from the promising appearance of the ground, and we had spent an hour, hunting with two brace of prime dogs, before we saw a bird. We met numerous indications of a strong pack having recently visited the river, and left no place untried which birds might be expected to frequent. At last, we began to imagine that the eagles had been here before us, when, at some distance from us, a young setter dropped on a heathy brow that overhung the rivulet. We were advancing,

outer edges of the exterior feathers whitish, the quill-feathers and thighs are dusky; the legs and feet yellow; the claws, which are large, and form a complete semicircle, are of a shining black. It is found in various parts of Europe and America; it is said to lay only two eggs during the whole year, and frequently produces only one young bird; it is said to see so distinctly in the dark as to be able to pursue and catch its prey during the night."—*Bewick.*

* "The story of the eagle brought to the ground after a severe conflict with a cat, which it had seized and taken up into the air with its talons, is very remarkable. Mr. Barber, who was an eyewitness of the fact, made a drawing of it, which he afterward engraved."—*Bewick.*

but the pack, alarmed by the sudden appearance of the dog above them, took wing, and we had to content ourselves with reckoning them as they got up, bird by bird. We counted seventeen, and concluded that two broods had packed accidentally.* They all pitched in a scattered manner on the side of a neighbouring eminence, and having marked them carefully down, we took up one brace of dogs, and with the other proceeded quietly to work. I never, in my sporting experience, saw a pack disposed of in better style. The dogs picked up the broken birds immediately, and with one miss (mine was the deed!) we brought eight brace to bag. The sole survivor probably *roaded off* during the slaughter, or threw himself into a hole in the heath, for we could not make him out.

From our opening essay we reckoned that this would prove an exterminating day, but with the destruction of this pack, our sport might be said to cease. For hours we traversed hills, and crossed moors, meeting but one weak brood, and a few *stagers*. We did find another brood, but the poults were scarcely able to leave the ground, and consequently were too weak for shooting. From their appearance we concluded them to be a second progeny of birds who had lost their first eggs by robbery or vermin. We met, however, a number of hares, and shot seven. Those, with thirteen brace of grouse, filled the game-bags.

Our course homeward lay along the base of Slieve More. The evening was calm and sultry, and a number of men and women of all ages were seated on the rocks fishing for gunners,† and gaffing the horse-mackerel, which were seen in numbers on the surface of the water.

This rock-fishing is more dangerous than productive,

* "Red grouse pair in spring; the female lays eight or ten eggs on the ground. The young ones follow the hen the whole summer; as soon as they have attained their full size, they unite in flocks of forty or fifty, and are then exceedingly shy and wild."—*Bewick*.

I have never known them flock in Ireland. Excepting an accidental junction of two broods, I have not met with grouse in any considearble nnmber. Broods will occasionally pack together, but it is not a common occurrence.

† Appendix, No. XXIII.

and many lives have been lost in pursuing it. Descending the precipices to reach the water's edge is attended with imminent risk, and as sudden and terrible swells come in frequently and unexpectedly from the Atlantic, many fishers have been swept off the rocks and perished. Another perilous occupation of the female peasants, is what they term "picking cranagh." This sea-weed, which forms a favourite esculent of the islanders, grows on the rocks that are but occasionally covered by the sea. Exposure to sudden swells from the ocean attend those who search for it, and loss of life has too often occurred.

One accident, which happened not long since, was truly melancholy. A woman, the mother of several helpless children, and who but a month before had given birth to twins, perished in the sight of her family. No relief in such cases can be given. The reflux of these mountainous waves bears the victim away; and, with rare exceptions, the bodies are never found, as they are either borne out to sea, or entombed in one of the many deep caverns with which the bases of these fearful precipices are perforated.

We reached home at seven, made a hasty toilet, and dined sumptuously from mountain mutton and a fine *John Dory*, which the priest had sent us in our absence. Determined to eschew temptation, we avoided engaging a fresh Dutchman, which our host pressed upon us, and put in a quiet evening. After smoking a cigar, and discussing its necessary association of *schnaps* and water, we turned into our hammocks in such grave and philosophic moderation, as might have claimed the approbation of Sir Humphrey, and entitled us to a place of honour in any Temperance Society in Great Britain.

LETTER XIX.

Grouse scarce in Achil—Prepare to leave it—Visit to the Eagle's Cliff—Attempts to destroy these Birds unsuccessful—Their Depredations—Partiality for black Fowls—Destroy Fish—Anecdote of an Eagle and Salmon—Exterminate Hares—Their Mode of coursing and catching Salmon—Foxes numerous and destructive—Smaller Birds of Prey—Run to Inniskea—Devilawn—Tarmon—Difficult Coast to land on—Woman and Curragh—Both described—I venture and effect a Landing—Rabbit-shooting—Local Sketches—Twilight Scenery—Revery interrupted—Dangerous Idiot—Whiskey—Its Excellence—Copper Stills—Island seldom visited by the Revenue—The Reason—Character of the Islanders—Particular in burying their Dead—Prone to Litigation—The Lawsuit.

From the scarcity of grouse in Achil, we altered our original plans, and decided upon sending our dogs back to the Lodge by a rowing-boat, and proceeding in the hooker to visit the island of Inniskea.

After breakfast we proceeded to embark our personals, and having despatched our heavy luggage by the attendants, whom we ordered home, we ascended the hill (while the crew were clearing and baiting their spillets) in the vague hope of getting a shot at these predatory birds, of whose spoliations we had heard so much on the preceding evening.

On reaching the bottom of the rock, in whose face the eyrie stands, we discovered that the old birds were absent, and as the nest was formed in a deep fissure, we could not ascertain its situation exactly. But that the eagles' dwelling was above us was evident enough: the base of the cliff was strewn with bones and feathers, and the accumulation of both was extraordinary. The bones of rabbits, hares, and domestic fowls were most numerous, but those of smaller game, and various sorts of fish, were visible among the heap.

Many attempts are annually made to destroy this predatory family. It is impossible to rob the nest. Situated two hundred feet above the base of the rock, it is of course unapproachable from below, and as the cliffs

beetle over it frightfully, to assail it from above would be a hazardous essay. An enterprising peasant, some years since, was let down by a rope and basket,—but he was fiercely attacked by the old birds, and the basket nearly overturned. Fortunately the cord was strong, and had sufficient length to allow his being lowered rapidly, or he would have undoubtedly sustained some bodily injury from the wings and talons of those enraged and savage birds.*

The village of Dugurth suffers heavily from its unfortunate proximity to the eyrie. When the wind blows from a favourable point, the eagle in the gray of morning sweeps through the cabins, and never fails in carrying off some prey.

To black fowls eagles appear particularly attached, and the villagers avoid as much as possible rearing birds of that colour.

A few days before, one of the coast-guard, alarmed by the cries of a boy, rushed from the watch-house; the eagle had taken up a black hen, and, as he passed within a few yards, the man flung his cap at him. The eagle dropped the bird; it was quite dead, however, the talons having shattered the back-bone. The villagers say (with what truth I know not) that turkeys are never taken.

That the eagle is extremely destructive to fish, and

* The following interesting anecdote is well authenticated. "Two eagles, in the wildest part of a neighbouring county, had for some time depredated on the neighbourhood, and bore away lambs, kids, &c., for the sustenance of their young. Some peasants determined if possible to obtain the young birds, and ascended the mountains, but found that the nest was in a part of the perpendicular rock, near one hundred feet below the summit, and about three hundred above the sea, which, with terrific appearances, dashed against its base. They had provided themselves with ropes, and a lad, armed with a cimeter, was by this means lowered by the rest. He arrived in safety at the nest, where, as he expected, he was attacked with infinite fury by one of the old eagles, at which he made a stroke with his sword that nearly cut asunder the rope by which he was suspended. Fortunately one strand of it remained. He described his state to his comrades, waiting in horrible expectation that the division of the cord would precipitate him to the bottom; but though he might have been to die by a rope, it was not in this manner; he was cautiously and safely hauled up, when it was found that his hair, which a quarter of an hour before had been of a dark auburn, had in that short period become perfectly white!"

particularly so to salmon, many circumstances would prove. They are constantly discovered watching the fords in the spawning season, and are seen to seize and carry off the fish. One curious anecdote I heard from my friend the priest. Some years since a herdsman, on a very sultry day in July, while looking for a missing sheep, observed an eagle posted on a bank that overhung a pool. Presently the bird stooped and seized a salmon, and a violent struggle ensued; when the herd reached the spot, he found the eagle pulled under water by the strength of the fish, and the calmness of the day, joined to drenched plumage, rendered him unable to extricate himself. With a stone the peasant broke the eagle's pinion, and actually secured the spoiler and his victim, for he found the salmon dying in his grasp.*

When shooting on Lord Sligo's mountains, near the Killeries, I heard many particulars of the eagle's habits and history from a gray-haired peasant who had passed a long life in these wilds. The scarcity of hares, which here were once abundant, he attributed to the rapacity of those birds; and he affirmed, that when in pursuit of these animals, the eagle evinced a degree of intelligence that appeared extraordinary. They coursed the hares, he said, with great judgment and certain success; one bird was the active follower, while the other remained in reserve at the distance of forty or fifty yards. If the hare, by a sudden turn, freed himself from his most pressing enemy, the second bird instantly took up the chase, and thus prevented the victim from having a moment's respite.

He had remarked the eagles also while they were engaged in fishing. They chose a small ford upon the rivulet which connects Glencullen with Glandullagh, and posted on either side waited patiently for the salmon to pass over. Their watch was never fruitless,—and many a salmon, in its transit from the sea to the lake, was transferred from his native element to the wild eyrie in the Alpine cliff, that beetles over the romantic waters of Glencullen.

Nor is it to birds of prey alone that the extreme scarcity

* Appendix, No. XXIV.

of game upon this island may be attributed. Foxes are found here in numbers that appear incredible. The sides of Slieve More, in places formed of masses of disrupted rock, afford numerous and inaccessible burrows to those mischievous animals, and the sand-banks, stocked with rabbits, offer them an easy and certain means of subsistence. Hence their annual increase is wonderful, aud the numbers on the island may be estimated from this simple fact, that one of the coast-guard, who happened to have a couple of good terriers, destroyed in the space of a season eighteen full-grown foxes.* The multitude of lambs lost by these depredators has nearly deterred the islanders from keeping ewes; and there is not a spot in Great Britain so persecuted by winged and footed vermin as this wild district. Of smaller birds of prey there is a plentiful variety, but the devastations of the greater tribe cause their minor larcenies to be unnoticed.

With a light leading breeze we stood across the bay, passed the island of Devilawn, and running through a sound which separates Tarmon from Inniskea, came-to at the distance of a quarter of a mile from the landing-place. It was low water, and the boats were all hauled up upon the beach. Even in the calmest weather, the greatest caution is requisite to protect them from the heavy and sudden swells that eternally break on this wild coast,—and if left within reach of the surf, they are frequently stove before the careless crew are aware of danger. Anxious to land, we fired a gun, and being upon an excellent bank for spillet-fishing, the boatmen adjusted their buoys and commenced throwing their lines overboard.

I was watching the progress made by a dozen of the islanders to launch a row-boat to the water, when suddenly, from beneath the opposite cliff, a floating substance appeared to issue from the side of the precipice. We

* Doctor Johnson, in his Tour to the Hebrides, remarks, "To check the ravages of the foxes in the Isle of Skye, the inhabitants set a price upon their heads, which, as the number diminished, has been gradually raised, from three shillings and sixpence to a guinea; a sum so great in this part of the world," adds the doctor, "that in a short time Skye may be as free from foxes as England from wolves." The fund for these rewards is a tax of sixpence in the pound, imposed by the farmers on themselves, and said to be paid with great willingness.

had neared the shore considerably, and the object of which I had previously but an indistinct view, was now more clearly seen. It was a woman sitting in a curragh, fishing for codling and gunners. Startled by the discharge of the musket, she pulled a short distance from the cliffs, and then lay-to upon her paddles, watching the hooker as she shot her spillets.

"These lazy lubbers will be half an hour getting that heavy row-boat across the sand-ridge," said my kinsman. "Hail the curragh, Pattigo, and let us get ashore."

To the shout of the skipper, a "cead fealtagh" was returned; the paddles dipped in the water, the light curragh skimmed over the surface like a sea-bird, and in a few minutes the female and her frail bark were rocking beneath the counter of the sailing-boat.

I shuddered as I looked over the hooker's side at this crazy vehicle; it was but a few slight hoops, secured together by cords, and overlaid by a covering of canvass rendered water-proof by a coating of tar and tallow. The machine was so unsubstantial, that a school-boy could carry it easily upon his shoulders. Nor was its fragility alone that which rendered this bark so perilous: from its peculiar construction, it scarcely rested on the surface of the sea, and consequently, the least change of position in the occupant would inevitably capsize it; and yet in this frail vessel she sat in perfect security, a couple of hand-lines coiled at her feet, and the bottom of the curragh overspread with the produce of her fishery. Without the romance of Scott's beautiful boat-woman, there was something more than interesting in the air and look of this wild islander. Free from that timidity which might be expected in the inhabitants of a remote coast, on her first introduction to strangers of a different grade in society, she laughed and jested with the boatmen; and the play of her merry hazel eye, and the smile which disclosed a row of pure and even teeth, had really more in them to captivate than the cold and regular charms of many a high-born beauty.

"We must embark singly," said my cousin; "your curragh is but a crank concern. Mind how you step in, Frank." But I had already determined against an embark-

ation, and accordingly declined the honour of being the first adventurer. My timidity only excited the mirth of the sea-nymph, and unwilling to be laughed at by a woman, I took courage, and cautiously committed my person to the skiff; a change of position was of course necessary on the lady's part, and this she managed with such adroitness that the equilibrium of the coracle was undisturbed.

In a moment, her sculls were flashing in the waters, and we speedily reached the strand.

The rowing boat was now afloat, and pulling to the hooker to bring off my kinsman. My sea-nymph tossed her fish and paddles to a little boy, who was expecting her, received with a low courtesy the silver I presented as my passage-money, and having returned her small purse to her bosom, she threw the curragh across her back, and left me, invoking "God to bless my honour."

The boat returned with my cousin and our guns; and while the dinner requisites were being brought ashore, we strolled towards the side of a hill, where we observed a number of rabbits at play. They were very numerous, and exhibited a greater variety in colour than those of the other warrens that I had as yet visited. We selected some of the gayest colour for our practice, and whiled an hour away until a summons from the cook recalled us to the village.

The spillets had provided us sumptuously with flat-fish, and a present of shrimps and lobsters completed our *cuisine*. The best house in the island had offered us its accommodation, and there was an appearance of comfort and rustic opulence in the furniture that we had not anticipated when we landed.

There are numerous chances and God-sends incident to these islands which the other lines of sea-coast seldom obtain. Frequent and valuable wrecks furnish the inhabitants with many articles of domestic utility. The drift timber from the Atlantic gives them an abundant supply for the building and repairs of boats and houses; and immense quantities of sea-fowl feathers are annually collected upon the black rock, which is contiguous to Inniskea.

The island affords excellent pasturage for sheep, and

thus, timber, feathers, and wool, enable the inhabitants to have domestic comforts in abundance. In winter, the take of cod, hake, and ling is inexhaustible; peats are excellent and plenty, and food and fuel are consequently never scarce in Inniskea. These are doubtless great advantages over the interior districts, but they are barely necessary to compensate the other local inconveniences. Throughout the greater portion of the winter, all communication with the main is interrupted. The sick must die without relief, and the sinner pass to his account without the consolations of religion. Should any thing beyond the produce of the island be requisite in the stormy months, it must be procured with imminent danger; and constant loss of life and property forms the unhappy theme of the tales and traditions of this insulated people.

A calm and misty twilight had fallen on Slieve More, and abridged the almost boundless range of ocean over which the eye passed when we first landed. At a little distance the village girls were milking, carolling those melancholy ditties to which the Irish are so partial. I strolled among the rocks, and chose the narrow path which the full tide left between its margin and the cliffs. The moon was rising now in exquisite beauty; the water was rippling to the rocks—one long and wavy line of molten silver undulated across the surface of the sea. There were wild cliffs and bolder headlands in glorious relief. No scene on earth could be more peaceful or romantic.

I was indulging in delicious revery, when something like a bird flitted hastily by—again, and there was a heavy plump in the water. I looked up,—a wild unearthly-looking creature stood on the cliff above, in the very act of launching a huge stone at me! Just then a female figure rose beside him, and with threats and blows drove him off the rock. It was my fair friend of the curragh, who seeing me take the lonely path I did, hastened after me to warn me of the danger. She told me that the assailant was a dangerous lunatic; he was treacherous beyond description, and his antipathy to women and strangers was remarkable. Many accidents had occurred from his savage disposition. He feared men, and rarely attacked them; but if he saw a female

at a distance from the village, he would lurk with malignant perseverance for hours behind a bank or cliff to attack her unawares. Some of the island women had narrowly escaped death from this truculent monster, and few of the males but had at some time or other suffered injury from his hands; a stone was his favourite missile, which he threw with wonderful force and precision. To my inquiry "Why this dangerous being was not removed to some asylum?" my protectress replied with a smile, "He was but a poor natural, after all; he was born in the island, and God forbid they should send him among strangers." On conversing with my cousin afterward, he told me that in the west of Ireland the peasantry had a superstitious veneration for idiots and madmen, and, like the Turks, believed that insanity and inspiration were only synonymes.

The illicit whiskey made in this island holds a first rank in the estimation of the *poteen* fancier. The cause of its superior excellency may arise from the insular situation of the place, enabling the distiller to carry on his business leisurely, and thus avoid the bad consequences attendant on hurrying the process,—for to rapid and defective distillation may be ascribed the burnt flavour, so common in whiskey, produced within the range of the revenue. The barley, also, grown in this and the other adjacent islands, is excellent—and as the spirit is drawn from a copper still, it has many advantages to recommend it. The illicit apparatus in common use, is, without exception, made of tin. The capture of a copper still, from the superior value of the metal, would be a serious loss, and consequently, a cheaper substitute is resorted to.

Here, the still is considered a valuable heir-loom in a family, and descends in due succession from father to son. When not in use, it is lowered by a rope into one of the deep caverns with which the western face of the island abounds, and nothing but a treacherous disclosure by some secret enemy could enable the revenue to discover the place where it is concealed, in any of the unfrequent visits they make to this remote spot.

That the attention of the preventive officers is not more particularly turned to a place notorious for its

inroads on the revenue may appear strange. In fact, this island enjoys a sort of prescriptive privilege to sin against the ordinances of the excise. This indulgence arises, however, not from the apathy of the revenue, but from natural causes, which are easily explained. A boat may approach Inniskea, in the full confidence of a settled calm, and before an hour a gale may come on, that will render any chance of leaving it impracticable, and weeks will elapse occasionally before an abatement of the storm would allow the imprisoned stranger to leave those dangerous shores. Hence, in his professional avocations, the priest is obliged to watch the weather carefully before he ventures to visit Inniskea--and it has not unfrequently occurred, that the rites of religion have been interrupted, and the celebrant obliged to embark at a moment's notice, to avoid the consequences of being caught by a coming gale. The islanders, from constant observation of the phenomena of sea and sky, generally foresee the storm before it blows; but even the oldest and most skilful inhabitant will frequently be surprised by an unexpected tempest.

There are no people on earth more punctilious in the interment of the dead, than the peasantry of this remote district. A strange and unaccountable custom of burying different families, resident on the main, in island cemeteries, exists, and great difficulty, and oftentimes imminent peril, attends the conveyance of a corpse to its insulated resting-place. No inducement will make those wild people inter a body apart from the tomb of its fathers, and if a boat will live, the corpse will be transported to the family tomb. At times the weather renders this impracticable, but the deceased is kept for many days sunburied, in the hope that the storm may subside; and only when frail mortality evinces unequivocal tokens of decay, will the relatives consent to unite its dust with the ashes of a stranger.

It is asserted, with what truth I cannot pretend to state, that the inhabitants of Inniskea are prone to litigation, and a curious legend of a lawsuit is told upon the main, illustrative of this their quarrelsome disposition. A century ago two persons were remarkable here for superior opulence, and had become the envy and wonder of

their poorer neighbours. Their wealth consisted of a flock of sheep, when, unfortunately, some trifling dispute occurring between them, a dissolution of partnership was resolved upon. To divide the flock, one would suppose, was not difficult, and they proceeded to partition the property accordingly. They possessed one hundred and one sheep; fifty fell to each proprietor, but the odd one —how was it to be disposed of? Neither would part with his moiety to the other, and after a long and angry negotiation, the sheep was left in common property between them. Although the season had not come round when sheep are usually shorn, one of the proprietors, requiring wool for a pair of stockings, proposed that the fleece should be taken off. This was resisted by his co-partner, and the point was finally settled by shearing one side of the animal. Only a few days after, the sheep was found dead in a deep ditch—one party ascribed the accident to the cold feelings of the animal having urged him to seek a shelter in the fatal trench; while the other contended, that the wool remaining upon one side had caused the wether to lose its equilibrium, and that thus the melancholy catastrophe was occasioned. The parties went to law directly, and the expenses of the suit actually devoured the produce of the entire flock, and reduced both to a state of utter beggary. Their descendants are pointed out to this day as being the poorest of the community, and litigants are frequently warned to avoid the fate of "*Malley and Malone.*"

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of weather in Inniskea is proverbial, we had no reason to complain. The sun rose gloriously from the ocean—every cloud vanished from the rocky pinnacle of slieve More—a stiff breeze from the north-west blew steadily, and by nine o'clock we had embarked our goods and persons; and with as much wind as the hooker could carry her three sails to, we ran through the Sound of Devilawn, and bade adieu to this interesting and hospitable island.

LETTER XX.

Signs of Fish—Mackerel—Spillet-fishing—Seal and Mermaids—Anecdote—The Bull's Mouth—Preservation of a Ship—The Fox and Cruiser—The Lodge in a Consternation—Arrival—The Colonel's Portmanteau—Robbing and its Consequences.

It was evident that the bay was full of mackerel. In every direction and as far as the eye could range, gulls and puffins were collected, and, to judge by their activity and clamour, there appeared ample employment for them among the fry beneath. We immediately bore away for the place where these birds were most numerously congregated, and the lines were scarcely overboard when we found ourselves in the centre of a shoal of mackerel.

The hooker, however, had too much way;—we lowered the foresail, double-reefed the mainsail, and then went steadily to work. Directed by the movements of the birds, we followed the mackerel, tacking or wearing the boat occasionally when we found that we had overrun the shoal. For two hours we killed those beautiful fish as fast as the baits could be renewed and the lines hauled in; and when we left off fishing, actually wearied with sport, we found that we had taken above five hundred, including a number of the coarser species, known on this coast by the name of *horse-mackerel.*

There is not on sea or river, always excepting angling for salmon, any sport comparable to this delightful amusement. Spillet and long-line fishing are generally tedious and uninteresting—and unless the fish take freely, it is, even with moderate success, a tame and spiritless employment. How different is mackerel-fishing! full of life and bustle, every thing about it is animated and exhilarating; a brisk breeze, a fair sky, the boat in quick and constant motion,—all is calculated to interest and excite. But hanging for hours above a spillet, or enduring the drudgery of lowering and hauling in an almost interminable length of line, over the side of a motionless boat,

is an abomination. Like *mud-shooting*, this is only work for a peasant, and should accordingly be excluded from the list of gentlemanly pursuits, and consigned entirely to those with whom fishing is a trade, and profit, not pleasure, the object of their piscatory occupations. He who has experienced the glorious sensations of sailing on the western ocean, a bright autumnal sky above, a deep green lucid swell around, a steady breeze, as much of it as the hooker can *stand up* to, will estimate the exquisite enjoyment our morning's mackerel-fishing afforded.

In following the shoal we had crossed the bay and got under the Achil shore. Having made sail again, we stretched over towards the Bull's Mouth, attracted by an immense play of sea-fowls. It was nearly low water, and while running past Innisbiggle, we observed several seals basking on the rocks. One was so curiously couched among the sea-weed as to render its species a subject of doubt and discussion, until the close approach of the boat obliged it to quit the rock, and thus afford a more distinct view, while, to use the skipper's phrase, it *wabbled* to the water. From the strange and undefined ideas the seal's first appearance occasioned, accustomed as we were to see the animal in its varied attitudes of action or repose, it is not surprising that numerous and ridiculous extravagances have had their origin in the Phocæe being seen under accidental circumstances, by the wild and credulous peasantry of this remote district. To these animals, the submarine beings who have for ages delighted the lovers of the marvellous, may without much difficulty be traced, and many a wonder-stricken fisherman imagined himself watching the movements of a mermaid,* while all the time he was only staring at a *sea-calf*.

A whimsical instance of the credulity of the peasantry was mentioned by my kinsman. Some years ago, a party engaged in a fishing excursion on the coast, *came-to* in Achil Sound, and leaving the boat, took up their quarters for the night in the priest's house, which was situated in a neighbouring village. One of the company

* Appendix, No. XXV.

was hunch-backed, with a face of singular and grotesque expression. Having indulged gloriously over-night in the native beverage which the honest priest most liberally supplied, the little gentleman found himself rather amiss in the morning, and determined to try what salutary effect the cool sea-breeze might have upon the fever warmth his nocturnal revelry had raised. He left the cabin accordingly,—and the early hour, with the islanders' celebrity for a simplicity in costume, induced him to postpone the business of the toilet to a more convenient season, and sally forth in perfect dishabille. For a time he straggled along the shore, until, reaching the point of land which forms the entrance of Achil Sound, he selected a smooth stone, and deposited his person among the rocks, to meditate the hour away, before whose expiration he could not expect that breakfast would be paraded in the cabin.

It was dead low water. Half a dozen row-boats, bound for the fair of Newport, and filled with men and women, were rowing merrily to the Bull's Mouth, intending to enter it upon the first flood. Having approached close to the spot where the little gentleman was ensconced among the sea-weed, up popped an outré countenance, surmounted by a scarlet nightcap! The effect was sudden, for till now a rock had concealed him from the boats. Instantly the women screamed, and the men betrayed unequivocal symptoms of dismay. But when the dwarf, remarking their alarm, skipped upon the stone, and uttered a wild, unearthly yell, which reverberated from rock to rock, the boats put about directly, and, abandoning the fair of Newport, men and women, with one consent, made off for their respective homes as fast as four oars could carry them. The awful intelligence was promulgated with incredible rapidity through Erris and Ballycroy. The same *Leprehawn* who was seen *the year before the French*,* had reappeared, to harbinger, no doubt, some local or national calamity.—To this day the credulity of the islanders has never been

* The landing of the French is a common epoch among the inhabitants of Ballycroy. Ask a peasant his age, and he will probably tell you, "he was born two or three years before or after *the French*."

disabused, and Tom's uncouth face and scarlet nightcap is often fearfully expected to rise over the rocks by the belated fisherman, as he runs through its dangerous opening to shelter for the night in Achil Sound.

The Bull's Mouth is rarely entered but with flood-water, or a powerful leading wind. The southern outlet of the sound, at Achil Beg, is similarly circumstanced. These straits are deep and dangerous, for through them the waters which flow from Blacksod and Clew Bay, and fill this extensive channel and its surrounding estuaries, rush with amazing violence, and the rapidity with which the tides enter and recede is frightful. The opposing currents flow nearly north and south, and meet and separate at the ruins of an ancient salt-house. Here, the old mountain-road terminated, and at the *Farsett*—as the ford across the estuary is termed—the passenger can earliest cross to the island from the mainland. Indeed, the intercourse with Achil was in former days limited enough. Few persons, except those engaged in smuggling, visited this insulated district—and many an islander lived and died without having ever seen a town.

The fishing-boats and hookers, whose easy draught of water will permit it, naturally prefer a passage through the sound, when voyaging from Erris to Clew Bay, rather than the longer and more exposed course of rounding Achil Head. To effect it, however, requires some skill, and a strict attention to the tides. On *the Farsett*, the depth at high-water seldom exceeds eight or nine feet; and as the flow and recession of the opposing waters is astonishingly rapid, the boat must enter upon one and retire upon the other. The passage, if effected, is consequently but very short, and the sound may be cleared in an hour, with the same wind that would occupy an entire day, if Achil Head were doubled.

In bad weather, both entrances, however, are dangerous in the extreme, and care and seamanship are necessary to pass either with safety. The peasantry are habituated to this voyage, and comparatively little risk ensues. Still, many accidents have occurred—small boats have foundered in the attempt—and large hookers, when deeply laden, have perished in the conflicting eddies

which opposite winds and tides occasion. The most cautious boatmen are sometimes overtaken by squalls from the surrounding hills—and night and drunkenness have, alas! been more fatal than all besides.

Yet the Bull's Mouth, like the ordeal of mortal inquietude, leads to its haven of rest. In a gale from the westward, when the Atlantic tumbles with mountainous fury into Blacksod Bay, the fishing-boat, once within the sound, finds smooth and unbroken water. When the storm comes on, the hookers seek its shelter, there to wait until the weather moderates.

Nor is it to the fisherman alone that the Bull's Mouth has afforded shelter and protection. Not many years ago, a large American vessel was driven upon the coast by a continuance of westerly winds, and unable to work off, was fairly embayed within Blacksod. Shipwreck appeared inevitable—anchor after anchor was let go, but the tremendous swell from the ocean parted the cables, and the vessel drifted rapidly towards the shore. The wild and rock-bound coast to leeward terrified the crew, and in despair they committed themselves to their boat, abandoning the ship to her fate. A hooker's crew, which had been caught by the gale, witnessed the desertion of the vessel, and although boarding her was a service of danger, they determined to attempt her rescue. They succeeded, and the *derelict* bark was carried safely within the sound.

To the Bull's Mouth, also, one of his Majesty's cruisers was indebted for her deliverance. During the last American war, an enemy's schooner, of formidable force, dragooned the coast from Arran to the Stags of Broad Haven. She landed where she pleased, and amused herself by burning every coaster that was silly enough to leave her harbour. In Achil *the Fox* was quite at home,—the crew trafficked, danced, and drank among the islanders with as much *sang-froid* as if Paul Jones had been commander. But this could not last for ever. Some heavy sloops and brigs were ordered from the southward, and the Fox was reluctantly obliged to disappear. A revenue cruiser that had been long blockaded in Westport Bay, took heart and ventured out,

The enemy was out of sight, and with a clear sea old Morris rounded Achil Head. When the scarecrow vanishes, it is marvellous how rapidly one's courage is rekindled; and too late, the Nepean discovered that the odds between herself and the privateer were not so desperate. In point of men and metal the Fox was, indeed, overwhelming; but still, steady discipline and close fighting might do wonders. Morning dawned—and its first light showed the infernal Fox but two short miles to *windward!* Away went the cutter, and away went the privateer. With singular audacity the Fox followed into the bay, came up hand over hand, and gained upon the cruiser, until the long *two-and-thirty*, which the Yankee mounted amidships, began to throw its shot to a most alarming proximity. The Bull's Mouth was before, and a rakish schooner that, to use a fancy phrase, "would not be denied," was astern;—there was no alternative, and for the first, and most probably the last time, the king's *bunting* sought safety within the Sound of Achil. Finding her water lessen—for she had actually crossed the Ridge Point before she hauled her wind, the Fox abandoned the pursuit, and left the Irish coast for America, where she duly arrived, after a daring and destructive, but a very unprofitable cruise.

* * * * * *

Safely landed at the lodge,—but all is an uproar! Colonel Dwyer, an honoured and expected visiter, has arrived in safety, but he comes *minus* his portmanteau, which some delinquent, neither having the fear of hanging or my kinsman's wrath before his eyes, abstracted from Andy Bawn, to whom its safe delivery was intrusted. Nothing can surpass the surprise and consternation this event occasions—the women are clamorous—the men curse fluently in Irish—and, from the vows of eternal vengeance which are uttered against the spoliator of the colonel's wardrobe, I should imagine, in case of apprehension, that the ceremony of waiting till the next assizes will be dispensed with. Antony "remembers the country these seventy years: many a robbery happened in his time, but—God stand between him and evil!—to take a gentleman's property, and he com-

ing to the master!—If it was a stranger, why there would be no great harm, &c. &c."

Fear and poteen disturb the concatenation of ideas and Andy Bawn's is any thing but a lucid narrative. There is a confused account of the bridge of Ballyveeney, and a dark man, and the clicking of a gun-cock. Now it appears that Andy is at feud with a Mr. Burke, who finished a relative of his with a *turf-slane*,* and in consequence has deemed it advisable to take to the mountain until terms can be arranged with the widow. Meantime, being a gentleman of active disposition, he occupies his leisure hours upon the highway, and all parties are unanimous in saddling him with the spoliation of the portmanteau. I am inclined to suspect, that my kinsman sported *deaf-adder* to any rumour of Burke being concealed within his territory. I think now, the sooner Mr. Burke levants the better. There is a settled gloom upon my cousin's brow, and yonder consultation with his foster-brother, my island friend, bodes the present proprietor of the portmanteau little good. To interrupt a visiter's effects was indeed to

> "Beard the lion in his den,
> The Douglas in his hall.—"

But dinner is announced.

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I wish the value of the colonel's assets could be ascertained, and that I dared liquidate the amount. An earthquake, I think, would not have created half the sensation. My kinsman is desperately irate—his feudal power is shaken to the centre, and either he or Mr. Burke must leave Ballycroy. It is quite evident that he tacitly permitted the outlaw to conceal himself in this neighbourhood, and considered that he existed but by his sufferance. There is a strange dash of barbarism among the old proprietors still. To hunt a felon down, who acknowledges the supremacy of the master, would be *infra dignitatem*. The good old system would then be at an end—and, in time, even a bailiff might pass what has been the *Ultima Thule* of the law, and *live*. My cousin is aware of this.

* An implement used for cutting turf, and *heads* occasionally.

He feels that the rights and immunities of his modern Alsatia must not be lightly compromised. His rent-roll may be small, but he can boast, as Dick Martin did of Connemara, that "here, thank God! the king's writ is not worth a halfpenny." Hence the impudence* of Mr. Burke is intolerable. An embassy will be despatched, aud if the colonel's wardrobe be not forthwith restored, with full satisfaction for the insult, I hold the value of the outlaw's life to be not worth a pin's fee.

Indeed, the whole *esprit de corps* is up—the multitudinous idlers of the lodge are concocting schemes of vengeance. The honour of "the ancient house" is at stake; and the very women are roused to action. Old Antony himself is not supine—he does not, like Diogenes at Sinope, contemplate the general activity with indifference: while all besides are turning the secular arm against the delinquent, the otter-killer will call in the assistance of the church, and, "by the blessing of God, he will have Mr. Burke *cursed* in two chapels next Sunday, and in a style, too, that he expects shall give universal satisfaction to all concerned!"

Nor am I, though unassailed in dignity or effects, upon a bed of roses. Who shall say where this business will terminate? We shall exchange deer-shooting for robber-hunting; and night and the mountains being unfavourable to identity of the person, I may be shot by mistake for an outlaw, or find myself in some ravine, *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Burke! I plead guilty to constitutional nervousness, and for the last hour my kinsman and his visiter have been seeking a parallel case in a number of outrages, that are quite sufficient to ruin a man's rest for the winter. What memories they have! There has not been a house robbed for the last century with whose localities they are not as well acquainted as the builder; and in murder-cases, they display an anatomical experience that is surprising! Hennessey, who seldom shows, has been eternally with us since the cloth was lifted, and having received his final instructions (I hope), has disappeared. Lord! the tall, gaunt, care-worn, homicidal look of the man,

* Appendix, No. XXVI.

as, with a double-gun across his arm, and a case of pistols projecting from his coat pockets, he took the wine his patron gave him!—but, "*Chacun a son gout*,"—my kinsman would not lose him for a thousand, while his very look gives me the horrors. Even the piper appears to have caught the general infection: he has been lilting a full hour—not a jig or strathspey, but love-lorn ditties, and the most lamentable compositions that ever issued from bag and chanter.

Would I were in England again; for what is matrimony to manslaughter? I have been for a moment out to breathe the cool sea-breeze, and, passing the window, peeped into that *refugium peccatorum*, the kitchen. The keeper is flinting a blunderbuss! There is security in Terracina contrasted with this cabin, and the Abruzzi is a land of Goshen compared with the mountains of Ballycroy! I wish I were in bed; and why there—to dream of every thing felonious? I may as well submit with Turkish endurance—it is the will of Allah! The colonel replenishes the fire, apportioning turf and bog-deal in such scientific proportion, that it is evident he is making himself up for a *wet evening;* and the cork our host is now extracting will be merely *avant courier* to these flasks which I see lurking in the cooper. Oh, that a deputation from the Temperance Society would drop in! But why complain?—'tis useless. The colonel has discharged a bumper to the speedy demolition of Mr. Burke. Nor has he forgotten to replenish again. The man is honest—a person that one might safely drink with in the dark. He clears his throat, and that cough preliminary is the prologue of a story. I must, in common courtesy, be attentive. This long and steady pinch is alarming, and we are on the brink of some desperate detail?

LETTER XXI.

The Colonel's Story—The Night Attack.

"It is thirty-five years, this very month, since I was quartered with my regiment in ——ford; I recollect the time particularly, for I got my company in the Thirty-seventh, on the same day that I received an invitation from Mr. Morden, with whom I had formed a mail-coach acquaintance, to spend a week with him, and join his nephew in partridge-shooting. This gentleman's house was fourteen miles distant from the town, and situated in a very retired part of the country. It was a wild but beautiful residence, placed upon the extremity of a peninsula, which jutted into an extensive lake. To a sportsman it offered all the inducements that shooting and fishing could afford. But it had others besides these; no man lived better than Mr. Morden—and his daughter Emily, and her orphan cousin, who resided with her, were decidedly the finest women who had attended the last race-ball. No wonder then that I accepted the old gentleman's invitation willingly, and on the appointed day put myself into a post-chaise, and reached the place in time for dinner.

"The house was one of those old-fashioned, comfortable Irish lodges, which are now extinct, or only to be seen in ruins. It was a long low building, covered with an infinity of thatch, which bade defiance to rain, cold, and storm. The tall and narrow casements reached the ground, a handsome flower-knot extended in their front, bounded by a holly hedge, and woodbine and other creepers festooned the windows with their leaves and berries. At some distance a well-stocked haggard peeped over a spacious range of offices; the lawn was studded with sheep, which appeard overburdened with good condition; and as I drove up the avenue, I passed a well-featured, well-clad simpleton, urging before him, from a neighbouring stubble-field, a flock of turkies, as formidable for num-

bers as for size. In short, every thing about the place bespoke the opulence and comfort of the proprietor.

"Mr. Morden was a clever and respectable man; he was land-agent to several large estates—noted for plain and unpretending hospitality, punctuality in business, and a character of unusual determination.

"The old gentleman received me with friendly sincerity, and his handsome daughter added a warm welcome. They apologized for not having company to meet me, but 'two families which they had expected had been detained by some unforeseen occurrences at home. Dinner was shortly after served. Like the host, it was excellent without display—the wines were superior—and when the ladies left us, the claret went round the table merrily.

"'We are in trouble here,' said Mr. Morden, addressing me, 'and you have come to a house of mourning. We have just suffered a serious, I may say, irreparable loss, in the sudden death of two favourite dogs. They were of the genuine breed of Newfoundland, and for size, courage, and sagacity were unequalled. Poor Emily has cried incessantly since the accident.'

"'Were they stolen?'

"'Oh no! I wish they were, for that would afford a hope that chance or money might recover them. No, sir, they would not follow a stranger; alas! they died yesterday by poison. We unfortunately laid arsenic in a meal-loft to destroy rats; and yet, how the poor animals could have got to it is a mystery! the steward declares the key never left his possession. I would give a hundred guineas the meal had been in the bottom of the lake. By Jove! no loss short of the death of a friend, could have given us all so much uneasiness. They were my daughter's companions by day, and my protectors at night. Heigh, ho! come, sir, pass the wine.' Tears stood in the old gentleman's eyes as he spoke of his unhappy favourites, and from the valuable properties of the lost dogs it was not surprising that their death oocasioned so much regret to the family.

"We joined the ladies in the drawing-room. After tea Mr. Morden took a bedroom candle, and apologized for retiring. 'Old habits best suit old people, captain; but

I leave you with the ladies, who will sit up till cock-crow, if you please,' and bidding us a good night he departed.

"'Emily,' said young Morden, 'you are still thinking of your favourites; well, I will ride the country over till I find you a handsome dog. Julia, hand me that violin from the piano, and Captain Dwyer will dance a reel with you and Emily.'

"'Heavens! who is at the window?' exclaimed Miss Morden, suddenly: 'it looked like that nasty beggarman who has been haunting the house and grounds these three days. Ah, Wolf and Sailor; had you been living, that vagabond would not have ventured here at this late hour.' Henry Morden had left the room on hearing his cousin's exclamation, but soon returned, assuring the lady that the beggar was a creature of her imagination; he had searched the shrubbery and flower-garden, and no mendicant was to be found in either.

"The alarm was speedily forgotten, and we danced reels till supper was announced. The doors were locked, the windows fastened, the ladies wished us good night, and retired to their respective chambers.

"Henry and I remained for some time in the eating-room; the clock struck twelve, and young Morden conducted me to my apartment, and took his leave.

"I felt a strange disinclination to go to bed, and would have given any thing for a book. For temporary employment I unlocked my gun-case, put my fowling-piece together, and examined whether my servant had sent all necessary apparatus along with me. I opened the window-curtains. The moon—a full, bright harvest moon, was shining gloriously on the lawn and lake; I gazed on the sparkling surface of the waters till I felt the chill of the night breeze; then closing the shutters, reluctantly prepared to undress.

"I had thrown my coat and vest aside, when a distant crash was heard, and a fearful noise, with oaths and screams, succeeded. I rushed into the corridor, and encountered a terror-stricken maid-servant running from the extremity of the passage. Miss Morden next appeared; she was in complete dishabille, and had hastily thrown on a dressing-gown. 'Good God! Captain

Dwyer, what has occurred?' A volley from without prevented my reply, and the crashing of the windows, as the glass was splintered by the bullets, made it unnecessary. 'The house is attacked,' she said, and then with amazing self-possession, added, 'there are always loaded guns above the kitchen fireplace.' We both ran down the corridor, she to alarm her father, and I to procure a weapon; young Morden, armed with a sword, met us. 'The attack is upon our kitchen,' he said, hastily, 'it is our weakest point; this way, captain,'—and we both entered it together.

"There was a bright fire burning on the hearth. The large window was shattered to pieces; and the idiot I had noticed on the lawn was standing beside the ruined casement, armed with a spit, making momentary passes at the breach, and swearing and bellowing frightfully. I leaped upon a table to seize two muskets which were suspended in the place Miss Morden had described. I handed one to Henry, when the fire blazed out suddenly, and discovered me to the banditti without. Instantly three or four shots were discharged. I heard a bullet whistle past my head, and felt something strike my shoulders like a sharp cut from a whip, but having secured the gun I jumped from the table uninjured. We heard Mr. Morden in the passage; his manner was calm and collected as he ordered the servant-men to the front of the house, and despatched his daughter for ammunition.

"Meanwhile, a dropping fire continued from without; from within no shot had been returned, as the robbers sheltered themselves effectually behind the angles of the offices and the piers of the gates. From some hurried words we overheard, they were arranging a determined attack.

"'They will make a rush immediately,' said the elder Morden, coolly, 'and here comes Emily in good time; don't come in, love?'—and he took some forty or fifty cartridges, which she had brought in the skirt of her dressing-gown. Notwithstanding the peril of our situation, I could not but gaze a moment on the white and statue looking limbs of this brave and beautiful girl. 'Go, love, tell John to bring the captain's gun-case from his

chamber; and do you, Emily, watch from the end window, and if you perceive any movement that side, apprize us of it here. Now, my boys, be cool; I'll give my best horse to him who shoots the first man. You have a good supply of ammunition, if we could but coax the scoundrels from their shelter, and I'll try a *ruse*.' The old gentleman took the idiot's spit, placed a coat upon it, while Henry and I chose a position at either side of the broken window. Mr. Morden raised the garment to the breach: it was indistinctly seen from without; three bullets perforated it, and it fell. 'He's down, by ——!' roared a robber, exultingly. 'Now Murphy, now's your time; smash in the door with the sledge?' Instantly a huge ruffian sprang from behind a gable; his rush was so sudden that he struck twice with shattering force. We heard the hinges give—we saw the door yielding—and, at that critical moment, young Morden's gun missed fire! 'Curses light upon the hand of him that loaded it!' he cried, as he caught up an axe, and placed himself determinately before the door, which we expected to be momentarily driven in. Murphy, perceiving the tremendous effects of his blows, called to his comrades to '*be ready*.' He stood about five yards from me; the sledge was raised above his head—that blow would have shivered the door to atoms—I drew the trigger—the charge, a heavy one of duck-shot, passed like a six-pound bullet through the ruffian's body, and he dropped a dead man upon the threshold. 'Captain Dwyer,' said Mr. Morden, calmly, 'the horse is yours!'

"I had now received my own double gun, and gave the musket I had used so successfully to Henry Morden. The death of the ruffian with the sledge brought on a heavy fire from his comrades. Between the volleys, they summoned us to surrender, with fearful denunciations of vengeance if we resisted longer. We were within a few yards of each other, and during the intervals of the firing, they poured out threats, and we sent back defiance—'Morden, you old scoundrel!' exclaimed the captain of the gang, 'in five minutes we'll have your heart's blood.'—'No,' was the calm reply, 'I'll live to see you arrayed in cap and halter.'—'Surrender, or

we'll give no quarter.'—'Cowardly scoundrel! come and try your hand at the sledge!' said the old gentleman, with a cold and sarcastic smile, as he turned his eye on me, where I was watching the door, with the confidence a man feels who has his own trustworthy weapon to depend upon.

"'Morden! we'll burn the house about ye.'—'Will you put the coal in the thatch, Bulger?'—'Morden, you have a daughter?' and the ruffian pronounced a horrid threat. The old man shuddered, then in a low voice tremulous with rage, he muttered—'Bulger, I'll spare five hundred pounds to hang you, and travel five hundred miles to see the sight!'

"'The coal! the coal!' shouted several voices, and unfortunately, the scoundrels had procured one in the laundry. 'By heaven! they will burn us out,' said Henry, in alarm.—'Never fear!' replied his cooler uncle; 'the firing must have been heard across the lake, and we'll soon have aid sufficient.'—But a circumstance occurred almost miraculously that averted the threatened danger. The moon became suddenly overcast—heavy rain-drops fell, and in an instant an overwhelming torrent burst from the clouds, rendering every attempt the robbers made to ignite the thatch abortive. 'Who dare doubt an overruling Providence?' said the old gentleman with enthusiasm; 'Surely, God is with us!'

"The storm which came to our relief appeared to dispirit our assailants, and their parley recommenced. 'Morden,' said the captain of the banditti, 'you have Lord ———'s rent in the house; give us a thousand pounds, and we'll go off and leave you.'

'"All I promise I'll perform,' said the old gentleman, coldly. 'Bulger, for this night's work you have earned a halter, and I'll attend and see you hanged.'—'Dash in the door,' exclaimed the robber in a fury; 'we'll have the old rogue's heart out!' A volley of stones rattled against the door, but produced no effect, and again the robber parleyed. 'Will you give us a hundred, Morden?'—'Not a sixpence,' was the laconic answer; once more stones were thrown, shots discharged, and threats of vengeance fulminated by the exasperated villains.

At last, the demand was reduced to 'twelve guineas, a guinea for each man.'—'They'll be off immediately,' said the old gentleman; 'they know assistance is at hand: would that we could amuse them for a little longer.' But the ruffians were already moving, and Miss Morden presently announced that they were embarking, twelve in number, in a boat. 'Now for a parting shot or two,' said Henry Morden. We picked up a dozen cartridges, and sallied from the house as the banditti were pulling hard across the lake. We opened a quick and well-directed fire, which they feebly, and without effect, replied to. While a musket-ball would reach them, we plied them liberally with shot; and, as we learned afterward, mortally wounded one man and slightly injured two others. As we returned to the house, we met some fifty countrymen, armed with all sorts of rustic weapons, coming to our relief. Without a moment's delay we launched boats, and set off to scour the country; and at noon, so prompt and vigorous had been the pursuit, that six of the gang, including the wounded robbers, were secured.

"We reached *the Wilderness* completely exhausted by the exertions of the morning, and the fatigue of the preceeding night. We refreshed ourselves, and went to bed, but previous to returning to my room, I visited the scene of action. Another blow, even a very slight one, must have driven in the door; and in the rush of twelve desperate ruffians, the chances would have been fearfully against us. Murphy lay upon his back; he was a disgusting object. The charge of heavy shot made as large a wound as a cannon-bullet would occasion. He was the strongest brute I ever saw; not more than five feet eight inches in height, but his limbs, body, and arms were a giant's; he was a blacksmith,—a man of infamous character, and of a most sanguinary disposition.

"Our escape from robbery was fortunate indeed; Mr. Morden had seven thousand pounds that night in the lodge, for he had just received the rents of two estates. It was almost entirely paid in specie. This was of course known, and two desperate bands, who had kept the adjoining counties in alarm since the rebellion was sup-

pressed, united, for the purpose of robbing 'the Wilderness,' and securing the immense booty.

"The body of the smith was sent away—and having brought the battle to a close, I shall explain some matters connected with this daring outrage.

"A man named Mitchell originated the intended robbery, and arranged the method of attack. He was a slight, low-sized person, but his activity was amazing, and no attempt was too hazardous for his desperate courage to undertake. On the morning of his execution—(he, with the three others, was hanged at the subsequent assizes)—he gave us a cool detail of his plans.

"The dogs were to be destroyed, and the premises reconnoitred. In the disguise of a beggar he effected both; laid meat, prepared with arsenic, for the poor animals; then made his way into the kitchen, and ascertained that the fastenings of the back door were defective. He purposed surprising the family at supper, or forcing an entrance when they were asleep. The first attempt he made at the drawing-room, but quickly perceiving that he had been observed by Miss Morden he retired hastily. A council was held by the robbers, and it was fortunately determined to postpone the attack until the family had gone to rest.

"Nothing could be bolder or more likely to succeed, than Mitchell's desperate resolution. It was to leap feet-foremost through the window, armed with a dagger, and open the back door for his associates. He made the attempt, and providential circumstances alone prevented its being successful. That very morning, a small iron bar had been placed across the window, it caught the robber in his leap, threw him back with violence, and the noise, attended with the outcry of the idiot, alarmed the family instantly.

"Circumstances, they say, will often make men courageous. In this case it had the same effect on two beings of a very different description—a lovely girl and an idiot boy. Miss Morden throughout the trying scene displayed the coolest courage—and the poor simpleton, who commonly would avoid the appearance of a gun, armed with his spit, defended the breach like a hero.

"We met at dinner. Julia, Miss Morden's cousin, would hardly venture to join us, for her brother rated her timidity severely. When the alarm was heard, the fearful girl buried her face beneath the bed coverings, and remained in pitiable agitation until the contest ended. Mr. Morden took her from his daughter's arm, kissed her, and congratulated her on their delivery from the last night's danger.

"'You little coward,' said the old man, jocularly, 'you must give your deliverer one kiss for your preservation:' the blushing girl received my salute. Miss Morden took my hand. 'You too, Emily, will you not reward your protector?' Without coquetry she laid her lips to mine, and that kiss was sufficient recompense for twice the peril I had encountered.

"For me, no praises seemed sufficient; the successful defence was attributed to my exertions; and the fortunate shot that killed the villain smith was never to be sufficiently commended.

"My visit ended—*I was in love with Emily;* but then I had little chance of succeeding to the property, which afterward, by a chapter of accidents, fell to me; and a company of foot was all my earthly riches. She was an heiress; would it be generous to take advantage of a casual service, and press a suit that would be as painful to refuse as unlikely to be granted? I mean (so says vanity) by Mr. Morden. No; I overcame the temptation of risking a trial, and returned to —— ford, possessing the esteem and good wishes of every inhabitant of 'the Wilderness.'

"I was on parade some mornings after I rejoined the regiment, when a horse, splendidly accoutred with a superb tiger-skin, holsters, saddle, and every housing fit for a field officer, was led into the barrack-yard by a groom. The animal was a perfect picture of symmetry and strength; a dark chestnut, sixteen hands high, and worth at least two hundred guineas. The groom presented me a letter,—it was from Mr. Morden—the horse was a present.

"Emily and her cousin married most happily, and we

have often met since. They treat me as sisters would a brother, and we frequently talk of the night attack upon 'the Wilderness.'

"Three years passed away; the gang had been incessantly followed by Mr. Morden, and were extirpated, with the solitary exception of Captain Bulger. Dreading the sleepless vengeance of that determined old man, this ruffian fled the country, and established himself in a disaffected district of the South.

"In the interim I got a majority in the Seventieth, then quartered in Cork. Soon after I joined I happened to be field-officer of the day on which a notorious criminal was doomed to suffer. The regiment had given a guard, and curiosity induced me to attend the execution.

"I entered the press-room. In a few minutes the malefactor appeared in white grave-clothes, attended by two priests. It was 'mine ancient enemy,' Bulger! Suddenly the sheriff was called out, and after a short absence returned, accompanied by a plain, vigorous country gentleman, enveloped in a huge driving coat, and apparently like one who had travelled a considerable distance.

I looked at the criminal; he was the ruin of a powerful man, and the worst-visaged scoundrel imaginable. He was perfectly unmoved, and preserved a callous sort of *hardiesse*, and as the priests hurried over their Latin prayers, made a careless response whenever they directed him. The door leading to the drop was open; the felon looked out upon the crowd most earnestly.—*He is not there,*' he murmured; '*he caused my apprehension, but he will not see me die!*' and added, with a grim smile—'*Morden, you neither kept your word nor proved your prophecy!*' The muffled stranger stood suddenly forward—'*I am here, Bulger! I paid for your apprehension, and have come some hundred miles to witness your execution.*'

"'Morden!' said the dying felon, solemnly, 'if a ghost can come back again, *I'll visit you!*'

"The person addressed smiled coldly.—'I found you unable to execute your threats while living, and, believe me, I apprehend nothing from you when dead.'

"The clock struck—the sheriff gave the signal—Bulger advanced to the scaffold—the drop fell—and in two minutes he was a corpse."

LETTER XXII.

Conversation—A brave Resistance—The Contrast—The Burglary.

"Well, I like a man to keep his word," said my relative, "and I admire your friend Morden prodigiously, for his punctual attendance on Mr. Bulger when he made his parting bow to an admiring multitude, and as the song goes, 'died with his face to the city.'"

"There is little danger after all," said the colonel, "to be apprehended from ruffian force if a man's nerve and coolness desert him not at the pinch. In house attacks the odds are infinitely against the assailants. The attempt is generally made in the dead of night; a robber party are never sufficiently organized to combine their efforts judiciously, and two men within, if properly armed and plentifully supplied with ammunition, are in my opinion a fair match for a dozen outside the doors."

"Calm and steady courage does wonders, certainly, and even when surprised and unprepared, a cool man will rarely be left without some means of defence. The Scotch proverb is a true saw 'a gleg (ready) hand never wanted weapon.'"

"There was never a better illustration of that truth, than the heroic resistance offered by an aged gentleman in the south, to a band of ruffians, under the most discouraging circumstances. I knew him intimately," continued the colonel, "and I'll briefly give you the story.

"Several years ago, when the south of Ireland was, as it has ever been within my memory, in a disturbed state, a gentleman advanced in years lived in a retired country house. He was a bachelor, and whether trusting to his supposed popularity, or imagining that the general alarm among the gentry was groundless, he continued in his lonely mansion long after his neighbours had quitted theirs for a safer residence in town. He had been indisposed for several days, and on the night he was attacked, had taken supper in his bedroom, which was on the

ground-floor, and inside a parlour, with which it communicated. The servants went to bed; the house was shut up for the night; and the supper-tray, with its appurtenances, by a providential oversight, were forgotten in the old man's chamber.

"Some hours after he had retired to bed, he was alarmed at hearing a window lifted in the outer apartment; his chamber-door was ajar, and the moon shone brilliantly through the open casement, rendering objects in the parlour distinct and perceptible to any person in the inner room. Presently a man leaped through the window, and three others followed him in quick succession. The old gentleman sprang from his bed, but unfortunately there were no arms in the apartment; recollecting, however, the forgotten supper-tray, he provided himself with a case-knife, and resolutely took his stand behind the open door. He had one advantage over the murderers, they were in full moonlight, and he shrouded in impenetrable darkness.

"A momentary hesitation took place among the party who seemed undecided as to which of them should first enter the dark room; for, acquainted with the localities of the house, they knew well that there the devoted victim slept. At last one of the villains cautiously approached, stood for a moment in the doorway, hesitated, advanced a step—not a whisper was heard, a breathless silence reigned around, and the apartment before him was dark as the grave itself.—'Go on, blast ye! What the devil are ye *afeerd* of?' said the rough voice of an associate behind; he took a second step, and the old man's knife was buried in his heart! No second thrust was requisite, for with a deep groan the robber sank upon the floor.

"The obscurity of the chamber, the sudden destruction caused by that deadly thrust, prevented the ruffians in the outer room from knowing the fate of their companion. A second presented himself, crossed the threshhold, stumbled against his dead associate, and received the old man's knife in his bosom. The wound, though mortal, was not so fatal as the other, and the ruffian had strength to ejaculate that he was 'a dead man!'

"Instantly, several shots were fired, but the old gentleman's position sheltered him from the bullets. A third assassin advanced, levelled a long fowling-piece through the door-way, and actually rested the barrel against the old man's body. The direction, however, was a slanting one, and with admirable self-possession, he remained steady until the murderer drew the trigger, and the ball passed him without injury; but the flash from the gun unfortunately disclosed the place of his ambush. Then commenced a desperate struggle—the robber, a powerful and athletic ruffian, closed and seized his victim around the body—there was no equality between the combatants with regard to strength; and although the old man struck often and furiously with his knife, the blows were ineffectual, and he was thrown heavily on the floor with the murderer above him. Even then, at that awful moment, his presence of mind saved this heroic gentleman. He found that the blade of the knife had turned, and he contrived to straighten it upon the floor. The ruffian's hands were already upon his throat—the pressure became suffocating—a few moments more and the contest must have ended; but an accidental movement of his body exposed the murderer's side—the old man struck with his remaining strength a deadly blow—the robber's grasp relaxed—and with a yell of mortal agony, he fell dead across his exhausted opponent!

"Horror-struck by the death-shriek of their comrades, the banditti wanted courage to enter that gloomy chamber which had been already fatal to so many. They poured an irregular volley in, and leaping through the open window, ran off, leaving their lifeless companions behind.

"Lights and assistance came presently—the chamber was a pool of gore, and the old man, nearly in a state of insensibility, was covered with the blood, and encompassed by the breathless bodies of his intended murderers. He recovered, however, to enjoy for years his well-won reputation, and to receive from the Irish viceroy the honour of knighthood, which never was conferred before upon a braver man."

"I know a melancholy contrast to this gallant story,"

said my cousin; "it occurred not many years ago, in an adjoining county. I heard it detailed in a court of justice, as well as privately, from the lips of the unfortunate gentleman, and I never shall forget his nervous agony as he gave me a partial narrative of the outrage."

"Oh! let us have the particulars, Julius; next to a good ghost-story, a cruel burglary is delightful."

"In 181—," said my kinsman, "a gentleman with his family left Dublin, and removed to an extensive farm he had taken in the wild and troublesome barony of ——. There was no dwelling-house procurable for some time, and the strangers took up their residence in a large cabin upon the road-side, about a mile distant from the little town of ——ford.

"It was naturally supposed that, coming to settle in a strange country, this gentleman had brought money and valuables along with him; a gang of robbers infested that lawless neighbourhood under the command of the notorious Captain Gallagher, and they marked out the stranger for a prey.

"This new settler had been married but a few months, and his wife was a young and very lovely woman. On the third night after their arrival they retired at their customary hour to rest—he slept upon the ground-floor, and the lady and her female attendants occupied some upper chambers.

"It was past midnight; the unsuspecting family were buried in deep repose, when Mr. ——— was fearfully awakened by a stone shattering the window and breaking the looking-glass upon the table. He was, unhappily, a nervous, timid man; he was aware that the house was being attacked; a loaded carbine lay within his reach, but he appears to have abandoned all hope or thought of defending himself;—he heard the crashing of the cabin-windows—he heard the appalling sound of women's shrieks—but, trembling and agitated, he had not power to leave his bed.

"Never did a more dastardly gang attack a house than Gallagher's. After every window was driven in, more than half an hour elapsed before one of them would attempt to enter, although no show of resistance had been

offered by the inmates of the house. The cowardly villains would occasionally peep through a shattered casement, and instantly withdraw.

"A single blow struck with good effect, one shot from the loaded carbine, would have scattered the scoundrels, and saved the family from plunder and a dreadful insult. But the unhappy man, paralyzed with terror, lay in helpless imbecility upon his bed, and the banditti, satisfied that no resistance would be offered, at last made good an entrance.

"They lighted candles, bound the unfortunate gentleman, left him, half dead with terror, and proceeded to ransack the premises. Soon after shrieks from the lady's chamber announced their being there. They drank wine, and broke every place and thing in the expectation of plunder.

"But, unfortunately, they were disappointed; I say *unfortunately*, as, had they found money, it is possible the lady would have been preserved from insult. Maddened by liquor, and disappointed in their expected booty, the helpless women were subjected to savage insult.

"What must have been that wretched man's sufferings, as he listened to the supplications of his beautiful wife for pity? Some of the villains were 'of milder mood' than their fellows, and a partial protection was afforded to the miserable lady.

"After a dreadful visit of three hours, the ruffians left the house. Their apprehension was almost immediate. I was present at the trial, and the testimony of that beautiful woman, who sat on the bench beside the judge, with the evidence of the wretched husband, was melancholy.

"Conviction followed, and I attended at the place of execution. Gallagher, the most horrible-looking scoundrel imaginable, came out. The buzz among the crowd subsided into muttered prayers, and compassionate ejaculations. He, the felon, was unmoved; his deportment was desperately hardened; he looked without emotion on the multitude, and from amid the mass, recognised some acquaintances, and acknowledged them with a demoniac grin. He was turned off in savage callousness--his life was miserably prolonged.

"From his immense weight—for the ruffian was of Herculean proportions,—the rope gave way, and he fell with violence to the ground. His thighs were badly fractured, and he was carried to the scaffold again, a maimed and trembling wretch. All his hardihood had forsaken him, and if it were possible for a man to undergo the agonies of death a second time, assuredly they were twice endured by that loathsome criminal—Captain Gallagher."

LETTER XXIII.

Midnight Reflections—A good Story-teller—The Affair of Ninety-eight.

We separated for the night—I retired to my well-appointed dormitory; every thing bespoke cleanliness and comfort, from the snowy coverlet to the sparkling fire of brilliant bog deal. The room was papered with caricatures, and crowded with prints on sporting subjects. This was cheerful and bachelor-like. I looked at the mantel-piece; a brass blunderbuss and a case of pistols were there suspended in most effective order. This brought on a train of thought, and all the pleasant narratives of my kinsman and his visiter rushed back to my recollection.

I have, God help me! no fancy for what the Irish call *active amusements.* I would have no ambition to hold a noctural colloquy with Mr. Bulger—nor would it afford me satisfaction to listen to solemn assurances of his determination to cut my throat. I would not give one farthing to spend half an hour in a dark closet with three robbers and a case-knife. I love uninterrupted repose, and it would annoy me to have my window dismantled at midnight, and my entire toilet annihilated by a well-directed volley of paving-stones. On earth there is not a more enchanting object than the exquisite symmetry of a

woman's well-formed leg; but Miss Morden's would have no charms for me, if *preluded* by a discharge of musketry. There is, moreover, a murderer quietly cantoned within a room or two of mine; and though the man may be "honest," as my loving cousin believes and verifies, yet one feels nervous in being within a dozen yards of a man who has thinned the population for the third time.

Your stupid Englishman retires to bed after his daily labour is ended—your livelier Milesian then only lays himself out for pleasure, and betakes himself to shoot at a justice of the peace, or, still better, amuse himself with a *too-roo among the Peelers*. Do you go out to dinner?—Calculate on being fired at when returning. Do you require a physician?—The odds are, that the honest doctor is qualified for a patient himself before he leaves your lawn. Do you delight in hunting?—You will find the monotonous period of waiting at the cover-side agreeably diversified by the occasional whistle of a musket-bullet from some ambushed *Rockite;* and if you venture to send a horse out to exercise, your groom returns *solus*, to acquaint you that the quadruped is no more, and that the gentleman who despatched him sent you his regrets that he was so unlucky as to miss yourself, but by the assistance of the Blessed Lady—for they are a pious and religious race—he hoped to be more successful on a future opportunity. Are you fond of a quadrille?—Ascertain before you attempt your first *chassez*, that the ball-room windows are *bricked-up*, and a guard of honour stationed at the door. Are you, *unfortunately*, a parson?—Insure your life to the uttermost farthing you can raise—arrange your affairs—perfect your will—and, if you be curious in posthumous renown, prepare your epitaph; then demand *one thirtieth* of your tithes—*you are a dead man to a moral*—and your heirs, executors, and assigns, secure of opulence within a fortnight.

All this is pleasant and exciting, but I, as I premised, 'have no ambition.' In spite of female persecution, I will return to England (if my life be spared) before the "morrow of All Souls," a day for ever ingrafted on my memory, it being the appointed period that a rascally tradesman (when I was in the Blues) allotted for pro-

ducing my body before his majesty's Barons of the Exchequer.

Thus resolved, I went to sleep; next morning my cousin rallied me at breakfast. "I think, Colonel Dwyer, we gave my friend Frank enough of robber narratives last night. Confess, was your couch visited by any of the departed heroes, whom illiberal enactments consign to the gallows, while lesser men are sent in state to Westminster? Dreamed you

> ——Of cutting foreign throats,
> Of breaches, ambuscados, Spanish blades?"

"Ah no," said the colonel, "our dull tales require the seasoning of good story-telling to render them impressive. I wish my quondam acquaintance, Mr. ——, had been here, and, by the shade of Munchausen, he would have embellished a simple burglary to such superlative perfection, that I am persuaded your kinsman could not have counted on a second night's sleep for a fortnight."

"Is the gentleman happy in description?" I inquired.

"Inimitable. 'He lies like truth.' I shall never forget the first evening I met him." The colonel took a preparatory pinch of brown mixture, and thus proceeded:—

"Before I retired from the army, I was ordered to Castlebar to attend a court-martial. It was then a most hospitable town, and during our stay, I and the other members of the court had more invitations than we could possibly accept of.

"At a large dinner-party, the conversation turned on circumstances connected with the disgraceful defeat of the King's troops here in ninety-eight, by Humbert. An elderly gentleman opposite favoured us with a striking and spirited account of the affair, and none could give it with more effect, for he had been a prominent actor in the scene.

"It was really the most soul-stirring narrative I had ever listened to,—and when, in course of the detail, the fortune of the day threatened to become disastrous, the individual exertions of this gallant gentleman appear to have been incredible. He flew through every arm of the royal forces—objurgated the militia, lauded the ar-

tillery, encouraged the irregulars, and d—d the carbineers;—held momentary consultation with three field officers, and the Lord only knows how many subordinates besides, and traversed the line from one extremity to the other, with such rapidity as proved him to have been mounted on a race-horse, or possessed of the gift of ubiquity itself.

"When the panic became general, and a rout inevitable, it was melancholy to hear this veteran mourn over blighted glory and blasted renown. He was forced away at last, it appeared, by the remnant of the combatants; but still, 'in the ranks of death you'd find him,' retiring reluctantly through the town, a sort of intermediate speck between his own rear-guard and the French advance. How the deuse he escaped the cross-fire of both, I could never comprehend.

"I looked at him with wonder and respect—no truculent traces of war lined a harsh and merciless countenance—no 'token true of foughten field' disfigured him with scar or blemish; but there was a quiet tradesman-sort of simper eternally mantling over his features, which would have been worth a hundred a year to any city dealer in ladies' mercery. Surely, thought I, he has, at all events, the true military enlargement on *the occiput*, and I'll warrant it, a *splendid developement*. In short, I was astonished, and marvelled how well such apparent benignity concealed a heart that only throbbed with rapture amid the roar and blaze of battle.

"How long this train of thought might have continued is uncertain; it was broken by a twitch upon the elbow from my neighbour. 'Curse him,' he said, in a whisper that paralyzed me, 'his story is nothing to-night, he forgot to kick down Humbert's aid-de-camp.'

"'*Kick down an aid-de-camp!* that would indeed be an unusual feat.'

"'Well, sir, that very feat is worth the remainder of the battle. It happened that our fat friend opposite had a horse that never could endure a crupper; the rider was disabled in a charge, broke his sabre, and was, or rather any other man would be, completely *hors de combat*. What did he do in this dilemma?'

"'Call out lustily for quarter, I presume.'

"'The farthest thing from his intentions. No, he slipped his hand slyly over the croup, and with the first fling knocked out the brains of Humbert's principal aid-de-camp. There was a simple and ingenious method of making a vacancy in an enemy's staff! Oh, the story is nothing wanting it! Had I not better make him tell it over in the new?'

"Just then we were summoned to the drawing-room, and whether the narrative was again given to the company, with the interesting addendum of the kick, I cannot take on me to say."

"Was the man even present at the battle?" I inquired.

"As much, my friend, as you were at Camperdown; and I have reason to believe that that affair was transacted before you was born. He absconded the moment it was known the French had landed at Killalla, and never appeared in the county afterward until the rebellion was suppressed, and the country as quiet as it is at present."

"Heaven protect us!" I exclaimed. "It is a lying world that we live in."

LETTER XXIV.

Spring Tides—Hennessey and the Portmanteau—Spillet-fishing—Coal-fishing—Mackerel—Sea-fowl—A Failure—Preserving Gunpowder—An Explosion—Another Accident—A House burned—The Dinner Signal.

THE springs have commenced, and the gray and lowering atmosphere which the influence of these tides occasions, has set in. Although the darkness would intimate a change, the fresh breeze and skyey appearances portend, as they tell me, good weather.

We are bound for the bay, to lay down spillets; and during the tedious interval, which of necessity occurs before they can be lifted, we shall kill coal-fish, shoot sea-gulls, smoke cigars, and, no doubt, have a further detail of atrocities from the colonel, which would put the Newgate Calendar to the blush.

The mainsail is *chalk-up*,—the hooker has slipped her cables, and hangs by a single end to the pier,—we are waiting for a row-boat, which four sturdy peasants propel with might and main from the opposite shore. There is a man in the stern-sheets who engrosses the undivided attention of my cousin and his followers. The boat approaches, and, "Blessed Mary! can it be?" there sit Hennessey and the colonel's portmanteau! The embassy has succeeded; the bustle of the boatmen is commensurate to the importance of the freight, and they *give way* in the full consciousness that they carry "Cæsar and his saddle-bags."

Mr. Burke has made the *amende honorable;* my cousin looks two inches taller, and hints slyly that feudal power in Ballycroy is not yet extinct; and well he may, for the colonel's chattels are uninjured—no rude hand has undone a buckle—not a shirt is wanting, or even the fold of a neckcloth disarranged. There is a mysterious whispering

between the ambassador and Pattigo; the commander rejoices over his wardrobe; my kinsman looks "every inch a king;" and I am probably the happiest of all, for I trust that the pleasant narratives which for two nights robbed me of my rest, like 'the thousand and one' of Scheherazade, have at last drawn to a close.

Did a man wish to moralize upon the unrealities of human expectations, let him hang over a spillet, and be interested in its success. Conceive an eternity of line, with a thousand hooks at given distances; as every snoud is placed a fathom apart, a person less conversant with figures than Joe Hume may guess *the total.* This endless continuity of hemp must be carefully taken up. Do it slowly, and the thing is worse than a penance to Lough Dergh; and if you attempt rapidity, the odds are, that the *back-line* breaks, and a full hour will scarcely remedy the mischief.

It would puzzle a philosopher to determine the state of affairs in ten-fathom water; and if you *shoot* in *foul ground*, you will probably lose the spillet, or with a world of labour, disentangle a moiety from rocks and sea-weed. Should it, however, have escaped those casualties, after a two hours' probation, while you listen to a *Drimindhu* from the skipper, and the exact state of the herring-market from the crew, you proceed to raise it. Up it comes—that vibratory motion announces that a fish is fast upon the snoud; conjecture is busily at work, and there is a difference of opinion whether 'the deceived one' be a codling or red gurnet. It appears—a worthless, rascally dog-fish! A succession of line comes in—star-fish, and, "few and far between," some solitary plaices and flounders—at last *a victim*—heavy and unresisting. An indistinct glance of a dark object, broad as a tea-tray, brings the assistant *spilleteer*, gaff in hand, to the quarter. Alas! *the turbot* in expectation turns out to be *a ray!* Often have I shot a spillet under favourable circumstances, and in approved ground, and lost time, hooks, and snouds, and my whole reward was a boat-load of skates and dog-fish.

We ran quickly, with a leading wind, to the fishing-bank, and having shot the spillets—a tedious thing enough

—stood for a rocky part of the coast, where the coal-fish are always abundant. This water-sport (viz. coal-fishing) is unknown 'to the many,' and yet to him whose hands are not unacquainted with rope and oar, it affords, at times, an admirable amusement.

The coal-fishing requires a stiff breeze, and if there be a dark sky it is all the better. In its detail, it is perfectly similar to mackerel-fishing, only, that the superior size of the coal-fish makes stronger tackle and a heavier lead indispensable.

An eel of seven or eight inches long is the bait. The head being removed, the hook is introduced as in a minnow, and the skin brought three or four inches up the snoud. This latter is a fine line of two or three fathoms length, affixed to the trap-stick and lead, the weight of which latter is regulated by the rate of sailing.

The coal-fish, in weight, varies from two to fourteen pounds; it is finely shaped, immensely rapid, uniting the action of the salmon with the voracity of the pike. If he miss his first dash, he will follow the bait to the stern of the boat, and I have often hooked them within a fathom of the rudder.

Four or five knots an hour is the best rate of sailing for killing coal-fish, and upon a coast where they are abundant, the sport, at times, is excellent.

Like the pike, the coal-fish is very indifferent to the tackle used, which is generally very coarse. Not so the mackerel; he requires much delicacy of line and bait to induce him to take.

In light winds, or when the fish are out of humour, I have killed mackerel by substituting a salmon casting-line of single gut for the hempen snoud commonly employed by fishermen, which, with a newly-cut bait of phosphoric brilliancy, commonly overcame his resolve against temptation. But there are times when a change of weather, or some inexplicacle phenomena of sea or sky, render these fish dull and cautious—for usually it requires but trifling art to kill them.

A little experience *is* necessary. The bait must be cut from the freshest mackerel, and assimilated in size and shape to the herring-fry, which they generally follow

—and the *way* of the boat must be so regulated as to preserve the deception by a sufficient velocity, without breaking by its *rapidity* the mackerel's hold. The mouth of this fish is particularly tender—and if care be not taken, many will drop from the hook before they can be secured on board.

Unaccustomed to the painful effects which friction and salt water occasion hands unused to *hemp*, I transferred my line to an idle boy, who proved a much more fortunate *coal-fisher* than I, notwithstanding the instructions of my friend Pattigo.

We were bearing down to a glorious play of sea-birds, and I got a gun *uncased* to practise at the gulls. It was a curious and bustling scene. Above, thousands of these birds were congregated in a small circle, screaming, and rising, and dipping over a dense mass of fry, which appeared at times breaking the surface of the water, while grebes, and puffins of many varieties, were persecuting those unhappy sprats underneath. As we bore down, I fired at a few straggling puffins. Some were missed, some disabled, but not a *clean-killed* bird! The great body of sea-fowl appeared so much engrossed with their predatory pursuits, as to neither attend to the reports of the gun or notice the approach of the hooker, until the boat's boltsprit seemed almost parting this countless host of floating and flying plunderers.

Bent on destruction, I waited until we cleared the ball and reached that happy distance when the charge should open properly. Pattigo estimated the shot would, *moderately*, produce a stone of feathers. I fired; a solitary gull dropped in the water, and half a dozen wounded birds separated from the crowd, and went screaming off to sea. The failure was a melancholy one. I sank immeasurably in the estimation of the crew as an *artiste*. Pattigo's bag of feathers was but an unrealized dream—while my kinsman muttered something about *the best single* he ever possessed—and I, to cover my disgrace, occupied myself with reloading.

"I can't congratulate you on your gunnery," said my cousin, "althongh I must admit, that it required some ingenuity to avoid accidents among the crowd. But, give

me the gun,—and here comes a victim," he continued, as a huge gray gull, reckless of danger, wheeled, as they will do, round and round a wounded companion.

"I would not be in his coat for half the hooker," said Pattigo, in a stage whisper.

"The Lord look to him!" exclaimed another boatman, "if it be not a sin to pray for a bird."

"He shall not carry his life to the water," rejoined the master, as he laid the barrel to his eye.

But, notwithstanding prayer and prophecy, the gull merely parted a few feathers, and flew off, to all appearance with little injury.

"By every thing blind!" exclaimed my kinsman, "the gun must have been charged with saw-dust. Ha! let's see the flask! Frank, Frank, thou art a careless gunner; the powder is not worth one farthing."

It was true. I had forgotten my flask in the pocket of a wet *cota more*,* and consequently the powder was spoiled.

"Nothing puzzles me more, with the exception of keeping the sheriff at a distance, than preserving gunpowder, and preventing my arms from rusting, and it is incredible how soon the humidity of this climate spoils the one, and causes the other.†

"My grand magazine is a sort of basket secured with a lid and padlock, and covered with a sheep-skin, which, like the coffin of Mahomet, hangs suspended between sky and earth from the couples of the kitchen. This disposition secures it alike against damp and accident. My arms give me an infinity of trouble, but by a weekly inspection, I manage to keep all in order.

"It is marvellous how quickly, even with moderate care, powder spoils. With my attention, I experience no inconvenience, and I always warm my flask, by plunging it in boiling water, before I take the field. This renders the powder sufficiently dry, without deteriorating from its strength, which exposure to a stronger heat will inevitably occasion.

* *Hibernice*—Great coat.

† Appendix, Nos. XXVII, XXVIII.

"By-the-way, I have had more actual experience in this necessary article than was exactly agreeable. Come, we will bear away for the Lodge, and as the colonel is immersed in 'The Packet,' and deep in the debate, I will give you the particulars. In powder I am not, '*ignarus mali*,' for I blew myself up, or made an excellent attempt,—and burned a cabin to the very ground.

"Both tales are briefly told. We were on a Christmas visit, when a slight fall of snow having taken place overnight, the host proposed that I and Captain H——, of the 7th dragoons, should go out and shoot snipes among the numerous drains by which his lawn was irrigated. Guns were procured, but only *one* powder-flask was attainable, and it was to be a partnership concern. For this purpose, it was large enough in all conscience, being an old-fashioned horn bound with brass, and capable of holding a pound of powder. *We filled it to the top.* At a short distance from the house, a snipe sprang unexpectedly—I killed it—and in attempting to reload, the charge ignited in the barrel, and the horn blew up in my hand. My clothes were reduced to tinder, my hat scorched, my hair and eyebrows burned off, but excepting a slight cut in my hand, otherwise I was perfectly uninjured. *Not a fragment of the flask, but one shattered piece of horn, could be found upon the unbroken surface of the snow.* H——, who was about one hundred yards distant from me, described the explosion as louder than the report of a nine-pounder; yet, to me, the noise was trifling. Was not this escape miraculous?

"The second explosion, in which I perpetrated *arson*, occurred some ten miles up the river. By some unhappy mischance, I took out a flask of condemned powder, and the accident was not discovered until it was too late to be remedied. To dry the powder was the alternative, and we repaired for this purpose to the only house within four miles of the place, a *shieling* occupied by an old herdsman and his wife.

"The powder was spread upon a wooden platter, and laid at a sufficient distance from the fire; and while I stirred it with a ramrod at a distance, one of my attendants conceived it a fitting opportunity to roast *a cast of*

potatoes in the embers. Both operations went forward successfully. The powder was almost dry; the potatoes nearly roasted; when my follower ingeniously contrived to introduce a coal into the loose powder. This incident, though trifling in itself, made an immediate alteration in affairs. The roof of the cabin was dry as tinder, while tow, flax, and other combustible matters were stored immediately above the hearth. In a moment all was in flames—the potato-roaster blown into the corner, and I, either by fear or gunpowder, *capsized* in another direction.

"The agony of the poor old woman, who fortunately was outside the hovel when the explosion took place, was pitiable. In five minutes her cabin was a ruin—and to her, that wretched *shieling* was worth a marble palace. For a time she could not be pacified. In vain she was assured 'that the master would build her a new house, *wider, and bigger, and warmer*, ay, and that it should have *a wooden door*;' but like another Rachel, she mourned, and refused to be comforted.

"Two or three days removed her sorrow. I sent assistance, and progressing like another Aladdin, the cabin rose Phœnix-like from its ashes. It is now the envy of the passing traveller—and as the old couple close their *wooden door* at night, they pray for *the master's* long life, and bless God that a 'pound of powder blew up at their fire-side.'

"But, see! old John's signal flies at the flag-staff. In with that endless spillet, Pattigo! Pshaw! red gurnets, codlings, flat fish, with skates and rays eternally. Now, *out reefs*—on with the *big jib*—nay, my dear colonel, I am commander. *Ease away the sheets.* Ha! she stoops to it! Hish! she travels. *Carry on*, Pattigo—the colonel is aboard, '*Cæsarem vehis!*'—*She does scrape the sand a little;* but we are fairly over *the bar*—John's dinner-signal would make any man a hero."

LETTER XXV.

A calm Night—Sand-eel Fishing—Dangerous to the Fair Sex—Cockles—Lobsters—Crabs—Scallops—Oysters—Punt adrift—My Brother's Shoes—Seal surprised—Incident—Gun burst—Birmingham Guns—Percussion Locks—London Makers—Barrel-making—Gun-making—Inferior Guns—Shooting Accident.

It was nearly dark, but the night was calm and warm. I stole from the heated room to indulge in a luxurious smoke *al fresco ;* and seated upon the wall of the little pier puffed away in Turkish indolence. The swell upon the bar was particularly distinct, as in successive falls the wave burst upon the sands, and ran hissing up the beach till its volume of water broke and subsided. The tide was almost out, and the river, which forms the channel of the estuary, would hardly reach beyond the knee ; and I thought of the singular contrast that existed between the quiet stream, now scarcely a stone's throw over, and the fierce and lowering water which a westerly gale forces in, rushing every moment with increased violence from the ocean, and threatening to burst over bank and rock that opposed a barrier to its rage. My musings were, however, speedily interrupted: voices came towards me from opposite directions, and the loud and frequent laugh replied to rustic badinage and youthful romping. My cousin joined me, and from him I ascertained that the jolly parties who seemed everywhere scattered over the sands beyond the river, were the village girls assembled to collect sand-eels, an employment they would pursue till the returning tide filled the estuary again. A little flat punt, which the servants use for bringing spring water from the bent banks, was speedily placed upon the river, and we pushed over to the opposite strand, and found ourselves surrounded by several hundreds of the young villagers of both sexes, who were busily engaged in this curious species of night-fishing.

The sand-eels are generally from four to nine inches

in length, and lie beneath the surface seldom deeper than a foot. The method of taking them is very simple; it is effected by passing a case-knife or sickle with a blunted edge quickly through the sands ; and by this means the fish is brought to the surface, and its phosphoric brilliancy betrays it instantly. At particular times during the summer months when these eels run in upon the estuary, quantities sufficient to fill several barrels have been collected during a night. When dressed the fish is reckoned by the peasantry a great delicacy, but to my taste, it is much too strong. But they are sought for other purposes : from the particular brilliancy of the skin they make an admirable bait for flat-fish ; and hence a spillet-setter prefers them to every other kind, as they are much more durable than the lug,* and infinitely preferable to eels of coarser size.

In speaking of this nocturnal fishery, if a search in the sands may so be termed, my cousin said that it was a source of considerable trouble to himself and the priest in their respective vocations: accidents of a delicate description were occasionally to be lamented, and many an unhappy calamity was traced to "the returning from the sand-eels." Whether the danger of this curious pursuit enhanced its enjoyment is questionable ; but, regardless of the frequent mishaps, which prudent mothers of course duly enumerate, the fair portion of the peasantry waited anxiously for twilight, and then, fortified by maternal advice and female resolution, set off in troops to the strand, to share the pleasures and the perils of this interesting but dangerous amusement.

A crowd of a more youthful description of the peasantry are collected every spring-tide to gather cockles on the same sands by day-light when the tide answers. The quantities of these shell-fish thus procured would almost exceed belief ; and I have frequently seen more than would load a donkey, collected during one tide by the children of a single cabin. They form a valuable and wholesome addition to the limited variety that the Irish peasant boasts at his humble board ; and afford

* The sand-worm used by fishermen.

children, too young for other tasks, a safe and useful employment.

Indeed, its plentiful supply of shell-fish may be enumerated among the principal advantages which this wild coast offers to its inhabitants. Along the cliffs, whether in the islands or on the main, lobsters are found in abundance; and, if the peasantry possessed the necessary means for prosecuting the fishery, it might at times afford them a lucrative employment. But, simple as the apparatus is, they do not possess it; and the lobsters obtained by sinking pots and baskets in the deep sea, are taken by strangers, who come for this purpose from a considerable distance. Those killed by the islanders are only procurable at low springs, when the ebbing of the water beyond its customary limits permits caves and crannies in the rocks being investigated, which, in ordinary tides, could not be entered.

Crabs are found on this coast of considerable size, and sufficiently numerous. Like the lobsters, they are only accidentally procured, but there is no doubt but a large supply could be obtained if proper means were employed to take them.

The most esteemed of all the shell-fish tribe by the western fisherman is the scallop, which here is indeed of very superior size and flavour. They are commonly found by the oyster-dredgers in deep water—and are estimated so highly as a luxury as to cause their being transferred to the next gentleman who may have been serviceable to the peasant who finds them, or whose future favour it may be advisable to propitiate. Indeed, in former days, and those too not very distant from our own times, to approach a justice of the peace without "a trifle for his honour," would be an offence of passing magnitude; a basket of chickens, a cleave of scallops, or an ass-load of oysters, harbingered the aggriever or the aggrieved. If these formulæ were not duly attended to, the fountain of law was hermetically sealed; and a house functionary—for all the servants on the establishment were "four pound constables"—announced that "his honour would do no justice," and bundled off the applicant to some one more approachable of his majesty's numerous and poor esquires.

The oysters found in the bays and estuaries along this coast are of a very superior quality, and their quantity may be inferred from the fact, that on the shores where they are bedded, a turf-basket large enough to contain six or seven hundred can be filled for a sixpence. A couple of men will easily, in a few hours, lift a horse-load —and, notwithstanding the numbers carried off by sailing-boats from Clare and Munster, the stock appears to be little reduced by the constant dredging. There are, besides these, other shell-fishes greatly prized by the peasantry, but which I never had the curiosity to eat, such as razor-fish, clams, and various kinds of muscles. These occasionally make a welcome change in the otherwise unvarying potato diet; and better still, employ the idler members of the family, whose youth or age unfits them for more laborious exertions.

We dallied so long among the fairer portion of the sand-eel fishers, that the tide insensibly rose, and when we reached the place where our punt had been secured, we discovered that the water had crept up the sands and floated the frail skiff away. To hail and get a boat from the Lodge, from the calmness of the night was readily effected; and while it was being launched down the beach, my kinsman told me that it was not the first time that the treacherous punt had played truant to its crew.

"On a stormy evening one of the boatmen was ordered to cross the estuary for spring-water, and set out accordingly for a supply, accompanied by a wild-looking and nondescript animal who infests the premises, who is known to the establishment by the name of '*Achil.*' The river was flooded, the evening stormy, and Peeterein, after leaving his coadjutor in strict charge of the skiff, set off to fill his water vessels, and to return, if possible, before the dusk had fallen into darkness. *Achil*, as the evening was chilly, lay down in the bottom of the skiff to shelter himself from the piercing east wind; and, in place of keeping watch and ward like an able mariner, composed himself to sleep. Meanwhile the river rose fearfully; the breeze freshened into a gale, and when Peeterein hurried back with his water-vessels, he had the

satisfaction of seeing the punt half a mile down the channel, hurrying, as fast as a flooded river and a freshening storm could urge it, to the bar, which now broke in thunder. I had been shooting on this side, and reached the strand while Peeterein was hallooing for assistance. A boat was rapidly despatched—the skiff, when its destruction appeared inevitable, was overtaken, and *Achil* found as comfortably asleep as if he were in his accustomed crib in the barn. The ebullitions of Peeterein's sorrow, while the fate of skiff and boy was still uncertain, astonished me; and when I saw the punt in tow, I observed, that, as the boy was recovered, he might now cease his lamentations.—"The Lord be blessed! there she is; another minute would have made noggin staves of her! Arrah! and did ye think it was *Achil* I was frettin after; the divil pursue him for an unlucky member! No, faith!—I was in sore distress, for *my brother's shoes were aboard!*"

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We were assembled round the breakfast-table this morning, and it was a questionable affair whether we should pass the forenoon in the warren, or shoot a spillet on the banks, when the conclave was dissolved by one of those incidental alarms that diversify the rustic monotony of our commonplace existence. The spring-tide had left the channel nearly dry, and except in some deep pools, the water was but ancle deep. Into one of these an unlucky seal had been seduced in pursuit of a salmon, and his retreat was cut off before he was aware that his ill-timed chassé would cause his ruin. On his being discovered, a host of cockle-gatherers formed across the neck of the hole, while a breathless courier brought the tidings to the Lodge. Instantly all was bustle; a salmon net was procured, and the whole of the "dramatis personæ," even to the colonel and the priest, were speedily armed with divers and deadly implements.—Old Antony had hobbled off at the first alarm, and by the prudent plan of taking time by the forelock, managed to be the first man at the scene of action. It was a deep, and rather an extensive pool, and the unfortunate seal absconded to the place most likely to afford concealment till the flood-tide should liberate him from the hands of

his enemies. But alas! they were many and malignant —and driven from his deepest and last retreat to avoid being meshed in the net, he was forced upon the shoal, when an otter-spear struck to the socket of the grains by the vigorous arm of Hennessey, killed him without a struggle. When the net was brought ashore, the moiety of a large salmon remained in the meshes, and told the errand which induced the defunct seal to commit himself to the faithless shoals which proved so fatal to him.

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This is, indeed, a day of incidents. Dinner was just removed, when, on the top of flood, a coast guard galley ran in with a leading breeze from the westward. The very elegant proportions of the boat, the happy attitude, the snowy whiteness of her large lugs, as with the favourable light which a sunless but clear blue sky gave, she rounded the headland, and came up like a race-horse to the pier, had called our undivided attention to her arrival. While conjecture was busy as to what her business might be, we observed a man with his arm slung in a handkerchief, and apparently in considerable pain, leave her. The cause was soon ascertained, for a serious accident had occurred, and we all adjourned to the kitchen, where Antony was already occupied with the wound.

It appeared that a gun with which the poor fellow had been shooting rabbits, had burst and shattered his hand; and when I saw the palm badly lacerated, and the thumb attached by a small portion of the muscles, I really feared to save it was a hopeless task. But Antony and my kinsman thought differently. The old man bound the wound up with a professional neatness that I could not have expected from him; the patient was accommodated in the Lodge, and in a fortnight the galley again returned to bring him thoroughly convalescent to his station.

I had some curiosity to examine the unlucky gun that caused the mischief. There was a longitudinal rent along the barrel of seven or eight inches length, terminating where the left hand usually grasps the stock. There had, no doubt, been a deep flaw in the inside of the metal; for the wounded man declared that he had ton loaded the gun beyond the customary charge,

It proved to be one of those wretched affairs which are constantly smuggled into Ireland, and sold under the denomination of London guns, but which, it is well known, are fabricated in Birmingham; and the extent to which this dangerous imposition upon the public safety is carried, would scarce be credited. There is a constant demand in this unhappy country for fire-arms; the well-affected and disaffected seek them for very different purposes: one wants them for defence, the other requires them for aggression; and every steamer that arrives from Liverpool has generally some stands of contraband arms on board.

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That our times should be as far distinguished for increased effect and superior elegance in the formation of fire-arms as for any other mechanical improvement, will be admitted by all but the most prejudiced of the old school. Antique gunners may still be found, who are obstinate in preferring the flint to the percussion plan. But any person who has suffered the disappointments that the best guns on the former principle will entail upon those that carry them, and particularly in wet and stormy weather, will freely admit the wonderful advantages that simple and effective invention the copper cap confers upon the modern sportsman. The misery entailed upon the man who in rain and storm attempts to load and discharge a flint gun, may be reckoned among the worst upon the human catalogue; and if he who has suffered repeated disappointments of eternal misses and dilatory explosions from a thick flint and a damp pan, tried the simple and elegant improvement now in general use, he would abandon the stone gun for ever.

It has been said that gun-making is only brought to perfection in London, and that the Irish are not able to compete with their English rivals. I am, I confess, decidedly partial to a London gun; and while I admit that I have occasionally met with excellent firearms produced by Dublin makers, yet they are, in finish and elegance, generally behind those which one gets from any of the leading artists in the great metropolis. To point

to any particular name among the host of London makers would be absurd. From any of a dozen a person will be certain of obtaining a first-rate implement; and from the Mantons, Purdy, Egg, and many others, guns of the most efficient qualities and beautiful finish will be procured.

Some sportsmen are partial to such makers as forge their own barrels, and who thus afford them an opportunity of seeing their gun in progress from its commencement to its finish; and I acknowledge that I like to see my barrels fabricated; not but that I believe the greatest pains are bestowed upon proving his barrels by every gun-maker of character, and that none will be permitted to leave the shop of any reputable artist that have not been faithfully tested as to strength and safety. Still to me it is a satisfaction to see the process; and I have been lately gratified in observing the formation of a pair of barrels, from the time they were a mass of unformed stumps enclosed in a ring of iron, until moulded into as fatal tubes as were ever laid to a sportsman's eye. I watched every department of the manual labour while my gun was being completed, and hence I feel a satisfaction in knowing that I possess a perfect and elegant weapon. All have their favourites among this useful class of artists, and I must acknowledge that I never would desire a more elegant and satisfactory workman than Charles Moore.

So much depends on individual fancy, as well as the personal formation of the shooter, that no two persons will exactly select the same gun. He who has long or short arms, or any peculiarity in the formation of neck or shoulders, will require, according to circumstances, a differently shapen stock. Every man knows the gun best suited to his taste aud figure, and few can shoot with one that differs materially from that which he has been accustomed to. To tell an experienced sportsman the qualities a finished gun should possess, would be giving him unnecessary information; and should the neophyte on this head wish for ample instructions, let him consult Colonel Hawker, and he, honest man, will open up all the 'arcana of the craft'—and though he may not teach him

"the cunning trick of shooting," he will, if his advice be attended to, enable him thoroughly to comprehend the requisite qualities of an efficient and well-finished fowling-piece.

Indeed, it is a miserable species of economy for a sportsman to purchase an inferior gun. To expect that the low-priced ones which are manufactured in country towns will be either safe or durable is an absurdity. No doubt the charges of some fashionable makers are exorbitant, and from more moderate tradesmen of excellent repute, an equally good gun may be procured at considerably less price. But if a London maker be expensive, he certainly gives you the best article that improved machinery and the first workmen in the world can produce. With common care it will nearly last a life time; and the small consideration between a warranted and a flimsy and hastily formed fowling-piece, will be too contemptible for a person to place in competition with personal security and sporting comfort.

When a gun begins to exhibit symptoms of having done its work, the sooner a man discards it the better. An injured barrel or feeble lock may prove fatal to the owner or his associates. Accidents every day occur, and very lamentable consequences proceed from a culpable neglect in retaining arms which should be declared unserviceable and disused.

I had once a favourite gun, which from constant wear and tear, exhibited unequivocal weakness in the locks, and which I had been earnestly recommended by a veteran sportsman to condemn. On a cold and rainy day I was with my friend O'M—— shooting woodcocks in the heath, and having sprung several, which from the severity of the weather were as wild as hawks, we marked them into a ravine, and determined to tie up the dogs, and endeavour to steal upon them. To keep my gun dry I placed it under the skirt of my jacket, with the muzzle pointing downwards. My companion and our attendant were busy coupling the dogs, when the gun exploded, the charge passing between O'M——'s bosom and the back of a dog he was in the act of securing, buried itself at the foot of the keeper, covering him with

mud and gravel. From the close manner in which we were all grouped, how the shot could have entered the ground without killing men or dogs, or both, was miraculous. I was desperately frightened, and from that moment forswore, for ever, the use of weakened locks and attenuated barrels.

APPENDIX.

No. I.—Page 40.

THE CURLEW TRIBE.

The bill is long, equally incurvated, and terminated in a blunt point; nostrils linear, and longitudinal near the base; tongue short and sharp pointed; and the toes are connected as far as the first joint of the membrane.

With the curlew, Linnæus begins a numerous tribe of birds under the genine name of Scalopax, which, in his arrangement, includes all the snipes and godwits, amounting, according to Latham, to forty-two species and eight varieties, spread over various parts of the world, but nowhere very numerous.

Buffon describes fifteen species and varieties of the curlew, and Latham ten, only two or three of which are British birds. They feed upon worms, which they pick up on the surface, or with their bills dig from the soft earth: on these they depend for their principal support; but they also devour the various kinds of insects which swarm in the mud, and in the wet boggy grounds where these birds chiefly take up their abode.

CURLEW.

(*Scalopax arquata*,—*Lin.* *Le courlis*,—*Buff.*)

"The curlew generally measures about two feet in length, and from tip to tip above three feet. The bill is about seven inches long, of a regular curve, and tender substance at the point, which is blunt. The upper mandible is black, gradually softening into brown towards the base; the under one flesh-coloured. The head, neck, upper part of the back, and wing coverts, are of a pale brown, the middle of each feather black, edged and deeply indented with pale rust-colour, or light gray. The breast, belly, and lower part of the back are dull white, the latter thinly spotted with black, and the two former with oblong strokes, more thickly set, of the same colour. The

quill feathers are black, the inner webs crossed or spotted with white: the tail is barred with black, on a white ground tinged with red: the legs are bare a little above the knees, of a blueish colour, and the toes are thick and flat on the under side.

"These birds differ much in size, as well as in the different shades of their plumage; some of them weighing not more than twenty-two ounces, and others as much as thirty-seven. In the plumage of some, the white parts are much more distinct and clear than in others, which are more uniformly gray, and tinged with pale brown.

"The female is so nearly like the male, that any particular description of her is unnecessay. She makes her nest upon the ground, in a dry tuft of rushes or grass, of such withered materials as are found near, and lays four eggs of a greenish cast, spotted with brown.

"The curlew is met with by travellers in most parts of Europe, from Iceland to the Mediterranean Islands. In Britain, their summer residence is upon the large, heathy, boggy moors, where they breed. Their food consists of worms, flies, and insects, which they pick out of the soft mossy ground by the marshy pools, which are common in such places. In winter they depart to the sea-side, where they are seen in great numbers, and there live upon worms, marine insects, and other fishy substances which they pick up on the beach, and among the loose rocks, and pools left by the retiring tide. The flesh of the curlew has been characterized by some as very good, and of a fine flavour; by others, as directly the reverse: the truth is, that while they are in season and live on the moors, scarcely any bird can excel them in goodness; but when they have lived some time upon the sea-shore, they acquire a rank and fishy taste."—*Bewick.*

No. II.—Page 41.

THE OSPREY, BALD BUZZARD, SEA EAGLE, OR FISHING-HAWK.

(*Falco Haliætus,—Lin.* *Le Bal Buzzard,—Buff.*)

"The length of this bird is two feet; its breadth, from tip to tip, above five; its bill is black, with a blue cere, and its eye yellow: the crown of its head is white, marked with oblong dusky spots; its cheeks, and all the under parts of its body, are white, slightly spotted with brown on its breast; from the corner of each eye a streak of brown extends down

the sides of the neck towards the wing: the upper part of the body is brown; the two middle feathers of the tail are the same; the others are marked on the inner ribs with alternate bars of brown and white: the legs are very short and thick, being only two inches and a quarter long, and two inches in circumference; they are of a pale blue colour; the claws black: the outer toe is larger than the inner one, and turns easily backward, by which means this bird can more readily secure its slippery prey.

"Buffon observes, that the osprey is the most handsome of the large birds of prey, and is scattered over the extent of Europe, from Sweden to Greece, and that it is found even in Egypt and Nigritia. Its haunts are on the sea-shore, and on the borders of rivers and lakes: its principal food is fish; it darts upon its prey with great rapidity, and with undeviating aim."—*Bewick.*

No. III.—Page 42.

COMMON SANDPIPER.

(*Tringa hypoleucos*,—*Lin.* *La Guignette*,—*Buff.*

"This bird weighs about two ounces, and measures seven inches and a half in length. The bill is about an inch long, black at the tip, fading into pale brown towards the base. The head and hinder part of the neck are brownish ash, streaked downwards with dark narrow lines: the throat is white, and a streak of the same colour surrounds and is extended over each eye: the cheeks and auriculars are streaked with brown: the fore part of the neck to the breast is white, mottled and streaked with spots and lines of a brown colour, pointing downwards: in some, the breast is plain white: belly and vent white. The ground colour of all the upper parts of the plumage is ash, blended with glossy olive bronze brown: the coverts, scapulars, lower part of the back, and tail coverts are edged with dull white, and most elegantly marked with transverse dark-coloured narrow barred lines: the first two quills are plain brown; the next nine are marked on the middle of their inner webs with white spots; the secondaries are also marked in the same manner on both webs, and tipped with white. The tail consists of twelve feathers; the four middle ones are of an olive brown, dark at the tips; those next to them, on each side, are much lighter-coloured, mottled with dark brown, and tipped with white; the two outside ones

are edged and tipped in the same manner, but are barred on their webs with dark brown: legs pale dull green, faintly blushed with red.

"This elegant little bird breeds in this country, but the species is not numerous, yet they are frequently seen in pairs during the summer months; and are well known by their clear piping note, by their flight, by jerking up their tails, and by their manner of running after their insect prey on the pebbly margins of the brooks and rivers. The female makes her nest in a hole on the ground near their haunts; her eggs, commonly five in number, are much mottled and marked with dark spots, on a yellowish ground. They leave England in the autumn, but whither they go is not particularly noticed by ornithologists. Buffon says, they retire far north; and Pennant and Latham that they are met with in Siberia and Kamschatka, and are also not uncommon in North America."—*Bewick.*

No. III.*—Page 55.

The Banshee is a nondescript being, supposed to be attached to particular families, and to take a lively interest in their weal or misfortunes; and there are a few ancient houses in Ireland unprovided with this domestic spirit. It gives notice of impending calamity—and a death in the family is always harbingered by the lamentations of this ill-omened *attaché*. The sex of the banshee is usually feminine; but I knew one instance where a male familiar attended on an old house, and was known by the title of the "Far-a-crick." The banshee was contented with frightening the family she patronized with her laments; but the far-a-crick was a more troublesome neighbour. On one occasion he beat severely a drunken servant who was belated returning from a fair—and a quarter of a mutton, which the unhappy man was bringing home, confirmed the story, for after the "Hill man's" assault, it was found to be as black as the ribs of the unfortunate sufferer.

The appearance of the banshee is variously described—as she sometimes assumes the form of "a little wizened old woman," and at others takes the semblance of "a black bitch."

No. IV.—Page 48.

"Fish may be collected into any part of a river, or piece of water, by throwing in goats', sheep, and bullocks' blood, which

is found curdled among the entrails of the fresh killed animals, pounded well together with thyme, marjoram, organum, flour, garlic, wine-lees, and suet, and the whole made into pills."

"For a standing water, heartwort and slack lime, made into paste, will fix the fish so as to be taken at pleasure."

"Fresh horse-dung put into a net and thrown into the river will entice the fish about it."

"Quicksilver, let down to the bottom of the water in a thick glass phial, on a moonlight night will evince its power to a quick-sighted observer, of drawing the fish together."

"Barley boiled until it bursts, then reboiled with liquorice, a little flour and honey, beat in a mortar until stiff as a paste, and thrown into the water, will induce fish to come where it is cast."

"Goats' blood, barley-meal, and the lungs of a goat boiled and pounded fine, and mixed with lees of sweet wine, the whole made into pills, and thrown into ponds or pits, will soon render the fish intoxicated; which the person probably was, who bestowed his labour to form the composition."

"Extract the juice of dragonwort, rub the hands with it, and hold them within the water about five or six in the morning, and it's the performer's own fault if he have not fish for dinner."

"Houseleek juice, with nettles and cinquefoil chopped small, distributed in quantities in the water, and the hands previously rubbed with it, induce the fish to come to the person, that he may take his choice."

"Heron's flesh, with some musk, amber, and civet, put into a bottle close covered with wax, the bottle to be placed in a kettle full of water, and boil it until the said flesh is converted into oil, and this rubbed on the line, insures the coming of fish to be taken."

"Heron's bowels cut in pieces, and put into a phial and buried in horse-dung, will turn to oil in fifteen days; an ounce of asafœtida is then to be mixed, when it will be the consistence of honey; anoint line, rod, or bait, it does not much signify which, and it will do wonders."

The following poetical nostrum will be found in a black-letter Treatise in the Bodleian Library, dated 1613;—

"*Wouldst thou catch fish?*
Then have thy wish;
Take this receipt
To anoint thy bait—

"Thou that desirest to fish with line and hook,
Be it in poole, in river, or in brooke

To bless thy baite, and make the fish to bite,
Loe! here's a means, if thou canst hit it right;—
Take Gum of Life, fine beat, and laid to soak,
In oyle well drawn from that which kills the oake,
Fish where thou wilt, thou shalt have sport thy fill—
When twenty fail, thou shalt be sure to kill.

Probatum.

"*It's perfect and good,*
If well understood;
Else not to be told
For silver or gold.—R—R."

No. V.—Page 62.

"In Ireland there are some excellent rivers, and, what you will hardly believe possible, comparing the characters of the two nations, some of them are taken better care of than the Scotch rivers, which arises a good deal from the influence of the Catholic priests, when they are concerned in the interest of the proprietors, on the Catholic peasantry. I should place the Erne, at Ballyshannon, as now the first river for salmon-fishing from the banks with a rod in the British dominions; and the excellent proprietor of it, Dr. Shiel, is liberal and courteous to all gentlemen fly-fishers. The Moy, at Ballina, is likewise an admirable salmon river, and sport, I believe, may almost always be secured there in every state of the waters; but the best fishing can only be commanded by the use of a boat. I have taken in the Erne two or three large salmon in the morning, and in the Moy three or four grilses, or, as they are called in Ireland, grauls, and this was in a very bad season for salmon-fishing. The Bann, near Coleraine, abounds in salmon; but in this river, except in close time, when it is unlawful to fish there, there are few good casts. In the Bush, a small river about seven miles to the east of the Bann, there is admirable salmon-fishing always after great floods, but in fine and dry weather it is of little use to try. I have hooked twenty fish in a day, after the first August floods, in this river; and should sport fail, the Giant's Causeway is within a mile of its mouth, and furnishes to the lovers of natural beauty or of geological research, almost inexhaustible sources of interest. The Blackwater, at Lismore, is a very good salmon river, and the Shannon, above Limerick and Castle Connel, whenever the water is tolerably high, offers many good casts to the fly-fisher, but they can only be commanded by boats. But there is no considerable river along the northern or western coast—with the exception of

the Avoca, which has been spoiled by the copper-mines—that does not afford salmon, and if taken at the proper time, offer some sport to the salmon fisher."

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Poiet.—I have heard various accounts of the excellent fishing in some of the greater lakes in Ireland. Can you tell us any thing on the subject, and if the same flies may be used in that island?

Hal.—I have been several times in Irelrand, but never at this season, which is considered as best for lake fishing. I have heard that in some of the lakes in Westmeath, very large trout, and great quantities, may be taken in the beginning of June, with the very flies we have been using this day. Wind is necessary, and a good angler sometimes takes in a day, or rather formerly took, from ten to twelve fish, which weighed from three to ten pounds, and which occasionally were even larger. In the summer, after June, and in the autumn, the only seasons when I have fished in Ireland, I have seldom taken any large trout; but in the river Boyle, late in October, after a flood, I once had some sport with these fish, that were running up the river from Loch Key to spawn. I caught one day two above three pounds, that took a large reddish fly of the same kind as a salmon fly, and I saw some taken that weighed five pounds, and I heard of one that equalled nine pounds. These fish were in good season, even at this late period, and had no spots, but were coloured red and brown, mottled like tortoise-shell, only with smaller bars. I have in July, likewise, fished in Loch Con, near Ballina, and in Loch Melvin, near Ballyshannon. In Loch Con the party caught many small good trout, that cut red; and in the other I caught a very few trout only, but as many of them were gillaroo or gizzard trout as common trout.

Poiet.—This must have been an interesting kind of fishing. In what does the gillaroo differ from the trout?

Hal.—In appearance very little, except that they have more red spots, and a yellow or golden-coloured belly and fins, and are generally a broader and thicker fish; but internally they have a different organization, possessing a large thick muscular stomach, which has been improperly compared to a fowl's, and which generally contains a quantity of small shell-fish, of three or four kinds, and though in those I caught, the stomachs were full of these shell-fish, yet they rose greedily at the fly.

Poiet.—Are they not common trout which have gained the habit of feeding on shell-fish?

Hal.—If so, they have been altered in a succession of generations. The common trouts of this lake have stomachs like other trouts, which never, as far as my experience has gone, contain shell-fish; but of the gillaroo trout, I have caught with a fly some not longer than my finger, which have had as perfect a hard stomach as the larger ones, with the coats as thick in proportion, and the same shells within, so that this animal is at least now a distinct species, and is a sort of link between the trout and char, which has a stomach of the same kind with the gillaroo, but not quite so thick, and which feeds at the bottom in the same way. I have often looked in the lakes abroad for gillaroo trout, and never found one. In a small lake at the foot of the crest of the Bremner, above four thousand feet above the level of the sea, I once caught some trout, which, from their thickness and red spots I suspected were gillaroo, but on opening the stomach I found I was mistaken, it had no particular thickness, and was filled with grasshoppers; but there were char, which fed on shell-fish, in the same lake.—*Sir Humphrey Davy.*

No. VI.—Page 63.

Hal.—I hope we shall have another good day to-morrow, for the clouds are red in the west.

Phys.—I have no doubt of it, for the red has a tint of purple.

Hal.—Do you know why this tint portends fine weather?

Phys.—The air, when dry, I believe refracts more red, or heat, making rays; and as dry air is not perfectly transparent, they are again reflected in the horizon. I have generally observed a coppery or yellow sunset to foretell rain; but, as an indication of wet weather approaching, nothing is more certain than a halo round the moon, which is produced by the precipitated water, and the larger the circle, the nearer the clouds, and consequently the more ready to fall.

Hal.—I have often observed that the old proverb is correct:—

> "A rainbow in the morning, is the shepherd's warning;
> A rainbow at night, is the shepherd's delight."

Can you explain this omen?

Phys.—A rainbow can only occur when the clouds, con-

taining or depositing the rain, are opposite to the sun, and in the evening the rainbow is in the east, and in the morning in the west; and as our heavy rains in this climate are usually brought by the westerly wind, a rainbow in the west indicates that the bad weather is on the road, by the wind to us; whereas, the rainbow in the east proves that the rain in these clouds is passing from us.—*Salmonia.*

No. VII.—Page 65.

"The first requisite in hook-making is to find good malleable iron, of the softest and purest kind, such as is procured from the nails of old horse-shoes. This must be converted, by cementation with charcoal, into good soft steel, and that into bars or wires of different thickness for different-sized hooks, and then annealed. For the large hooks the bars must be made in such a form as to admit of cutting the barbs, and each piece, which serves for two hooks, is larger at the ends, so that the bar appears in the form of a double pointed spear, three or four or five inches long; the bars for the finer hooks are somewhat flattened. The artist works with two files, one finer than the other, for giving the point and polishing the hook, and he begins by making the barb, taking care not to cut too deep, and filing on a piece of hard wood, such as box-wood, with a dent to receive the bar made by the edge of the file. The barb being made, the shank is thinned and flattened, and the polishing file applied to it, and by a turn of the wrist round a circular pincers, the necessary degree of curvature is given to it. The hook is then cut from the bar, heated red hot by being kept for a moment in a charcoal fire, then plunged, while hot, into cold water; then tempered, by being put on iron that has been heated in the same fire, till it becomes a bright blue, and, while still hot, it is immersed in candle-grease, where it gains a black colour; it is then finished."—*Sir Humphrey Davy.*

No. VIII.—Page 73.

"Of all the fish I have seen, the mullet is the clearest instance of the structure of its stomach approaching that of birds; its strong muscular stomach being evidently adapted, like the gizzard of birds, to the two offices of mastication and digestion. The stomach of the gillaroo-trout holds the second place, but still neither of these stomachs can be justly ranked

as gizzards, since they want some of the most essential characters, viz. a power and motion fitted for grinding, and the horny cuticle. The stomach of the gillaroo-trout is, however, more circumscribed than that of most fish, and endued with sufficient strength to break the covering of the small shell-fish, which will most probably be best done by having more than one in the stomach at a time, and also by taking large and smooth stones into it, which will answer the purpose of breaking, but not so well that of grinding, nor can this fish's stomach possess scarcely any power of grinding, as the whole cavity is lined with a fine villous coat, and whose external surface everywhere appears to be digestive, and by no means fitted for mastication."—*John Hunter.*

Although the gray mullet is common in the Mediterranean, it is in such indifferent repute that none but the lower classes use it. The red mullet is, however, held in the highest estimation, and from its scarcity and peculiar flavour is much sought after as a delicacy. It seldom exceeds a pound or two in weight, and it is dressed with the inside entire, as the woodcock is sent to table with his trail.

On our coasts it is rarely seen. At particular seasons the gray mullet visits us abundantly, and nothing can be more delicate, when *uninjured by keeping or carriage.*

No. IX.—Page 77.

"On the superior breed of grayhounds there has been a variety of opinions; the blood of the late Lord Orford's was allowed to stand very high, if not the first in public estimation. Perhaps there has not been any person who took more pains to arrive at the utmost state of perfection in his object; and it is a circumstance generally believed, that he even had a recourse to cross with the English bull-dog, in order to acquire a courage and resolution until then unknown. After seven descents, it is said, he obtained the object for which he had been so solicitous, without any diminution of speed or the beauties of shape and symmetry.* Lord Rives's stock is now

* "At his (Lord Orfords's) death, his grayhounds were sold by auction, and some of his best were purchased by Colonel Thornton; from one of them, Claret, which was put to a favourite bitch of Major Topham's, was produced the best grayhound that ever appeared, Snowball; although he was nearly equalled by his brothers, Major and Sylvia, who were all of the same litter. They were never beaten, and may be considered examples of the most perfect grayhound.

allowed to be one of the first in England, and its superiority may be owing to a judicious cross of the Dorsetshire and Newmarket blood. Mr. Gurney, of Norwich, has likewise for some years been in possession of a breed in considerable repute. It has the three great requisites, blood, bone, and shape. Snowdrop, a son of Snowball, won the Malton cup for successive years; and Fly, a grand-daughter of Snowball, a yellow and white bitch, the property of Major Topham, carried it away also in the Malton Spring Meeting of 1810, though she had suffered previously by very severe exercise. Scarcely a grayhound, indeed, of any other blood now appears at the Malton Meeting, and it has been so celebrated as to be introduced in almost every county in the kingdom.

"There was a circumstance respecting Snowball, peculiar to him in the history of coursing. He served grayhounds for years before his death at three guineas each. The first year he had ten, the second, fourteen, the third, eleven, and the fourth, seven; and among them, two out of Wales, two out of Scotland, one from the Marquis of Townshend, out of Norfolk, and the rest out of counties at some distance. Fifty guineas were given for young Snowball, who was sold afterward for one hundred. And Mr. Mellish beat all Newmarket with another son of Snowball."—*Sporting Anecdotes.*

No. X.—Page 79.

"A vertuous monke declareth, that to him (travailing in Vlster) came a grave gentleman about Easter, desirous to be

"The shape, make, elegant structure, and other characteristics of high blood, were equally distinguishable in all three; the colour of Snowball was a jet black, and when in good running condition, was as fine in the skin as black satin. Major and Sylvia were singularly but beautifully brindled. Snowball won ten large pieces of silver plate, and upwards of forty matches, his master having accepted every challenge, whatever might be the dogs of different countries which were brought against him. His descendants have been generally successful.

"The last match of this celebrated dog was against the famous grayhound Speed, the property of Hall Plumber, of Bolton Park, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He gained the match, but so severe was the run that Speed died soon after it. This terminated the career of Snowball's public coursing, as the owner, in consideration of his age, then declared he should never run another.

"This dog was, perhaps, the fleetest of his race that ever ran, and like the Flying Childers, which was the swiftest of horses, may never be outstripped in rapidity of movements."—*Brown's Anecdotes of Dogs.*

confessed and howselled, who in all his lifetime had never yet received the Blessed Sacrament. When he had said his mind, the priest demaunded him whether he were faultlesse in the sinne of homicide? Hee answered, that hee never wist the matter to bee haynous before, but being instructed thereof, hee confessed the murther *of five*, the *rest hee left wounded*, so that hee knew not whether they lived or no. Then was he taught that both the one and the other were execrable, and verie meekelie humbled himself to repentance."—*Campion's Historie.*

No. XI.—Page 83.

"About seventeen years since, when visiting the late Marquis of Clanricarde, at Portumna Castle, two gentlemen brought to the marquis an immense pike, which they had just caught in the River Shannon, on the banks of which they had been taking their evening walk. Attracted by a noise and splashing of the water, they discovered in a little creek a number of perch driven on shore, and a fish, which in pursuit of them, had so entangled himself with the ground as to have a great part of its body exposed, and out of the water. They attacked him with an oar, that by accident lay on the bank, and killed him. Never having seen any fish of this species so large, they judged it worth the observation of the marquis, who, equally surprised at its magnitude, had it weighed, and to our astonishment it exceeded the balance at *ninety-two pounds;* its length was such, that when carried across the oar by the two gentlemen, who were neither of them short, the head and tail touched the ground."

No. XII.—Page 84.

"The stomach of the common trouts are uncommonly thick and muscular; they feed on the shell-fish of lakes and rivers, as well as on small fish; they likewise take into their stomachs gravel or small stones, to assist in comminuting the testaceous parts of their food. The trouts of certain lakes in Ireland, as those of the county of Galway, and some others, are remarkable for the great thickness of their stomachs, which, from some resemblance to the organs of digestion in birds, have been called gizzards. The Irish name of the species that has them is gillaroo-trouts, and their stomachs are sometimes served up to table under the former appellation.

It does not appear to me, that the extraordinary strength of stomach in the Irish fish should give any suspicion that it is a distinct species. The nature of the waters might increase the thickness or the superior quantity of shell-fish, which may more frequently call for the use of its comminuting powers than those of our trouts, and might occasion this difference. I had the opportunity of comparing the stomach of a great gillaroo-trout with a large one from the Uxbridge river; the last, if I recollect, was smaller and out of season, and its stomach (notwithstanding it was very thick) was much inferior in strength to that of the former, but on the whole there was not the least specific difference between the two subjects."—*Pennant.*

No. XIII.—Page 85.

"The pike's voraciousness is well known; what is here mentioned of it is singular. In 1810, a hook baited with a roach was set in the Manor pond at Teddington, Bedfordshire; the next morning, a large pike was caught, which with difficulty was got out. It appeared that a pike of three and a half pounds' weight was first caught, which was afterward swallowed by another weighing thirteen pounds and a half, and both were taken. It has been before remarked, that pike are frequently shot when floating near the surface of the water—other sorts of fish are often so destroyed. In June, 1808, Mr. Burn, the Earl of Lonsdale's gamekeeper, shot in the river Eden, at Beaumont near Carlisle, the extraordinary number of eighty-six fish at two shots; the smallest fish was seven inches in length."—*Daniel.*

This voracity of the pike is more strongly exemplified in the following extract from a *provincial newspaper.* Of the truth of the occurrence we presume there can be no reasonable doubt, even in the minds of the most skeptical; but we believe there is no instance of animal ferocity on record which could parallel it, excepting the celebrated case of the Kilkenny cats, whose respective demolition of each other is as wonderful as authentic.

"A party angling at Sunbury, one of them sat across the head of the boat, as a punishment inflicted on him for wearing his *spurs.* Another, having caught *a gudgeon*, stuck it on one of the spurs, which he (the delinquent in the bow) not perceiving, in a few minutes a large jack bit at the gudgeon, and the *spur being crane-necked*, entangled in the gills of the jack

which, in attempting to extricate himself, actually pulled the unfortunate person out of the boat. He was with difficulty dragged on shore, and the fish taken, which was of *prodigious size.*"

Now, after this cautionary notice of ours, we do assert, that any gentleman who goes to fish in *crane-necks*, and disposes of his legs overboard, with *a gudgeon on the rowel*, is not exactly the person on whose life, were we agent to a company, we should feel justified in effecting a policy of insurance.

No. XIV.—Page 91.

"The red-deer, or stag, may be said to inhabit some of the forests of this country (Perthshire), in the most perfect state of nature and wildness; cautious in the extreme, singularly jealous of the human form, and eluding with wonderful sagacity the wiles of the sportsman."—*Daniel.*

"Things gradually continued thus to improve, in proportion as the face of the country became more cultivated, till animals of the chace were greatly reduced in number, so much so, that even the stag is but seldom seen in a state of nature in this country, decreasing as the sequestered places of its abode become fewer. They are now only to be met with in a state of unrestrained freedom in those extensive moors upon the borders of Cornwall and Devonshire, and in some places of the Highlands of Scotland, and the mountains of Kerry, in Ireland, in which last place they add greatly to the beauty and magnificence of the justly celebrated Lake of Killarney, where they are pursued by hound and horn."—*Brown.*

No. XV.—Page 97.

This gentleman's temporary sojourn with the fairies is generally credited in Ballycroy. Why the gentlefolk, who are accounted scrupulous in selecting youth and beauty when they abduct mortals, should have pitched upon Shamus, is unaccountable. His charms are of the plainest order, and he had long passed his teens before the period of his being carried away. His own account of the transaction is but a confused one—and all I recollect of the particulars, is, that he crossed to Tallaghan, over an arm of the sea, on a gray horse, behind a little man dressed in green. Neither good nor evil resulted from this nocturnal gallop of "the Stutterer," if we except a

sound horse-whipping which he received from the priest, for attempting to abuse the credulity of the peasantry, by detailing the fairy revels in which he alleged that he participated.

No. XVI.—Page 109.

Captain Brown places this animal in the class of "domesticated dogs which hunt in packs or singly, principally by the eye, although sometimes by the scent."

"The Irish Grayhound. *Canis Graius Hibernicus,—Ray.*

"This is one of the largest of the canine race, with an air at once beautiful, striking, and majestic. He has been known to grow to the extraordinary height of four feet, although the general standard is about three feet.

"In shape the Irish grayhound somewhat resembles the common grayhound, only that he is much larger, and more muscular in his formation, clumsy in all his different parts, and is quite unserviceable in hunting either the stag, fox, or hare. His chief use in former times was in clearing the country of wolves and wild boars, for which his great size and strength peculiarly adapted him.

"The colour of the Irish grayhound is a pale cinnamon or fawn. His aspect is mild, and his disposition gentle and peaceable. It is said he is greatly an overmatch for either the mastiff or bull-dog; and when he fights he generally seizes his antagonist by the back, and shakes him to death, which his great strength enables him to do with ease.

"M. Buffon supposes the great Danish dog to be only a variety of the Irish grayhound; and Mr. Pennant was of opinion that the French mâtin and the Albanian dog were also varieties of the same.

"The Irish grayhound is now rarely to be met with, even in his native country.

"The Marquis of Sligo is among the few individuals who possess that fine animal in a state of tolerable purity; he keeps a number at Westport, in the county of Mayo, Ireland, where there is a person employed to look after them. It is said that great care is necessary to preserve the breed, and keep them in good health.

"Aylmer Bourke Lambert, Esq. one of the vice-presidents of the Linnæan Society, took the measure of one of the Marquis of Sligo's dogs, which was as follows:—'From the

point of the nose to the tip of the tail, sixty-one inches; tail seventeen and a half inches long; from the tip of the nose to the back part of the scull, ten inches; from the back part of the scull to the beginning of the tail, thirty-three inches; from the toe to the top of the fore shoulder, twenty-eight inches and a half; the length of the leg, sixteen inches; from the point of the hind toes to the top of the hind shoulders, thirteen inches; from the point of the nose to the eye, four inches and a half; the ears, six inches long; round the widest part of the belly (about three inches from the fore legs), thirty-five inches; twenty-six inches round the hind part, close to the hind legs; the hair short and smooth; the colour of some brown and white, of others black and white.'

"They seemed good-tempered animals, but from the accounts Mr. Lambert received, it is obvious that they have degenerated, particularly in point of size.

"Dr. Goldsmith says he has seen a dozen of these dogs, and assures us the largest was about four feet high, and as large as a calf of a year old."

We are sorry to remark, that Captain Brown's statement, "that the Irish grayhound is still preserved by the Marquis of Sligo," &c. &c. is totally unfounded. No dog of this description has for many years been in the possession of the noble lord. In his father's time, there were, I believe, some descendants of this splendid stock at Westport House—but for years they have been extinct. The present marquis introduced some double-nosed boar-hounds into the country, which possibly were mistaken for the Irish grayhound, although no animals could be more dissimilar in shape, courage, and docility.

No. XVII.—Page 114.

"There is a certain limit to the sport of the angler, if continuous fishing be adopted in the same pool. Every fish is in its turn made acquainted by diurnal habit with the artificial fly, and either taken or rendered cautious; so that, in a river fished much by one or two good anglers, many fish cannot be caught, except under peculiar circumstances of very windy, rainy, or cloudy weather, when many flies come on, or at night, or at the time the water is slightly coloured by a flood, or when the fish change their haunts in consequence of a great inundation. In the Usk, in Monmouthshire, when it was very full of fish in the best fishing-time, when the spring brown

and dun flies were on the water, it was not usual for some excellent anglers, who composed a party of nine, and who fished in this river for ten continuous days, to catch more than two or three fish each person. But one day, when the water was coloured by a flood, in which case the artificial fly could not be distinguished by the fish from the natural fly, I caught twelve or fourteen of the same fish that had been in the habit of refusing my flies for many days successively. This was in the end of March, 1809, when the flies always come on the water with great regularity, the blues in dark days, the browns in bright days, between twelve and two o'clock in the middle of the day. In rivers where the artificial fly has never been used, I believe all the fish will mistake good imitations for natural flies, and in their turn, to use an angler's phrase, 'taste the steel;' but even very imperfect imitations and coarse tackle, which are only successful at night or in turbid water, are sufficient to render fish cautious." —*Sir Humphrey Davy.*

No. XVIII.—Page 116.

"Much caution and judgment are requisite in excising the bitten part. I have known of failures where the parts were excised and afterward cauterized; but I am fully persuaded that this arose from want of sufficient attention to some of the minuter circumstances of the operation. The first requisite before the excision of the bitten part, is to wash not only the inside of the wound, but also the surrounding parts with great care; for if this be neglected, and the poisonous saliva be not removed, in making the incision on each side of the wound, the sound portions through which they are made will be inoculated with the virus. The incisions should then be made, one on each side of the wound, forming an eclipsus, in those that will admit of it, which should be carried to such a depth as completely to remove the part; it should then be carefully examined if there be any part in the piece excised through which the dog's tooth appears to have passed, and in case there is, the excision should be carried deeper. In making the excisions, great attention should be paid to the direction of the tooth, and if the knife should meet the wound made by the dog's tooth, I should consider it always necessary to recommence the operation with a clean knife, and this as often as the occurrence should take place; for if we continue to use the same knife, which is likely to be contaminated in conse-

quence of its entering the wounded parts, the operation may be rendered useless by the sound part becoming inoculated with the canine virus.

"For the purposes of ablution after excision, I generally employ the volatile alkali with water, for the following reasons:—That, of the different alkalis, the volatile gives a greater fluidity to the saliva, and at the same time completely dissolves it; besides, it possesses another advantage, it may be used without much pain to the patient, from its being a less powerful caustic. Some attention also is necessary, even in cleaning the parts from the morbid saliva.

"There is another circumstance, of too much importance to pass unnoticed, that is, employing frequently clean sponge during the operation; perhaps fresh lint will often answer the purpose, and may prevent the risk of using the sponge, which may have been contaminated with the virus. The wounds, after extirpation, should then be again freely washed with a weak solution of volatile alkali and dressed with simple dressing, or may be drawn together with adhesive plaster.

"A variety of writers have recommended strongly the keeping open the wound, by stimulating applications, for some length of time; but when the whole of the parts have been removed, which ought to be done without leaving the smallest portion behind, I cannot see what good can arise from so doing.

"There are, however, many parts of the body very unfavourable for extirpation, or where it cannot possibly be performed; in such cases where they cannot be excised with safety, the operation, except the mere removal of the ragged parts, should not be attempted, and other means should be resortedt o, and the best, perhaps the most efficacious remedy, is ablution. For this purpose I recommend a weak solution of volatile alkali, viz.—Of water four parts, of volatile alkali one part. When stronger solutions are employed, the more solid parts become corroded, and the corroding liquor is very likely to hold the virus in solution. With the above, as it is fully capable of dissolving the saliva, the wounded parts should be first freely washed, and injections with a syringe be forcibly made into the wound, which should be persevered in for a considerable duration. After this, warm water may be used in place of the solution, in order to promote a flow of blood, by which means any portion that might remain will be washed out by ablutions assiduously employed; and by the aid of a syringe the fluids may be directed with great force into the

wound. It is to be hoped the patient will be completely freed from the canine virus, and consequently from the danger which usually follows when such precautions are neglected.

"Perhaps among the most popular remedies, none can be more appropriate than that recommended by the late celebrated Doctor Percival; he advised all persons, the moment they received the bite of a rabid animal, to apply to the first spring, brook, pool, or ditch, and as water is generally within our reach, the wound may be easily cleansed; this is urged to be diligently persevered in till a surgeon can be procured."—*Gilman.*

No. XIX.—Page 118.

"Although the indications of approaching rabies are generally unequivocal, and loss of appetite, altered habits, and fixed melancholy will bespeak the existence of disease, instances are not unfrequent where the dog has continued eating and drinking freely many days after he has actually communicated the malady by bite. This is a fact of much importance," says Mr. Gilman, "as it points out the dangerous policy of considering hydrophobia as a leading characteristic symptom of rabies."

Dr. Clarke, of Nottingham, relates a case in that neighbourhood, of a dog that was not suspected to labour under rabies until *ten days* after he had bitten an unfortunate man, who in six weeks after the bite died of hydrophobia. This dog ate and drank heartily, showed no signs of indisposition, hunted as usual, and occasionally went into a neighbour's house among children, without injuring any of them; but on the morning of the tenth day (that is, ten days after communicating the disease by the bite, and when he had no hydrophobia) he was seen snapping at every dog in the street, and was in consequence destroyed.

No. XX.—Page 121.

Large birds should be carefully skinned, the head, tail, and feet left entire; the skin may then be either put into a vessel of spirits, or rubbed well on the inside with the following mixture:—One pound of salt, four ounces of alum, and two ounces of pepper, pounded together. Small birds may be thus treated. Take out the entrails, open a passage to the brain, which should be scooped out through the mouth, introduce

into the cavities of the scull and the whole body some of the above mixture, putting it also through the gullet and entire length of the neck. Hang the bird in a cool airy place, first by the feet, that the body may be impregnated by the salt, and afterward by the thread through the under mandible of the bill, till it appears to be sweet, then expose it in the sun or near a fire; after it is well dried, clean out what remains loose of the mixture, and fill the cavity of the body with wool, oakum, or any soft substance.

No. XXI.—Page 122.

"If the night should be wet, previous to the day of shooting, you had better not attempt the hills, for in this case the grouse will not lie. If you should be out, and you find the birds erect their heads and run, you may be certain that they will not lay well during that day; the only chance you have here is to pursue them, running as fast as you can, which has been found by experience to be the only possible means of getting within shot. But observe, there are two evils that attend this mode of grousing,—if you run, your dogs will do the same, and to get within shot you must keep your eye on the birds while they are running, take care you do not get a fall, which you most likely will in uneven ground, and probably not only hurt yourself, and bend your gun, but, as has been formerly observed, spoil your dogs."—*Thornhill.*

Against running after grouse I uplift my voice. If they are wild and will not stand or sit, a commonplace occurrence in wet cold weather, I would recommend gentlemen to remain at home. If circumstances bring them to the moors, or they are particularly solicited (as I have often been) to procure birds, let them depend on *close marking*, tie up every dog but the steadiest one, and quietly, patiently, and silently endeavour to come within range of their object. If the bird moves, then to *outflank* him is the best chance. Take a considerable circuit, and the more apparent carelessness you show in striving to close with a wild grouse, the more likely you will be to succeed. If the bird observes any hurry in the approach of the shooter, he will take alarm instantly, and an immediate flight will show that he has been perfectly on the *qui vive*.

No- XXII.—Page 122.

(*Whimbrel,—Bewick. Le Petite Courlis,—Buffon.*)

"The whimbrel is only about half the size of the curlew, which it very nearly resembles in shape, the colour of its plumage, and manner of living. It is about seventeen inches in length, and twenty-nine in breadth, and weighs about fourteen ounces. The bill is about three inches long, the upper mandible black, the under one pale red. The upper part of the head is black, divided in the middle of the crown by a white line from the brow to the hinder part: between the bill and eyes there is a darkish oblong spot: the sides of the head, neck, and breast are of a pale brown, marked with narrow dark streaks passing downward: the belly is of the same colour, but the dark streaks upon it are larger; about the vent it is quite white. The lower part of the back is white also. The rump and tail feathers are barred with black and white; the shafts of the quills are white, the outer webs totally black, but the inner ones marked with large white spots: the secondary quills are spotted in the same manner on both the inner and outer webs. The legs and feet are of the same shape and colour as those of the curlew."

"The whimbrel is not so commonly seen on the sea-shores of this country as the curlew; it is also more retired and wild, ascending to the highest mountain heaths in spring and summer, to feed and rear its young."

No. XXIII.—Page 126.

The *gunner* is the common name given to the *sea-bream* by the fishermen on the western coast. They are found near the shore, in from five to fifteen fathoms' water, where the bottom is foul and rocky. The gunners are pretty, but insipid fish, and in variety of colour differ from each other more than any species of the finny tribe that I have met with. In size, they seldom exceed three or four pounds; but from the avidity with which they bite, they afford excellent amusement when the breeze is not sufficiently stiff to allow a take of mackerel and coal-fish. The bait generally used for gunners is a small crab, broken, and bound about the hook with a thread; and two hooks affixed to a trap stick, with a light leaden plummet, comprise the simple apparatus requisite for this kind of sea-fishing.

No. XXIV.—Page 130.

"Now that I am speaking of pike, I may observe, that eagles, which were rather numerous hereabout, were not unfrequently seen to pounce on those fish while basking near the surface. It was said, however, that when the pike was very large, he has been known to carry the eagle under water; when, from the latter being unable to disengage his talons, he was of course drowned. Indeed, Dr. Mellerborg, a medical gentleman attached to the Uddeholm establishment when I first visited Wermeland, vouched for this being the fact, he himself having once seen an enormous pike, with an eagle fastened to his back, lying dead on a piece of ground which had been overflown, but from which the water had then retreated.

"Captain Eurenius also informed me, that he himself was once an eyewitness to a similar occurrence. This was on the Götha river, and at no great distance from Wenersborg. In this instance, when the eagle first seized the pike, he was enabled to lift him a short distance into the air; but the weight of the fish, together with its struggles, soon carried them back again to the water, under which for a while they both disappeared; presently, however, the eagle again came to the surface, uttering at the same time the most piercing cries, and making apparently every endeavour to extricate his talons, but all was in vain, and after a deal of struggling, he was finally carried under the water.

"Captain Eurenius said, moreover, *that pike were occasionally taken alive with only the legs and talons of the eagle attached to their backs, the bodies of the bird having previously rotted off.** This, if true, is a curious circumstance; for one would naturally have supposed, that with such a knapsack, the fish would have been unable to procure his food, and that he consequently must soon have perished.

"In corroboration of these stories, I may mention, that when I was in the Orkney Islands, a few years ago, I was told of the eagle striking turbot and other fish at sea, when similar results to what I have just stated occasionally took place. At that time, however, I confess, I was a little incredulous on the subject."—*Lloyd.*

* Credat Judæus!

No. XXV.—Page 139.

"Many of these stories have been founded upon the long-haired seal seen at a distance, others on the appearance of the common seal under particular circumstances of light and shade, and some on still more singular circumstances. A worthy baronet, remarkable for his benevolent views and active spirit, has propagated a story of this kind, and he seems to claim for his native country the honour of possessing this extraordinary animal; but the mermaid of Caithness was certainly a gentleman, who happened to be travelling on that wild shore, and who was seen bathing by some young ladies at so great a distance, that not only genus but gender was mistaken. I am acquainted with him, and have had the story from his own mouth. He is a young man, fond of geological pursuits, and one day in the middle of August, having fatigued and heated himself by climbing a rock to examine a particular appearance of granite, he gave his clothes to his highland attendant, who was taking care of his pony, and descended to the sea. The sun was just setting, and he amused himself for some time by swimming from rock to rock, and having long unclipped hair and no cap, he sometimes threw aside his locks, and wrung the water from them on the rocks. He happened the year after to be at Harrowgate, and was sitting at table with two young ladies from Caithness, who were relating to a wondering audience the story of the mermaid they had seen, which had already been published in the newspapers. They described her as she usually is described by poets, as a beautiful animal, with remarkably fair skin and long green hair. The young gentleman took the liberty, as most of the rest of the company did, to put a few questions to the elder of the two ladies, such as, on what day, and precisely where this singular phenomenon had appeared. She had noted down not merely the day, but the hour and the minute, and produced a map of the place. Our bather referred to his journal, and showed that a human animal was swimming in the very spot at that time, who had some of the characters ascribed to the mermaid, but who laid no claim to others, particularly the green hair and fish's tail; but being rather sallow in the face, was glad to have such testimony to the colour of his body beneath his garments."—*Sir Humphrey Davy.*

No. XXVI.—Page 145.

I remember hearing this word used in a court of justice in a curious sense. A man was on trial, capitally indicted for murder. The chief witness on his examination detailed the leading incidents—his being awakened by cries for help—his rising, striking a light, opening his door, and finding a man dead upon the threshold. "And what did you do next, my friend?" interrogated the crown lawyer. "Why," replied the witness, with amazing *sang froid*, I called out, "Are any of ye there that kilt the boy? By J——s, I'll give a *thirteen* to him who'll tell me who it was that had the *impudence* to murder a man at my door!"

No. XXVII.—Page 172.

Gunpowder is composed of very light charcoal, sulphur, and well refined saltpetre. The powder used by sportsmen in shooting game is generally composed of six parts of saltpetre, one of charcoal, and one of sulphur; but these proportions, as well as the introduction of other ingredients, and the sizes of the grains, are undoubtedly varied by the different manufacturers in the composition of the powders of the same denomination, and are always kept profoundly secret.

The materials are put into a wooden trough, where they are ground together, to render the contact of the nitrous and combustible particles intimate and equal throughout the whole mass. The mixture is occasionally sprinkled with water, to form an amalgam, which is afterward granulated, and to prevent the finer particles of the sulphur and the charcoal from flying off, which would necessarily alter the proportion of the composition. The powder-makers employ more or less time in the operation of grinding, in proportion to the quantity and quality of the saltpetre. When they conceive that the ingredients are properly mixed together, they from the paste form those little grains, which being dried obtain the name of gunpowder.

There are two general methods of examining gunpowder, one with regard to its *purity*, the other with regard to its *strength*.

Its *purity* is known by laying two or three little heaps near each other upon white paper, and firing one of them. For if this takes fire readily and the smoke rises upright, without

leaving any dross or feculent matter behind, and without burning the paper, or firing the other heaps, it is esteemed a sign that the sulphur and nitre were well purified, that the coal was good, and that the ingredients were thoroughly incorporated together; but if the other heaps also take fire at the same time, it is presumed, that either common salt was mixed with the nitre, or that the coal was not well ground, or the whole mass not well beat or mixed together, and if either the nitre or sulphur be not well purified the paper will be black or spotted.

To determine the *strength* of powder, dry it perfectly and ascertain how many sheets of paper it will drive the shot through at the distance of ten or twelve yards. In this trial we should be careful to employ the *same sized shot* in each experiment—the quantity both of the shot and the powder being regulated by exact weight, otherwise we cannot even in this experiment, arrive to any certainty in comparing the strength of different powders, or of the same powder at different times.

Mr. Daniel, in speaking of gunpowder, gives the following receipt for increasing its strength. We entirely coincide in his opinion, that it is quite unnecessary to augment the force of modern power, and insert the directions for that purpose, rather for the experimentalist than the sportsman.

"The following method of increasing the force of gunpowder one third in proportion to its original goodness, was discovered by a physician of Fogano, in Tuscany, whose name was Francesco. To every pound of powder add four ounces of quick lime, fresh and well pulverised, let the whole be shaken until the mixture is perfect, and afteward kept for use in a close stopped vessel. To the chemists is left to decide upon what principle the lime acts in strengthening the powder. The experiment is said to be certain. It is necessary to add, that the powder used in priming must be unmixed with lime. Without artificially augmenting the strength of gunpowder, that made by Messrs. Pigou and Andrews will be found excellent; and it is to be feared, if a gentleman cannot kill with the above, no chemical preparation will much assist his endeavours."

The concluding observations are taken from a very clever and ingenious work, published many years ago, and entitled "An Essay on Shooting."

"Powder ought to be kept very dry; every degree of moisture injures it. Good powder, however, does not readily

imbibe moisture; and, perhaps, there is no greater proof of the bad quality of powder, than its growing damp quickly when exposed to the air. This readiness to become moist, depends upon the salt-petre employed in the composition not having been freed from the common salt it contains in its crude state, and which, in consequence, has a very strong attraction for watery particles.

"Powder may acquire a small degree of dampness, and be freed from it again by drying, without much injury to its quality. But if the moisture is considerable, the salt-petre is dissolved, and the intimate mixture of the several ingredients thereby entirely destroyed. Drying powder with too great a heat also injures it; for there is a degree of heat, which, although not sufficient to fire the powder, will yet dissipate the sulphur, and impair the composition by destroying the texture of the grains. The heat of the sun is, perhaps, the greatest it can with safety be exposed to, and, if properly managed, is sufficient for the purpose; when this cannot be had, the heat of a fire, regulated to the same degree, may be employed; and for this end, a heated pewter plate is perhaps as good as any thing, because pewter retains so moderate a heat, that there can be little danger of spoiling the powder by producing the consequence before mentioned.

"It is observable that damp powder produces a remarkable foulness in the fowling-piece after firing, much beyond what arises from an equal quantity of dry powder; and this seems to arise from the diminution of the activity of the fire in the explosion.

"Unless the sportsman *is very particular indeed* in the mode of keeping his powder, we would recommend him always to air it and his flask before he takes the field.

"Flasks made of copper, or tin, are much better for keeping powder in than those made of leather, or than small casks; the necks of these should be small and well stopped with cork."

No. XXVIII.—Page 172.

"Three ounces of black lead, half a pound of hog's lard, one quarter of an ounce of camphor, boiled upon a slow fire; the gun-barrels to be rubbed with this, and, after three days, wiped off with a linen cloth: twice in a winter will keep off the rust, which the salt-water is otherwise sure to be continually bringing out from the iron."—*Hawker*

To protect guns from rust in the humid climate I have been latterly accustomed to, I found nothing answer well but *strong mercurial ointment.* On the Western coast, oil, no matter how good in quality, is useless, but for cleaning.—Those who are acquainted with the localities of that country know that *turf* is of trifling value. No limit is consequently placed upon its consumption; it is calculated only by the *stack* or the *boat-full*, and hence more fuel was wasted in my lodge, than would supply three moderate houses. Yet so penetrating is the damp from the ocean breeze, that the house-arms rusted above the fire-places, and the pistols I kept upon my table would spot if not frequently examined, and dry-rubbed with a flannel cloth.

END OF VOL. I.